# The Need for Grassroots Implementation in Educational Research

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We are now as a Nation engaged in an aggressive program to improve the educational institutions of our country. In the historic 89th Congress in 1965, after long debate and struggle, we were finally able to enact the first massive program of general aid to elementary and secondary schools. It has always seemed to me an anomaly that we should have had to work so long and so assiduously to help education, when of all the institutions of civilized society, it is the only organized effort of man which truly epitomizes the democratic ideals of freedom and opportunity. The book-learning, the concepts and principles of freedom, the mores and traditions of this Union, the dreams and aspirations of our unspoiled youth, and the motivation to become a part of the complex mechanism of life reflect the values of a strong and vigorous educational system. I cannot conceive of any more vital concerns for the future of this Nation than those which focus upon the quality of our education.

There are many who argue that the Federal government has already moved too far and too quickly. My contention is that we have only scratched the surface and that far more needs to be done if we are really to meet the challenges of the future. Not only do we have to equalize the opportunities for educating all of our children — those in the ghettos and slums of our cities and those in the remote regions of the countryside without the wealth to sustain an adequate education—but we must also constantly seek quality and freshness of approach.

It is in maintaining this delicate balance between controlling equality and enhancing innovation that the Federal government meets its greatest challenge. It can be a moving force to expand opportunity for all our children, for no one would deny the fundamental premise that equal opportunity ought to be granted to all. At the same time it can be a force which promotes innovation in order that we may shape the education of the future.

Now that we have made an initial stride forward, much of our attention must be turned to modernizing, updating, freshening our present approach to education. In the two years' experience with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 we have learned that many educators have been too timid in their applications of Federal aid: too often they have viewed government funds as a means to do more of the same; too many have shied away from the implicit challenge to experiment, to revamp, to innovate. We in Congress cannot supply the innovation. We can react to the

demonstrated need for more funds; we can provide the tools for change; but we cannot reach into the individual classroom and define and create the new programs which are needed. The educators, as experts working with the human material, must take the lead in striking out on new paths which the changing times demand. Congress is not by nature a pioneering institution: it moves cautiously because of the very nature of its composition. The status quo always mounts a strong defense in our society, and we must devote our efforts to overcoming the prevalent "what was good enough for me is good enough for my kids" attitude. The stimulus for change must emanate from the classroom. It must be a constant flow of departures from the norm. Experimentation and innovation are key concepts and themes. Only by holding these as values can we hope to conquer the tremendous public and official inertia lying between us and our vision of the future.

With the passage of ESEA and the provision of additional funds for research in education it is quite obvious that the apparatus of education is a growing business demanding our attention. Corporations are keenly interested in the possibilities for new markets. Exciting new hardware has hit the streets, and educators have become intrigued, fascinated, and sometimes perhaps fearful of the implications. An industry — new, mechanical, "computerized" — offers interesting avenues for public investment. We are no longer talking only about individual teaching machines for classroom use, but programmed research and reference facilities.

The development of such technology was inevitable, and the extent of its practical application must be confronted. We must examine these new teaching and research techniques and set the limits of public expenditure for such items, lest we move in directions which serve to compound the inequalities now making educational opportunity unattainable to the vast majority of our children. Just as man must set certain goals in life for himself, so it is imperative that we set goals for the machines we have created. The governments of nations have set up priorities with reference to international agreements on nuclear weaponry, and our government in concert with the States and with local school administrators must similarly come to grips with proposing values for the new technology in education. By setting forth goals and ideals for the use and dissemination of technology, our nation can continue to foster and promote the goals of equal opportunity and avoid being the instrument for furtherance of a sophisticated inequality. Those who program the materials for use in these teaching machines will share a great responsibility for their effectiveness. This advent is a source of great relief for the classroom teacher, for properly used, the machine will serve to relieve him of the monotony of repetition and exercise which has been so much a part of the daily routine of teaching.

I am firmly convinced that the classroom teacher, the heart and head of our entire school system, has been truly the neglected and forgotten element. Not only is he in need of advisement on new techniques and gadgetry, but his needs and his consequent effectiveness in nurturing our youth must receive far more attention than now. We need to elevate the teacher in the public eye; we need to give him his deserved status. We must make him aware of how our hopes rise and fall with him; we must allow him the opportunity not only to teach but also to learn and to renew his knowledge and abilities. It is another anachronism of American education that the teacher, historically an honored figure treated with great respect by societies of many eras, should be so carelessly relegated to the status of tutor rather than mentor. Much remains to be done, legislatively and within the local community, in developing the education profession and its image.

There is also crying need for innovation and new outlooks in relation to the changing patterns of our social structure. We must develop a concern for creating new kinds of community surroundings. How, for example, are we to contend with the growth of the inner and outer city? How are we to provide for more meaningful and distributed urban growth and development? Here too we must break with tradition and establish centers of learning at the secondary level where students may come for the best we are able to offer. This concept of an educational "park" which would provide a community access to various kinds of activities from the grades through high school to continuing education is what I envision as I look ahead to the future in educational innovation.

There is a great need for an interaction among the States, local jurisdictions, and the Federal government; there is a need for pooling research capabilities and resources through data collection to quicken the pulse of education at all levels in every part of the country. The weaknesses and strengths of diverse systems and techniques need to be recorded and analyzed, and the best of them disseminated for the benefit of all.

As we discuss and dissect the role of increasing specialization and advanced technology, we can perceive that the education industries are humane recognitions of the fact that engineering knowhow can be harnessed for the general good of the

populace. As always when we have had to utilize our technological potential to tap the natural resources and wonders of our physical environment, so too today we employ it to understand how we can better teach our children. And we must listen to those who voice concern about our massive attempts to standardize education and reduce the individual to a by-product of cybernetics.

We must somehow prepare the student for his role, for the accelerating rate of change he will have to contend with and adjust to. Yet we must reveal to him that beneath the temporal nature of scientific and technological change exist more fundamental tools of existence out of which our past was made and from which our future can also be fashioned.

Especially at a time when we are talking of nihilism and apathy, it becomes increasingly important to discuss the particularity of the individual. The avenues which the Federal government has opened in education will become increasingly more significant as the pressures of conformity increase. Only if we truly believe in and practice education as the renewal and perpetuation of a free and individualistic society will we be molding and shaping a future yet to be realized through the dynamic instrument of learning.

What, we might ask, are we doing to ensure that the monies which we are spending for education are entering those areas which will produce men and women better able to meet the changing demands of a still undetermined future? None of us possessed the clairvoyance in his own youth to predict the shape of life today with all its advances in technology and their impact on civilization. How much effort, then, are we now expending in an attempt to anticipate what will be the human and the educational problems of the twenty-first century? In the midst of our sometimes frenetic efforts to bring our schools into the second half of the twentieth century, might it be asking too much to set our sights fifty or a hundred years hence and to attempt to forecast what life will be like then? Perhaps if we envision the future we may move forward with conscious goals instead of always playing "catch-up."

And yet there are portents and signs of various afflictions besetting the human condition today, which cannot help being magnified should we not take heed and apply the lessons available to us. I refer to the alienation from traditional mores of increasing numbers of our youth, to rebels denying entrenched customs. As thousands and thousands of them flock toward the banners of dissent, to the cults of individuality, to what we disparagingly term "hippie" and "beat" behavior, we see more clearly that we have failed to channel and direct the restless, intelligent energies of many of our most promising young people. Bored and unfulfilled with the status quo we offer them, they call for massive innovation and shift in directions. I am convinced that we must respond to the message if we can but learn to interpret it. We must perceive our educational failures to date and face up to them if we are ever to begin the long, hard road to the means and the methods of bringing out the best in every individual. The goals of education remain unchanged from century to century; yet we tend to forget that the development of the whole man is our lasting and intangible ideal.

We must endeavor to create an appreciation for the human race as something special, to develop laughter, to create a climate of compassion and tolerance, where each child will come to understand his own emotions and his own mind. We must teach him to understand his own body, train his eye to see and his ears to hear, help him learn to jump and run, to throw a ball, to ride a bicycle, to lift a weight. All these are integral to the uniqueness of each of us as individuals. We must teach a youth how to value what is best in himself without scorn for his peers who may have other talents. Besides employing specialized textbooks and techniques for honing the modern mind, we need to keep alive in our youth a love of music and art, an appreciation of theology and myth.

The swirl of technology is so massive and confusing that we need to seek out and emphasize the fundamentals of human existence; we need to help our children sift out the important values in life. Even with the most advanced knowledge and in the most sophisticated society, there exists the possibility that we neglect to educate our youth to develop an awareness of his fellow man; we neglect to educate him in the pursuit of happiness and self-fulfillment through meaningful and significant goals. We neglect to reveal to him the deep values of family and community living. If these ideals remain neglected, I submit that we shall be reversing the processes of human evolution and destroying the bright promise with which each individual is brought forth into this exciting and often bewildering world.

We need to educate the whole person, not just in partitioned academic subjects; we must focus on the education of the human personality.

These are the concerns that will continue to move the Congress and the Federal agencies to action, and which will continue to be the motivation for exciting legislation such as that born in Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.