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Some Aspects of the Effectiveness of a Demonstration Program in an Experimental High School

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SOME ASPECTS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM IN AN EXPERIMENTAL HIGH SCHOOL

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PREFACE

Since its inception in 1960, Ridgewood High School has become increasingly well-known for such innovations as its atypical organizational pattern (large group, seminar, laboratory instruction, and independent study) and for its team teaching approach to the education of all students. Visitors in ever-increasing numbers from all over the world have come to view the school in operation. With the incorporation of a State of Illinois Demonstration Program for the Gifted in September, 1964, Ridgewood formalized its commitment to demonstrating its educational approach and officially accepted a role as an agent of change in the field of education.

In addition to accepting a role as a demonstration school, Ridgewood is also concerned with determining the appropriateness and effectiveness of the demonstration approach. If large amounts of state and federal funds are to continue to be allocated for the support of demonstration programs, then surely, it is reasoned, the effectiveness of the procedure needs to be determined. It is hoped then that this report will shed some light upon just how effective Ridgewood High School has been in its first year as a demonstration school.

Without the assistance of the entire Ridgewood demonstration staff, especially: Beecham Robinson, director; Karen Connell, research director; and, Mrs. Warren Tinnes, secretary; the collection of data for this thesis would not have been possible. A special thanks to Miss Connell for developing the questionnaires used to collect the data.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE REPORT. At no time in recorded history has so much interest, time, and money been focused upon the field of education. Yet, it is difficult, when one enters many public schools, to see or feel the effects of this surge of interest. The thought that it is disheartening to see school after school housed and slumbering in the security of a nineteenth century tradition is mirrored in the writings of many educators, including Professor Herbert Thelen of the University of Chicago. Wrote Thelen: "In recent years a startling number of changes have come about in education. We have had, for example: development of the external examination system...; revision of curricula on a nationwide basis...; invention of many, many types of audio-visual materials--possibly as many as 50 distinct species; growth of educational radio and later, TV; development of guidance and counseling...; flourishing of team teaching; concocting of programmed materials and teaching machines...; and various ways of grouping students...

"In the face of all these changes, however, the school's society and culture seems largely undisturbed. Comparing class-

rooms now with classrooms of 40 years ago, one notes that at both times there were numbers of students not much interested in what was being done; the typical teacher still presents material and quizzes the kids to see if they understand it; the amount of creativity and excitement is probably no greater now than then. The development of new materials and techniques has enabled us to spin our wheels in one place, to conduct business as usual in the face of dramatic changes in the society and in the clientele of the school."[1]

This pessimistic attitude about the probability of implementing lasting changes in education is empirically justified when one looks at the life cycle of seemingly good innovations attempted in American education during the past 50 years. Such innovations, of which the Eight Year Study is a typical example, blossomed and died, leaving hardly a trace of their existence, except in the literature of their day. They appear to have been unsuccessful in perpetuating themselves even within the district in which they were born and were certainly largely unsuccessful in denting the gigantic educational establishment.

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[1] Thelen, Herbert A. "New Practices on the Firing Line." Administrator's Notebook XII, No. 5 (January 1964).

Recognizing the fact that a changing society needs something more than a nineteenth century educational system, the Seventy-Third General Assembly passed Senate Bill 749 which authorized the Illinois Plan for Program Development of Gifted Children.

A portion of this money was earmarked for the establishment and operation of Demonstration Centers in schools around the state. Inherent in the demonstration center function is the "selling" of good educational innovations being used in a few schools to the much larger number of dormant schools. Borrowing from the techniques of advertisers and salesmen, the most effective change agents in American society, demonstration personnel are commissioned to sell educators on an idea, to convince educators that in their own school they might be doing things differently and, perhaps, more effectively. Demonstration schools are, therefore, to be change agents in the educational community.

The procedures demonstration centers are to employ to insure their effectiveness as change agents has been defined by the State of Illinois as follows: (1) attract visitors through advertising; (2) effectively display the "product"; and, (3) incorporate a follow-up that encourages use of the product that has been "sold". A fourth procedure that should, it seems,

be an integral part of demonstration center programs is evaluation. Do demonstration centers accomplish what they are intended to accomplish, i.e., are they influencing the perceptions of visiting educators and are visitors subsequently incorporating change into their own systems?

This report will describe the results of visitor follow-up procedures employed by Ridgewood High School's Demonstration Center staff to ascertain the effectiveness of its program during the 1964-65 school year. Particular emphasis will be given to analyzing and describing the extent to which teachers who visited the center reported changed teaching behaviors as a result of their visit and to how much of the change they reported was perceived by a sample of their students.

THE SETTING. Ridgewood High School is a four-year institution serving two northwest Chicago suburban communities. The school has been in operation since 1960 and presently serves a student population of approximately 1150.

Ridgewood is a Trump school and as such, is a team teaching institution that incorporates a four-phased instructional program: large group, seminar, laboratory instruction, and independent study. Students at all grade and ability levels participate in each of the four phases of instruction in each

course. The school's organizational scheme is based upon a 20-minute modular schedule designed to permit a variation of group size, composition, and time allotment not easily implemented with a more conventional schedule.

Some additional unusual aspects of the school are listed below:

1. Every teacher belongs to a teaching team and all teaching in the school is team teaching.

2. There are no departments. Instead, the school has been organized into two divisions of instruction--the humanities and the sciences divisions.

3. The school's bell system has been shut off, and students proceed through the school day on an "education by appointment" basis.

4. Some students may spend as much as 1/3 of their time on independent study. During this time they may schedule themselves into any one of sixteen independent study areas.

5. There are no conventional classrooms and no conventional classes.

6. All students, even those in the program for slow learners, continue to study English, history, mathematics, and science every year they are in school. The curricula in these subjects have been modified in order that they may be as appropriate as possible for each group of students.

7. Ridgewood High School is one of 28 State of Illinois Demonstration Centers for the Gifted.

RIDGEWOOD'S DEMONSTRATION CENTER FOR THE GIFTED. To attract visitors to Ridgewood's Demonstration Center for the Gifted, the Center's staff produced and distributed two advertising media. A color "wheel" (See Appendix A) depicting the major aspects of the school's program for able students was sent to all secondary schools in Supervisory District Number One. In addition, a color filmstrip depicting the program in more detail and an accompanying taped narration were produced.

Prospective visitors and/or visitors who had already visited the school were encouraged to show the filmstrip in their respective schools. A total of 113 persons in 24 high schools reported having viewed the filmstrip in their own schools during the 1964-65 school year. Viewers reaction was generally very positive and apparently influenced a large number of educators to schedule a visit to the Center. In addition, several schools reported that the filmstrip served as a useful in-service training device.

Visitors are scheduled to arrive at the school at 8:30 a.m. and to begin their day's activities at 8:45. A "Pre-Demonstration Questionnaire" (See Appendix B) designed to determine what prompted the visitors to come to Ridgewood and what expectations they have for the visit is administered first. Visitors then

view and hear the filmstrip and taped narration in order to introduce them to the school's philosophical and operational approaches to education.

While the Demonstration Center Director conducts a tour of the building and answers basic questions for visitors, the Demonstration Center secretary prepares a schedule for each visitor, based upon his particular interests as he defined them on the "Pre-Demonstration Questionnaire." Most visitors choose to visit a large group lecture and at least one seminar in a subject of particular interest. In addition, most visitors spend at least one hour discussing the school's programs with teachers and/or students.

At approximately 2:30, the visitors reassemble, fill out the "Post-Demonstration Questionnaire" (See Appendix C), and further discuss their reactions to the school.

A "Two-Month Follow-up Questionnaire" (See Appendix D) is sent to all visitors to establish the reliability of the reactions they expressed at the end of their visiting day.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT. Chapter II reports the literature judged by the author pertinent to the earlier described purposes of this report. The third chapter describes the procedures employed in collecting the data for the report

and Chapter IV summarizes the data. The fifth and final chapter reports the conclusions and implications of the study.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Undoubtedly because of their recent appearance on the American educational scene, there is a paucity of research evaluating the effectiveness of demonstration center programs. One study, however, was of major importance in prompting the formulation of the demonstration model. In New York State, a study of educational innovations by Henry Brickell suggested that change resulted primarily from the activity of the public, the board of education, and the administrators of the school.[2]

The literature selected by the author as pertinent to this study is that related to the diffusion of innovations, since it is intended that demonstration programs in education should serve that end. With few exceptions, research regarding the diffusion of innovations in education has not been as thorough, systematic, or as fruitful as in the other social sciences. Thus, this review of related literature includes reports of diffusion studies from anthropology, rural sociology, and sociology as well as reports of studies done in education.

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[2] Henry Brickell, "The Dynamics of Educational Change," Theory Into Practice, Vol. I No. 2 (April, 1962) p. 82.

The importance of personal contact and compatibility between the innovation and the potential adapters were factors first emphasized in anthropological reports on primitive cultures. Early studies discussed the transmission of elements from one culture to another on the basis of personal influence.[3] Linton noted the importance of prestige in the geographical diffusions of cultural elements from one group to another.[4] Factors related to the transmission of innovative traits, reported by Sapir, are: (a) the ease or readiness with which the trait is communicated; (b) the readiness with which it is adopted by the receiving group; and, (c) the external conditions that favor or work against adoption.[5]

Reports in rural sociology have stressed the study of innovative farm practices. In a summary of the literature, Lionberger identified five stages in the acceptance of an

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[3] F. C. Bartlett, Psychology and Primitive Culture (London: Cambridge University Press, 1923) Chap. VII

[4] Ralph Linton, The Study of Man (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1936) p. 341

[5] David Mandelbaum (ed), Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture, and Personality (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949) p. 414

innovation as: (1) awareness, (2) interest, (3) evaluation, (4) trial, and (5) adoption.[6] Other research, including that done by Rogers and Beal, stresses the importance of personal contact in the diffusion and adoption process.[7]

In the field of sociology, a study by Katz and Lazarsfeld has shown that a proposed change is not likely to be adopted unless it is identified with or supported by a group.[8] This need of interpersonal contact is reflected by Cartwright's hypothesis that to achieve change in people, one must understand that an individual's behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and values are firmly grounded in the groups to which he belongs.[9]

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[6] Herbert F. Lionberger, Adoption of New Ideas and Practices (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1960) pp. 3-4

[7] Everett M. Rogers and George M. Beal, "The Importance of Personal Influence in the Adoption of Technological Changes," Social Forces, Vol. XXXVI (1958)

[8] Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld, Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communication (Glencoe: Free Press, 1955) pp. 74, 130-31

[9] Dorwin Cartwright, "Achieving Change in People," The Planning of Change: Readings in the Applied Behavioral Sciences, ed. Warren G. Gennis, Kenneth D. Benne and Robert Chin (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1961) p. 701

Katz, in analyzing the diffusion of innovations, listed the following items: (1) acceptance--the dependent variable; (2) the item--the innovation studies; (3) the adopting units--who or what accepts the item; (4) time--a dependent variable; (5) channels--the networks of communication; (6) social structure--the boundaries within which the innovation spreads; and, (7) culture--the prevailing attitudes and values concerning acceptance.[10]

The diffusion of educational innovations is a slow and tedious one as evidenced by the studies of Mort and Cornell (1941). They found that approximately 15 years elapse between a practical educational invention and three percent national acceptance. Furthermore, at least fifty years invariably elapse before wide-spread acceptance takes place.[11]

Mort and Cornell also reported a study of nine innovations among the public schools of Pennsylvania. The factors they found influencing adoption included: (1) size of the school,

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[10] Elihu Katz, "The Social Itinerary of Technical Change: Two Studies on the Diffusion of Innovation," Human Organization Vol. XX, No. 2 (Spring, 1961) pp. 70-82.

[11] Paul R. Mort and Francis G. Cornell, American Schools in Transition (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1941).

(2) heterogeneity of the community, (3) financial resources, and (4) educational diversity of the teaching staff.[12]

Cocking traced the diffusion of seven educational innovations among urban schools in a national sample. He reported that diffusion was influenced by geographical location, community characteristics, community groups, the administration of the school, and financial resources.[13]

Rogers suggests that adoption of an innovation usually takes place in three stages: (1) the development of awareness and interest concerning the innovation; (2) evaluation; and, (3) actual trial of the innovation in the local system. This process, he suggests, results in a decision to adopt, adapt, or reject the innovation.[14]

Mackenzie reports that adoption is likely to proceed in the following sequence: (1) criticism of existing programs;

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Walter Cocking, The Regional Introduction of Educational Practices (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1951).

[14] Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962).

(2) presentation and clarification of the proposed changes; (3) review and formulation of proposals; (4) action decisions; and, (5) implementation.[15]

The following major conclusions made by Mort in a recent review of the literature reveals that in adoption of educational innovations: (a) decades elapse between the need for change and acceptance of innovations; (b) diffusion of innovations through the American school system proceed at a slow rate; (c) simple and complex innovations spread at about the same rate; (d) multiple adoptions appear to be the rule in communities that adopt innovations; and, (e) the character of the community explains the varying degrees of receptivity to innovations.[16]

More recent studies on the diffusion of educational innovations show a greatly accelerated diffusion rate during the

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[15] Gordon N. Mackenzie, "Curricular Change: Participants, Proven, and Processes," Innovation in Education, ed. Matthew B. Miles (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964) pp. 399-424.

[16] Paul R. Mort, "Studies in Educational Innovation from the Institute of Administrative Research: An Overview," Innovation in Education, ed. Matthew B. Miles (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964) pp. 317-28.

past twenty years, This evidenced by many studies of which the following two are typical. The National Education Association Project on Instruction (1962) reported that the teacher aide innovation was begun in 1952 in Bay City, Michigan, and by 1960, nine percent of the primary and 18 percent of the secondary schools in that city were using teacher aides.[17] The most dramatic diffusion rates have been evident in the area of curriculum innovation. For example, the Physical Science Study Committee was formed in 1956; its first text was available in 1957; and, according to Mayer (1961), the PSSC materials were in use in nearly 20 percent of the nations secondary schools by 1960.[18]

The causative factors underlying the accelerated diffusion of educational innovations appear to stem from both within and outside the formal educational structure. Miles suggests that the sheer growth of the educational establishment may be exerting

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[17] NEA Project on Instruction, The Principal Looks at the Schools: A Status Study of Selected Instructional Practices (Washington: National Education Association, 1962).

[18] Martin Mayer, The Schools (New York: Harper, 1961).

the most profound influence upon the American educational scene.[19] Brickell's report, published as the Commissioner's 1961 Catalog of Educational Change, showed a greatly accelerated innovation rate immediately following Sputnik I in the fall of 1956.[20] Jennings, in commenting on educational change, suggests that another accelerator of the diffusion of educational innovations has been society itself desperately trying to prepare its citizens to cope with an ever-changing cybernated world.[21]

Increased awareness about society's educational needs has been reflected, in recent years, in increased expenditures by local, state, and national governments for education. The portion of this country's gross national product devoted to formal education has now risen well above the five percent level,

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[19] Matthew B. Miles, "Educational Innovation: The Nature of the Problem," Innovation in Education, ed. Matthew B. Miles (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964) p. 9.

[20] Henry M. Brickell, Commissioner's 1961 Catalog of Educational Change (Albany, New York: State Education Department, 1961) p. 49.

[21] Frank G. Jennings, "Mass Media, Mass Mind, and Makeshift: Comments on Educational Innovation and the Public Weal," Innovation in Education, ed. Matthew B. Miles (New York: Teachers College Columbia University, 1964) pp. 563-586.

a figure which in 1964 amounted to an estimated $40 billion.[22] An ever-increasing percentage of these educational expenditures is being allocated for the establishment, testing, and diffusion of innovative programs. Federal, state, and local governments appear to be cooperating to an increasing extent with private foundations such as Kettering, Ford, and Carnegie to promote such educational innovations as team teaching, independent study, flexible scheduling, and new organizational schemes. The study reported herein represents one attempt to add some knowledge to the literature about the effectiveness of such expenditures.

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[22] Miles, p. 10

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES EMPLOYED IN COLLECTING THE DATA

Visitors to Ridgewood's Demonstration Center were given a "Pre-Visit Questionnaire" when they arrived in order to establish what prompted them to visit the Center and what personal expectations they had for the visit. At the end of the visiting day, they were given a "Post-Visit Questionnaire" to determine their reactions to the visit and their interest in learning more about specific aspects of Ridgewood's program.

Two months after the visit, each visitor was sent a follow-up questionnaire designed to test the reliability of the statements made while at the school and to obtain information about any actions visitors might have taken as a result of their visit to the school.

A summary of visitor's responses to these questionnaires, with particular emphasis upon reporting visitor's reactions to the Demonstration Program and upon analyzing responses that suggested either an intention to or an already implemented change, constitutes the first part of the fourth chapter of this report.

Because this writer was interested, particularly, in whether or not any visitor had, in fact, changed any teaching behavior after visiting Ridgewood's Demonstration Center, he visited a sample of the teachers who had reported, on the two-month follow-up questionnaire, some change as a result of their visit. The teachers and a sample of their students were asked to respond to questionnaires (See Appendixes F and G) designed to obtain further information about the changes the teachers had previously reported and to ascertain whether or not the students sampled had perceived the changes the teachers reported.

Ten (10) teachers, representing seven (7) schools, cooperated in this aspect of this study. A total of two hundred and fifty-five (255) students also participated.

Part II of Chapter IV reports the results of the analysis of these data.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Part I. Pre-Demonstration, Post-Demonstration, and Two-Month Follow-Up Questionnaires

Ridgewood's Demonstration Center for the Gifted hosted 336 visitors between October 1, 1964 and May 1, 1965. Of these, the greatest percentage (43 percent) were classroom teachers. The remainder of the 336 visitors were classified as follows:

CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL VISITORS
Supervisors (principals, assistant principals, department heads)	21
College Students	10
Administrators (superintendents, assistant superintendents, "others")	9
College professors	6
Counselors	5
Board members	3
Librarians	2
High School students	1

Complete pre-demonstration and post-demonstration questionnaire data had been obtained from 136 visitors as of March 1, 1965 and the "Two-Month Follow-up Questionnaire" had been returned by 43 of the 50 visitors to whom it had been sent at

that time. The responses of these persons constitute the bases upon which the remainder of Part I of this chapter is based.

Visitors, when asked to specify what prompted them to visit Ridgewood, said they had come for one of the four reasons listed below.

REASON	PERCENT OF VISITOR SAMPLE
1. Recommended by another person	39
2. See Ridgewood in action because they consider it a "unique" school	30
3. Get "new ideas" in order to incorporate some changes in their teaching methods	20
4. See the school in action after seeing the Center's circular advertising	11

More specifically, visitors said they hoped to learn about Ridgewood's philosophy of education, its grouping and scheduling procedures, team teaching, independent study activity, four-phased instruction, evaluating the school's programs, and students' reactions to the school. Generally, visitors seemed most interested in seeing the program "work".

Visitors responses to the "Post-Demonstration Questionnaire", answered at the end of the visiting day, indicated the visit had

met their expectations as follows:

CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE OF VISITOR SAMPLE
Very Satisfactorily	69
Satisfactorily	31
Not Satisfactory	0
Total	100

It would appear that visitors, then, did learn about those aspects of Ridgewood's program in which they had indicated, on the "Pre-Demonstration Questionnaire", an interest. Further supportive evidence of this fact, in addition to the high percentage of visitors who said the visit had met their expectations "very satisfactorily", was specific reference by visitors to the special interest in the following aspects of the program: unique student and teacher roles and particularly, the emphasis upon students' accepting responsibility for their own learning; use of audio-visual and library facilities; scheduling and grouping procedures; "phased" instruction, especially seminars, individual study programs, and large group instruction; and, team teaching and planning.

When asked to specify those ways in which the demonstration program failed to meet their expectations, 68 percent of the visitors made no negative comments. The remaining 32 percent of the visitors often questioned the desirability of such

practices as student-directed seminars, student "freedom", the value of independent study, and the value of some student evaluation procedures, such as the guaranteed "A" for able students, optional tests, and student-teacher discussions.

When asked to comment about the demonstration procedure itself, every visitor (100 percent) had some positive comment. Generally, visitors said that the program was well-planned and executed, that the introductory filmstrip and tape narration was very helpful, that the use of student guides was a very good procedure, and that the opportunity to visit with students and teachers about the school was the most profitable part of the demonstration program.

Approximately 35 percent of the visitors made some comments that were classified as "negative." Most of these (70 percent) said they would like to have spent more time talking with teachers and students. Others felt that the whole school should have been demonstrated, or that more advance materials should have been mailed prior to the visit, or that the introductory filmstrip was too general to be of much value.

Ninety-six percent (96) of the visitors answered the question, "Which of the procedures you saw demonstrated here, if any, do you feel might be appropriate for schools in your

district?" Approximately 50 percent of the respondents felt that seminars, individual study programs, and/or team teaching would be appropriate procedures to use in their respective districts. In order of the frequency with which they were mentioned, visitors also suggested that the following procedures, or some modification of them, might be suitable for incorporation into their districts: large group instruction, increased student freedom and responsibility outside of class, modular scheduling, learning laboratories, four-phased instruction, expanded use of library and audio-visual facilities and materials, ability grouping, and using student-teacher planned programs rather than textbook units in various subject areas.

As was noted earlier, the "Two-Month Follow-Up Questionnaire" had been sent, as of March 1, 1965, to 50 visitors and had been returned by 43 persons or 86 percent. The purpose of the follow-up questionnaire was to determine the reliability of the statements visitors made while at the school and to obtain information about any actions visitors might have taken as a result of their visit to the school.

When asked to recall how well their visit to Ridgewood had met their expectations, 54 percent of the questionnaire respondents said "very satisfactorily," 44 percent said "satisfactorily" and two percent reported "not satisfactorily."

Fifty-eight percent (58) of the 43 respondents said they had attempted to implement some of the procedures they had seen demonstrated two months earlier, and another 28 percent reported that they were then planning to incorporate some change as a result of their visit. Fourteen percent (14) of the respondents reported that they had not and/or did not intend to make any changes in their present behavior as a result of their visit to Ridgewood's Demonstration Center.

Those 25 educators who reported some changed behavior as a result of their visit said they had attempted the following practices:

PRACTICE	PERCENT OF TOTAL REPORTING CHANGE
Individual study programs	30
Seminars	24
Large Group lectures	19
In-service Training	13
Team Teaching	11
Programmed Instruction	3
Total	100

Those 12 educators who said they intended to implenent some kind of change in the future reported they were interested in the following practices:

PRACTICE	PERCENT OF TOTAL PLANNING CHANGE
Seminars	19
Large Group Instruction	19
Independent Study Programs	14
Team Teaching	14
Modular Scheduling	14
Subject Area Resource Centers	10
"Innovations in General"	10
Total	100

Part II. Validating Reported Changes in Teachers' Teaching Behavior

Ten (10) teachers and 255 students representing seven high schools participated in the final phase of the study. The teachers were selected from those who had indicated on the "Two-Month Follow-up Questionnaire" that they had changed some aspect of their teaching behavior as a result of their visit to Ridgewood's Demonstration Center. The purpose of this phase of the study was to determine whether or not a sample of the selected teachers' students perceived the changes the teachers had reported.

The writer visited the seven schools and administered a questionnaire to the selected teachers and to a sample of each of their students. Each of the 10 teachers again reported changes in their teaching behavior and eight of the 10 (80 percent) reported the same changes they had reported on the "Two-Month

Follow-up Questionnaire." Nine of the 10 teachers (90 percent) elaborated further on this questionnaire and reported additional changes as well. Nine of the 10 (90 percent) confirmed again that their visit to Ridgewood's Demonstration Center had played an important role in changing their teaching behaviors.

No attempt was made to test teacher-student agreement statistically. Instead, teacher-reported changes and the changes students reported having perceived were listed in order of the frequency with which they were mentioned. Data from all teachers and from all students were grouped together.

Teacher-reported and student-reported changes are listed below in order of decreasing frequency with which they were mentioned.

TEACHER-REPORTED CHANGES	STUDENT-REPORTED CHANGES
Used seminar discussion	Teacher encouraged independent study
Encouraged independent study	Teacher used seminar discussion
Used team teaching	Teacher added resource materials
Used large group instruction	Teacher used large group instruction
Used new student evaluation procedure	Teacher used new evaluation procedure
Added resource materials	Teacher used team teaching

The percentage of students reporting independent agreement with teacher-reported changes varied among the 10 teaching situations. In those instances where the teacher-reported change could be classified as "procedural," agreement between students' perceptions and teacher reports was almost unanimous. For example, students almost always reported that their teachers had attempted to incorporate independent study and seminars into their instructional practices when the teachers had reported those changes. A relatively small percentage of the students, however, reported that they had perceived such practices as new student evaluation procedure, team teaching and/or team planning.

The investigator attempted to assess teachers' and students' attitudes toward the changed teacher-behavior by discussing them informally in the school settings with the teachers and students. In all cases, teachers and students appeared interested in and positive about the attempts to change that teachers had made.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Analysis of the data suggest that the following conclusions are valid:

1. Word-of-mouth "advertising" appears to have been the most successful way to encourage educators to visit Ridgewood's Demonstration Center. The fact that Ridgewood is generally regarded as a "unique" school apparently contributed significantly to others' interest in visiting it.

2. Regardless of the specific purpose visitors gave for choosing to visit the school, a large percentage (69) reported the visit was "very satisfactory." No visitors said their visit was "not satisfactory."

3. Visitors consistently gave evidence of being interested in further information about specific aspects of the program when they left Ridgewood. Interest in the following areas was particularly keen: unique student and teacher roles, especially student "free-time"; use of audio-visual and library facilities; scheduling and grouping procedures; "phased" instruction, especially seminars, individual study programs, and large group instruction; and team teaching and planning.

4. A small percentage (32) of visitors made negative comments about their visit and when they did, they questioned the following practices: student-directed seminars, student "freedom," the value of independent study, and the value of such student evaluation techniques as the guaranteed "A" grade for able students, optional tests, and student-teacher discussions.

5. Most visitors left Ridgewood feeling that some procedures they saw demonstrated would be appropriate for use in their respective districts. Seminars, individual study programs, and/or team teaching were the practices mentioned most often by visitors.

6. Two months after their visit to the Center, 54 percent of the 86 percent who returned follow-up questionnaires reported that the visit had met their expectations "very satisfactorily," 44 percent said "satisfactorily" and two percent reported "not satisfactorily." These data were not substantially different from those reported by visitors at the end of their visiting day and thus, suggest that visitors reactions expressed at the end of the visiting day are reliable indices of how visitors are likely to feel two months later.

7. Eighty-eight percent (88) of the visitors who responded to the "Two-month Follow-up Questionnaire" reported that they had either implemented or intended to implement some procedure they had seen demonstrated at Ridgewood High School. Individual study programs, seminar discussions, and large group lectures, were the practices most often attempted or planned by the questionnaire respondents.

8. A sample of 255 students representing 7 high schools conclusively verified "procedural" changes their teachers reported they made as a result of their visit to Ridgewood High School. Students almost unanimously verified such teacher-reported changes as the incorporation of independent study and seminar discussion.

9. Students did not, generally, verify such teacher-reported changes a s new student evaluation procedures, team teaching, and team planning.

10. Informal assessment by the investigator of teachers' and students' attitudes toward the changes teachers made suggested that all concerned felt positively about them.

The findings appear to clearly suggest that Ridgewood High School's Demonstration Center did serve as an agent of

change in at least seven high schools. Further, the instructional procedure changes it helped to effect were, generally, perceived by the students involved.

The data indicate that such procedures as seminar discussion, independent study, and large group instruction are readily accepted and incorporated by teachers and are subsequently clearly perceived by students. Such procedures as student evaluation techniques, team teaching, and team planning, while often accepted and adopted by teachers, are not readily perceived by students.

It would appear, then, that one way to effect some kinds of change in the educational community is to demonstrate "unique" educational programs. Further, it would appear that the kinds of changes that have been attempted by teachers can be ascertained by asking them, two months after their visit, what changes they have attempted to incorporate. Teacher reports, however, are not necessarily a reliable index of which changes students have perceived. Generally, those changes that can be classified as "procedural" are adopted by teachers and perceived by students more often than are changes of a less obvious or specific nature.

If one subscribes to the theory that change, in order to be meaningful, must be perceived by the objects of it, one would have to question, on the basis of the data presented herein, whether or not demonstration programs can effect anything other than "procedural" changes. It is possible of course, that changes other than those classified as "procedural" will, ultimately be perceived by the objects of them. It would appear, therefore, that further research of a more longitudinal nature is in order.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B

RIDGEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL
STATE DEMONSTRATION CENTER FOR THE GIFTED
Pre-Demonstration Questionnaire

Today's Date_____

Name_____

Position_____

Representing_____

Mailing Address_____

_____

Please answer the following questions as completely and as accurately as you can.

1. What prompted you to want to visit Ridgewood's Demonstration Center for the Gifted?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What do <u>you</u> hope to learn from your visit here today? Be as specific as you can.

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

RIDGEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL
STATE DEMONSTRATION CENTER FOR THE GIFTED
Post-Demonstration Questionnaire

Name_____Today's Date_____

We are attempting to learn as much as possible about two aspects of our program:

(1) the effectiveness of the presentation of our Demonstration Center materials;

(2) the impact of the ideas--such as team teaching or seminar instruction--presented via our Demonstration Center program.

We would, therefore, very much appreciate your answering the following questions as completely and as accurately as you can.

(1) Please <u>circle</u> the word or phrase that best describes how well your visit to Ridgewood's Demonstration Center for the Gifted met <u>your</u> expectations:

Very satisfactorily Satisfactorily Not Satisfactorily

(2) What did you see that was of particular interest to you? Please be specific. _____

_____

(3) In what specific ways, if any, did the demonstration program fail to meet your expectations?_____

_____

(4) Please express freely your reactions to the filmstrip and tape recording, the tour, the class visits and/or any other aspect(s) of our demonstration program. Both positive and negative comments are invited.

(a) positive:_____

_____

_____

(b) negative:_____

_____

_____

(5) Which of the procedures you saw demonstrated here, if any, do you feel might be appropriate for schools in your district? Please be specific._____

_____

_____

(6) Would you recommend to others that they visit Ridgewood's Demonstration Center for the Gifted in order to learn more about teaching academically able students? Yes____ No____

(7) If you are connected with a high school, does that school currently have a program for academically able students? Yes_____No_____

(8) Ridgewood High School's staff offers the following services to teachers and schools interested in initiating or further developing programs for academically able students. Please check below any services that would be of interest to you.

A. Information and/or consultation about?

1. identifying academically able students _____
2. organizing a program _____
3. curriculum planning in humanities _____
4. curriculum planning in physics _____
5. large group instruction _____
6. seminar instruction _____
7. laboratory instruction _____
8. independent study _____
9. organizing a demonstration center _____
10. selecting demonstration teachers _____
11. how to obtain state support for experimental programs _____
12. evaluating experimental programs _____

B. Demonstration of (for nearby schools):

1. humanities class _____
2. physics class _____

Please Note: It is our intention to send one short follow-up questionnaire to all persons who visit the Center. We are dependent upon the information you give us to assess the effectiveness of our program and we would sincerely appreciate your cooperation. Upon completing our study, we will be happy to send a summary of our findings to participants who would like to receive one.

APPENDIX D

RIDGEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL
STATE DEMONSTRATION CENTER FOR THE GIFTED
VISIT FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

Today's Date_____
Name_____

Approximately two months ago, you visited Ridgewood High School's Demonstration Center for the Gifted. At that time, you were kind enough to give us a few minutes of your time to comment about your visit. We should very much appreciate your giving your visit a few minutes of thought once more in order to answer the following questions as completely and as accurately as you can.

1. Please circle the word or phrase that best describes how well your visit to Ridgewood's Demonstration Center for the Gifted met your expectations.

   Very Satisfactorily Satisfactorily Not Satisfactorily

2. Please comment freely about any aspect(s) of our demonstration program about which you now feel strongly. Both positive and negative comments are invited.

   (a) positive:_____

   _____

   (b) negative:_____

   _____

3. Which of the procedures that you saw demonstrated at Ridgewood do you feel might be appropriate for schools in your district? Please be as specific as you can._____

   _____

4. As a result of your visit to the Center, did you try to implement any of the procedures you saw demonstrated at Ridgewood? Yes____No____.

   (a) If yes, please explain the action(s) you took as precisely as you can:_____

   _____

   (b) If no, do you presently have any plans to try to implement any of the procedures you saw demonstrated at Ridgewood? Please explain as fully as you can:_____

   _____

5. Are there any particular aspects of Ridgewood's program about which you would like to know more? Please be as specific as you can._____

   _____

6. Would you recommend to others that they visit Ridgewood's Demonstration Center for the Gifted in order to learn more about teaching academically able students? Yes____No____

7. Would you like to receive a summary of our Demonstration Center Study findings? Yes____No____

8. Any additional comments_____

   _____

Please return your completed questionnaire as soon as possible in the enclosed stamped, return envelope. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

APPENDIX E

Dear Ridgewood Visitor:

Greetings again from Ridgewood High School's State Demonstration Center for the Gifted. We thank you for visiting us during this school year and we sincerely hope that your visit was of some help to you in your work. We want to thank you too for cooperating with our Demonstration Center studies to date and to request, once more, that you lend us your assistance.

We are in the process of completing this year's evaluation of the effectiveness of our Demonstration Center program. The study with which you are being asked to cooperate now is a follow-up study of some teachers who returned the Center's two-month follow-up questionnaire and expressed a special interest in some aspects of our program. Mr. Robert Roskamp, Demonstration physics teacher, will conduct the study.

Mr. Roskamp would like to visit your school to administer a short questionnaire (20 minutes) to you and to one class of your students. The entire visit will not exceed one hour. Information will be treated confidentially and a report of the findings of the study will be sent to you.

Mr. Roskamp can visit you on_____

or _____. He will call you personally on

_____, at _____to confirm

an appointment with you.

We should very much appreciate your cooperation with this project.

Yours very truly,

Beecham Robinson
Demonstration Center Director

APPENDIX F

Today's Date:_____
Grade:_____
Class:_____
School:_____
Male_____Female_____

Looking back over this year, think about your teacher's manner of teaching, about the things that he or she does to make this class both effective and ineffective. You might want to jot down some notes about your thoughts on this paper.

Then, think about whether or not your teacher's teaching methods and/or attitudes seem to you to have changed in any way during the course of this year.

Now, describe as completely as you can those changes, if any, that you can recall. Please be as specific as you can.

You will have 20 minutes to write. Your comments will not be read by your teacher.

APPENDIX G

Today's Date_____
Subject Area Taught:_____
_____
Grade Level:_____
Male_____ Female_____

Looking back over this year, think about your manner of teaching, about the things that you do that you feel make your classes both effective and ineffective.

Then, think about the ways in which you feel you have tried to change your teaching methods and/or attitudes during the course of this year.

Now, in section "a" below, describe as completely as you can those changes, if any, that you feel you have tried to make this year.

In section "b" page 2, describe as specifically as you can what and/or who prompted you to try to make any changes reported in section "a".

Your responses to this questionnaire will be treated confidentially. Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX H

The following is a list of schools that cooperated in the final follow-up study:

Auburn High School, Rockford, Illinois

Dekalb High School, Dekalb, Illinois

Dist. No. 6. Ft. Atkinson, Wisconsin

East High School, Rockford, Illinois

Guilford High School, Rockford, Illinois

Immaculate Conception High School, Elmhurst, Illinois

West High School, Rockford, Illinois

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Robert G. Roskamp has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Education.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

_____ _____

Date Signature of Adviser