

Results From the First Year of a Nationwide, Multi-method Evaluation of Innovative  
Programs Serving At-risk Students:  
*Implementation of The Paideia Proposal*

Pamela S. Nesselrodt and Eugene C. Schaffer  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
College of Education and Allied Professions  
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
Charlotte, NC 28223

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Paideia School A

The three story *Paideia School A* sits in the middle of a neighborhood made up primarily of rowhouses. Some of these appear cared for while others are empty and have broken windows which have been boarded over. In the neighborhood, there are signs admonishing residents to take care of their surroundings. There is a grayness about both the neighborhood and the exterior of the school facility. The school has no playground; there is only a basketball goal in the parking lot which is fenced by wire.

The contrast between the exterior of the school building and the interior is surprising. Inside, the building is warm and cheerful. The halls are painted a bright yellow, and the first two floors which house grades K-5 are decorated with the children's work and charts showing grades students can earn and the criteria for earning them. Shelves in the stairwells display books which remain unguarded and unstolen.

Throughout the day, the regimented movement of the children can be noticed. They are lined up for restroom breaks, for lunch, etc. Some are told to stand up straight "like little soldiers." Overall, the children's behavior is tightly controlled. They are reminded of rules in no uncertain terms. Despite the rather bleak environment in which the school sits and the economic backgrounds of the children who come here to learn, a sense of pride pervades the school.

Perhaps one of the most dramatic signs both of this pride and of the contrast between the external environment of the school and the school itself is seen and heard at the beginning of each school day. The bell rings to signal that children should be in their classrooms. The voice of the school's French teacher says, "Good morning," and she leads them in the pledging of allegiance to the American flag in both English and in French. Then, perhaps the most touching aspect of this scene--793 African-American children, 90% of whom are eligible for free or reduced-priced breakfasts and lunches, in a school sitting amid a partially bombed-out neighborhood lift their voices to sing:

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies.  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us.  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.  
Facing the rising sun of a new day begun  
Let us march on till victory is won.

The singing of the African-American National Anthem is for obvious reasons. The recitation of the pledge of allegiance in French for not so obvious but certainly rational ones. First, the Francophone-African connections are strong; therefore, it makes sense for children who are all of African descent to study French. Second, because of the classical tradition of educated people learning French, the Paideia Program's originators at the school decided that the children here would learn it too. This kind of classical tradition is part of the underpinning of the Paideia Program.

### Tenets of the Program

The implementation of the Paideia Program is based on Mortimer Adler's concept of how children should be educated in a democratic society as set forth in *The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto*. Adler espouses the idea that all children are entitled to the same education both in terms of content and in terms of instructional methodology. That is, all children should be given "cream" rather than some being given "cream" while others are given "skim milk." The program, then, is meant for all students no matter what their abilities. It seeks to develop all aspects of the students' cognitions. A fully implemented Paideia Program includes as its goals: (1) "acquisition of knowledge," (2) "development of intellectual skills," and (3) "enlarged understanding of ideas and values" (Adler, 1984, p. 8).

In a later work, *The Paideia Program: An Educational Syllabus*, Adler and the Paideia group present curricular suggestions based primarily on great pieces of literature and conceptual understanding along with three instructional methods: didactic instruction, coaching, and Socratic seminars. Didactic instruction is the kind of instruction currently found in most classrooms in which "teacher talk" is the focus of instruction. Adler believes that this type of instruction is most appropriate for "acquisition of knowledge" (Adler, 1984, p. 8). He describes coaching as one-on-one or small group instruction in which the teacher/coach works with individual students or small groups of students with similar capabilities to improve their skills rather than assuming that students are able to transfer general corrective statements to their own work. This kind of instruction, says Adler, is most appropriate for "development of intellectual skills" (1984, p. 8). Coaching has been interpreted by practitioners as including peer tutoring and computer assisted instruction as well. Socratic seminars, the centerpiece of the program, are discussions among students and teachers based primarily on divergent questions so that a true exploration of ideas can ensue. Adler sees this kind of instruction as most appropriate for "enlarged understanding of ideas and values" (1984, p. 8).

Adler points out that coaching and Socratic seminars are unusual in contemporary classrooms. He summarizes the three kinds of teaching on a chart with each method composing a column--thus a school that has totally embraced the Paideia concept is a "three-column" Paideia school. The responsibilities of the teacher expand to include two new roles--coach and explorer. The teacher becomes a supporter of individual development of students' skills and understanding in the role of coach. He/she becomes an explorer of ideas with students during seminar by formulating questions for which there is not a single, correct answer.

The program, then, is unique in several ways. First, through the conduct of seminars it stresses the equality of opportunity for all learners to discuss ideas presented in pieces of literature and other pieces of art. Second, the seminars redefine the role of the teacher. That is, the teacher becomes an instructional facilitator rather than a storehouse of knowledge. He/she becomes a seeker of knowledge along with children. The coaching aspect, too, is a unique attribute of the program. It emphasizes the individuality of children's needs during the development of skills and requires the teacher to attend to providing individual instruction to each learner to help in that development.

### Paideia School B

*Paideia School B* is located in a large city in the southeast. It is a one-story facility whose main building was erected in 1924, sits amid a lower-middle class neighborhood made up primarily of small brick and frame houses on the side streets and businesses on the four-lane main street that runs in front of the school. The immediate area surrounding the school is a small, former mill community with textile plants and neighborhood businesses. Many of the school's 450 students walk to school. There is also a large concentration of lower socioeconomic students bused from the predominately black west side of the city to meet a court mandated desegregation plan. Additionally, the school serves a large exceptional education (handicapped) component drawn from many parts of the city. Approximately 60% of the children who come to this school receive free/reduced-price lunches.

Classroom windows are often open in warm weather to traffic noises and noises of delivery trucks which pull up next to the building. These noises are sometimes distracting but the lack of air-conditioning in most of the building coupled with the warm climate necessitates the windows' being open. Besides the main building described above, there are three additional permanent external structures that house the multi-purpose room and cafeteria, the art room, and special education classrooms. This year two mobile classrooms have been added as well. There is a large school yard with grass, trees, and a paved playground area with a variety of playground equipment. Plans to expand and renovate the school are underway.

The main foyer of the school's entrance, although relatively dark, is inviting because of an area with padded seats placed in a conversational arrangement. It is also brightened by displays of student work and an easel advertising the school's "Wednesday Revolution." This area is usually quiet in contrast to the office which is a very busy place where children and faculty come for everything from disciplining to clinic services to advice from the secretary about a multitude of things to passing through to the teachers' lounge.

The halls too are relatively dark since they are made of a brownish tile. Bulletin boards and door decorations add color and a bit of warmth to them, however. Classroom doors basically remain closed during the school day and the halls are quiet until children must be moved for various activities. These children too are lined up to move from one area of the school to another. Their teachers quietly smile and nod at guests and at each other. Teachers often address each other by first name during their conversations.

The school day begins with the pledge of allegiance, the school song, and a reminder from the principal that the children should remember that they are from *Paideia School B* where "we're all committed to excellence." Part of this school's commitment to excellence is its implementation of the Paideia Program in an attempt to improve the curriculum and instruction offered to the students of the school. The originators of the program believed that the children in this school deserved the same opportunity to learn and to become critical thinkers as children in more affluent neighborhoods in the city. In the past, the school has consistently reported standardized test scores well below state and system averages. It is typical of many urban schools across the country which have quickly changed from a community of single-family residences to an area of commercial and multifamily structures.

### Essential Elements of the Program

In *Paideia Problems and Possibilities*, Adler presents "some tentative suggestions" (1983, p.66) for the actual implementation of the Paideia Program. He does not, however, provide teachers and school administrators with a model program containing specific guidelines for schools that want to become "three-column" Paideia schools. Instead, Adler leaves "the steps of implementation to practitioners on the spot" (1983, p. 75).

Therefore, schools which wish to implement the program must base implementation on their own understanding of Adler's *Proposal*, visits to other Paideia sites, conversations with fellow implementors, and workshops they might arrange. Approaching implementation in this manner is a monumental task. Not only are the logistics of arranging visits among those interested in the concept difficult but the areas left rather grey by Adler in his writings are large thus requiring much interpretation by implementors. Furthermore, the Paideia content suggested by Adler is stringent in that it is based primarily on great works of literature. Additionally, teaching methodologies are complex requiring skills not typically part of pre-service teacher education programs or in-service training programs. And, finally, the integration of the content with the methodologies requires an understanding of the various pieces of the program as well as an overall vision of it.

The Paideia concept, as described by Adler, requires very few resources beyond the purchase of a library of "great books" and some training of teachers to conduct seminars and to act as academic coaches. Adler sees both of these pieces as being very simple. And, while the purchasing of books may be a simple matter--assuming that monies are available for books anyway--teacher training is not necessarily so. A complete implementation, however, would involve substantial restructuring.

As described above, Adler's *Proposal* hinges on the utilization of three methods of instruction: didactic, coaching, and Socratic seminar. These methodologies cannot be fully implemented in traditional classrooms. Adler recommends a difference that, from the researchers' point-of-view argues for a restructuring not only of the curriculum but also of the school day and changes in grouping procedures as well as teacher-student interactions.

In order for a school to meet the goals of Adler's Paideia Program, it would reduce student-teacher ratios for coaching, increase time available for seminar, reduce the subjects taught in school, and permit seminar times to be based on intellectual needs of students. The sites selected for this study have altered the time available for seminar, but have not restructured other elements to meet the goals of the program.

Adler also suggests that Paideia teachers be liberally, generally, and humanistically educated so that they "can help others to learn" (1982, pp. 60-61). Following this kind of undergraduate program, Adler calls for graduate teacher education or an internship period to learn how to teach.

Adler sets forth the notion that as long as a small cohort of strong teachers are part of the program, they will be able to pull the others along and strengthen the skills of those weaker cogs in the Paideia machinery. [Based on the observations of these researchers, that is probably not the case. Staff development is a very important piece of the program at both sites included in this study. Likewise, implementers usually choose to have much more in the way of supportive staff and resources, a program coordinator, computers to assist in the coaching of students, electronic bookshelves to monitor student's reading, hands-on science materials, and whole-language-based texts, parent-volunteer coordinators, etc.]

The administration at both the school and district levels has substantial impact on the program as it has in any restructuring activity, but Adler focuses on the building administrator. According to Adler, the very least an administrator can do is to understand and support the implementation of the program. An active and committed principal, who has power, recruits staff interested in the program and releases those who do not meet standards. Adler adds that the principal must "have the power to establish and enforce rules of decorum." Finally, the principal, as master teacher, creates opportunities to involve students, teachers, and the community to enhance the program. (1983, pp. 63-65).

#### Implementation of Paideia at the School Level

*Paideia School A* is a K-8 inner-city school, in a large midwestern city, with approximately 800 students. The Paideia Program at this school has been implemented for eight years. The curriculum makes it one of the district's magnet programs which were "established in neighborhood schools to increase the educational opportunities for students."

The Paideia program at this school was started in 1983 by the former principal. He shared the idea with the faculty who agreed that it would be appropriate for the children at this school whom, they felt probably would not have the opportunity to learn to think critically if it did not happen at school.

The Paideia Program is intended to be an integral part of the school's total curriculum and is implemented in every classroom in the school; therefore, all children are a part of it. The school's main thrust in its implementation of the Paideia program has been in the areas of

Socratic seminars and coaching. Therefore, staff development has focused on developing teaching skills related to those two methods of instruction.

At this school seminar sessions and coached follow-up activities have traditionally been scheduled for 1 1/2 hours on Wednesday morning. Teachers report that they assign the reading of a piece of literature several days in advance of the seminar discussion. Children who can read are responsible for reading the selection once or twice before the discussion. Teachers also often precede seminar days with pertinent vocabulary lessons (sometimes generated by the students). Some teachers also encourage students to write questions that occur to them as they read the selections.

On seminar mornings, the children and their teachers sit in their desks which are arranged in a large rectangle in the center of the classroom. During the seminar, teachers usually ask three to five prepared questions, one of which deals with the basic theme of the selection. This question is to permit divergent thinking on the part of students without a preconceived outcome on the teacher's part. As the seminar progresses, teachers must interactively develop follow-up questions that help students to clarify their opinions both through agreement/disagreement with a classmate's point of view and through reference to text that supports their points of view. Although consensus does not have to be reached, the discussion leader must decide when the group has concluded meaningful exploration of the ideas presented in the selection.

Usually after seminar, follow-up activities related to the main idea of the selection take place. These follow-up activities are individual activities during which the teachers "coach" students to develop their intellectual skills. Coached activities at this site are writing activities which employ staff and computer labs for the coaching. During each marking period, the entire staff focuses on the same type of writing which then changes with the beginning of the next marking period.

An important aspect in the implementation and development of the Paideia concept at this school is that teachers receive continual staff development both at faculty retreats at the beginning of the school year and at staff seminar/training sessions held once a month after school throughout the school year. Additionally, teachers have the opportunity to attend Paideia training workshops at St. John's College in Santa Fe, NM during the summer months. During the summer of 1989, eight teachers took advantage of the NM training. As new teachers join the faculty, they receive mentoring from veteran seminar leaders who conduct the seminars in new teachers' classrooms as demonstrations until new teachers feel ready to take over themselves. In addition, they immediately become part of the faculty seminars and again learn through modeling. There are no orientation/ training sessions for new faculty. Consultants from the Adler Institute have played an integral part in the staff development by conducting both staff and student seminars at the school.

In 1988 significant reforms in the management structure and curricular program of both the school district and of the school itself were instituted. These changes include shifts of decision making to the local school, increased financial resources and responsibilities in the hands

of individual schools' administrations, and a movement of curricular decision making to the individual schools. These changes altered the Paideia program and, according to the school's principal, will probably continue to alter the program for several years.

The school has begun working toward moving from its focus on the centerpiece of the Paideia model, the seminar, toward fully embracing the concept and becoming a "three-column" Paideia school. The administration would like to see Paideia methodology used in all content areas and to see seminar readings be more than just literary selections.

The implementation of the Paideia program at *School B* is in most ways very similar to the implementation at *School A* described above. At both schools, the program was initially implemented as part of the language arts program and a block of time has been designated for seminars throughout the school one morning a week. The primary difference in the seminars is the time allotted at each site. At *School A*, 1 1/2 hours are set aside each week while at *School B*, 2 1/2 hours are allocated. Another difference is that at *School B* the seminar follow-up activities are not always writing activities; art and movement activities are also included. When follow-ups are writing activities, particular writing skills are not systematically developed schoolwide as at *School A*.

Like *School A*, *School B* has begun working toward becoming a "three-column" Paideia school. Perhaps the biggest difference in the implementation of the program at the two sites is the speed with which the two administrative staffs have begun to move the schools toward becoming three-column Paideia schools. *School A* was in its eighth year when it began making plans for fuller implementation of the Paideia concept. *School B*, on the other hand, was in its second.

Staff development is also different at the two schools. Unlike *School A*, *School B* does not have close contact with the Adler Institute. Rather, its links are with the National Paideia Center. The school has also used consultants from other Paideia Schools in the southeast and school staff to prepare the faculty for the program. *Junior Great Books* training for 12 hours for all staff was also instituted. A coaching activity for two faculty members, travel to other sites (including *School A*), and attendance at the National Paideia Conference by the coordinator and one teacher were other external activities. Some of the faculty have participated in specialized graduate work in conjunction with the Paideia Program. Faculty-initiated staff development included involvement of all teachers in de-briefing sessions each week. Additionally, peer observations, demonstration seminars, and teachers working with university students have all been parts of staff development. New faculty receive several days training in the philosophical underpinnings of the Paideia Program and in the conduct of seminars before the beginning of school.

### Web of Support

The stability of the Paideia Program at *School A*, as evidenced by its longevity--eight years, seems to be a result of a number of mechanisms that support its maintenance. First, the

school district has recognized the program as an integral part of its magnet offerings and promotes this school in its magnet school literature. In fact, there are three Paideia schools in the district. And, because this particular site has a magnet program in a predominately African-American neighborhood, it receives a substantial amount of desegregation monies from the federal government which seem to support the sustaining of the program. Other funding comes from a local bank which contributed \$100,000 for training, resources, and books during the 1990-91 school year.

In addition to this funding from the bank, it subsidizes Saturday seminars for graduates of the school who are not currently enrolled in a Paideia high school which further supports the maintenance of the Paideia concept in the district. Other community support comes from a local religious organization which sponsors four parent seminars a year. Approximately 60 parents attend these each year. There is also a small cohort of about five parents who volunteer much of their time to the school by performing clerical duties. Another bit of external support for the program comes from its ongoing relationship with the Adler Institute.

Finally, it seems that the site-based management in place within the school district supports the continuation of the program. Because the principal is free to allocate funds as she deems fit, it is relatively easy to maintain and expand the program. A second support, closely related to this, is the principal's own belief in the program. This appears to guarantee leadership that enables the continuation of the program during her tenure at the school.

*School B's* program appears to be less stable. Admittedly, it is difficult to assess stability in the second year of a program's implementation. However, several factors point toward instability in this program. *School B* began its program with monies from the school district's Flexible Funding Grants Program, which supports efforts at implementing innovations in the local schools. The school has not, however, received the same level of recognition as an integral of the district's offerings as *School A*. For example, the school's Paideia coordinator was unsure of whether her position would be refunded for the second year of implementation until August, 1990--only weeks before the opening of school.

The district provided \$37,000 of district monies along with state and Flexible Funding Grants Program funds during the 1990-91 school year. The budget was less than half requested by the school. This level of support did not permit the development of support programs for parents and delayed the establishment of the Electronic Bookshelf at the School. An additional grant of approximately \$30,000 was obtained from the state Department of Public Instruction to conduct research related to the Paideia Program at the school year for the period of January, 1990-June, 1991.

## Implementation at the Classroom Level

### School A--Third Grade Classroom--1990-1991

Two teachers share a large, brightly lighted second story room in the old wing of the school building. Large windows reaching up to the 15 foot ceilings line one side of the room while the other wall has two doors at opposite ends of the classroom which are separated by chalkboards. These doors open into a cream colored, tiled hall. Light from windows above the doors adds to that provided by the outside windows. The classroom has student desks with cubbies under their tops and metal frames. They are actually built for larger children than these third graders whose legs dangle from the chairs and whose feet do not reach the floor. The desks are arranged in rows of 6 or 7 facing the front board and one of the teachers' desks. The other teacher's desk is pulled over to the side of the room near the windows and faces the side of the class. Filing cabinets, a reading corner and science experiments are located under the windows.

The two teachers, Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Stone (pseudonyms) teach all 30 of the students designated as Chapter 1 third graders. Because of the lack of classroom space, two teachers were assigned to one large group to reduce the student teacher ratio to 15 to 1. Mrs. Brown has been teaching 4 years. She has an Elementary Education Degree (K-8) from a nearby university. She will start a masters degree in January in curriculum development. Mrs. Stone has 19 years of classroom experience. She holds a bachelor's degree from a southern institution (BSD K-3). She completed her masters degree at a local university.

While at the Paideia school, these teachers have had opportunities to be involved in expert-led groups and staff-led Paideia seminars as part of their training in the methodology. These have included sessions at locations throughout the U.S. as well as their own staff development meetings led by the Paideia coordinator and sessions led by faculty and graduate students from a local university.

The students in Mrs. Brown's and Mrs. Stone's classroom come from the surrounding community and as suggested in the introduction have economic, family and community liabilities that have limited their performance in school. And, although by most measures their home situations would seem to be unstable enhancing the likelihood of large migrations of students in and out of the school, the population of the third-grade class remained relatively stable during the school year. At most the class lost and gained two students through family moves. The students selected for this Chapter 1 classroom are below the 25% on math and/or reading scores on standardized tests and have been recommended by their second-grade teachers.

### Instruction in School A's Third-Grade Classroom

On seminar days such as this one, the classroom environment is different. The desks are arranged in a large square, the classroom is prepared for a face-to-face discussion. Each desk has a paper nameplate identifying the child or adult sitting there. It is Wednesday, and the day's

schedule includes instruction in reading, mathematics, language, writing, and science. Social studies lessons were not observed in this classroom. Special programs that were observed include a session in a computer laboratory and Paideia seminar. The instruction for these classes included a wide variety of strategies but an unevenness in the quality of instruction.

The Paideia seminar takes place at the beginning of this day as scheduled throughout the school. This placement notices the importance of seminar in the day's instruction. Students are asked questions regarding the motivation of the protagonist in the story. The overall tone and discussion in the first 30 minutes relates to the meaning of the story. During the next half hour the teachers relate the story to students' feelings, attitudes and values.

The instruction seems to have reached perhaps 40-50% of the students. The others are off-task or appear confused by the story or the questions. Reducing the effectiveness of instruction is the sweltering room that by 10:00 AM has reached 95°. The teachers switch back to comprehension questions by this time. This appears in part to involve the 40-50% of the students who were not attending to the task. This comprehension strategy continues for another twenty minutes reducing the class to little more than a group reading of the story. The seminar clearly represents another column of instruction, but quality of the instruction is not very high. Feedback to students about their understanding is often critical and they are told they have not read or are not thinking.

Reading this day is related to the Paideia seminar discussed above. The elements of reading that are covered include student development of questions related to the story to be discussed and a preliminary outline of the plot. This is done as a strategy to begin the seminar discussion.

Writing is used as a follow-up of the story. The teacher begins with a rousing "Baptist Preacher" speech about writing a story about "The day in the life of a gym shoe." Teachers help individual students as they write for a period of an hour or more with few prompts but a great deal of encouragement. This is a coached activity which provides another column of the three column school. There are some negative statements toward children and their behavior, but much of the teachers' statements about writing are positive.

Mathematics takes a number of forms during the day. It includes direct instruction at the board on multiplication by 9, a mathematics contest with suckers as prizes, and a computer lab activity. While the direct instruction is on multiplication facts and the contest is on multiplication and division facts, the computer lab activities are individualized and are based on basic addition facts for most of the students. These individual lessons are prescribed by previous performance of students on other software.

Students use their fingers to assist them with computations for many of the activities and often do not make the time limits set by the computer or reach a mastery level to move on in the program. The teacher in the computer room gives feedback to the classroom teachers and encourages them to remediate. She says, and the Chapter 1 teachers agree, that the students need

this work, but the classroom teachers say they cannot go back and review addition and subtraction because they are mandated to teach multiplication. Most students stay with this task unless they are looped back through the program for not completing the task at mastery level.

Science is the last part of the day and consists of reading about corn. This takes 15 to 20 minutes. There is no interaction between teachers and children about the reading. Students simply read until the bell marking the end of the day rings and they are dismissed.

### Conclusions About Classroom Level Implementation

Overall, the classroom described above is typical of the experiences of the students in this Chapter 1 classroom. There are some elements of the special strategy that have been implemented, but the degree of implementation, the effective use of Chapter 1 funding to assist students with needs, and the instruction in the classroom are, at best, uneven.

The elements of the Paideia Program that have been implemented in this classroom have, however, reached an observable level. Students are exchanging views and asserting their own opinions about events in the text. They often exhibit Paideia behaviors such as referring to the text during their discussions. The Chapter 1 teachers have provided equal time and materials to all students.

Other elements of the special strategy and general instruction practices are less effective. Seminars are not sustained as high level intellectual activities for the students. This outcome seems to stem from a combination of lack of understanding of the stories by the students because of limited reading and comprehension skills, a limited set of strategies used by the teachers to engage students at a higher intellectual level, and, as a corollary, the dependence on factual and comprehension questioning strategies to move the instruction along. The spirit of inquiry among the students and in consort with the teachers is lacking in the seminar and the other classroom activities. This reinforces the Paideia coordinator's concern that "not all seminars are equal." That is, a seminar conducted with a homogeneous group of Chapter 1 students will not be of the same calibre as a seminar conducted either with a heterogeneous group of students or with a higher-ability homogeneous group.

The instructional strategies used in the classroom represent a number of problems. There appear to be many mismatches between the content to be covered and the skills of the students particularly in mathematics. Related to this problem is the continued teaching of content without regard to the level of success students are experiencing. Another mismatch is between the intended outcome of having two teachers in the same classroom and the real outcome. The teachers appear to take turns in the class. Rarely are both teachers teaching at the same time and only during the coaching period did both adults appear to take on the role of teacher. The "team teaching" appears to be more of a "tag team" effort. Finally, instruction takes place in an atmosphere of harshness that characterizes many of the interactions between students and teachers within the school at-large. The third-grade classroom has reached a limited level of success in the implementation of the Paideia Program.

### School B--Third Grade Classroom--1990-1991

This classroom is a moderate size with three windows along the back wall. Between these windows is a bulletin board with student work displayed. At the front of the room, the wall is lined with teacher chalkboards. To one side of these boards, two tables have been pushed together for use as the teacher's desk. There are two teachers' desks at the back of the room that are unused except as storage and display areas. In one front corner of the room is a TV monitor and at the other is a portable wrap closet where the children store jackets and knapsacks. The front of the closet is used as a current events board with a map of the middle east. The sidewall of the room here has bulletin boards with class rules and consequences posted as well as a calendar with helpers' names. There is a sink near the back wall on this side and a portable book rack with the class library. The other sidewall of the room holds cabinets and shelves with simulations, games, and workbooks. The children's desks are basically arranged in pods of three desks each. There are several separate student desks along the walls and in corners of the room. Students who have needed to be separated from classmates occupy these seats. Overall, the room is a pleasant setting.

This third-grade teacher, Mrs. Amos (pseudonym), has a B.S. from one of the state's universities. She has 30+ years experience of elementary school experience. She received her training in Paideia methodology with the first cohort of teachers at *School B*. She believes that some of the children in her class are not really capable of participating in Socratic seminars because they lack the intellectual skills required. She also feels that many of the problems her students face academically are grounded in the lack of support and interest from their parents.

The children in this third-grade classroom are a heterogeneous group. Those eligible for additional Chapter 1 services receive them in the school's afterschool Chapter 1 Program.

### Instruction in *School B's* Third-Grade Classroom

As in the third-grade classroom at *School A*, the desks are arranged in a hollow rectangle for seminar on this Wednesday morning. The children's names are taped on the front of their desks. On this day, the children participate in seminar and follow-up activity and receive instruction in health, Spanish, and math.

Following the teacher's administration of a system-wide survey in which the children evaluate the instruction they receive, the seminar is begun. The seminar discussion is based on the story, "Ooka and the Honest Thief." The session consists of a retelling of the story by the children followed by the teacher's asking of the main question for discussion--"Was it right for Ooka to steal the rice?" The children offer varied responses which include the notion that under some circumstances, such as hunger and homelessness, stealing is not wrong. They discuss the predicament of homeless people in contemporary American society. When the discussion turns to interest being charged for the rice, it becomes apparent that some of the children do not understand the concept. The teacher, however, does not stop to explain it. The final question

presented by the teacher is for the children to consider what they would do if they caught a good friend stealing? This will be their topic for a written follow-up activity.

Before beginning their writing, the children are given a 15 minute restroom break. When they return, the children choose to keep their seats arranged in a rectangle for the follow-up activity. While the children write, the teacher monitors them for a while stopping to talk to individuals about the assignment. She then leaves the teaching assistant to monitor the children while she works on administrative tasks. The children ask the assistant questions and share their essays with one another. The writing time is interrupted when a dispute over a pencil occurs among several children. After approximately 40 minutes of writing, the children are finished and the teacher directs them to move their desks back into their regular pods. This transition takes a full eleven minutes. Then, five or six children volunteer to read their essays to the class. Most of the children are inattentive during this reading. For a full six minutes, the teacher reprimands the class for being noisy.

The remainder of the morning in the classroom is given to a health lesson based on a program discouraging the children from smoking. The teacher reads them a story about "Smokey-Town" which is followed by a discussion about fresh air. The class also discusses what happens to smoker's bodies and how difficult it is to quit smoking. The children are responsive to the teacher's questions. She asks them to support their answers whenever they fail to do so. [This is a Paideia behavior.] The health lesson is interrupted at 11 a.m. for lunch and recess but resumes at 12:16. After summarizing the story read earlier in the day, the children draw pictures of "Smokey-Town." The class brainstorms for ideas about what the town might look like before beginning. They are also told that they will receive a certificate of participation for their drawings. The children seem excited about this prospect. They draw until 12:49 when the teacher passes out reading record cards and the children go to several areas of the room to choose books.

They read silently until the Spanish teacher comes at 1:03. The lesson is all oral and all in Spanish. The children are very responsive to their Spanish teacher and seem to enjoy the games he plays with them in which they are asked the Spanish words for various colors, pieces of clothing, and numbers.

Between Spanish and math, a resource teacher takes a girl out of the classroom, and the teacher reprimands the rest of the class for their behavior toward the girl. This reprimand takes approximately 8 minutes.

The last part of the day is allocated for math. The children are working on dividing two digit numbers which the teacher says is difficult for this group. The teacher conducts a guided practice with the children who are responsive to her questions about the process of dividing 74 by 6. This part of the math lesson lasts approximately 9 minutes because a mother comes to the door to talk with the teacher about her son's behavior. When the mother leaves, the children are reprimanded for their behavior once again. Finally, the teacher spends another 6 minutes on math before closing class and handing out report cards.

## Conclusions About Classroom Level Implementation

The pace of the lessons and transitions is very slow in this classroom at *School B*. Consequently, the children spend much time off-task during seatwork until the teacher gives a warning indicating a limited amount of time for completion of the task. Then, they scurry to finish. There also seems to be much time lost to transitions and coming to and from breaks, lunch, and recess. Even though much time is spent reprimanding children for their behavior and off-task during seatwork, the children seem eager to learn. They eagerly respond to the teacher's questions and seem to perk up whenever a discussion or new activity begins.

The level of implementation of the Paideia Program is moderate in this classroom. Although the seminar could have been more successful had the teacher made certain that everyone understood the concept of interest (perhaps during math some days earlier), the children did discuss the ideas presented at a fairly high cognitive level. Of particular note is that the children dealt with situational ethics during their discussion which is certainly more abstract than simply saying that an act is right or wrong. The children and teacher both exhibited Paideia behaviors during other times of the day. For example, the children were asked to support their responses during the health discussion.

## Children's Responses to the Program

### *School A--Tanika*

Tanika (pseudonym) is a small African-American girl with a ready smile and pigtails. She dresses in colorful clothing and appears to be well cared for. On the first battery of the CTBS given during the fall of Tanika's third grade year, she scored at the 3rd national percentile in reading and at the 6th national percentile on mathematics.

Tanika indicates that she sometimes needs help with seminar. She doesn't, however, need help in completing the activities related to seminar especially when she writes about how she feels. She says that sometimes she must work hard at the activities related to seminar because they are difficult for her. According to Tanika, her favorite school subjects are math, handwriting, and reading. At home, she does her homework and jumps rope. She says that she "loves" seminar because she can talk a lot. She especially likes to be able to agree and disagree.

Probably the best way to assess a child's response to the Paideia program as implemented is to look at that child's interactions with each of the three instructional columns representative of the program when fully implemented. Tanika seems to adapt to the instructional mode being used. During *didactic instruction* she is attentive. And, although there is a coyness that approaches shyness about the child, Tanika participates in the oral drills/practices with much enthusiasm. This child has little problem staying with tasks used in this kind of activity, and she usually knows what the expectation for performance is. She often raises her hand to volunteer an answer. When she reads orally, she usually has several errors in her reading. When answering drill-type questions, she is just as likely to respond incorrectly as correctly. But no

matter what the outcome of her response, once she has received feedback about her answer she will grin and duck her head slightly looking at the adults in the room. She easily connects with adults, especially her teachers, and very ably seeks and receives help or feedback from them when doing seatwork.

Tanika is a bit more reserved during *seminar*. She is, however, as attentive as during any other time of the day. She listens both to the teacher's questions and to her classmates responses. She follows along when the teacher refers the children to the text to read passages. And, although Tanika volunteers points to the discussion which show both her comprehension of the story and her insights into people, she hesitates before answering a question directed at her without her volunteering for it.

In Tanika's class there is opportunity for *coaching* when the children are assigned seatwork. This sometimes is in the form of a composition, often related to the Paideia seminar, and sometimes in the form of either grammar exercises or math problems. Tanika, who is attentive to her teachers' instructions, understands the requirements of the tasks and begins working immediately which is not the case with many of the other children in her group. With composition-type assignments, she doesn't ask for help or feedback from her teachers nor does she necessarily get it. With practice exercises which are textbook or worksheet based, Tanika will ask for an assessment of her work when she finishes by raising her hand.

The effects of both the *coaching* and *seminar* elements of the Paideia program are not measurable with standardized tests. However, the teachers at this site reported that they felt that students had gained self-confidence, were able to apply Paideia skills to other subject areas, could compare/contrast different styles of writing, were reading a greater variety of books, could defend their points-of-view, could relate ideas from literature to their own lives, and were paying more attention in class. The researchers did, in fact, witness many of these teacher perceptions. Tanika is a good example of a child who seems to have benefitted observably but perhaps not measurably from the implementation of Paideia in her school.

#### School B--Larry

Larry (pseudonym) is a third grader in Mrs. Amos's class. He is a caucasian child with dull, straight blond hair who sometimes wears glasses. He is small and rather thin and wears jeans and tee-shirts to school. He is a rather quiet child in class, and although at times he seems eager to be involved in the activities, his attention is short. He spends much time playing with his fingers, digging in his desk, and playing with small objects he has found in there. Larry is in the Chapter 1 After School Program. His Chapter 1 teacher believes that he is unchallenged by school. Larry scored at the 24th percentile in reading on the CTBS and at the 36th percentile in math.

Larry indicates that he sometimes likes seminars especially when the story is good. During those seminars he'll answer lots of questions. He says that he sometimes has problems with the words in the seminar selections. Larry reports that he sometimes needs help figuring

out what to write for seminar follow-up activities and with putting together things the students make for follow-up activities. Larry's favorite school subjects are math and P.E. because he feels that he's good at math and he enjoys the variety of activities in P.E.

Larry seems to be a child who could benefit greatly from the *coaching* and *seminar* types of Paideia instruction. Both of these kinds of instruction provide opportunities for individual children to be attended to and to be engaged in intellectual endeavors with others. However, both of these kinds of instruction require smaller groups of children than a class of 27.

Larry approaches each new instructional activity with eagerness to become involved and to interact with his teacher and his peers. However, because he is a relatively well-behaved and quiet child Larry does not command the attention of either his teacher or his peers. Larry is also of below-average ability in a heterogeneous class. Consequently, during *didactic instruction*, Larry often is not called upon to supply answers and those he gives are sometimes incorrect or not particularly noteworthy. He is provided with no incentive to remain engaged in the activities at hand. This coupled with his short attention span result in Larry's loss of attention to learning activities and turning instead to small toys, pencils, or his own arms and fingers for play.

Larry reports that he doesn't like *seminar* if he doesn't like the story or if the discussion becomes too lengthy. The lengthy seminars make him physically uncomfortable. In this respect, Larry is not unlike many young boys who find themselves in classrooms where they must sit still in chairs for long periods of time. Perhaps, Larry's teacher needs to be more cognizant of the developmental level of her students as she implements this column of the Paideia Program.

And, the *coaching* done in Larry's classroom is minimal thus providing little opportunity for the kind of one-on-one attention that he could so desperately use to develop his intellectual skills. When there are activities assigned where students could be coached, Larry's teacher usually quickly monitors the children and then turns to administrative tasks. However, even if she distributed the time available among 27 children, she would be able to give very little to each child.

This is not to say that Larry has not benefitted from the Paideia Program at his school. Both of his parents indicate that they believe the program has helped Larry to increase both his reading and his communication skills. His father believes that the Paideia Program has helped Larry to overcome his shyness. However, it would seem that Larry could benefit even more if the level of program implementation in his classroom were higher. As pointed out earlier, neither Larry's school nor the other Paideia school in this study have restructured the groupings to enable teachers to work with smaller groups of children as recommended by Adler in his descriptions of both *coaching* and *seminars*. Until this kind of restructuring is done, a high level of implementation of the program is probably not possible.

## Preliminary Conclusions About the Paideia Program

The basic tenets of the Paideia Program are certainly worthwhile. Adler presents a philosophy of education that an egalitarian society finds attractive. He believes that all children can learn and should be provided with opportunities to fully develop all aspects of their cognitive capabilities--acquisition of knowledge, development of intellectual skills, and an understanding of ideas and values. Furthermore, he asserts that all children--not just the brightest--should be provided with an equal opportunity to develop intellectually.

Furthermore, Adler describes three modes of instruction that provide children with opportunities to fully develop intellectually. He provides some suggestions about how these modes of instruction might be implemented. And, he lists the kinds of content that should be taught in a Paideia school.

This study describes two schools with large percentages of economically disadvantaged children in urban areas of the United States that have translated Adler's work into practice as they understand it and to the degree that it is feasible to do so in their contexts. While neither site has fully achieved the status of being a "three-column" Paideia school, nor has every teacher achieved a high level of implementation of the program in his or her classroom, they have introduced some important aspects of the program into their curriculums and instructional methodologies. The children at both schools read and discuss pieces of literature and original historical documents rather than merely learning decoding skills from basal readers and being exposed to distilled textbook versions of history. The children at both schools are learning to verbalize their ideas and to support their viewpoints with reasons. The children at both schools are learning to listen and to think about other people's views. They are learning that intellectual arguments are healthy and stimulating. And, while the effects of some of the instruction that these children receive are not measurable with available standardized tests, they are certainly observable to those who come into contact with many of these children.

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