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The reading problem in urban schools : who has it and what has been done about it?

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THE READING PROBLEM IN URBAN SCHOOLS: WHO HAS IT

AND WHAT HAS BEEN DONE ABOUT IT?

A Dissertation Presented

By

GEORGENA VAN STRAT

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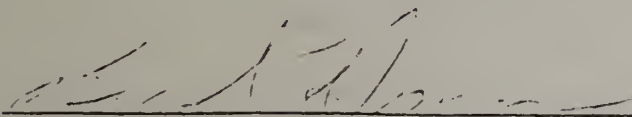(Major Subject)   Urban Education

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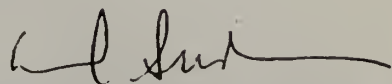Approved as to style and content by:

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School of Education

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THE READING PROBLEM IN URBAN SCHOOLS: WHO HAS IT

AND WHAT HAS BEEN DONE ABOUT IT?

(December, 1974)

Georgena Van Strat, B.A., Newark State College
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A clear and present reality facing contemporary American education·is that urban schools have failed to teach black and lower status group white children to read. For more than a decade educators, social scientists, psychologists and federal officials have recognized, assessed and analyzed the situation. Educational researchers have offered a wide variety of theories seeking to explain why children in urban schools are inefficient readers. Federal, state and local agencies have sponsored special reading programs designed to increase the reading achievement of inner-city youngsters. Finally, urban school systems have searched for panaceas in the form of new methods, materials and approaches hoping to reverse reading failure.

Results of these efforts have been discouraging. Despite special programs urban schools are not producing

proficient readers. Further, the issues surrounding the poor reading achievement of inner-city children have raised serious controversies regarding the effectiveness of urban schools and the cognitive abilities of the students they serve.

Although a large majority of urban schools have failed to teach poor and minority children to read, there are schools that have demonstrated measurable success in teaching inner-city youngsters to read. These schools have proven that teachers can teach reading, that poor and minority children do learn to read as well as white middle class children and that urban schools are viable educational institutions.

Chapter I establishes a historical-sociological framework in order to provide a comprehensive survey of the past and present failure of education, particularly reading, in serving minority populations. An examination of historical antecedents, the growth of standardization in education, and the application of scientific measurement to reading are among the subjects covered. Chapter II contains a review of pertinent literature which seeks to explain the causes of reading failure in urban schools. Among the topics discussed are the myth of cultural deprivation, Black English, visual perceptual deficits and teacher attitudes.

Chapter III describes successful reading programs and practices which have achieved measurable success in reversing reading failure in urban schools. Among the reading programs analyzed are: The Follow Through Program; P.S. 11, P.S. 129 and P.S. 146 in New York City; the Woodland School in Kansas City, Missouri; the Ann Street School in Los Angeles; School 6 Annex in Passaic, New Jersey; and Sesame Street. Chapter IV presents the Career Opportunities Program at the University of Massachusetts as an academic-experience based teacher training model preparing effective reading teachers for urban schools. Contained in Chapter V is an examination of four proposals for change directed at increasing reading achievement. Included in this chapter are descriptions of The Right to Read Program, The Reading Improvement Act of 1973, the University of Massachusetts Center for Urban Education Inservice Program and the University of Massachusetts Reading Inservice Program.

Through a detailed analysis of reading and urban schools, it is clear that educators must examine the myths and issues surrounding the lack of reading achievement in urban schools if meaningful change is to occur. A real hope for increasing reading achievement, now, in urban schools lies in identifying ingredients of successful urban reading programs and effectively diffusing the practices in hopes they will be employed by other schools seeking positive change.

To my mother, Lottie;

all my kids;

and an Ace.

PREFACE

A clear and present reality facing contemporary
American education is that urban schools have failed to
teach black and lower status group white children to
read. The fact that poor and minority children have not
been taught to read as well as white middle class children
is undeniable.

For more than a decade educators, social scientists,
psychologists and federal officials have recognized,
assessed and analyzed the situation. Educational researchers
have offered a wide veriety of theories seeking to explain
why children in urban schools are inefficient readers.
Federal, state and local agencies have sponsored special
reading programs designed to increase the reading achievement
of inner-city youngsters. Finally, urban school systems
have searched for panaceas in the form of new methods,
materials and approaches hoping to reverse reading failure.

For the most part, the results of these efforts
have been discouraging. Despite special programs urban
schools are not producing proficient readers. Further,
the issues surrounding the poor reading achievement of
inner-city children have raised serious controversies

regarding the effectiveness of urban schools and the
cognitive abilities of the students they serve.

The situation may be discouraging but it is
not hopeless. Although a large majority of urban
schools have failed to teach poor and minority children
to read, there are schools that have demonstrated
measurable success in teaching inner-city youngsters
to read. These schools have proven that teachers can
teach reading, that poor and minority children do
learn to read as well as white middle class children
and that urban schools are viable educational institutions.

These instances of successful reading programs
in some urban schools are the exception when they should
be the rule. Yet, their very existence raises a set of
complex questions. If the technology is available to
teach both middle class white and poor black children
to read, why has not this knowledge been applied to
urban schools? Why are some urban schools effective
in teaching reading to their students while the majority
of urban schools remain unsuccessful? What are the
identifiable components comprising successful urban
reading programs? Can these components be replicated?
How can educators promote successful urban reading programs
and thereby facilitate positive educational change in
urban schools?

This dissertation serves two purposes: first, to demystify the reading process within the context of urban education and secondly, to identify successful programs and practices which hold potential for reversing urban reading failure. An examination of historical antecedents and a survey of pertinent literature, programs and practices delineates a basic operational perspective on reading and urban education. Chapter I establishes a historical-sociological framework in order to provide a comprehensive survey of the past and present failure of education, particularly reading, in serving minority populations.

Chapter II, "Rhetoric, Reality and Responsibility," reviews pertinent literature seeking to explain the causes of urban reading failure. This chapter addresses myths and issues surrounding the reading problem in urban schools.

Compensatory education programs designed to increase the reading achievement of minority and poor children have consistently shown positive results. Despite their successes, the general consensus of opinion toward compensatory education programs seems to be negative. Misleading evaluations point to those programs which have had little impact, disregarding achievements of others.

Chapter III presents a description of several programs that have achieved measurable success in reversing reading failure in urban schools.

A great hope for reversing reading failure lies in the preparation of effective reading teachers. Chapter IV presents the Career Opportunities Program at the University of Massachusetts as a successful teacher training model preparing effective teachers of reading.

Quality education is a fact in some urban schools. The question is, what makes it happen? A real hope for increasing reading achievement, now, in urban schools lies in identifying ingredients of successful urban reading programs and effectively diffusing the practices in hopes they will be employed by other schools seeking positive change. Chapter V contains an examination of four proposals for change: The Right to Read Program, The Reading Improvement Act of 1973, the University of Massachusetts Center for Urban Education M. Ed. Inservice Program and the University of Massachusetts Reading Inservice Program.

I express my deepest thanks to Dr. Byrd L. Jones, Chairman of my dissertation committee, whose guidance, suggestions, criticisms and support of my work throughout

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CHAPTER I

LITERACY--PAST AND PRESENT

Reading is a basic skill necessary for most persons
to earn a decent living in contemporary society. The ability
to read allows a person to participate actively in the social
and economic mainstream of American life. For instance,
reading helps consumers to make more knowledgeable choices
concerning the effectiveness and quality of products on the
market. Reading is also an invaluable tool in most areas
of employment--from filling out a job application to keeping
abreast of current trends in industrial and professional
fields. Further, reading proficiency is fundamental to other
aspects of American life, including preparing annual income
tax forms, applying for social security benefits, securing
a bank loan and acquiring insurance. Reading also provides
a source of leisure time activity enabling a person to relax
and enjoy a book or magazine for sheer entertainment. In
short, reading is a tool which empowers a person to learn
independently throughout life.

More importantly, reading is crucial to successful
school performance and is a contributing factor affecting

future social class position and earning power. It is
not likely that students lacking the reading skills of
word recognition and reading comprehension will be successful
academically. In the classroom, information and concepts
are primarily transmitted through reading. Further, reading
scores of standardized tests are used to group and track
students according to reading achievement.

Students unable to handle school curricula due to
reading skill deficiencies are unable to compete academically
with more proficient readers. In the elementary school,
poor readers may be homogeneously grouped and labelled as
"slow-learners," "lazy," or "learning disabled." In junior
and senior high schools, inefficient readers must choose
between vocational or general courses of study, being unable
to qualify for college preparatory curricula.

Lack of reading proficiency hinders opportunities
for career development and can prevent persons from moving
up into higher paying occupations--skilled white-collar and
professional jobs. It is extremely difficult for persons
unable to read well to qualify for skilled jobs and for the
higher pay and status such jobs offer.

Traditionally, one function of the American school
has been to teach children how to read. Yet, indices of
academic achievement illustrate that urban schools have
failed to teach poor and minority children to read. According

to the 1970 census, of the fifty-nine million school-age
children in the United States, over eight million come
from families with incomes under $5,000.00 a year.
Approximately four million are from families which earn
less than $3,000.00 a year. During the winter of 1970,
nearly seventeen million school-age children lived in families
who either had no income from employment, or only part-time
employment.[1]

Further, statistics demonstrate that low socio-
economic conditions cluster around minority group families.
Figures show that approximately four and one half percent
of white children, twenty-eight percent of black children,
seventy-five percent of Spanish-American children and
twenty percent of American-Indian children are from families
earning less than $3,000.00 annually. Finally, eighteen
percent of school-age children are at least a year or more
below the level they should be in school; of these nearly
one and a half million are two or more years below their
chronological age, and minority children are proportionately
the highest percentage in these figures.[2]

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[1]America's Educationally Neglected: A Progress Report
on Compensatory Education, Annual Report to the President and
Congress, Alfred Z. McElroy, chairman (Washington, D.C.:
Government Printing Office, 1973), pp. 7-9.

[2]Ibid.

The New York City Board of Education published the results of citywide reading tests administered to students in the 1971-72 academic year. The test scores were listed by school and by grade level, and for each level the report indicated what percentage of students had fallen below the national norm. On a citywide basis 66.3 percent of the elementary school pupils and 71.3 percent of the junior high and intermediate school pupils were reading below grade level. The clear implication was that slightly more than two-thirds of the students were "failing" and below the norm.[3]

Although, the use of standardized achievement tests, would result in approximately fifty percent of all children taking the test to score below the national norm, a conspicuously cited aspect was that the scores were lower than in previous years. Coinciding with the precipitous drop in reading scores has been the ethnic changeover of the city's school system from a majority of non-Puerto Rican white children to a majority of black and Puerto Rican children. Of the city's thirty-one community school districts, the ones in which poor reading achievement was at its lowest tended to be the districts having the fewest white pupils--

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[3] "Reading Scores Decline in the City Schools Again," New York Times, March 18, 1973, p. 1.

Manhattan's Lower East Side, Harlem, East Harlem, South
Bronx, Central Bronx, and the Bedford-Stuyvesant Williams-
burg, Park Slope and Brownsville sections in Brooklyn.
The implication here being that as black and other minority
children have come to comprise larger segments of the schools'
enrollments, reading scores continually decline, which has
encouraged an inference of a causal relationship.

The test results further revealed that schools with
the highest proportion of youngsters reading at or above
grade level were generally those in white middle class
neighborhoods and those schools with the lowest proportion
were in poor neighborhoods. For example, at Community
School in Harlem, only 7.1 percent of the school's 600
pupils--roughly two-thirds of whom are black and the rest
largely of Spanish-speaking backgrounds--were reading at
or above grade level. While at P.S. 184 in Queens, which
serves a white middle income neighborhood, 81.2 percent
of the 566 students scored at or above grade level.

Specifically citing New York City schools on the
basis of 1971 data, research analyst Annie Stein noted
a strange phenomenon regarding the curve of reading
achievement:

> It is bi-modal, a double humped 'normal' curve.
> It peaks at two-and-a-half years below grade

level, falls to nearly zero at grade level.
Black and Puerto Rican schools lie on the
below-grade half of the curve, continental
white schools on the above grade. There
are in effect two independent curves, one
for Blacks and Puerto Ricans, the other
for whites.[4]

In city after city, Stein's description of a bi-modal curve of reading achievement is evident. In the table on the following page, the reading achievement scores of urban city schools range from 1.1 to 2.9 years below their more affluent counterparts in the suburbs.

The data presented indicates that poor reading achievement does not fall equally on all groups in American society. It appears that schools with enrollments comprised of black and Hispanic pupils from poor families lag behind national levels in reading proficiency.

However, P.S. 91, situated among crumbling tenements and boarded-up storefronts in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, New York is an anomaly. More than eighty percent of P.S. 91's pupils are black and nine percent are of Puerto Rican or other Hispanic backgrounds. Yet, 51.4 percent of P.S. 91's pupils scored at or above the national norm in reading.[5]

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[4]Annie Stein, "Strategies for Failure," The Harvard Educational Review, 41, No. 2 (May, 1971), p. 134.

[5]"2 Schools Succeed in Teaching Reading Where Others Fail," New York Times, May 28, 1973, p. 30.

AVERAGE READING ACHIEVEMENT GRADE LEVELS
OF STUDENTS IN THE SIXTH GRADE[6]

	Reading Achievement Level	Difference
Detroit	5.1	
Grosse Point, Mich.	8.0	2.9
Atlanta	4.3	
Fulton County, Ga.	6.9	2.6
New York City	5.0	
Scarsdale, N.Y.	7.5	2.5
Cleveland	5.4	
Shaker Heights, Ohio	7.8	2.4
Los Angeles	5.0	
Beverly Hills, Calif.	7.0	2.0
Philadelphia	5.6	
Lower Marion, Pa.	7.5	1.9
Newark	6.2	
Tenafly, N.J.	7.3	1.1

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[6]W.S. Riles, The Urban Education Task Force
Report (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 169.

P.S. 91 raises a new set of questions that cry
for an answer concerning the lack of reading achievement
among poor and minority children in urban schools. If
middle class white children can become proficient readers,
why are not poor and minority children equally proficient
readers? Why are some urban schools successful in the
teaching and learning of reading while the majority of
urban schools fail to do so? Specifically, what are the
factors contributing to poor reading achievement in urban
schools?

The Past--A Legacy

At the beginning of the twentieth century, America's
black population was overwhelmingly rural and Southern.
Approximately three out of four blacks lived in rural areas
and nine out of ten lived in the South. Yet, just sixty
years later blacks were mainly an urban population, almost
three-fourths of them being city dwellers; about half
living outside former slave states.[7]

During and shortly after World War I nearly a million
blacks left the South. Although the pattern of black
migration from farm to city was complex and made in several
stages spanning two or more generations, the end result was
a shift from the South to expanding industrial centers in
the North. Discouraged by the futility of sharecropping on

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[7]August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, From Plantation to
Ghetto (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970), pp. 213-216.

worn out cotton fields devastated by the boll weevil, Southern blacks sought a better life elsewhere. They left racially segregated and unequally financed schools, poor economic conditions and political disenfranchisement in hopes of finding better and more equality of opportunity in Northern cities.

Yet, for migrating blacks, the North yielded the bitter and frustrating reality of moving from plantation to ghetto. Racial animosity grew as numbers of migrating blacks increased. Local zoning ordinances, restrictive covenants and terrorism characterized segregational attitudes and practices of whites. These pervasive patterns of discrimination and prejudice resulted in segregated housing forcing black families into gradual ghettoization.

The struggle for free education had been won by 1900 and the proposition that free public secondary education had to be provided was widely accepted. A demand for free public education for all children was met by state govern- ments with a shift from permissive to compulsory free schools. In theory, each child would be afforded equal educational opportunity and be able to grow to his or her fullest potential. In practice, however, the education of minority children was racially separated and generally unequal.

The North Before 1900

Many areas in the North had experienced slavery on a small scale. In the more diversified economy of the North, blacks had worked as servants, laborers in industry, artisans, seamen, and apprentices. Legally, slaves occupied a dual status as both property and as persons. As property, slaves were subject to taxation; they could be bought, sold, and inherited. On the other hand, they were legally regarded as persons; slaves could acquire, hold, and transfer property; they were entitled to jury trial though they could not serve on juries.[8]

Although slavery was less central to Northern economy than to Southern economy, most whites had believed themselves superior to black Americans whether freed or slave. Exemplifying white sentiment, P. A. Siljeström, a foreign observer of American educational institutions wrote in 1853:

> . . . as a race, however, they [blacks] are still, even where they have attained liberty, much inferior to the Anglo-Saxon race. . . . It cannot be contested that the coloured population in America stands, in mental and moral culture, vastly below the real Americans.[9]

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[8]A. Meier and E. Rudwick, From Plantation to Ghetto (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970), p. 43-48.

[9]P. A. Siljeström, Educational Institutions of the United States (New York: Arno Press, 1969), pp. 113-4.

In the North free public education for all white youth was the rule by the 1830's, but common schools seldom included blacks. Where schooling was provided for blacks it was generally separate and unequal.[10] Segregation was the custom in most places, but in some states it was legislated. A segregated school system might be inaugurated by white authorities, or might be requested by blacks because it would be preferable to no schools at all, or to a mixed system where black children were mistreated.

Siljeström observed that:

> Separate schools for coloured children exist in all the larger cities, where a coloured population is gathered in any numbers. In the country, where there are comparatively but few coloured persons, and, where in consequence, the prejudice against them is not so great, coloured children attend the same schools as the white, although there are isolated instances of the mixture of the two races having been objected to there also.[11]

Although schools existed for blacks in the North during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, observations as to the differences in black children's learning abilities to those of white children illuminated white racist attitudes. Theories of non-white inferiority produced speculation regarding intellectual abilities of blacks. Black children

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[10]August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, From Plantation to Ghetto, p. 96.

[11]Siljeström, Educational Institutions, p. 136.

were viewed as deficient in cognitive abilities and abstract thought processes:

> The peculiar physical, mental, and moral structure of the coloured children renders it necessary in their education to adopt a somewhat different mode of treatment from that followed with regard to white children. It has been observed by teachers in schools where children of both races are mixed, that in those studies that principally call into action the memory and the imitative faculties, the coloured children frequently keep pace with the whites; but that they are soon outsped in those studies which require invention, comparison, and reflection.[12]

Racist assumptions of black inferiority and manifestations of discrimination and prejudice exhibited by a white status quo have existed wherever blacks have sought a foothold in American institutions. For schools, the message clearly was that black children could not learn as much, as well, nor as quickly as their white counterparts.

The South Before 1900

Prior to the Civil War, the Northern states had established tax supported public schools, while the public school movement was only in its beginnings in the South. In the South laws prohibited teaching slaves how to read and write, and several states extended the prohibition to

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[12]Ibid., p. 138.

free blacks. For example, in 1832 Alabama added a new statute:

> Sec. 10. And be it further enacted, that
> any person or persons who shall endeavor to
> attempt to teach any free person of color,
> or slave to spell, read, or write, shall
> upon conviction thereof by indictment, be
> fined in a sum not less than two hundred
> and fifty dollars nor more than five
> hundred dollars.[13]

The Southern economic system was based upon plantation economy and slave holding. In states where no legislative prohibition existed, the white slave owners had the option to more or less interpret individually the extent of education their slaves would have. A few of the slave owners considered it a Christian duty to teach slaves to read, and by 1860 as much as 5 percent of the slaves could read and write.[14]

Educating blacks for literacy was not a goal of Southern society. Charles S. Johnson succinctly expressed a white Southern point of view toward black education:

> Literacy is not an asset in the plantation
> economy, and it was not only discouraged but
> usually forbidden. . . . Reading and figuring
> carry elements of danger to established

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[13]Acts Passed at the Thirteenth Annual Session of the General Assembly of the State of Alabama, 1831-32, p. 16. in Edgar W. Knight, A Documentary History of Education in the South Before 1860 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), Volume V, p. 476.

[14]W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction in America (New York: 1935), p. 638.

relations. Too much attention to reading about
the outside, and particularly to figuring, on
the part of Negro tenants, would surely make
them less satisfied with their status and bring
them into harsh conflict with the system.
The need of enough education to read and figure
arises largely from families desirous of
escaping from the dependent relationship under
the old plantation system.[15]

In other words, education for literacy among
blacks would prove highly unprofitable economically.
Moreover, the "technique of literacy" would make blacks
"less satisfied" with their condition and upset the white
status quo. Increased ability on the part of blacks to
understand the printed word could undoubtedly strengthen
their desire for promised inalienable rights of freedom,
justice, and equal opportunity.

After the Civil War there was a great demand for
education in the South. Educational philanthropy extended
by the North helped to achieve greater educational oppor-
tunities for blacks. And between 1861 and 1871 black men
and women actively organized efforts for education, attended
classes and sought to prepare for freedom.

A significant number of Union soldiers remained
in the South to teach freed blacks the basics of reading,
writing, and arithmetic. Assisted by Abolitionists and

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[15]Charles S. Johnson, Shadow of the Plantation
(1934), p. 129. In Myrdal Vol. 2 American Dilemma, p. 894.

Northern blacks, they served as the first teaching force.
For the first time blacks saw their hopes and dreams for
educational opportunity being realized. However, Southern
whites suspected these Northern "missionaries" were teaching
the doctrine of equality.

Reconstruction governments laid the foundation
for a public school system in the South for both black
and white children. All of the Southern states incorporated
the principle of free public schools for all children into
their new constitutions or other statutes. What had
previously been organized only for whites, now was to
be provided for all children. However, the abolition
of slavery did not mean the abolition of discrimination
and subjugation of blacks in education.

If the white South had to adhere to public
education for all children, most certainly blacks would
"learn" how to become better servants and laborers rather
than achieving equality and rising out of their "place."
Essentially, the question became--How can we educate blacks
(in keeping with equal democratic processes) while maintaining
and protecting economic status and/or interests within
the existing social order?

Myrdal answered:

> The interest of educating the Negroes to become
> faithful helots has been obvious, but the Southern

whites have not even attempted to make it
effective in practice. Instead they have
merely kept Negro education poor and bad.[16]

Educational opinion in the South resembled that
held farther north at an earlier time. What was believed
in New York or New Jersey in 1790 was still affirmed
in many parts of the South in 1860. In both places
and times education was considered a valuable attainment
for those who could get it; but its acquisition was a
personal and a private matter.

Southern white leaders held views similar to
those held in the North only one or two generations earlier
when many of the "best" people preferred and supported
private schools. Many of the upper class did not want
their children to associate with those whom they
considered "trash" and did not see any reason for educating
the poor and black.

Former slave owners, business and professional men,
politicians, and professors in colleges and seminaries
believed that public schools might become the means of the
absolute control of the thoughts and opinions of the people.
They feared that free schooling would be followed by
compulsory schooling. Further, they argued, the greater

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[16]Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma, Vol. II:
The Negro Social Structure (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962),
p. 896.

part of mankind must work and "real mental culture" could not co-exist with daily labor. They held that state education, mere reading and writing, would soon be lost by the laboring class through disuse. But to their minds the worst of the matter was that those who did retain these arts would be likely to become dangerous agitators, turning factories and fields into debating societies. The thoughts of the South, although affected by its social and economic system, differed from those of the North mainly in timing.

The opponents of public education proposed a solution of their educational question: continue existing practices. They claimed that the truly kindly and philanthropic way to serve the genuine interests of working people was to educate, not the workers themselves, but the higher classes who would then in turn lift the submerged multitudes. By this procedure, it was claimed, all portions of the social organism would be raised together, the true relations of class to class and race to race would be preserved, and the masses would receive by association with its superiors the only real education possible to it.

The school laws of reconstruction days demanded separate but equal school opportunities for white and black alike, but this promise faded early. Many whites

thought blacks should pay for their own schools, but
tax receipts from the property of blacks were so low
they lost whatever chance they may have had for equal
educational opportunity and self-determination.

By 1877 Republican political leaders allowed
a counterrevolution in the South. Through violence and
disenfranchisement blacks were again reduced to powerless-
ness. The Southern restoration reinforced the plantation
system with many new varieties of controls over blacks.
Within this time frame white racism took on new
institutional forms, the insidious nature of which has
kept blacks poor and ill-educated.

Southern rural blacks migrating to an urban North
carried with them a legacy of poor and unequal education,
hopes of self-determination being consistently frustrated,
and a cycle of poverty spanning several generations. Yet,
that legacy was less of a barrier which could be overcome
than the burden that blacks could not and should not learn.
White racist attitudes of black inferiority operationalized
differential instruction for different classes and races of
children. However, until the twentieth century the education
of black children was not a public problem because they
were not being educated.

Science, Standardization and Reading

In the period between 1900 and 1920, schools were making strides to accommodate a growing population. With the advent of mass public education, previous elitist doctrines gained the appearance of scientific support in theories of human intelligence. Invoked by psychologists and adopted by educators, intelligence tests classified and grouped pupils. The groupings determined both what was expected of students and also what was taught to them.

The application of science to education was not fortuitous. The need existed. School personnel were unprepared to deal with new students in urban centers-- mainly immigrant Europeans, migrant blacks and poor whites from rural areas. Faced with a large number of students achieving at varying levels and rates--from "excellent" to "failing"--psychologists and educators attempted to explain achievement differences in terms of differences in intellectual ability.

Intelligence tests were derived from the work of Alfred Binet, who published the first usable general intelligence test in 1905. Binet's intent in the use of the intelligence test was different from American interpretations and his conception of intelligence even more so. Ironically, in establishing a fixed-intelligence educational system,

essentially based on race and social class, American psychologists drew so heavily from the work of a man who wrote:

> A child's mind is like a field for which an
> expert farmer has advised a change in the
> method of cultivating, with the result that
> in place of desert land, we now have a
> harvest . . . the intelligence of children
> can be increased. One increases that which
> constitutes the intelligence of a school
> child, namely, the capacity to learn,
> to improve with instruction.[17]

Lewis Terman at Stanford, Robert Yerkes at Harvard and Henry Goddard in Vineland, New Jersey, were the major translators and importers of Binet's work. In addition to being pioneers in the American mental testing movement, they held common socio-political views which helped to shape the nature and use of intelligence tests.

In 1916, Terman published The Measurement of Intelligence which introduced the Stanford-Binet test. After describing the poor test performance of a pair of Indian and Mexican children he wrote, "Their dullness seems to be racial. . . . Children of this group should be segregated in special classes, they cannot master abstractions, but they can often be made efficient workers."

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[17]Alfred Binet, Les Idees Modernes sur les Enfants (Paris: Flamarion, 1909). Cited in J. Hunt, Intelligence and Experience (New York: Ronald Press, 1961), p. 13.

Terman noted further that low intelligence test scores were more frequent among Indians, Mexicans and blacks.

Terman's conclusions echoed similar sentiments held by Goddard and Yerkes. Goddard held that differences in mental intelligence directly correlated with economic position. An intelligent man spends money wisely and saves enough to provide for his needs in time of illness. Persons of low intelligence spend money foolishly and have no savings. In times of hardship they become dependent on public welfare. Thus, poor people are not as intellectually gifted as the wealthier, or upper class.[18]

American entry into World War I brought the science of mental testing to a new level of public recognition. Directed by Robert Yerkes, the Army applied intelligence tests to approximately two million draftees. Under Yerkes' editorship, the results were published in 1921. The data provided the first large-scale evidence that blacks scored lower than whites. Further, the data was analyzed by country of origin revealing that Latin and Slavic countries scored low. Commenting on those officially diagnosed as "feeble-minded," Yerkes wrote:

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[18]H. H. Goddard, Human Efficiency and Levels of Intelligence (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1920).

> Never should such a diagnosis be made on IQ
> alone. We must inquire further into the
> subjects' economic history. What is
> his occupation; his pay. . . . We must learn
> what we can about his immediate family.
> What is the economic status or occupation
> of the parents? When this information has
> been collected, the psychologist may be of
> great value in getting the subject into
> the most suitable place in society.[19]

The genetic interpretation of socio-economic class differences in test scores, fostered by Terman, Goddard and Yerkes, served to legitimate the existing social order. Consciously or unconsciously they justified a scheme of exploitation and discrimination. Their work reflected the general social and political opinion of the time. Further, it contributed to the use of the intelligence test as an instrument of oppression against the poor, the foreign-born and racial minorities.[20]

Individual differences in learning ability held educational implications by setting limits of probable achievement. Students could be classified in accordance with the probable limits of their intellectual talents--assumed to be largely determined by inheritance--playing

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[19]R.M. Yerkes and J.C. Foster, A Point Scale for Measuring Mental Ability (Baltimore: Warwick and York, 1923). Cited in Leon J. Kamin, "Heredity, Intelligence, Politics and Psychology" (paper presented at Experimental Psychology Association, Atlanta, Georgia, March 1973), p. 3.

[20]Leon J. Kamin, "Heredity, Intelligence, Politics and Psychology" (paper presented at Experimental Psychology Association, Atlanta, Georgia, March 23, 1973).

a major role in predetermining the nature and quality of the education received.

The strong surge of interest in placing education on a scientific basis with its correlative motives for developing instruments of measurement precipitated the scientific study of reading problems.[21] From 1910 to 1920 the field of inquiry into reading was characterized by the application of "scientific" techniques, adopted and adapted from psychometric theories and procedures, to the study of reading and by the development of standardized instruments to measure reading achievement.

The period extending from 1920 to 1930 noted fundamental changes in reading practices due largely to the preceding period of scientific advancement. With the administration of newly developed tests came the realization that there were wide individual differences in the reading achievement of children in the same grade and in the same classroom. In order to cope with this newly revealed variation in the learning rates of children, school personnel began to experiment with a variety of adjustments in classroom organization and instruction.

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[21]For a more definitive historical analysis see Nila Banton Smith, American Reading Instruction (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1965).

The adjustments took the form of ability grouping, flexible promotions, and differentiated assignments in order to allow for individual progression.

The use of standardized reading tests also revealed that many students were failing each year to make normal progress in reading. Seeking answers to disability problems, the concept of remedial reading began to take form. Finally, the concept of reading readiness was formulated, the proposition being that children needed mastery of certain skill pre-requisites in order to begin to learn to read.

From 1930 to 1940, remedial reading, which had experienced a touch-and-go recognition during the preceding decade, now became established and gained stature. Many significant studies were conducted in the remedial reading areas: causes of difficulties, diagnosis, and corrective procedures. Professional books devoted exclusively to remedial reading were published, and the majority of studies were now made in the public schools, rather than in laboratories. Also during this time investigations of reading readiness and applications of the readiness theory steadily increased.

In the forties there was a diminution in the number of reading investigations since many psychologists

and educators who conducted research in reading, or stimulated others to do so, were in the armed services. With the large number of young men in the military service came the discovery that thousands could not read well enough to follow simple printed instructions necessary for army life. However, coupled with this discovery was the revelation that reading could be taught to the men in an amazingly short time. Concurrently, investigations disclosed reading deficiencies in large numbers of high school and college students. These two facts precipitated great interest in reading at higher educational levels.

Remedial diagnosis and treatment continued to claim a large segment of interest. Mechanical instruments and devices increased in numbers and use. There were fewer studies reported on psychological factors such as dominance, handedness, and reversals. An increasing number of studies were devoted to personal factors as related to reading: Personal interests and attitudes and personal status in social, emotional, and experimental maturity.

The events which led to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision of 1954 that racial segregation of schools was unconstitutional accentuated for the nation's schools the

achievement differences of black and white middle class children in a mobile society bent on an education for all its youth. The orbital flight of the Russian Sputnik in 1957 and the subsequent technological explosion in the United States exerted another important effect in reading.

American schools underwent harsh and severe criticism by laymen, and a great deal of pressure for achievement was placed on the schools. This criticism by the public caused school personnel to examine their methods of teaching reading more carefully and stimulated the interest of parents and other laymen in reading. Further, this exposure demanded that the schools explain the research, psychology, and philosophy on which their reading methods were based.

The crisis in urban education hit public consciousness in the 1960's. Parents of minority and poor white children demanded equality of educational opportunity and quality education for their youngsters. The tragedy of the situation is that while the school continued to accept the responsibilities of other social institutions, educators seemed no longer clear about the social function of their own institution. For example, when the black community cried out about the low reading achievement of its children, the school refused to accept this responsibility. Instead,

educators responded with lengthy discourses on the
psychosocial factors of the home, the community, the
family structure, the inherent deficiencies within the
child, and so on, as determinants of low reading
achievement.

A manifest function of American educational
institutions was to teach the nation's youth to read.
However, a latent function of the school denied black
and lower status group white children their right to
read. Nelson and Besog wrote:

> The manifest function of an institution is the
> overt, generally understood function for which
> the institution is originally established.
> The latent function is not nearly so overt.
> It is, however, more basic in that it is more
> effectively performed than the manifest
> function.[22]

The evolution of racism from slavery and socially
contrived inferiority has all but negated the vast amount
of reading related knowledge gained during the twentieth
century. The failure of urban education today reflects
a larger and more persistent failure of American society
to allow poor and minority citizens to achieve to their
fullest potential. Differences in reading achievement

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[22]Jack L. Nelson and Frank P. Besog, Sociological
Perspectives in Education: Models for Analysis (New York:
Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1970), p. 29.

scores between poor black and white middle class children parallel differences within political, social and economic institutions. For decades the median income for blacks has been about 60 percent of that for whites. Rates of unemployment are approximately double among blacks.

Educators have identified the problem--specifically, the failure of urban schools to teach poor and minority children to read. However, patterns of discrimination and attitudes of black inferiority are so ingrained in American social thought and institutions that the cause-- white racism--has neatly eluded the educational establish- ment. The tragedy of the situation is that so many white Americans honestly believe the rhetoric developed to deceive, which, in turn, has resulted in a society where its victims--poor and minority children--are blamed for their own failure.

CHAPTER II

RHETORIC, REALITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

The Rhetoric of Reading Research

The poor reading achievement of black and poor
white children in urban schools, as compared to white
middle class children, has been a part of a total pattern
of American racial history. One of the initial issues
on the nature of Africans was whether they were capable
of learning to read--or if capable, whether they should
be taught to read. The need to perceive blacks as less
than human was basic to the discussions concerning their
intelligence and determined the policies and practices
used to govern the quantity and quality of their education.

Built upon this foundation, the academic retarda-
tion of black children developed and continues. Only
the explanations and theories accounting for their lack
of reading achievement have changed. The first explan-
ations of the academic inferiority of black children
were argued in terms of the inherent, racially determined
intellectual inferiority of the Negro race. The theory of
inherent racial inferiority was once widely accepted by

social scientists and educators. Although earlier
hypotheses of hereditary racial differences in the
ability to learn have been discredited, recent proponents
of the idea have gained considerable attention.[1]

Those who stress biological-genetic-racial
explanations consider the poor academic achievement of
allegedly inherently inferior races to be irremedial by
any educational process. They concluded that nothing
can be done to increase black children's reading achieve-
ment since the children themselves were incapable of
functioning intellectually.

Supplanting racial and biological explanations
of academic failure among urban school children, causes
in social and environmental areas were sought. More
recent explanations of reading failure stem from the
widely accepted theory of cultural disadvantage. The
theory of cultural disadvantage or deprivation rejects
inherent racial or biological inferiority as a cause of
academic failure. Rather, it purports that black chil-
dren as a group do not perform as well in school--do not
learn to read as quickly or as well as other children--
due to complex social and cultural deficits which, in
turn, lead to cognitive deficiencies. Most professional

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[1]Arthur Jensen, "How Much Can We Boost IQ and
Scholastic Achievement: A Discussion," Harvard Educational
Review, Spring 1969, pp. 273-356. A. M. Shuey, The Testing
of Negro Intelligence, (New York: Social Science Press, 1966).

educators since the 1930's have eschewed genetic explanations, but they arrive at much the same principle of operation by adhering to the doctrine of cultural disadvantage or deprivation.

Spokesmen for the cultural deprivation theory argue that the educator must understand the nature of black children as a complex phenomenon, shaped by a pathological environment of poverty and white racism. Positing serious learning deficits in "disadvantaged" children under conditions of poverty and discrimination, they infer that urban children simply cannot learn as other children do. Educators have placed the responsibility for failure upon black children, their families and their communities. Social scientists engage in learned disputes as to whether it is heredity or environment that makes poor and minority children inferior forms of humankind--but the assumption of black inferiority is not disputed.

Reading and Black Children

The process of reading includes many types of skills and abilities, from the making of simple associations to the complex analyses involved in critical thinking and problem solving. Increasingly, students of the field of reading instruction have come to realize that, in order

to grasp the fundamental nature of the reading act, investigators must gain an understanding of an individual's perceptual and cognitive skills.

For poor and minority children in urban schools, the procedure has been to apply bits and pieces of data gathered from crude hypotheses. Then to test for reliability on children already identified as having reading difficulties. Thus, any comprehensive explanation can scarcely be guessed at this time.

Most explanations seeking to explain the poor reading achievement of urban children tend to minimize or deny the influence of the schools as a factor causing reading retardation. When the retarded reader is black, urban, and poor, his lack of reading achievement is considered a concomitant of being "disadvantaged." Educationally, being culturally disadvantaged means that the urban child comes to school with: (a) language inadequacies, including limited vocabulary and syntactical structure, inability to handle abstract symbols and complex language forms to interpret and communicate, difficulties in developing and maintaining thought sequences verbally, restricted verbal comprehension, unfamiliarity with formal speech patterns, and greater reliance on non-verbal communications means; (b) perceptual deficiencies, problems of visual and auditory discrimination and spatial organization; (c) a mode of expression which is more motorial and

concrete than conceptual and idea symbol focused; (d) an
orientation of life which seeks gratification in the here
and now, rather than in delaying it for future advantage;
(e) a low self-image; (f) low motivation to achieve academic
goals; (g) apathy and detachment from formal educational
goals and processes; (h) inadequate or inappropriate adult
models.

The preceding list of handicaps is the very nature
of the reading problem in urban schools. Proponents of
the theory of social deprivation attribute the poor read-
ing achievement of urban children to deficits within the
child resulting in a blaming the victim type ideology.[2]
Surprisingly, inner city children do survive the processes
of educational institutions despite the labels of pro-
fessional educators that denote disability and dysfunction.
These labels contain little or no educational meaning but
carry high social and political connotations. Further,
these negative attitudes and faulty assumptions regarding
the cognitive abilities of poor children are widely accepted
and are the foundation upon which reading instruction and
reading programs in urban schools are based. Most impor-
tantly, the myth of cultural deprivation serves as the basic

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[2]William Ryan, _Blaming the Victim_ (New York:
Pantheon Books, 1971).

frame of reference for reading related research. Reading research has consistently categorized and doomed poor children to failure by generating, perpetuating, and elaborating upon the myth of cultural disadvantage.

The lack of reading achievement among urban school children has been documented reasonably well, but the why of poor reading achievement is still very much at issue. Supporters of the theory of cultural disadvantage attribute underachievement to experiential deficits in early childhood and embrace the hypothesis that cultural deprivation leads to cognitive deficits.

From the schools' viewpoint, the limited language development, with the attendant consequences for intellectual development has marked "disadvantaged" children. Gertrude Whipple observed:

> They are unable to carry on connected discourse when they enter first grade because they have heard partial sentences at home. They use incorrect word forms and immature sentence structure and cannot elaborate their ideas. Their language deficiency, in turn, dwarfs their power to think, reflect and imagine.[3]

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[3] Gertrude Whipple, Reading for Children Without - Our Disadvantaged Youth (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1966), p. 2.

Other school behavior traits, including apathy and withdrawal or hostility and alienation are seen as related to language and intellectual retardation. This experiential deprivation, according to Ausubel, meant for the child that:

> . . . when new concepts and transactional terms are largely acquired verbally, i.e., by definition and context from speech and reading, rather than by abstraction from direct concrete experience, he suffers from the paucity of abstractions in the everyday vocabulary of his elders, from the rarity of stimulating conversation in the home, from the relative absence of books, magazines and newspapers, and from the lack of example of a reading adult in the family setting.[4]

Ausubel further observed that the most serious effect of the "disadvantaged" child's language disability is the painful, dragging transition from concrete to abstract modes of thoughts and understanding.[5] The conclusion inferred from such statements perceives the cognitive abilities of black children as inferior to the intellectual processes of white children.

To what extent are contemporary notions of social disadvantage substitutes for theories of genetic inferiority? To what extent do these theories obscure more

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[4]David P. Ausubel, "How Reversible are the Cognitive and Motivational Effects of Cultural Deprivation? Implications for Teaching the Culturally Deprived Child," Urban Education, I, (Summer, 1964), p. 24.

[5]Ibid, p. 25.

basic reasons for poor reading achievement among minority and poor children? To what extent do they offer acceptable alibis for educational default?

Cultural deprivation or cultural disadvantage is usually synonymous with poverty and minority status. White middle class Americans associate the words "poor," "disadvantaged," and "deprived" as descriptive labels for black and other non-white minorities.

The implication educationally, is that socioeconomic differences are the determining factors in the low reading achievement of urban children and that these differences limit these students' abilities to profit from education. It would, therefore, seem reasonable to assume that if being poor inhibits the capacity to learn, then eradication of the existing conditions would be the most direct way to increase reading achievement. Further, the difficulty with the wide variety of theories seeking to explain why urban children generally read so poorly is their failure to account for the children who are proficient readers and yet in all other variables are similar to those children who are non-readers.

The Contrasting Reality

Reading may be defined as the act of responding with appropriate meaning to printed or written verbal

symbols. For the beginner, reading is mainly concerned with learning to recognize the printed symbols which represent speech and to respond intellectually and emotionally as he would if the material were spoken rather than printed. Reading is a facet of language, and as such poses two questions basic to understanding the nature of the reading problem in urban schools. First, what are the language differences in the speech of black children? Secondly, what role, if any, do these differences play in the acquisition of reading skills?

The language differences of English speaking blacks in America have often been characterized as non-standard and deficient. Dillard[6] notes that "dialect geographers" have been instrumental in creating the atmosphere that Black English is not a legitimate language system. Their primary assumptions are that (1) Black English is a collection of archaic forms of British English and that (2) Black English differs significantly in various parts of the United States. These two assumptions clearly imply that the speaker of Black English has not been able to keep up with American and English speakers in language development and ignores aspects of Black English that are

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[6]J. Dillard, Black English: Its History and Usage in the United States (New York: Random House, 1972).

not derived from British English. Further, the second assumption fails to recognize that while vocabulary may vary in different parts of the country, the grammar of Black English remains the same.

The theory of "language deprivation" for speakers of Black English does not stand up under careful scrutiny. Recent work by linguists and sociolinguists have noted that Black English is a rigidly constructed set of speech patterns, with the same sort of specialization in sounds, structure and vocabulary as any other language system. Further research has demonstrated relationships between Black English and West African languages.

White middle class listeners who hear black inner city speakers say "dis" and "tin" for "this" and "thin" assume that black speakers are being careless or have not been able to learn standard English. However, these differences are characteristic aspects of Black English. Etymological examination reveals that the voiced th sound in "this," and the unvoiced th sound in "thin" are almost nonexistent in the West African languages which most black immigrants brought with them to America.

A related differential feature of Black English speakers is the tendency not to use sequences of more than just one final consonant sound. For example, "just" is

pronounced "jus," "past" is "pass" and "mend" sounds like "men." Again, etymological investigations have revealed few clusters of consonants in speech patterns of West African languages.

The hypothesis that black children are characterized by deficient language has been further discredited by William Labov.[7] Labov performed a research study in Harlem with 200 boys from 10 to 17 years of age. In analyzing the speech of his subjects in terms of phonological and snytactical structure, Labov found that: (1) while the lower class black child has a distinctive form of speech, it is not impoverished, illogical, syntactically primitive or semantically empty. Rather, it is quite similar to standard English, and the differences in general are rather superficial. (2) The lower class black speaker can comprehend standard English quite well, even though he cannot always produce it. (3) Speakers of Black English produce some forms of standard English, but not others. Their underlying syntax is sometimes identical to that of standard English; sometimes it lacks standard English features; sometimes it overgeneralizes

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[7]William Labov, <u>Language in the Inner City</u>: <u>Studies in the Black Vernacular</u> (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972).

standard English features. (4) The notion of "restricted" and "elaborated" codes implies social class differences along a dimension of complexity-simplicity, or expressive-muteness which does not correspond to the facts.

What are the implications for understanding black children's poor reading achievement? One theory, Englemann and Bereiter's,[8] asserts that poor black children cannot learn to read because their language is massively deficient: they could not possibly understand the words on the page. Joan Baratz, however, while recognizing Black English as a language, maintains that Black English is sufficiently divergent from standard English so as to cause difficulty for children who are attempting to learn to read in a language which is not similar to the one they speak.[9]

Labov's results strongly suggest that both of these positions are not true. Black children have a mature language, and so a language deficiency hypothesis cannot explain their failure to read. Labov maintains that, although there may be some cases of structural interferences between Black English and standard English, Black English is not sufficiently divergent from standard

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[8]C. Bereiter and S. Englemann, _Teaching Disadvantaged Children in the Preschool_ (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966).

[9]Joan Baratz, "Beginning Readers for Speakers of Divergent Dialects," _Reading Goals for the Disadvantaged_ (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1970), pp. 77-83.

English to explain massive reading failure. Further substantiating Labov, a study by Ramsey[10] compared Black English speaking first graders' relative comprehension of stories presented orally either in standard or Black English. No major significant differences were found, suggesting that rewriting teaching materials into Black English for black children would be of little advantage.

However, does the discovery that Black English has a pattern and structure mean that it should not be tampered with? Should children who speak Black English be excused from learning standard English in school? Should they perhaps be given books in Black English to learn from?

Any such accommodation would result in a hardening of separatism and require formal dual educational systems for black and white. Viewed in the context of the larger society, black children must have the ability to speak and read standard English if they are to enter an integrated America and deal with it on its own terms. Pupils should learn enough about standard English to use it when

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[10]Imogene Ramsey, "A Comparison of First Grade Negro Dialect Speakers' Comprehension of Standard English and Negro Dialect," Elementary English (May, 1972), pp. 688-696.

necessary, and teachers would have to learn enough about Black English to understand and accept it for what it is--not just a "careless" version of standard English, but a different form of English.

There also exists evidence which suggests that classroom teachers often make mistakes when talking about their children's language output. Rystrom and Cowart noted that black teachers familiar with black dialect scored black children consistently higher on a test of the Dolch Sight Words than did an equally well-trained white colleague.[11] Roger Shuy reported on the results of a doctoral dissertation in which the researcher asked a group of urban teachers to identify the language problems of their students. After listening to a tape recording of their children and then characterizing the linguistic problems, Shuy reported that the researcher found a very low correlation of response to reality. Eighty percent of the teachers reported their children having a meager or limited vocabulary, when in fact that was not the case.[12]

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[11]Richard Rystrom and Harry Cowart, "Black Reading 'Errors' or White Teacher Biases?," Journal of Reading (1972), pp. 273-276.

[12]Roger Shuy and Joan Baratz (eds.), Teaching Black Children to Read, (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1969).

Reading specialists, classroom teachers and some psychologists point to visual perceptual deficits in urban children as the reason for poor reading ability. The research on visual perception and its relationship to reading improvement does not support this perceptual notion in a positive way.

Commenting on perceptual motor activities in the treatment of reading disability, Balow stated:

> Surprisingly, in numerous searches of the literature no experimental study of research design has been found that demonstrates special effectiveness for any of the physical, motor, or perceptual programs claimed to be useful in the prevention or correction of reading difficulties.[13]

Similar findings were reported by Cohen as he interpreted the visual perceptual deficit in terms of reading instruction. He reported that his clinic records "did not show any differences in the treatment success rate between retarded reading children with perceptual deficits and those without."[14]

In her summary of the research on perceptual training and its relationship to reading improvement, Robinson concluded: "The research shows no conclusive

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[13]B. Balow, "Perceptual Motor Activities in the Treatment of Severe Reading Disability," The Reading Teacher, 24, (1971), p. 523

[14]S. A. Cohen, "Studies in Visual Perception and Reading in Disadvantaged Children," Journal of Learning Disabilities, 2, (1969), p. 502.

answers to the question of the effectiveness of perceptual training to improve reading."[15] The conclusion that seems most tenable after this brief review of the literature is that those proponents who believe that perceptual deficits in minority children are the cause for reading retardation have failed to answer, Why is it that basic perceptual programs don't result in concomitant gains in reading achievement?

What, then, is responsible for the failure of the schools? Teachers of black children seldom understand the reason for differences in Black English. They are apt to think that careless speech or deficient cognitive abilities prevent black children from speaking standard English.

Several years ago Kenneth S. Goodman, widely noted for his research in linguistics and the reading process, hypothesized that there was a direct relationship between the degree of dialect divergence and success in learning to read among minority and poor white urban Americans.[16] Reversing this earlier position, Goodman now

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[15]H. M. Robinson, "Perceptual Training: Does it Result in Reading Improvement?" Paper presented at International Reading Association, Atlantic City, April, 1971.

[16]Kenneth S. Goodman, "Dialect Barriers to Reading Comprehension," Elementary English Vol. 42, No. 8 (Dec., 1965).

notes that the solution to reading problems of divergent
speakers lies in changing the attitudes of teachers and
writers of instructional programs toward the language
of the learner. He concludes that the disadvantage of
the divergent speaker, whether black or white, arises from
linguistic discrimination and instruction based on rejec-
tion of linguistic difference is the core of the problem.[17]
Thus, the school and the attitudes of teachers seemed more
important than the language of the children. In summary
Goodman noted:

> The only special disadvantage which speakers
> of low-status dialects suffer in learning
> to read is one imposed by teachers and
> schools. Rejection of their dialects
> and educators' confusion of linguistic
> difference with linguistic deficiency
> interferes with the natural process by
> which reading is acquired and undermines
> the linguistic self-confidence of diver-
> gent speakers.[18]

If teachers unfamiliar with Black English under-
stood why many black students speak as they do, and recog-
nized the legitimacy of Black English as an organized
language system, certainly the psychological climate of the
classroom would improve. The myth of language deprivation

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[17]Kenneth S. Goodman and Catherine Buck, "Dialect
Barriers to Reading Comprehension Revisited," The Reading
Teacher Vol. 27 No. 1 (October, 1973) pp. 6-12.

[18]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

based on racist myths and practices in the United States
has functionally replaced earlier beliefs in racial inferi-
ority as an explanation for the failure of urban schools
to teach reading.

The Responsibility of the Schools

Educators have consistently ignored a deep pathology
inherent in American society--a society which has never
treated minorities as part of the democratic ethic. In
regard to the lack of reading achievement in urban schools,
professionals have failed to examine the deep racist
strain in American culture which has tainted their own
views and hypotheses as to the true nature of the reading
problem. Rather than viewing the problem as one of patho-
logical individuals, researchers should concentrate on
seeing a pathological society. The reading problem is
not the black child's problem to be solved, it is a problem
of white Americans. Unfortunately, minority youths and
adults who missed reading skills continue to carry the
major burden for that failure.

Instead of responding to unequal educational
opportunity with quality instruction, educators have adhered
to the prevailing concept of cultural deprivation.
Reading specialists have, in turn, produced numerous studies
based on some cultural deprivation theory producing

supportive research which explains urban reading failure in terms of one or more of a combination of disabilities. Increasingly, cultural deprivation has been used as a catch-all term to be elaborated upon and perpetuated. It has become a built-in rationalization for the educator who fails to teach minority children effectively.

In contrast to the "blame the victim" approaches to urban reading failure is the view of a growing number of observers that the school itself is the main cause of widespread academic failure among minority and poor children. Eleanor Leacock has pointed to negative expectations and low performance standards that prevail in ghetto schools.[19] Both Stein and Clark have acknowledged the notorious resistance of the educational bureaucracy to meaningful change.[20]

In the field of reading, however, professionals are quite preoccupied with researching and trying to overcome presumed defects within minority and poor children. If reading specialists were truly interested and committed

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[19]Eleanor B. Leacock, Teaching and Learning in City Schools (New York: Basic Books, 1969), p. 61.

[20]See Annie Stein, "Strategies for Failure," Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 41, No. 2 (May, 1971), p. 135. Kenneth B. Clark et. al., The Educationally Deprived: The Potential for Change (New York: Metropolitan Applied Research Center, 1972), p. 65.

to reversing the trend of urban reading failure, truly compensatory intervention would have been directed toward correcting the grossly dysfunctional characteristics of the school as an institution.

Perhaps the most encompassing and negative effect of cultural deprivation as a concept is the inference that a total restructuring of society and cultural patterns must occur before a black or poor white child can learn to read. Poor reading achievement among urban school children is conceived of as due to socio-economic status, family structure, language in the home and other conditions not easily changed. However, changing these conditions is not the most direct way to improve education for the poor. It seems almost senseless to wait for the end products of social change before ameliorating and mitigating the current educational scene.

The task of the urban school remains that of teaching its children to read. If, as the spokesmen for the concept of cultural disadvantage allege, that the parents and family of urban school children are unable to accomplish this end, it doubly behooves the school to perform this duty.

As Herbert Kohl has written, "There is no reading problem. There are problem teachers and problem schools."[21]

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[21]Herbert Kohl, Reading, How to (New York: E. P. Dulton and Company, 1973), p. xi.

Kohl maintains that anyone who knows how to read and is interested in sharing that skill can be a teacher of reading. Along with Annie Stein, Kohl agreed that the art of reading is not a mystical process nor technically complex, but, rather, a skill "that is no more difficult than learning to walk or talk." His message contains a common sense approach toward viewing the reading achievement of urban school children. Namely, if teachers want to help their students to learn to read, and believe that their students are capable of learning to read, urban school children will learn to read.

Urban schools can be effective educational institutions if educators are committed to the concept of quality education and are sensitive to the needs of poor and minority children. As Kenneth Clark has noted:

> If [minority] children are effectively
> taught, and if a public school system is
> really seriously interested and concerned
> with the education of these children,
> like other human beings will learn.[22]

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[22]Kenneth B. Clark, "Issues in Urban Education," in Black Manifesto for Education, edited by James Haskins, (New York: William Morrow, 1973), p. 84.

CHAPTER III

SOLUTIONS TO THE READING PROBLEM: QUALITY PROGRAMS

Research in the area of urban reading retardation
has shown contradictory or confusing causations. Most
studies have dealt with assaying and listing deficits
and limitations of the child. Few studies have dealt
with learning methodology or effective instructional
strategies.[1] Thus, research that is generated, based
upon unproven assumptions and beliefs, promotes low
expectations for the successful teaching and learning
of reading in inner city schools. Further, the research
provides more excuses as to why minority and lower status
group children cannot learn to read.

The numerous causations seeking to explain urban
reading failure have produced a frantic search by school
systems for programs and special methods of instruction
designed to meet the needs of the "urban reading problem."
The result has been a myriad of "breakthroughs" in finding
foolproof (teacher-proof and/or child-proof) ways of

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[1]Jeanne Chall, Learning to Read: The Great
Debate (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).

improving reading programs and reading instruction. The miraculous machines, methods, materials, approaches, and packages have all purported to be the magical way of ensuring positive gains in the reading achievement of urban youngsters. Teachers and administrators have actively engaged in efforts to be fully knowledgeable as each new trend in reading has appeared. School systems, endowed with federal and state funds, have bought and then discarded much of the material when the learning packages have failed to produce the desired outcomes. As a result of this helter skelter activity, educators have once more relearned that the quality of reading programs does not rise above the quality of instruction, and the quality of reading instruction does not rise above the quality of the reading program.

In some cases, the reaction of educators to the problem of poor reading achievement in urban schools has been to intensify the use of traditional approaches of teaching reading and to focus the blame for failure upon minority children. The concepts of "cultural disadvantage" and "cultural deprivation" have been coined, serving to suggest that the minority group pupil and his family are at fault; that the pupil and his culture should be

manipulated. This approach suggests that the traditional school is in effect a finished product which has served a majority of white middle class pupils well and should, therefore, not be seriously challenged. Minority groups must adjust, must conform, must change, while the schools and their basically sound programs need no fundamental revision. School administrators and personnel delude themselves and the public into believing that special programs designed to compensate for an inadequate home environment are all that is needed.

Compensatory Education: Has It Really Failed?

Emerging during the early 1960's for the avowed purpose of narrowing the gap in academic achievement between middle class white children and poor children, the compensatory education movement burgeoned throughout the nation's urban areas with federal support under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Compensatory education programs are generally based on the assumption that increased exposure to any school environment coupled with an intensified remedial approach would solve or at least ameliorate the reading failure of minority and poor white children.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) was designed to meet the manifest need for

improved quality of education throughout the country.
The act addresses through eight major titles, financial
assistance to school districts characterized by economic
impactness (Title I); financial aid for the purchase of
materials and resources (Title II); encouragement of
educational innovation (Title III); encouragement and
dissemination of educational research and the training
of professional educators (Title IV); the stimulation
and strengthening of leadership resources of state
educational agencies for the provision of continuity
and uniformity in provision of services (Title V); finan-
cial aid for education of handicapped children (Title VI);
financial aid for bilingual education programs (Title VII);
and financial aid for dropout prevention (Title VIII).

Essentially, ESEA of 1965 defined the educational
crisis as most critically affecting poor and minority
Americans. The reality of educational underachievement
among low-income youth, particularly in urban areas, could
not be refuted. Therefore, programs to compensate for
past failures in achieving academic success among minority
and poor white children became the foundation upon which
ESEA was constructed.

In the course of its controversial development,
compensatory education programs have been characterized

as a way toward achieving quality education and equality of opportunity for minority and poor children, a ploy designed to circumvent school integration, a laudable achievement and a massive failure. In varying degrees, all of the characterizations are correct. However, the most common findings of systematic evaluations of compensatory education programs is that they have made "no significant difference" to substantially enhance the educational development of poor children.

The American Institute of Research, whose report has been cited as an authoritative judgment on the failures of Title I, based their evaluation on programs dating as far back as 1961 and 1962, three and four years before there was a Title I, Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Although invalid data was utilized, the study has been cited as an authoritative judgment of the failure of Title I.[2]

Compensatory education is many things to different people. Alfred Z. McElroy, Chairman of the National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children,

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[2]America's Educationally Neglected: A Progress Report on Compensatory Education, Annual Report to the President and the Congress, Alfred Z. McElroy, chairman (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 52.

stated, "National evaluations which appear glowing or derogatory usually have one common flaw, that criteria were applied to a program which did not attempt to achieve the goal by which it was evaluated."[3] Further, McElroy cautioned that national evaluations of compensatory education programs should be viewed with "suspicion" and called attention to the "propaganda between the lines."

McElroy's concerns are not unwarranted. The Follow Through Program, a comprehensive approach to compensatory education with many components and with massive parent involvement, was measured by its success in reading and mathematics. In this case the measurer was an outside contractor, Stanford Research Institute. Although the General Accounting Office heavily criticized the multimillion dollar contract, the Stanford evaluation was still used as the basis for the approaching demise and limited funding of the program. So irritated were the parents of children in the program at the fact that dilution and elimination of the experiment seemed imminent, coupled with their perceptions of a lack of understanding and competence on the part of the evaluators, that confrontation politics surfaced at regional meetings.[4]

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

Currently available data from the Follow Through National Evaluation indicate that the Follow Through Program of instruction and comprehensive services is enhancing the achievements of children. Further, the effects of the program become stronger on children as they progress through the program and on successive groups of children entering the program.[5]

Follow Through was initially established in order to sustain and expand on the gains made by children in Head Start or similar pre-school programs. Follow Through began in the school year 1967-68 with thirty-nine grants to pilot communities; by school year 1972-73 the program had grown to 173 projects in urban as well as rural areas, serving approximately 84,000 low income children.

The program incorporates the concept of planned variation which involves implementing alternative approaches to the education and development of low income children in kindergarten through third grade. Institutions designated as sponsors and affiliated with Follow Through on a national level have developed various approaches and implemented them within a program of comprehensive services plus parent

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[5]A Guide to Follow Through (Follow Through Program, U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1973), pp. 69-113.

and community involvement. In addition, there are
several self-sponsored projects which have instituted
programs that they developed themselves.

One of the most important aspects of Follow
Through is its emphasis on parent involvement inside
and outside the classroom. Parents, as well as concerned
community residents, participate in all areas of the
development, operation and direction of the programs.
Parents serve as paid teacher aides and as volunteers
in the classroom as well as social service staff assistants.

The Follow Through program requires that each
project be comprehensive in scope on all aspects of child
learning and development. This includes instruction,
medical and dental health, nutrition, psychological
services, social services, staff development, career
development and career advancement.

In school year 1972-73, 173 Follow Through
projects were operating throughout the United States
and Puerto Rico, enrolling over 90,000 children from low
income areas. Follow Through kindergarten has produced
a greater relative gain in reading scores over non-Follow
Through kindergarten experiences available to children
in the same community. Of eleven sponsor models sampled,
nine exceeded non-Follow Through schools as measured by

pupil outcomes on the Metropolitan Reading Test.
Further, based on the first large sampling of kinder-
garten children in mature programs, Follow Through
children in the entering 1971 class exceeded the
national norms in reading at the end of one year
in the program.[6] The finding is significant since
these same children scored lower on the Wide Range
Achievement Test upon entering the program than those
entering in previous years and, therefore, would not be
expected to achieve normal levels within the 50th
percentile range.[7]

The outcome data for one of the projects sponsored
by Bank Street College of Education revealed a mean grade
equivalent score of 3.6 for third grade Follow Through
children as compared to 2.5 of non-Follow Through children
as measured by the Metropolitan Reading Subtest--Grade 3.
Second grade pupils participating in Follow Through
programs sponsored by the California State Department of
Education (California Process Model) showed a growth of
fourteen grade norm months and scored significantly higher
than did comparison groups on the Cooperative Primary
Reading Test. Follow Through pupils achieved a grade

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[6] Ibid., pp. 69-72.

[7] Ibid., p. 73.

equivalent norm of 3.1 while the comparison group achieved a grade equivalent norm of 2.4.[8]

These selected results indicate that Follow Through projects have had a positive effect in increasing the reading achievement of minority and poor children. While most projects showed significant results, some failed to meet expected achievement norms. Yet, the positive data are not easily accessible to the general public.

The ultimate conclusion of these studies suggests that not only is compensatory education a failure, but that "schools are dead." This pessimism, based on invalid evaluations, renews controversies and speculations as to the cognitive abilities of poor and minority children. Again, the victim is blamed and the hope of equality of educational opportunity is diminished.

Uniform goals and uniform priorities of compensatory education do not exist on a national level. Most educators agree in principle that compensatory education is the major attempt to raise the educational attainment of educationally disadvantaged children. In trying to achieve this goal, there are as many "how to's" as there are programs and people. Certainly, there have been

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[8] Ibid., pp. 80-81.

failures. But should unsuccessful projects and invalid program evaluations be used as the criteria for dismembering all projects and programs? Can successful project components be identified? What makes a successful program work?

Successful Reading Programs

Samuels and Dahl[9] reported on a Kansas City, Missouri elementary school where poor black children are "reading--and reading well." As part of a federally funded compensatory education program in reading, the authors point out that "those who attempt to place the blame for reading failure in ghetto schools on factors such as lack of readiness and genetic inferiority are wrong." They maintain that the reason most federally funded reading programs geared to increase the reading achievement of poor and minority children fail is because the programs themselves are doing an inadequate job in teaching urban children to read. They concluded that the children are not responsible for reading failure, but rather, the schools are responsible.

Essential to the success of the Kansas City reading program was a shared philosophy that urban children

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[9]S. J. Samuels and Patricia Dahl, "Ghetto Children Can Learn to Read - A Personal Report," The Reading Teacher Vol. 27, No. 1 (October, 1973), pp. 22-24.

"were capable of mastering the skill of reading." Noting that many teachers in urban schools do not have high expectations for their students, the students fail to succeed. However, in Kansas City, administrators, teachers and students felt that success must be the norm. Those teachers who were not able to help the children succeed were asked to go to another school in the district where the student population was not poor or black. The positive attitudes and high expectations of the Kansas City staff have made the self-fulfilling prophecy work for them and their students.

Other factors helped to foster reading success in the Kansas City program. Reading and spelling instruction were given primary importance, federal money was used to hire a remedial reading teacher who served as a consultant to other teachers. Teacher aides were utilized and trained. Finally, the integrated faculty committed itself to a continuing effort to build racial pride as well as teach reading skills.

Those who doubt that schools can make an impact on the academic performance of poor and minority children point to the apparent failure of compensatory education programs. However, as Birch and Gussow stated, "Compensatory education has not really failed; it has just not

been adequately tried."[10] Throughout the nation there are school systems and personnel who have reversed the trend of reading failure among urban school children.

At P.S. 146, located in New York City's East Harlem, students' reading achievement approximated city wide and national norms. Approximately forty-five percent of the pupils were black and fifty percent were of Hispanic origin; sixty percent qualified for a free lunch program. Test results showed that fourth grade pupils were reading three months above the national median--5.0 versus 4.7--and more than a year above other East Harlem schools. Fifth and sixth grade students who had attended other schools in early primary grades were still reading below national norms, but were making steady progress. For example, sixth grade pupils who were reading seven months below the norm in fourth grade, were only one month behind the norm in the spring of sixth grade; their median reading score had shown a twenty-six month gain in a seventeen month period.[11]

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[10]Herbert G. Birch and Joan D. Gussow, Disadvantaged Children: Health, Nutrition and School Failure (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1970), p. 272.

[11]Charles E. Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom: The Remaking of American Education (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 99-101.

The curriculum at P.S. 146 was designed to meet the needs of students.[12] Classification and scheduling of instructional activities were done according to what was diagnosed as individual subject and skill needs. Two reading periods of fifty minutes each in length were scheduled for all classes above grades one and two. Students in the morning reading period were grouped heterogeneously. In that period emphasis was placed on developing reading comprehension skills by using textbooks, workbooks and other materials on various grade levels. Homogeneous grouping was used during the afternoon reading period. Students were grouped according to reading levels and emphasis was placed on basic reading skills: phonics, word analysis and vocabulary development. During individualized reading periods, a cluster teacher taught basic reading skills twice a day to children who were two or three years behind in reading.

Although heavy emphasis was placed on academic achievement, a variety of forces shaped the curriculum. Title I money was appropriated for after-school study center programs. In an effort to enhance the self-image of pupils

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[22]See Royce M. Phillips, "The School as a Social Partner in Urban Communities" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, 1970).

by helping them to learn about their own cultural heritages, Afro-Hispanic innovations were instituted. Spanish language instruction and Afro-Hispanic culture were added to reading, mathematics, library skills and homework study.

Special federal and city allotments provided extra money for materials and supplies, particularly modern audiovisual devices. All classes used "urban oriented" materials which depicted children of minority groups in the context of an urban setting.

To stimulate greater community and parent involvement as part of the More Effective Schools Plan, a full-time Community Coordinator (a licensed teacher with special qualifications in this area) was assigned to the school. It was the Coordinator's responsibility to help a cooperative and alert Parent-Teachers Association in the school and to conduct professionally scheduled workshops with parents and teachers to try to promote understanding of the school's goals and to elicit cooperation between school and home.

Just what compensatory education is operationally often depends upon who does the defining; for the term covers an extremely diverse assortment of educational theories and practices. Testifying before the Senate Hearings before the Subcommittee on Education, George Weber noted that allocating ESEA Title I money alone is not the

solution in providing inner-city schools with quality
reading programs. Weber stated, "The schools have money.
They have lots of money for reading. They are not using
it in the best way."[13] Weber elaborated that the fundamental
question in reversing the trend of reading failure prevalent
in urban schools is one of "quality" and "competence."
Finally, Weber acknowledged the primacy of positive
attitudes among principals and teachers as being an
important factor in maintaining and perpetuating a
successful reading program.[14]

George Weber's testimony before the Senate bears
witness to a study he conducted of four successful inner-
city school reading programs. The schools were P.S. 11 and
P.S. 129 in Manhattan, the Woodland School in Kansas City,
Missouri, and the Ann Street School in Los Angeles.

Weber set out to contradict the conclusions of
the Coleman Report. In essence, the most important con-
clusion drawn from the Coleman Report was that schools
could do little about the low educational achievement of

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[13]Hearings before the Senate Subcommittee on
Education of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare,
93rd Congress, 2nd Session, ED-083-550, p. 136.

[14]George Weber, Inner-City Children Can Be Taught
to Read: Four Successful Schools (Washington, D.C. Council
for Basic Education, Occasional Papers Number Eighteen, 1971).

poor and minority children due to the social background
of the children, the premise being that educational
institutions cannot expect any better performance from
children in urban schools.[15]

Weber's study demonstrated that Coleman was
wrong by finding four inner-city schools where reading
attainment, at the end of third grade, was about the national
average; that is, what one would find in average middle-
income areas. The existence of these four schools clearly
illustrates that something can raise the academic attain-
ments of poor and minority children. It has been done and
documented. The question now becomes, If it has been done,
how did they do it?

As part of the More Effective Schools Program,
P.S. 11 in Manhattan has been provided with extra super-
visory and auxiliary personnel. There is a low teacher-
pupil ratio with an average of twenty-two students to one
teacher. Although there is a strong emphasis on reading
throughout the primary grade curriculum, there is no single
approach to the teaching of reading. Teachers are given
considerable flexibility in selecting from a wide variety
of materials, however, phonics instruction is emphasized.

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[15]James S. Coleman, et al., Equality of Educational
Opportunity (Washington: G.P.O., 1966).

Individualization is encouraged by the heterogeneous nature of the classes. The staff at P.S. 11 carry high expectations and concern for every pupil which is reflected in the atmosphere of individualization. Further, there is an emphasis on early reading achievement and on the importance given to phonics instruction.

Basic features of the reading program at P.S. 129 include a combination of two approaches--language-experience and basal readers. Phonics is stressed, and children are grouped heterogeneously in the first grade, homogeneously in the second. Individualization is emphasized requiring frequent evaluations of student progress. Finally, the general school atmosphere is marked by high expectations of the staff and a concern for each child.

The Woodland School in Kansas City, Missouri is part of an ESEA Title I project. The reading program utilizes the Sullivan Programmed Reading Series and draws from additional personnel including reading and speech specialists and teacher aides. Of crucial importance is the inservice training of teachers. Area superintendent, Robert Wheeler, states that, "The staff has to believe the pupils can and will learn before they can convince the students that they are not doomed to fail."[16] The basic

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[16]George Weber, Inner City Children Can Be Taught, p. 9.

belief that inner-city students can learn as well as others is the driving force behind the program's success. Wheeler notes:

> We have not accepted the myth that environmental factors develop unalterable learning depression. We believe that so-called negative environmental factors can be overcome with sensitive and responsive teaching.[17]

The school employs two full-time reading specialists whose duties include in-service work with classroom teachers, classroom demonstrations and general monitoring of the reading program. Due to large class sizes, teacher aides lend support.

The Ann Street School in Los Angeles, California, also receives funds from ESEA Title I. Classes operate on a divided day basis whereby half the children come to school from nine to two o'clock, the other half from ten to three. The two hours a day in which half the class is present is devoted chiefly to reading instruction. The Sullivan Programmed Reading Series is used exclusively in the early grades, supplemented by other materials in the later primary grades. There is a full-time reading specialist who works with the teachers and students within their classrooms. Reading achievement is emphasized, and the reading program is carefully structured and planned.

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[17] Ibid., p. 19.

In the four successful schools described above, Weber noted eight common factors that are not present in unsuccessful inner-city schools:

1. strong leadership

2. high expectations

3. good atmosphere

4. strong emphasis on reading

5. additional reading personnel

6. use of phonics

7. individualization

8. careful evaluation of pupil progress.[18]

Each of the schools received additional money through ESEA Title I. The funds allowed the schools to hire the necessary reading specialists and teacher aides. Further, new reading materials could be purchased. Weber stated:

> These four schools knew how to use their money, and the Title I money was used to good effect. . . . But for every one of these schools you have hundreds--maybe thousands of schools--that did not do a thing with it except spend it.[19]

The Success of Sesame Street

Combining the technology of television with the art of entertainment and specific educational aims, Sesame

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[18]George Weber, Inner-City Children Can Be Taught, p. 26.

[19]Reading Emphasis Programs, 1973, Hearings Before the Senate Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, 93rd Congress, 2nd Session, ED-083-550, p. 135.

Street has provided a further educational alternative designed to benefit children's development. On March 15, 1968 several government agencies and private foundations announced support for the proposal "Television for Preschool Children." A grant of eight million dollars covering an eighteen month planning period and a year's series of 130 one-hour programs endorsed the project which set out to answer two basic questions:

1. Can a daily television program filled with elements of learning attract and hold the attention of four and five year old children-- particularly those from poor homes--in free competition with animated cartoons and "shoot-'em-ups?"

2. If the series can win and hold this attention, will viewing children learn basic skills?[20]

The fundamental goal of Sesame Street was to prepare children for school. Some observers of educational institutions have viewed schools as so inhumane and uselss that preparation for them shares their uselessness. Although none of the planners of Sesame Street believed that schools were everything they should be, especially for children in urban areas, they

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[20]Gerald S. Lesser, Children and Television: Lessons from Sesame Street (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 36.

argued that schools could not be changed in any meaningful way overnight. For better or worse, schools existed and they would be a fact of life for all children. It was felt that one route toward preparing children for school was to build an appetite for learning based on real accomplishment and its recognition. One premise of Sesame Street, then, was to suggest skills that might help prepare a child to enter school quickly and comfortably, skills that would be recognized by people important to the child as something worth knowing.

A basic consideration for selecting specific goals for Sesame Street was given to the concerns of what inner-city parents said they wanted for their children. As a result, the concensus of most inner-city parents' aspirations reflected the wants of most other parents-- reading, writing, arithmetic and any other skills that would equip their children for later life and school success.[21]

Planners of Sesame Street had noted that the series' concentration on basic skills may teach children what to think instead of how to think. Yet, since both thought processes were important in terms of developmental advance- ment, it was decided that both the what to think and the

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[21] Ibid., pp. 47-48.

how to think were to be included in the program's
curriculum.

Thus, three related aims of the series emerged:
school preparation, inner-city families' stress on basic
skills and the effort to teach both what and how to think.
A final premise that was rejected has broad educational
implications. A common basis for deciding what should be
taught in pre-school are the presumed differences between
white middle-class children and poor and minority children.
With white middle-class characteristics as a standard, some
pre-school compensatory education projects are designed
to bring poor and minority groups up to that standard.
Aimed at giving the "have-nots" what the "haves" already
possess--it must be good or why would the "haves" have
bothered to get it?

This "deficit model" had guided many compensatory
education programs designed for poor and minority children.
For example, the assumption that a primary problem of poor
children is their inability to use language effectively,
compensatory programs set out to build language skills.
Guessing that poor children lack tender, loving care at
home, some programs tried to compensate by the teachers'
giving of this care. Betting that poor children's environ-
ments are chaotic some programs presented a structured,

tidy atmosphere. Assuming that poor children's inferior reasoning skills were their major disadvantage, other programs provided training in the understanding of cause-and-effect relationships.

All of these "compensatory" education programs aim to make amends--to give poor and minority children whatever it is that can make them like everyone else. Yet, Sesame Street's contrasting premise is to give inner-city children the skills they need in order to cope with school environments.

The instructional goals of Sesame Street included:

1. Symbolic Representation--The child can recognize such basic symbols as letters, numbers and geometric forms, and can perform rudimentary operations with these symbols.

2. Cognitive Processes--The child can deal with objects and events in terms of certain concepts of order, classification and relationship; he can apply certain basic reasoning skills; and he possesses certain attitudes conducive to effective inquiry and problem solving.

3. The Physical Environment--The child's con-
   ception of the physical world should include
   general information about natural phenomena,
   both near and distant; about certain
   processes which occur in nature; about certain
   independencies which relate various natural
   phenomena; and about the ways in which man
   explores and exploits the natural world.

4. The Social Environment--The child can
   identify himself and other familiar
   individuals in terms of role-defining
   characteristics. He is familiar with
   forms and functions of institutions which
   he may encounter. He comes to see situations
   from more than one point of view and begins
   to see the necessity for certain social
   rules, particularly those insuring justice
   and fair play.[22]

The evaluation of Sesame Street was designed by
the Educational Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey.
Although periodic testing was done during the series' first
broadcast year in 1969-70 to guide production, a true

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[22]Ibid., pp. 62-74.

estimation of Sesame Street's overall effects had to be ascertained. The test items assessed the major curriculum goals of Sesame Street:

1. Body Parts

   Pointing to Body Parts
   Naming Body Parts
   Function of Body Parts

2. Letters

   Recognizing Letters
   Naming Capital Letters
   Naming Lower-Case Letters
   Matching Letters in Words
   Recognizing Letters in Words
   Initial Sounds
   Reading Words

3. Forms

   Recognizing Forms
   Naming Forms

4. Numbers

   Recognizing Numbers
   Naming Numbers
   Numerosity
   Counting
   Addition and Subtraction

5. Relational Terms

   Amount Relations
   Size Relations
   Position Relations

6. Sorting Skills

7. Classification Skills

   Classification by Size
   Classification by Form

> Classification by Number
> Classification by Function

8. Puzzles[23]

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) tested over 1200 children before Sesame Street began broadcasting, sampled geographically from white middle-class suburbs, urban ghettos in northern and western cities, low socio-economic sections of a southern town and from rural areas. The most direct test of Sesame Street's effectiveness came from comparing children who had watched the show regularly with those who had not seen it at all over the course of the broadcast year.

Children who watched Sesame Street the most, learned the most. For example, the 731 poor and minority children participating in the ETS study were divided into four groups according to the amount of viewing. Gains of nine percent were made by children who seldom watched the series, fifteen percent gains were made by those who watched two to three times a week, nineteen percent gains were made by those children watching four to five times a week and twenty-four percent gains were made by children who viewed Sesame Street more than five times a week.[24]

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[23] Ibid., pp. 216-217.

[24] Ibid., p. 218.

The skills that received the most time and attention on Sesame Street were, with rare exceptions, those that were learned best. For example, fourteen percent more time was devoted to letter-related skills than to any other single subject, and here the children's gains were the most dramatic. In addition to acquiring skills that were directly taught, there was some transfer of learning. Some children, for example, learned to recognize full words or to write their own names, skills not taught directly on the program.[25]

The major finding--that children who watched more learned more--held true for children of different ages, sexes, geographical locations, socio-economic status and IQ's, as well as for children watching the series at home or at school. In all goal areas, gains in learning increased steadily with amount of viewing. Some groups of children, however, showed greater gains than others. The three-year old children gained the most, five-year old children the least. That is, although three-year olds scored lower than four- and five-year olds before broadcasting began, after broadcasting those three-year olds who watched regularly scored higher than older children who did

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[25]Ibid., p. 220.

not watch regularly. A similar pattern emerged for white middle-class children and poor children. Although poor and minority children began the broadcast year with considerably lower scores than white middle-class children, after broadcasting those poor and minority children who watched regularly surpassed white middle-class children who watched less.[26]

One hundred and sixty children from ETS's first-year study had gone into Head Start, kindergarten or first grade by the beginning of the second season, which provided an opportunity to study Sesame Street's influence on school performance. Teachers of Sesame Street follow-up children were asked to rank all children in their classes for their general readiness for school, verbal readiness, quantitative readiness, general intelligence, attitude toward school, realtionships with peers and physical coordi-nation. The veteran Sesame Street viewers were ranked higher than children who had watched less.[27]

The same teachers were asked to rank their children again at the end of the 1970-71 school year, the second year of Sesame Street broadcasts. Children who

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[26]Ibid., pp. 220-221.

[27]Ibid., pp. 223-224.

remained regular viewers through both seasons or who had
viewed regularly during the first season even if they
stopped by the second season were ranked higher than
their classmates who did not watch in either season.
This superiority held across all areas of school readiness,
including general readiness, positive attitudes toward
school and relations with peers.[28]

Unlike Head Start and other compensatory education
programs, which could be offered to poor children, yet
legitimately withheld from middle-class families by requiring
the demonstration of financial need in order to qualify,
Sesame Street was planned to reach as large a national
audience as possible, including middle-class children as
well as poor and minority children. The series had not
aspired to reduce the differences between poor and middle-
class children but, rather, it was designed in the hope that
all children would watch and learn.

Seasame Street's successful non-deficit approach
to education is one answer to why educators have not done
better in providing quality education for poor and minority
children. Assumptions about how children learn combined
with a planned and specific goal oriented curriculum

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[28]Ibid., p. 224.

provided a basis for success. Sesame Street demonstrated
that education can be fun and can occur in open environ-
ments as well as schools when positive attitudes towards
the learning abilities of poor and minority children are
held by professional as well as non-professional educators.

A Short-Lived Success

In Passaic, New Jersey, during the 1970-71
school year, students in the School 6 Annex ESEA Title I
remedial reading program showed an average gain of 2.4
years as measured by the California Reading Achievement
Test. Of the fifty-five fifth and sixth grade students,
two-thirds were black, one-third of Hispanic origin, all
were poor, all read far below their potential, and, when
asked, all said they wanted to increase their reading
achievement.[29]

By employing a diagnostic-prescriptive approach,
it was ascertained that all students possessed substantial
gaps in their reading skill development. Most had not
progressed beyond the first grade in acquiring reading
skills, even though many of the students had previously
been enrolled in ESEA Title I remedial reading programs
for approximately three years.

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[29]The description of the School 6 Annex reading
program is based on the experience of the writer who designed
and implemented the program.

The cumulative records of the students indicated that many had histories of disruptive behavior, had been suspended from school, and lacked motivation toward academic endeavors. Also included in the records were descriptions of the child's home and family life. Aside from that information, there was little data that could be used in or applied to an instructional situation.

Instructional periods were forty-five minutes long, and each child was seen daily in groups of eight to twelve outside their classrooms. In order to meet the specific needs of each student, the program was highly individualized. A wide variety of materials were utilized along with varied approaches. Strong emphasis on phonics combined with a language-experience approach constituted a major portion of the program. Students typed, mimeographed and distributed their own written stories to classmates. Students worked in small groups or individually, many times tutoring one another. The reading program at School 6 Annex adapted itself to the needs of the students participating in it. The program was successful in increasing the reading achievement of inner-city children while providing an atmosphere of creativity and freedom within a highly structured purposeful framework.

The program in School 6 Annex operated from a different set of assumptions from most of the other reading

programs in the city of Passaic. Students were viewed as articulate, intelligent, normal children, rather than as culturally deprived or culturally disadvantaged. Likewise, the children were expected to learn--for the students there was no excuse for not learning to read; for the teacher there was no excuse for not helping the students gain insights into the reading process.

Oddly enough, the success of the reading program, which should have inspired hope and encouragement, was greeted with bureaucratic indifference and animosity by the system's administration. The illogical conclusion reached by administrative leaders attributed the reading gains to the development of a positive self-concept in the children, a job which was not considered the domain of reading personnel. Rather than actively assessing Passaic's Title I Reading Project and questioning basic assumptions under which the project operated, it was decided School 6 Annex should discontinue its reading program.

Although the School 6 Annex reading program was short-lived, it was successful in helping fifty-five students increase their reading achievement by at least two grade levels. That reading program, as well as the others cited, illustrates that money derived through

compensatory education programs is an effective tool
for change. For all of the programs, both large and small
(and there are more throughout the nation), have made
it possible for committed educators to design and
implement reading programs which have begun to reverse
the trend of reading failure in urban schools, despite
popular notions of cultural deprivation and cultural
disadvantage.

If a program can bring about increased reading
achievement once, it can happen again. But money is not
enough. The strategies of teaching aimed at successfully
educating minority and poor white children depend in large
measure on the insightful and sensitive approaches made
in the organization or setting for learning in urban
schools. It is important to realize that seemingly
qualitative reading programs can become mere manipulations.
Publicized new approaches to teaching reading to urban
children may be only hollow verbalisms. Finally, new
reading programs may represent only administrative tinkering.

Compensatory education programs run by persons
who see a "deficit" in the learning abilities and environ-
ments of poor and minority children are unlikely to achieve
positive results. While compensatory education programs
administered by persons who view extra staff and extra

materials as an opportunity to help poor and minority children catch up from past failures and avoid new ones should generally prove worthwhile efforts toward achieving the goals of quality education and equality of educational opportunity.

CHAPTER IV

TEACHERS DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Successful urban reading programs do not just happen. They are planned by individuals committed to increasing the reading achievement of poor and minority children. But commitment is not enough. If successful reading programs are to be initiated, quality instructional personnel are necessary to implement the design.

Limited attention in educational research has been given to a most vital element--the classroom teacher. This void in reading research is difficult to understand when one recognizes that good teachers are the one element consistently identified in reading as being vital to effective reading instruction. Strangely enough, the value of a good teacher has been revealed most often in studies designed to investigate something other than teacher effectiveness.

In school year 1964-65 the U. S. Office of Education sponsored twenty-seven cooperative first grade reading studies. The studies investigated the comparative effectiveness of various approaches to beginning reading instruction.

When the studies were completed and the data collected and analyzed, the results were inconclusive. No one approach to reading emerged superior. There was one clear finding, however, and it emphasized the importance of good teachers in reading instruction. In their summary of the studies, Bond and Dykstra concluded that:

> . . . the tremendous range among classrooms within any method points out the importance of elements in the learning situation over and above methods employed. To improve reading instruction it is necessary to train better teachers of reading rather than to expect a panacea in the form of materials and methods.[1]

Results from some first-grade studies that were continued through grades two and three also revealed that the various approaches to reading instruction continued to be more similar than dissimilar in terms of their effectiveness. But the value of the teacher remained evident. Harris, Sewer and Gold found that "the teacher was a far more important influence than the particular one of the four methods used."[2] Following the third year of

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[1]Guy L. Bond and Robert Dykstra, "The Cooperative Research Program in First-Grade Reading Instruction," Reading Research Quarterly, 2 (summer, 1967), p. 123.

[2]Albert J. Harris, Blance L. Sewer and Lawrence Gold, "Comparing Reading Approaches in First-Grade Teaching With Disadvantaged Children - Extended Into Second Grade," The Reading Teacher, 20 (May, 1967), p. 202.

this same study Harris and Morrison stated that the findings "indicated that the teacher is far more important than the method."[3]

Other studies lend further support to the contention that good teachers are the success ingredient in reading instruction. Mitzel and Medley compared the reading achievement of students in forty-nine New York City schools. Even after making statistical compensations for differences in several major pupil variables, there remained wide differences in the average reading improvement among classes. Differences were no greater between classes in different schools than between classes in the same school. These findings led the investigators to conclude that the differences in student growth in reading were attributed to variance in teacher effectiveness.[4]

More recent support is given by Chall who observed reading instruction in more than three hundred classrooms in England, Scotland and the United States. She noted

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[3]Albert J. Harris and Coleman Morrison, "The CRAFT Project: A Final Report," The Reading Teacher, 22 (January, 1969), p. 339.

[4]Harold E. Mitzel and Donald M. Medley, "Pupil Growth in Reading--An Index of Effective Teaching," Journal of Educational Psychology, 48 (April, 1957), pp. 227-239.

that "generally it was what the teachers did with the method, the materials and the children, rather than the method itself that seemed to make the difference."[5]

Training Programs

The need to train competent reading personnel, including school administrators, classroom teachers, specialists and aides, requires a concerted effort from various sectors of the educational establishment. School systems, schools of education and state certification agencies, must share the responsibility in providing the best possible training programs if educators are to effectively reverse the trend of reading failure in urban schools.

In a national survey conducted by Austin and Morrison administrative officers and teachers indicated that their preservice education had not been adequate to insure even initial success in the teaching of reading.[6] During the course of their survey with school personnel, Austin and Morrison touched upon two areas, namely, the content of reading courses and student teaching programs.

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[5]Jeanne Chall, Learning to Read: The Great Debate (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), p. 270.

[6]Mary Austin and Coleman Morrison, The First R: The Harvard Report on Reading in Elementary Schools (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), pp. 164-180.

When teachers were asked to discuss the adequacy of
their college preparation, they indicated widespread agree-
ment that insufficient time was allotted for directed on-
site experiences in local schools. Teachers and adminis-
trators also felt that their preparation to teach reading
would have been improved had they been exposed more widely
to the reading materials they would be expected to use in
the classroom. Few teachers had had the opportunity to
examine basal series and accompanying teachers' manuals
and workbooks during their preservice education. Further
they felt that course content in reading was a remote kind
of preparation for actually dealing with the conglomeration
of reading materials and instructional aids a teacher
faces in the day to day teaching of reading.

Although the majority of teachers surveyed by
Austin and Morrison were critical of their course work in
reading, they generally favored student teaching programs,
labelling their experiences as "real," "dynamic," and
"meaningful." Student teaching provided a concrete learn-
ing experience under supervision and guidance by both
master teachers and university or college personnel.

The Harvard-Carnegie study indicated that a com-
plaint frequently voiced by teachers and administrators
concerns the adequacy of their collegiate preparation
in reading instruction. In particular, they cited the

sophomoric and soporific content of reading courses. In addition, they felt that instructional procedures would be vastly improved if there were more opportunities for integrating theory with practice.

Thus, a desirable component of a teacher preparation program should include the flexibility to offer direct classroom experiences in the teaching of reading plus a strong academic base in reading as a discipline. Concrete learning experiences in classrooms provide reality situations in which preservice teachers can gain valuable insights into the problems and processes of teaching reading while academic course work in reading provides opportunities for disseminating new knowledge in the area of reading and for exploring the theoretical nature of the reading process.

The Career Opportunities Program: A Reality Based Teacher Training Design

The Career Opportunities Program at the University of Massachusetts has presented itself to be a viable model for preparing effective teachers of reading, because it combines commitment, training and job experience. The design of the Career Opportunities Programs (COP) was a national effort to encourage and train low-income residents for professional careers in education in neighborhood

schools serving poor and minority children. The Career
Opportunities Programs originated as a result of the
Educational Professions Development Act of 1967. The
general thrust of the program was directed toward allevia-
ting the teacher shortage in urban schools and providing
better educational opportunity for poor and minority
children.

The rationale of COP at the University of Massa-
chusetts is based on three assumptions. First, urban
school children have needs that can be better served by
experienced teachers with a native knowledge and interest
in the urban community. Second, poverty and discrimination
are a part of the complex urban problems, and one partial
solution to this problem is the provision for meaningful
training and professional employment for inner-city
residents within their own community. Finally, a school
of education, committed to real change, such as the Univer-
sity of Massachusetts, can help bring about that change
by jointly participating with outside communities to
provide innovative solutions to educational problems.

In contrast to more traditional teacher preparation
programs, the goal of the Career Opportunities Programs is
to provide students--paraprofessionals and inner-city
residents--already rich in experience, with academic

credentials necessary to be certified as elementary
teachers. COP students, who begin as teacher aides, advance
upward with the accumulation of college credits and exper-
ience through an institutionalized career lattice to become
certified classroom teachers.[7] Such mobility provides
participants with an opportunity for professional employ-
ment which otherwise would have been denied due to a lack
of financial and educational resources.

The Career Opportunities Programs also provide the
School of Education, in conjunction with the community and
local schools, the opportunity to be active change agents.
Working together, these groups have worked toward closing
the gap between institutions of higher learning and the
realities of teaching in inner-city classrooms.

Finally, an unexpected outcome of the COP programs
has been the preparation of effective reading teachers.
Its comprehensive academic-experience based teacher prepar-
ation program is the essence of its success in the area
of reading.

Research concerning the utilization of paraprofes-
sionals within urban school classrooms has indicated that

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[7]See Bobby F. Gentry, "Differentiated Staffing
for Urban Schools" (unpublished dissertation, University
of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, February, 1972).

teacher aides have a positive impact upon pupil learning. Further, teacher aides, with high expectations regarding the achievement potential of urban children, have made a demonstrable impact in reversing the trend of poor reading achievement prevalent in inner-city classrooms.[8]

With the advent of the Career Opportunities Programs under the aegis of the Center for Urban Education at the University of Massachusetts, COP students were able to participate in a unique program of study ultimately leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree and Massachusetts State Certification. A concomitant aspect of the program is that COP graduates have become effective teachers of reading.

A Reality-Based Design

The strength of the Career Opportunities Program lies in its comprehensive reality-based design combining academic course work with on-site work experiences in urban schools. Each COP participant works twenty hours a week as an educational paraprofessional in an elementary school classroom.

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[8]F. Riessman and A. Gartner, "Paraprofessionals: The Effect on Children's Learning," The Urban Review, 4, (1969), pp. 21-22. Ray C. Rist, "Black Studies and Professionals - A Prescription for Ailing Reading Programs in Urban Black Schools," The Journal of Reading, 14, (May, 1971), pp. 525-583.

In general, most school classrooms consist of one teacher to oversee the management and instruction of approximately thirty students. The rigors involved in such a situation require that a teacher depend primarily on large group instruction with little time for dealing more directly with small groups of students or individuals. With the placement of an educational aide in the class-room it is possible for a teacher to organize a reading program to accommodate small groups of children and to successfully move toward individualizing reading instruc-tion. Further, the employment of a teacher aide relieves many managerial and clerical functions a teacher must fulfill.

In most cases, COP paraprofessionals were actively recruited to assist teachers with various functions related to the teaching of children, class management and clerical details. With their increased sophistication in educational techniques and methods resulting from academic course work and job-related experiences. COP teacher aides were given greater and far more responsible roles in the classroom.

Specifically, COP aides were given the task of instructing those students who were falling behind in the acquisition of reading skills. Theoretically, educational

aides were only to assume the responsibility of rein-
forcing and reviewing daily reading lessons previously
taught by the teacher. Due to strict contract stipulations
with the school system, a teacher aide could not assume
total responsibility of planning and implementing instruc-
tion, for that was the teacher's sole domain as a certi-
fied public servant. However, in practice, COP para-
professionals assumed total responsibility for daily reading
lessons with small groups of students, while school admin-
istrators seemingly looked the other way.

COP teacher aides provided all aspects of reading
instruction including daily lesson planning, motivational
materials, lesson implementation, review and reinforcement
of the reading skills covered, student evaluations,
follow-up enrichment activities and homework assignments.
As a result of their increased instructional roles, COP
participants were actively engaged in teaching reading as
a part of their daily job experiences. They became familiar
with reading materials, learned to use teachers' manuals
effectively, were adept in constructing teacher-made mater-
ials related to their reading lessons and their students'
needs, and utilized multi-media equipment effectively.

COP teacher aides also provided positive support
for the pupils they came in contact with. As residents in

the local community and as active participants in the
school structure, their presence in the classroom served
as positive role-models, sensitive to the needs of the
children. They carried with them high expectations of
success, so crucial to increasing academic achievement.[9]
As one participant put it, "I know these children. I
know what they need. I was there once myself."

Academic Preparation

Career Opportunities Program participants are
granted release time from their paraprofessional duties
to attend on-site courses offered by the University of
Massachusetts. The academic program is designed to meet
University requirements necessary for students pursuing
a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Elementary Educa-
tion and Massachusetts State Certification for elementary
school teachers. Each student must complete thirty-three
credits of core courses, twenty-seven credit hours in
Arts and Science electives, thirty credits of required
education courses and thirty credit hours of general
electives.

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[9]R. Rosenthal and L. Jacobson, Pygmalion in the
Classroom (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968).
Ray C. Rist, "Student Social Class and Teacher Expecta-
tions: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy in Ghetto Education,"
Harvard Educational Review, 40 (3), 1970, pp. 411-451.
Eleanor Burke Leacock, Teaching and Learning in City
Schools (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1969).

The academic preparation COP students receive
reflects a strong arts and science background coupled with
a heavy educational component. The credit distribution
and course offerings may appear similar to any other under-
graduate teacher preparation program. However, the difference
lies in the number and nature of practicum experiences.

The COP practicums are unique in that they provide
academic credit for the supervised classroom instructional
experience of the participant. The practicum component
synthesizes the theoretical study of teaching methods with
actual teaching experiences. Since COP teacher aides were
primarily involved in the teaching of reading in their
respective schools, the practicums were geared to deal
with the problems they encountered in their efforts to
raise the reading achievement of their students.

Practicum sessions were held approximately six times
during a semester and earned the participants three credit
hours. The practicum that developed became a methods
course, giving each COP student an opportunity to discover
new approaches and materials to teach reading, plus an
opportunity to try them and report back at the next session
the success or failure of its implementation.

By contrast, most traditionally oriented reading
methods courses are held in a university classroom and begin

with a general look at reading, what it is and what skills
are contained in it, as a substantive area of the elemen-
tary school curriculum. Beginning readers and reading
are examined and various approaches for determining readi-
ness and introducing reading are discussed. The reading
related topics discussed in a college classroom bear
little resemblance to the actual activities encountered
in an elementary school classroom. This divorcing of
theory and reality places an aura of uncertainty regarding
the nature of reading for a prospective teacher.

On the other hand, practicums experienced by COP
participants bore a direct relationship to their job
activities. The practicum provided an open forum in which
trends in reading, reading methods and materials, reading
research and reading activities could be examined, dis-
cussed and then implemented the following day in a real
situation. The format of the series of practicum sessions
varied from formal presentations to workshops, and infor-
mal group discussions. The coordinators of the sessions
consisted of School of Education faculty, graduate students
and practicing specialists.

A full range of reading related topics were pre-
sented including grouping techniques, individualization,
programmed instruction, behavioral skill competencies,

Black English, basal reading programs, language-experience, phonics, word recognition skills, developmental reading, comprehension skills, study skills, language arts, reading disability, and reading readiness. Viewpoints on the teaching and learning of reading were shared by all concerned and the facts and fallacies regarding the nature of reading gave the participants a greater grasp of the discipline.

The practicum designed by the Center for Urban Education for the Career Opportunities Program was intended as a possible answer in joining the (1) theoretical study of teaching methods, techniques and practices to the on-going job experiences of the participants, and (2) allowing for joint planning and evaluating by university and public school personnel. The practicum gave each student a chance to discuss and try various teaching methods, then to evaluate themselves aided by the classroom teacher and the university supervisor. The practicum was a successful attempt to help teacher aides "see" relationships between principles of teaching reading and actual classroom performances of themselves and their students.

Student Teaching

Successful reading instruction with a small group of children, however, is not a guarantee that a prospective

teacher will be as effective in a self-contained class-
room. The student teaching experience of COP partici-
pants was designed to give practicing aides an opportunity
to manage an entire classroom and to deal with curriculum
areas other than reading. The cooperating teacher assumed
the aide's previous duties and the roles of teacher and
paraprofessional were reversed. In most cases the COP
intern remained in the same classroom in which he or she
worked as an aide. Thus, in assuming greater teaching
responsibilities the COP intern was familiar with the total
make-up of the school as well as the classroom.

Each COP intern was evaluated by their cooperating
teacher and the University supervisor several times during
the student teaching experience. The evaluation consisted
of ratings in the following areas:

1. Teaching Results

    a. Effectiveness in achieving established
       objectives.

    b. Recognition of and provision for individual
       differences.

    c. Interest in subject maintained at a high
       level.

    d. Desired skills and attitudes effectively
       developed.

2. Rapport With Students

    a. Students respond in positive manner.

    b. Opportunities for teacher-student planning utilized whenever possible.

    c. Procedures in classroom reflect a democratic type of leadership.

    d. Ability to relate himself and subject matter to the slow learner.

3. Classroom Management

    a. Effective control maintained at all times.

    b. Classroom arrangements made for optimum learning.

    c. Students share responsibility for wholesome classroom environment.

    d. Wise use of class time.

4. Professional Qualities

    a. Reads widely in his field.

    b. Attends and participates in professional meetings.

    c. Assumes his share of the responsibilities of the school.

    d. Growth potential.

5. Personal Qualities

    a. Favorable appearance.

    b. Good character.

c. Resourceful.

d. Communicative skills.

e. Works effectively with others.

f. Critical thinker.

g. Good judgment.

6. Intern and Community

a. Is genuinely accepted by the workers of
the community agency or project.

b. Is making a genuine contribution to the
functioning effectiveness of the project.

c. Accepts instruction from community people
without showing resentment.

d. Involvement with community commitment.

Evaluation of an intern's performance for each
category was rated as:

1. Superior--Demonstrates a high degree of
excellence. This intern has great potential
and possesses many outstanding characteristics
necessary for teaching success.

2. Very Good--Assets definitely outweigh weaknesses.
Strong teaching characteristics are evident in
this intern.

3. Good--Strengths and weaknesses are in balance.
The potential of this intern is good.

4. Fair--Achievement varies from very good to
acceptable. The teaching abilities of this
intern need development.

5.   Poor--Not acceptable. This intern has failed
     to meet the standards necessary for recommenda-
     tion.

In most cases COP interns received ratings of
superior and very good for each category from their co-
operating teachers and the University supervisor. COP
participants demonstrated an ability to draw from a rich
experiential background based on job related activities
combined with theoretical knowledge from academic course
work to be successful classroom teachers.

In one instance, for example, a COP intern was
aware of the wide range of individual differences and learn-
ing styles of students in the classroom. In trying to
meet the individual needs of each child the participant
developed learning stations in order to present a social
studies unit on Nigeria. Each learning station was
activity oriented which incorporated skill and concept
development on varying levels of difficulty. Students
could choose from a wide range of activities including
map-making, dance forms, music, government structures,
history, religion, art and economics. In each case mastery
of content material was contingent upon specific exercises
in vocabulary development and word attack skills. For
example, in order to locate Nigeria on a map, latitude and

longitude were words and concepts which students needed
to recognize and understand. Each student was able to
participate and succeed at his or her own level. The COP
intern was successful in meeting the needs of individual
students. Specific objectives and goals were clearly
articulated. Student strengths and weaknesses were assessed
as well as the intern's teaching style. Past experiences
with students indicated that the participant felt more
comfortable managing individuals and small groups in an
informal and flexible atmosphere. Thus, these consider-
ations were successfully applied by the intern to instructional
situations involving a large group.

The COP student teaching experience lasted for a
period of eight weeks. In that time, COP interns demonstrated
that not only were they effective reading teachers but that
they were able to integrate sound principles of reading
instruction into other content areas of the curriculum.
For example, in implementing a science unit, one intern
noticed that her students were not equipped with the
necessary language and study skills to adequately use the
assigned textbook. Appropriately, she used the science
text material in conjunction with reading exercises including
word recognition, phonic analysis, prefixes and suffixes,
word derivation and syllabication. Teacher-made materials

and multi-media equipment were employed as well as work-
book and textbook materials. The unit ultimately provided
the students with an understanding of a specific content
area while at the same time reviewed and reinforced language
skills.

In another situation, a COP intern applied the
SQ3R method when using a social studies textbook. This
system involves five steps of study procedures: (1) survey--
making a quick overview of the material; (2) question--
turning each heading and subheading into a question; (3)
read--to find answers to the questions; (4) recite--stating
the answers and evidence found to yourself, subvocally,
orally, or in the form of written notes; and (5) review--
at appropriate intervals for permanent retention.

This study procedure was originally presented to
COP students as part of a practicum workshop session.
The presentation involved the COP students in active parti-
cipation of the technique. The COP intern who used the
procedure had found it worked successfully for her and her
students on several occasions in her capacity as an aide and
decided to capitalize on its use during her internship.
The cooperating teacher was unfamiliar with the technique and
expressed a desire to learn more about it. The COP intern
responded with a short after-school session in which she
presented a mini-SQ3R lesson to the cooperating teacher.

This experience suggests that as teacher aides, primarily involved in reading instruction, COP students had needs and problems which were, in part, met and solved through the practicum. In like manner, the teacher aides brought back to the classroom possible solutions and innovations which could be applied to various instructional situations. The illustration above also points out the possibilities of trained educational aides as providing new teaching strategies to inservice school personnel and a base for further university-school cooperative efforts.

Measuring Success

The foregoing appraisal of the Career Opportunities Program presents a rosy picture of a teacher preparation program model. This is not to say that there were no problems encountered in the program.

Perhaps one way of assessing positive educational and social change may lie in measuring the resistance to the change. Some cooperating teachers and administrative personnel in the school systems felt that teacher aides could never be effective classroom teachers. As community residents, COP participants were oftentimes faced with the same insensitive attitudes and negative expectations their students experienced within the school structure.

Some teachers and principals felt seriously threatened when COP aides demonstrated measurable academic achievement in university related courses. Rumors of "watered down courses" and "low achievement standards" circulated among school personnel.

COP aides who were successful in raising achievement levels of their students were criticized in their methods of instruction in presenting material to children "who obviously were not capable of mastering basic skills." During their internship, some COP participants had as many as four adult "observers" in the classroom each time a lesson was presented. The "observers" were higher level school administrators who took it upon themselves to monitor several individuals whom they knew to be "professionally incompetent."

Despite harassments and negative attitudes displayed by some teachers and administrators, there were others who openly supported the program. Many cooperating teachers expressed positive views noting the sophistication and professional growth of COP participants. One principal observed that COP students provided an experience and expertise that many teachers trained in traditional programs lacked.

The Career Opportunities Programs have weathered politically volatile and financially stressful situations with characteristic endurance. During the 1974-75 school year approximately 350 COP students will have graduated from the program and be certified elementary teachers. Yet, the prospects for effecting real change are dim. School systems are facing decreasing student enrollments. Further, inflationary economic trends have made it difficult for recently licensed teachers to be absorbed into the job market. However, COP has provided a design which has prepared effective teachers of reading.

CHAPTER V

PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE

The lack of reading achievement in urban schools has been viewed not only as a crucial educational issue but also as a national problem requiring top priority. Two major proposals of change directed toward improving the reading skills of school-age children and adults have been initiated on a national level: The Right to Read Program and The Reading Improvement Act of 1973.

The Right to Read Program

In October, 1969 the late Dr. James Allen, then the U. S. Commissioner of Education, proclaimed the decade of the Seventies, The Right to Read decade. Dr. Allen spoke of the millions of American children with serious reading difficulties who were, as he called it--"denied a right--a right as fundamental as the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."[1] In March, 1970 President Nixon endorsed the program in his message to Congress on education reform.

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[1]Right to Read Program, U.S. Office of Education, "Identifying, Validating, and Multi-Media Packaging of Successful Reading Programs," Washington, D.C., 1973, p. 1. (Mimeographed).

Right to Read is an education reform program in the area of reading. It is the goal of the National Right to Read Program that by 1980, 99 percent of the sixteen year olds in the United States and 90 percent of the people over age sixteen have the reading competency which an individual needs to function effectively as an adult.

Right to Read is not primarily a federal effort, a single reading program, or a single method of reading to be endorsed for the teaching of all. Rather, it is a program to persuade the public that there is a nation wide reading problem, to determine what changes are required to meet the problem, and to identify existing resources-- public and private--which can be used to solve the problem, and to make additional resources available.

In order to achieve its stated goal--the elimination of illiteracy by 1980--Right to Read, encompasses three major objectives. First, to search the nation for reading programs which have evidence of effectiveness. The search would include federal, state, local and privately funded reading programs but exclude searches in compensatory education projects. Second, a validation of exemplary reading programs through independent assessments and verifiable hard data. Lastly, to design multi-media models

appropriate to the various identified reading programs
so they may be replicated in part or whole in other
schools.[2]

Implementation of the Right to Read Program includes
the following strategies and tactics:

a. Analyzing the reading problem, community by
   community.

b. Identifying effective reading practices used
   in schools across the country and installing
   them systematically in other districts.

c. Surveying and analyzing the availability of
   teachers and resources, and how best to use
   them.

d. Disseminating technical information to school
   systems throughout the country.

e. Devising procedures for providing technical
   assistance where needed.

f. Developing a public information system to
   keep people aware of the problem and
   progress toward its solution.

g. Encouraging state education agencies to
   establish Right to Read programs and
   to develop specific action plans.

h. Translating reading research into classroom
   practice.

i. Redirecting and influencing federal reading
   programs.

j. Setting up liaison procedures with all related
   groups to coordinate the total national effort.[3]

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[2] Ibid., pp. 2-6.

[3] Ibid., pp. 2-3.

The Right to Read effort operates under three basic principles which serve to make it a people-oriented rather than a process-centered effort. The first of these is the belief that ninety-nine percent of all Americans can learn to read if given instruction geared to their individual needs. Second, that teachers will adopt effective methods if they are shown the results those methods can produce. Finally, the nation possesses both the human and material resources to cope with the lack of reading achievement. If the resources are employed and committed individuals work toward eliminating reading deficiencies, the problem can be solved.

By the summer of 1973 the Right to Read Program had 244 participating schools and community sites. Thirty-one states were funded through Right to Read to set up centers which would serve as a nucleus of talent to provide technical assistance in replicating and multiplying successful reading demonstration projects.

School based centers have emphasized inservice training for staff rather than the addition of new personnel. The principal of each school served as program director to facilitate the involvement of students, community, parents, teachers, teacher aides and librarians in the reading effort.

Community based centers directed their efforts toward out-of-school adolescents and adults in need of

reading help. They are diverse in location, in population served and in program content. For example, community based Right to Read centers can be found in prisons, community colleges, urban community agencies and Indian reservations.

In addition, by 1973, eleven state education agencies had signed agreements with the Office of Education which established them as Right to Read States. Under those agreements each state pledged to use Right to Read concepts as coordinating vehicles for federal and state programs which involved reading activities. By the end of 1974 it was expected that all fifty states would have funded staff resources through Right to Read in state education agencies.

The Right to Read Program is an ambitious undertaking by the federal government designed to reduce the incidence of poor reading achievement among America's citizenry. Yet, the attainment of that goal remains illusory.

Although the Right to Read effort was considered a "national priority" by the Nixon Administration, Right to Read has been seriously hampered by budget limitations. President Nixon indicated he would request 200 million dollars for Right to Read in fiscal year 1971. Yet, when the details of the budget request became known, there was

no 200 million dollars in new money to launch the new program, but rather a shifting around of funds already committed to existing library and education funds. For fiscal years 1973 and 1974 the administration recommended twelve million dollars for the program.[4]

Certainly, the Right to Read Program has accomplished some of its goals on a small scale. At the close of school year 1972-73, thirty thousand school children were being reached through Right to Read centers. But what of the millions of youngsters in urban schools who are not being reached. Can they afford to wait for Right to Read's "multiplier effect" to take its course? Further, in view of the existing budgetary limitations and shifting of funds, can Right to Read survive until 1980?

The Reading Improvement Act of 1973

Following Congressional hearings on reading programs and what steps could be taken to improve reading skills in the United States, Senator Thomas Eagleton proposed the Reading Improvement Act of 1973. The bill was prompted as a result of two issues. First, millions of school age children, particularly poor and minority youngsters in

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[4]Hearings before the Senate Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, 93rd Congress, 2nd Session, ED-083-550, p. 31.

rural and urban areas, were not reading at expected levels of achievement as a result of inadequate reading instruction. Second, that the Right to Read effort, although ambitious in scope, did not possess the necessary funds to achieve its goal.

In essence, the Reading Improvement Act of 1973 would have:

1. Authorized the Commissioner of Education to contract with the states to develop improved reading programs and to encourage the establishment and expansion of improved reading programs for adults.

2. Authorized funds for the training and retraining of instructional personnel in reading programs and for the acquisition of instructional materials.

3. Directed local educational agencies participating in subcontracts with a state to establish special reading programs for those children not succeeding in regular school programs, to ensure non-public school children participation, to periodically test children and to make public the results of those test scores.

4. Authorized the Commissioner to contract with institutions of higher education to strengthen and improve undergraduate programs in the teaching of reading and to develop cooperative programs with local education agencies.

5. Established within the Office of Education an office for the Improvement of Reading which would be responsible for administering the programs provided for in the bill and for coordinating them with other office and agency programs dealing with instruction in reading.

6. Directed the National Institute of Education to conduct research on the use of technology in reading programs.

7. Authorized funds for the Adult Education Act, with directions to give priority in programs conducted under this act to those for functionally illiterate adults.

8. Authorized funds for state accrediting agencies to upgrade their certification requirements for reading teachers.[5]

Although no Congressional action was taken on the bill, it is significant for several reasons. First, the Reading Improvement Act of 1973 clearly focussed on reading instruction as a crucial variable in attaining increased reading achievement. A major assumption of the bill was that effective reading instruction produced effective readers. Rather than advocating a panacea in the form of methods or materials, the bill gave emphasis to the training and retraining of individuals involved in teaching reading.

In addition, the bill promoted involvement among various sectors of the educational establishment: state departments of education which set certification requirements, institutions of higher education which train teachers, and local school systems. Further, The Reading Improvement Act of 1973 would have authorized 207.5 million dollars in new money for implementation during its first fiscal year.

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[5]Ibid., pp. 32-46.

Most importantly, the bill recognized that limited progress had been made toward the goal of overcoming reading deficiencies and moved to fulfill unmet promises by pro- posing a reality-based design with realistic and sound funding.

The Need for Inservice Teacher Education

Any effort to enhance the quality of reading instruc- tion in urban schools must take into account three factors which directly affect the ways in which change can take place in coming years. First, inflationary economic trends have made the cost of schooling more expensive. Second, decreasing student enrollments have precipitated cut-backs in school services and personnel. Third, the teacher shortage of the 1960's has shifted to a teacher surplus in the seventies.

Enrollment in the nation's schools has decreased by 400,000 pupils since 1973. Yet, the total cost of educating the nearly 59 million youngsters now enrolled will come to an estimated eleven billion dollars or more because virtually everything is more expensive particularly school supplies and equipment.[6]

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[6] "High Cost of Schooling," Newsweek, Vol. 84, No. 12 (September 16, 1974), pp. 54-55.

The number of pre-school age children in 1970
was estimated to be seventeen million, a drop of about
three million in a ten-year period and the largest
recorded decline in that group in the nation's history.
Some schools are being forced to close for lack of
pupils. For example, Salt Lake City has closed twenty
public schools, including three junior high schools,
since 1966 because of a thirty-five percent drop in
enrollment.[7]

In 1973 the surplus of beginning elementary
school teachers was approximately 57,000. By contrast,
in the fall of 1969 only 1,600 beginning teachers at all
levels could not secure jobs. The demand for new teachers
in elementary and secondary schools has dropped from a
peak of approximately 220,000 to roughly 175,000 a year.[8]

According to a National Education Association
research poll conducted in 1973, thirty-nine percent of
the canvassed schools reported that class sizes were
being increased and in forty-two percent of the schools
teaching materials were in short supply. Twenty-eight

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[7]"Those Missing Babies," Time, Vol. 104, No. 12
(September 16, 1974), pp. 54 ff.

[8]"Everything is Shrinking in Higher Education,"
Fortune, Vol. 90, No. 3 (September, 1974), pp. 123 ff.

percent of the schools reported elimination of some special programs while twenty-six percent indicated decreases in the number of special teachers employed.[9]

The data presented above holds serious implications for urban schools. For a decade or more educational reformers have focussed their strategies for change on adding new programs, new materials and new personnel to urban schools in order to increase the reading achievement of poor and minority children. With the help of federal funds, school systems sought and bought panaceas to "end the reading problem" in the form of packaged programs and miraculous machines. Newly trained specialists were added to staff special reading programs and were paid with federal funds.

Future strategies designed to bring about fundamental change in urban schools must include an examination of existing and future resources. Urban schools which once faced critical teacher shortages must now direct their efforts toward improving the performance of inservice teachers. In the face of federal funding cutbacks school systems must look toward existing services and personnel

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[9]Stanley M. Elam, "A Somber Economic Picture for Teachers," Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. LVI, No. 3 (November, 1974), p. 170.

to solve their problems rather than spending money for new materials or special personnel.

Institutions of higher education committed to preparing quality teachers for urban schools must also redirect their teacher preparation programs to include inservice teachers. If the goal of quality education for poor and minority children is to be attained there must be continual development of new teacher training models for urban schools that will bring about real changes in inner-city schools.

Until very recently it was possible for teachers to teach reading without a single college course in reading or reading methods. For example, in Maryland prior to 1972, the only requirement was a single course in language arts. In general, this is the case throughout the country. A study by the Educational Testing Service, Berkeley, California noted that, "in 1960, as in 1970, the most frequent requirement for certification as a regular elementary teacher or secondary teacher was one course in reading and/or language arts."[10] Further, as the Harvard-Carnegie Commission reported, teachers complained that

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[10]Congressional Research Service Questionnaire (distributed to the States on January 15, 1973), Hearings before the Senate Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, 93rd Congress, 2nd Session, ED-083-550, pp. 28-29.

reading courses offered during their undergraduate preparation bore little or no relation to instructional procedures they encountered in the classroom.[11] This lack of emphasis on the realities related to the teaching of reading in many teacher preparation programs combined with limited credit and/or course specification related to reading by many state certifying agencies indicates that many teachers receive minimal training in the basic techniques and concepts of reading instruction.[12]

Teacher education can be considered a life-long process of growth toward professionalism and excellence. Yet, too often awarding of an undergraduate degree and teacher certification have been perceived as terminal points in teacher preparation. Few teacher preparation models encompass a preservice-inservice continuum, hence the need for continuous growth is too frequently unmet.

Traditional attempts to provide continuous professional growth to teachers have often taken the form of a series of disconnected workshops and have been less than

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[11]Mary Austin and Coleman Morrison, The First R: The Harvard Report on Reading in Elementary Schools (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 236.

[12]Mary C. Austin and Coleman Morrison, et al., The Torchlighters: Tomorrow's Teachers of Reading (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 147.

totally successful. Typically, an inservice workshop
is initiated by a school's administration, occurs after
school hours, is a single preparation by an "expert" and
is not necessarily related to actual problems or concerns
of teachers. Part of the reason for the lack of success
with this approach is that the workshops prepared for
teachers offer experiences that someone external to the
teachers and the school think may be "good" for them.
For the most part, this type of approach to inservice
education does not consider teachers' needs as teachers
perceive them.

For example, in one school teachers frequently
expressed dissatisfaction with assigned reading textbooks.[13]
The readers were outdated and no workbooks accompanied the
texts. Further, the reading series contained material
that was too sophisticated for most students to handle
independently. Various grouping techniques were tried
but proved fruitless since the material was not geared
to students' skill needs. Some teachers began to rewrite
the texts and tried to adapt the material to their students.
However, this tactic proved to be extremely time consuming
and teachers were unsure as to the quality of their work.

A partial solution to the problem was offered by
the school's principal who arranged an inservice workshop

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[13]Based upon the experience of the writer in Passaic,
New Jersey, 1971.

related to effective uses of basal readers in the class-
room. Despite negative experiences with inservice work-
shops in the past, most teachers held high expectations
that this presentation would yield more substantive results.
Teachers had identified a common set of problems all related
to their students' reading ability. Further, the teachers
genuinely wanted to help students develop reading skills
in a more effective manner but were unsure how to accomplish
that goal with existing materials.

The resulting inservice "workshop" consisted of a
two-hour lecture by a reading specialist from a local
institution of higher education. The presentation centered
around a basal reading series authored by the specialist
which had been recently published. The specialist aptly
demonstrated various ways of using the series in different
situations, none of which applied to the problems teachers
were encountering in their classrooms. Clearly the
answer to the teachers' problems was to use the newly
published materials, then there would be no problem. During
a question and answer session several teachers raised
specific questions directly related to the reading materials
they had to use. The specialist expressed unfamiliarity
with the materials the school was using and apologized to
everyone.

Teachers' reactions to the presentation were overwhelmingly negative. Their concerns and needs were not taken into account and they still faced the same problem of trying to work with reading materials which in their experience were unsuited to the needs of their students.

The example presented above illustrates the need for a reality based strategy designed to meet the needs of inservice teachers and to provide for their continual professional development. If meaningful educational change is to be initiated, it is essential that institutions of higher education and local agencies work cooperatively toward the goal of improving the skills of the classroom teacher. Such a partnership is the only way which assures the liklihood of designing courses and generating and disseminating the kinds of information necessary to promote better learning opportunities for students in inner-city schools.

A Response: The University of Massachusetts
School of Education

The development of cooperative relationships between local school systems and institutions of higher education is no longer an impossible dream. The School of

Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, has stated as a priority a commitment to combat institutional racism. In response to this commitment members of the School of Education community have developed innovative approaches to education emphasizing concern for improved educational opportunities for all persons desiring or needing it. Further, the school's programs and policies reflect a general reshaping of educational processes so as to become more meaningful to poor and minority Americans.

The primary focus for the School of Education and its concern in developing meaningful relationships with minorities is the Center for Urban Education. The Center for Urban Education (CUE) is a planning, research and training center focusing on education in urban areas. The primary goal of CUE is to implement programs for real change in urban education--in public schools, in urban communities and in institutions of higher learning.

In recognition of the need for the continuing education of inservice teachers in urban schools, the Center for Urban Education has implemented a reality based inservice teacher education program. The program design used on-going urban school partnerships as a basis for preservice teacher education as a basis for evolving a productive collaboration for the continuing education of inservice teachers.

In keeping with previous commitments to combat racism and provide quality education for poor and minority children, the goals of the program are:

1. To provide opportunities for cooperating urban school personnel to pursue an M. Ed. degree part-time, while continuing to teach full-time.

2. To strengthen and revitalize existing Urban Education Teacher Preparation Structures.

3. To continue the professional development of urban classroom teachers in a directed continuous program.

4. To provide inservice teachers in urban schools with skills to effectively guide undergraduate learning experiences for preservice teachers who will later intern with them.

The Center for Urban Education has established and maintained working relationships with schools in Worcester and Springfield, Massachusetts and Hartford, Connecticut through CUE Teacher Education Program. The purpose of the program was to prepare prospective teachers for urban schools. As such the program has:

a. provided students with learning theories
    and implementation skills adapted speci-
    fically to the learning problems and
    processes of the urban child.

b. provided a variety of clinical experiences
    so that each participant would understand,
    from personal experience, the problems that
    may influence the learning process for
    the urban child.

c. provided interracial experiences that would
    be beneficial to prospective teachers in any
    situation.

d. developed positive attitudes toward teaching
    urban children based on an understanding and
    respect for their world.

e. acquainted participants with an understanding
    of the civil rights movement and Black and
    Hispanic history and culture.

f. developed human relations skills.

g. trained teachers who responded to work
    experience positively.

h. provided prospective teachers with change
    agent skills based on a knowledge of how
    schools work.

An urban internship combining teaching and living in an inner-city community served as the focus for the program. Preparation for the internship consisted of course work designed to give participants an overview of problems and processes of education in urban areas. Prior to the internship, students met with cooperating teachers and a University supervisor to plan the structure of their internship.

CUE interns were required to live in the area in which they were practice teaching. In addition to living in the community, participants were encouraged to take part in community activities and develop in and out of school relationships with students and with their families. Student teachers were assisted in the development of skills and teaching methods for different instructional situations. Workshops involving the intern, cooperating teacher and University supervisor structured student teaching experiences so as to provide a procedure for moving from a case study approach to working in tutorial and other capacities in small groups to preparing and coordinating lessons with an entire class.

After the internship, students returned to the campus for one or two semesters of follow-up experiences. Included in the externship was an evaluation of student

strengths and weaknesses, identification of problem areas and needs in skills, knowledge and training. Further, externs were involved in working with groups of students who were preparing to begin their internship.

The completion of the CUE Teacher Education Program consisted of a second practicum experience. Students participated in a seminar in curriculum development which involved further on-site experiences in an urban school.

As a result of the Center for Urban Education's Teacher Education Program, close ties were developed between school districts and CUE students, faculty and staff. Participating individuals within school districts expressed a firm commitment and desire to build new kinds of partnerships with the Center for Urban Education seeking to refine and retool the skills of their teaching staffs. Teachers, principals and superintendents desired to shape and define strategies which would provide a wider teacher education base.

Within that context of expressed need to continue and renew partnerships with the Center for Urban Education, CUE sought to meet those exigencies through the Urban Inservice Teacher Program. In order to provide a flexible

program meeting individual as well as institutional
needs, specific learning experiences are determined
on the basis of a preliminary needs assessment of
each individual's objectives and goals. Further,
participants are involved in educational experiences
consisting of modular offerings, workshops, marathon
events and University courses which would be located
on-site in urban schools and/or at the University.

Participants are expected to spend equal time
in the three areas of the curriculum:

1. Curriculum Development in Content Areas

Modular experiences designed to provide the most
recent and innovative methods and materials for the effec-
tive teaching of reading, mathematics, language arts,
social studies and science to urban children. Emphasis
for these offerings are placed on specific skills based
on practical need for immediate use in the classroom.

2. Educational Strategies for Urban Schools

This series of learning experiences serves as a
basis for integrating newly acquired teaching skills within
a larger philosophical framework and concentrates on
practices and procedures dealing with instructional and
classroom management in urban schools. Modules are
offered in: the Open Classroom in Urban Education,

Competence-Based Education, Systems Approach to Education,
Individualization, and Instructional Application of
Computers.

3. Developing Individual and Institutional
Self-Renewal Strategies in Urban Education

Modular experiences pertaining to the impact of
racism on American education and the effects of racism
on teacher and student performance provide urban teachers
with a basic understanding of the nature of urban
education plus institutional and programmatic strategies
to counteract the negative effects of racism.

Emphasis for these modules are placed on the
acquisition of skills necessary to combat the multi-faceted
nature of racism. Change strategies include: Flexible
Scheduling, Differentiated Staffing, and alternative
programs in higher education.

Ultimately, the success of the entire program will
be measured and dependent upon the degree to which each
participant has met individual objectives. To this end,
the Center for Urban Education has included in the program
a modularized component in which each inservice teacher
is required to clearly define current needs and future goals.

The first modularized assessment component serves
as the primary entry point into the program. This form

of needs assessment and goal clarification is offered several times during the duration of the program to ensure that individual as well as institutional needs are being met. In this way course offerings and program format can be more effectively designed to meet specific needs and to help actualize goals.

For example, if participating teachers question the effectiveness of reading instruction and express concerns related to reading, program content can be concentrated so as to alleviate specific problems.

The future direction of urban schools depends in large measure upon the effectiveness of inservice programs to develop new attitutdes and instructional skills toward the goal of providing quality education for all children. The Center for Urban Education Inservice Teacher Education Program is an effort designed to meet the needs of practicing professionals.

University of Massachusetts Inservice Reading Program

A complementary effort to resolve existing disparities between community need and the goals of institutions of higher education is the University of Massachusetts Inservice Reading Program. Three basic assumptions underlie the program:

1. In general, American reading instruction
   is weak.

2. The classroom teacher is the most important
   variable in reading instruction.

3. To improve reading instruction it is
   necessary to train better teachers of
   reading rather than to expect a panacea
   in the form of materials.

Within that context, the purpose of the Inservice Reading
Program is to upgrade the reading achievement of pupils
by improving the quality of reading instruction.

The Inservice Reading Program seeks to actively
combat racism and reverse the lack of reading achievement
in urban schools by preparing classroom teachers to meet
the needs of diversified student populations. The
program is based on the belief that the elimination of
racist attitudes and negative expectations toward urban
children, combined with the effective teaching of basic
reading skills would be sufficient to end the "reading
problem" in urban schools.

The primary goal of the program is to prepare
effective reading teachers by providing an opportunity
for full-time teachers to earn a Master of Education
degree through inservice teacher education. The program

is particularly designed to meet the needs of practicing professionals who are unable to pursue an advanced degree because of work responsibilities and distance from the University campus.

Recognizing the need for continuous personal and professional growth, the M. Ed. Inservice Reading Program seeks:

1. To assist teachers, both experienced and new, in acquiring competencies which will enable them to help children learn to read.

2. To provide a variety of experiences and resources enabling selected schools to improve their reading programs; including inservice staff workshops, marathon events, summer programs, and regular University course offerings.

3. To combat racism by examining the role that racism plays in promoting negative attitudes and low expectations in relation to reading among poor and minority students.

4. To develop leadership skills among the participants by helping them to guide undergraduate learning experiences for preservice teachers who will later intern with them.

5. To provide a University sponsored community
    service to the Schools of Massachusetts.

6. To enable full-time teachers to pursue an
    M. Ed. degree in a directed continuous
    program under the guidance of the Reading
    Program and other faculty.

7. To develop a renewal partnership between
    school districts and the School of Education.

The Reading Program seeks to draw on relationships
with elementary schools in Massachusetts, in keeping with
a commitment to state education. Participating schools
wishing to develop partnerships with the University of
Massachusetts School of Education and interested in
developing effective reading programs are a primary focus.
Further, the program seeks to work with classroom teachers
who exhibit a willingness to become a part of a super-
visory team to offer counseling, methods and support to
undergraduate interns.

The program of study for participants in the
Inservice Reading Program consists of the following
experiences:

1. Introduction to Reading

2. Survey of Children's Literature

3. Studies in Language

    General Linguistics
    Language and Culture in Society
    Structure of Modern English

4. Language Arts

5. Electives:

    Field Experience in Reading
    Psychology
    Supervision and Administration
    Reading Programs, Methods and Materials.

In addition, an elective rotating seminar is offered. The content of this experience results from current interests and needs of program participants. The seminar serves as a basis for in depth discussions related to concerns explored in course work and/or job responsibilities. In this way, participants are involved in a continual evaluation of their needs, goals, accomplishments and benefits from the program.

CONCLUSION

The inservice program designs of the Center for Urban Education and The Reading Program at the University of Massachusetts present viable reality-based teacher education models. The combined effect of inservice and preservice teacher training creates real hope that meaningful educational change can happen now. Further, the strength of these programs lies in the concerted efforts of individuals from various sectors of the educational community who are committed to the goal of ensuring quality education for all children.

In an age of teacher-surplus and inflationary economic trends urban school systems as well as colleges and universities must find new ways of forming mutually productive partnerships by using existing resources and by reshaping outmoded structures. Such cooperative relationships can be mutually reinforcing and mutually enhancing both programmatically as well as individually.

Improving reading instruction where it takes place by retraining inservice teachers, colleges and universities can combine their unique characteristics of inquiry, scholarship and commitment to serve and put them into immediate action. Schools of Education are in a position to provide classroom teachers with the skill competencies, instructional strategies and sensitivities necessary to deal effectively with the realities of urban classrooms and receive immediate feedback of their efforts. Current innovative theories, strategies and research can be applied to actual on-going procedures in urban classrooms.

Participants in urban schools can be afforded opportunities to continue to refine and retool their teaching competencies while examining their attitudes and instructional strategies directed toward their pupils. Inservice teachers will be a part of, not apart from, the process of educational change.

Ultimately, the impact of inservice teacher education programs such as those at the University of Massachusetts will depend primarily on the number of teachers participating in them. The greater the number of inservice teachers involved, the greater the hope that no child will be denied a right in acquiring reading skills.

The decade of the seventies will be one in which education will be measured by a student's performance, and that performance will be the measure of the teacher. Finally, the education system is no longer for the administrators, the merchants, or the teachers and parents--the clients are now the children and the entire education community must measure its success or failure by the performance of their students--and not one child can be neglected.

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