INSTITUTING CHANGES IN CURRICULUM AND TEACHING STYLE
IN LIBERAL ARTS PROGRAMS:
A STUDY OF NINETEEN FORD FOUNDATION PROJECTS
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ABSTRACT

From 1986 to 1990, nineteen colleges and universities in the U.S. southeast and southwest conducted two- to three-year literacy projects funded by the Ford Foundation. The program, Literacy and the Liberal Arts, was intended to improve undergraduate education by integrating literacy skills instruction with content in the liberal arts and sciences disciplines. This study describes how the Ford Foundation developed and conducted that program, whose grants totalled $1,089,000. It also describes what happened with the nineteen projects.

Data collection was done through a review of grant-related documents in the Foundation archives; through site visits at eight of the projects; through telephone interviews with project directors at the sites not visited; and through participant observation at Arizona State University, where the author was program coordinator of one of the grants.

Findings are reported in six case studies and in a summary of all nineteen projects. Recommendations are offered to higher education officers and granting agencies for developing academic programs in literacy and other areas. The Literacy and the Liberal Arts program focused attention on the importance of literacy in general education and produced significant impact on the nineteen grantee institutions.

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Part One

The Nature and Purpose of this Study

The following five chapters comprising Part One introduce and explain this study, an evaluation of the Ford Foundation's Literacy and the Liberal Arts program, a series of grants awarded to nineteen colleges and universities in the United States. These five chapters describe what this study is and how and why it was done. Chapter One provides an overview of the entire work. Chapter Two describes the Literacy and the Liberal Arts program's genesis and evolution. Chapter Three reviews briefly the literature on educational program evaluation and surveys current attitudes and practices in evaluating large scale grantmaking programs such as this one. Chapter Four describes how this study was conducted. And Chapter Five gives brief descriptions of the nineteen projects that comprised the Literacy and the Liberal Arts program.
Chapter 1.

Introduction

In 1986 and 1987 the Ford Foundation awarded a series of grants to American colleges and universities under the rubric of "Literacy and the Liberal Arts." The grants were intended to assist institutions of higher education in developing undergraduate curricula in which the teaching of writing was integrated with the content of curricula in general education. The nationally recognized need to improve students' reading, writing, and critical thinking combined with competing notions of how to integrate literacy skills instruction into undergraduate curricula provided the impetus behind the program's development. The liberal arts, as the traditional locus for literacy instruction, were seen as the educational location in which to accomplish the integration and effect curricular change. This study examines (1) the projects funded by the Literacy and the Liberal Arts program and (2) the overall impact of the program itself.

The Context for this Literacy Program

The Ford Foundation's initiative in developing the Literacy and the Liberal Arts program can be seen as an outgrowth of several of Ford's continuing interests. The Foundation has been committed to the advancement of literacy for some time and on several fronts. Among other activities, the Foundation has commissioned in-depth reports to keep Foundation staff informed about the incorporation of
learning research into educational planning (Hunter and Harman, ix, x). Two of these reports have dealt specifically with literacy issues. The first, by Donald H. Graves, *Balance the Basics: Let Them Write* (1978), deals with the teaching and learning of writing in the nation's schools. The second, by Carman St. John Hunter and David Harman, *Adult Illiteracy in the United States* (1979), deals with the educational problem of adult illiteracy in the context of America's changing society. In 1985, when development of the Literacy and the Liberal Arts grants began, a great deal of attention was still being paid nationally—as it is even now—both to "the literacy crisis" and to the need for educational reform.

A further, though less crucial factor, is that of Ford's six grantmaking divisions, the division that sponsored the Literacy and the Liberal Arts grants—the Program on Education and Culture—has the closest affinity with humanistic (as opposed to social scientific) philosophy and approaches. To engage in philanthropy that connects literacy with the goals of liberal learning, which in turn connect with one of the Foundation's larger goals—that of enabling an informed world citizenry—is fitting and natural. The purview of the Program on Education and Culture is higher education (pre-collegiate educational grantmaking originates in the Program on Urban Poverty) and literacy is understandably one of Education and Culture's
long-standing concerns. The Education and Culture Program had previously awarded a number of individual literacy-related grants; the Literacy and the Liberal Arts series was a logical continuation of earlier Foundation efforts in this area.

The Literacy and the Liberal Arts Program

Arising from this broad context, The Ford Foundation's Literacy and the Liberal Arts program awarded $1,089,000 to nineteen colleges and universities in the U.S. Southeast and Southwest. These geographical areas were selected for the diversity of student populations and the areas' range of educational institutions, especially those which enroll students whose degree of literacy preparedness is insufficient. Institutions of many types--small and large, public and private, liberal arts and comprehensive, independent non-profit, land-grant, religiously affiliated--were invited to apply for two- or three-year grants of either $50,000 or $100,000. The request for proposals intentionally allowed ample flexibility so that planners could design projects consonant with their institutional missions and appropriate to the literacy problems of their particular student populations.

The Foundation stipulated that projects connect literacy, broadly construed, with liberal arts disciplines in the general education curriculum and that the projects emphasize faculty and curriculum development rather than
individual research. Suggestions included redesigning courses to include more writing (and other literacy skills as relevant), creating new courses or instructional formats, training of both junior and senior faculty, fostering interdisciplinary efforts among all liberal arts areas, and collaborating with other regional institutions.

The ten projects comprising the first phase of the Literacy and the Liberal Arts program began in the fall of 1986 and the nine projects comprising the second phase began in the fall of 1987. Projects ran for two to three and a half years depending on the scope of their activities and the amount of the award. The final grant concluded in December 1990.

The Literacy and the Liberal Arts program is far from being one of the Ford Foundation's major initiatives; indeed, it is a rather modest effort compared to a number of their other undertakings. One program from 1958-1976, for example, provided $32 million for experimental teacher education grants to fifty colleges and universities (Magat, 39). Nonetheless, much can be discovered from examining these nineteen projects' activities, durability, and impact on their respective campuses and from looking at the aggregate to determine what trends may have emerged and what lessons were learned.
Background of this Study

This follow-up study of the Literacy and the Liberal Arts program was commissioned by the Ford Foundation in August of 1990 and began immediately thereafter. I had served as program coordinator for the Literacy and the Liberal Arts grant at Arizona State University and had become interested in programmatic evaluation from the standpoint of determining what evidence would be required to secure continued institutional support once the grant monies expired.

That interest led to a related and larger interest in how the Ford Foundation would determine the extent to which the entire Literacy and the Liberal Arts program was a "success." The Foundation's own historiographer, in a report commissioned by Ford's Board of Trustees, acknowledged that the Foundation has been "late in instituting systematic evaluation of its work" and that although evaluative activities have increased, they are still undertaken with "considerable variation," with the resulting reports placed in the archives where they are "consulted occasionally" (Magat, 37-8). Ordinarily the program officer in charge reviews the effectiveness of his or her grants at a program's close-out, but in this case, the program officer responsible for developing the Foundation's literacy initiative had resigned to take an administrative post at a nearby university. The program, in
her words and in the words of others at the Foundation, became an orphan. I was both allowed and encouraged to adopt it, with its guardian's blessing, just as the final projects were concluding.

Purpose and Approach of this Study

My objective in approaching this study has not been to conduct a summative evaluation in any way, nor did the Foundation seek summative information on which to base future funding decisions. An external mid-decade review of Education and Culture's grantmaking policies, completed in June of 1987 during the Literacy and the Liberal Arts' ongoing operation, had recommended discontinuing grantmaking in literacy "after completion of the current round of grants on the grounds that there is no agreement about direction, and the level of resources available is insufficient for any leadership role" (Shapiro, et. al., 23). As a means of strengthening its grantmaking emphases, therefore, the Foundation chose to direct limited resources to other areas. Nonetheless, the Foundation was interested in learning what had occurred with the nineteen projects. Believing that experiences in one project area are transferable to another, the Foundation was just as interested in learning what hadn't worked so as to improve grantmaking policies in new areas. Negative feedback, in other words, was just as welcome.
My objective in approaching the study was more a formative one, despite the fact that future literacy grants were not to be forthcoming from the Foundation. There was still much to be learned and shared from examining how these projects had worked or not worked, information that could assist in future literacy program development. The opportunity existed to move critical information out of Foundation archives into the public domain where it might affect curriculum development and/or improve grantmaking by other foundations. The overarching question guiding the review has been "What was the impact of these projects on their individual campuses? What difference did they make?"

I have looked for evidence of the programs becoming institutionalized, evidence of curricular changes, evidence of faculty participation and satisfaction, evidence of effects on student attitude, and evidence of the program's value to instruction at the institutions.

My review of the Literacy and the Liberal Arts program has consisted of three main parts. First, I examined the documents pertaining to the grants which are located in the Foundation archives and I interviewed the Ford Foundation officials instrumental in the program's development and operation. Second, I conducted site visits at nine of the nineteen institutions where I reviewed additional materials pertaining to the projects, observed classes that were part effects on student attitude, and evidence of the program's value to instruction at the institutions.

My review of the Literacy and the Liberal Arts program
students, faculty, staff, and administrators. And third, I conducted telephone interviews with project directors at the sites that were not visited personally.

The approach to the material has been qualitative and naturalistic from the outset. With regard to the applicability of quantitative analyses to render judgments on program effectiveness and subsequent planning for future projects, Magat summarized the Foundation's experience thus:

Here and there we are trying to use them, but so far it appears to be no easier to identify our effect in a complex social system by traversing a jungle of measured but tangled variables than by more intuitive forms of analysis. (40)

The various reasons behind choosing a qualitative approach are examined more fully in Chapter Three's discussion of possible methodologies for educational program evaluation.

**The Structure of this Study**

This study is divided into three sections. Part One presents five chapters describing the nature and purpose of the research. Chapter One introduces and provides a general overview of the entire work. Chapter Two outlines the background of the Ford Foundation's Literacy and the Liberal Arts program and describes in detail the program's evolution, characteristics, goals, and operation. Chapter Three presents the various approaches used and attitudes toward program evaluation held by directors of agencies which mount programs similar to Literacy and the Liberal Arts program.
educational program evaluation. Chapter Four describes in
detail how this study was conducted, including the
philosophy that undergirds it, the rationale for selecting
which sites to visit, the procedures used in conducting
interviews, and the categories of information sought.
Chapter Five offers brief descriptions of each of the
nineteen projects that comprised the total program, grouped
by size of student population and by governance structure
(whether public or private). These brief descriptions are
intended to show an overview of the entire program; analysis
of the projects appears later in Part Three.

Part Two presents two chapters describing six
representative literacy projects in modified case study
form. Chapter Six discusses literacy projects at three of
the smaller institutions. Berea College in Berea, Kentucky,
is an independent college in the Appalachian foothills; all
of its 1500 students participate in a work program to
support their education. Fort Lewis College in Durango,
Colorado, is a state-assisted school enrolling a high
percentage of Native American students. Xavier University
of Louisiana is a historically black urban school affiliated
with the Roman Catholic church. Chapter Seven discusses
literacy projects at three of the larger institutions, all
of them state supported. The University of New Mexico in
Albuquerque has a minority enrollment of approximately 30%
is an independent college in the Appalachian foothills; all
of its 1500 students participate in a work program to
support their education. Fort Lewis College in Durango,
Kentucky enrolls 22,000 students; its curriculum is unique in that all students are required to take two full years of general education/liberal arts courses. Arizona State University is the fifth largest institution of higher education in the country with over 44,000 students.

Two chapters comprise Part Three. Chapter Eight presents a summary and analysis of the findings from all nineteen of the projects. It assesses the impact, individually and collectively, of the Literacy and the Liberal Arts program. Chapter Nine looks ahead to developing future courses and curricula that incorporate literacy instruction with liberal arts content. It offers recommendations based on experiences from those involved in running the projects and conclusions based on the sum of their activities.

Definitions

Several key terms in this study require clarification. The first is "writing." Although the Foundation's Request for Proposals stressed the importance of writing as a means of learning in undergraduate education and recipients correctly interpreted the initiative to emphasize composition in the curriculum, the invitation to apply also clearly signaled a larger framework by choosing the title "Literacy and the Liberal Arts." The Request for Proposals, in other words, just as clearly stressed the concomitant skills of reading, thinking, and speaking. Most of the
nineteen institutions did indeed focus primarily on composition instruction (there are one or two exceptions that will be explained in subsequent chapters). But the emphasis did not stop there. Realizing the impossibility of neatly separating the complex activity of writing from the other related skills that inevitably accompany writing, virtually all of the projects also emphasized critical thinking, reading, speaking, and/or listening in some form and in some combination. Despite the expanded attention to these multiple literacy skills, however, many grantees labeled their work as "writing projects" or "writing programs" presumably for ease of recognition in the academic community, even though the projects really included much more. When the word "writing" is used therefore in this study, it can be assumed that what is being referred to is actually some combination of skills related to literacy.

Another term requiring comment is "writing across the curriculum," an ambiguous phrase at best since it has acquired nearly as many different connotations as it has had applications. David Russell points out that although the term "writing across the curriculum" has only been around since the early 1970's

...the idea of sharing responsibility for writing instruction forms a recurrent theme throughout the history of the American university. There have been literally hundreds of cross-curricular writing programs since the turn of the century at institutions of every type. ("Writing" 52)
In a broad sense, all of the nineteen projects described here constitute "writing across the curriculum" enterprises of one sort or another by virtue of the fact that they all integrated writing and writing instruction into the undergraduate curriculum. That is the context and connotation of the phrase that this study assumes.

The last is "literacy," a term even more ambiguous and complex than writing across the curriculum for the same reasons. The word was used in multiple ways in the many documents generated over the course of the Literacy and the Liberal Arts program. One of the most elegant, and also one that nearly all projects approximated in some form, was this one taken from an address given by Professor James Slevin of Georgetown University to Regis College's literacy project participants which was cited in Regis' final grant report:

There is...a higher level of literacy, one that is generally overlooked in popular discussions because it goes beyond common sense notions of reading and writing and even threatens the stability that common sense has always ascribed to the written word. Only this higher literacy, involving the ability to read and write with some degree of critical awareness, enables citizens to enjoy the right to information and self-expression....For genuine literacy is a way of acting in and on the world. Literacy is not simply reading and writing but these activities directed to some end, tending to some transformation.

Note on Independent Study

Finally, I wish to emphasize that this is an entirely
grant-related documents during my research trips to New York, as well as support for the site visits during the remainder of the year. I have benefitted greatly from their help and extend sincere thanks to Dr. Peter W. Stanley, Director of the Program on Education and Culture, and to his able staff for facilitating my work. At the same time, the Foundation has been scrupulous in leaving me free to conduct the research according to my own wishes and to arrive at my own conclusions. As is explained further in Chapter Two, the Foundation's philosophy toward grantees' projects-in-progress is one of minimal, if any, monitoring; that philosophy extended to this work as well.
Part Two

The Literacy and the Liberal Arts
Projects in Action:
Selected Modified Case Studies

The following case studies provide a close look at representative projects that made up the Literacy and the Liberal Arts program. Chapters Six and Seven each examine three different institutions with common characteristics. Berea College, Fort Lewis College, and Xavier University of Louisiana are all small institutions—one independent, one public, and one private—which have unique missions and serve somewhat specialized student populations. The University of New Mexico, the University of Kentucky, and Arizona State University are all large public institutions with the attendant exigencies facing large state-supported schools.

The intent is neither to single out these projects for special criticism nor to showcase them as models. Beyond taking into account the site visit rationale described in Chapter Four, the projects that received site visits and the projects presented here as case studies were selected almost arbitrarily. Any six of the projects in the Literacy and the Liberal Arts program would serve to illustrate the range of philosophies, activities, approaches, problems and solutions faced by the grantees. Each of the nineteen, in other words, has its own compelling, relevant data; findings of the entire set are summarized in Part Three.
These six cases are presented to offer detailed examples of "what happened" in the program. Institutions of like kind may find useful correspondences here with work they may want to undertake, as might faculty teams or project coordinators who are charged with initiating or continuing undergraduate programs to improve education through literacy emphases.

Each case study is presented in three parts: a brief introduction with the institution's history, size, mission, student demographics, and so on; a description of the literacy project that was proposed and why, along with its objectives; and a narrative describing what happened as the project evolved and what its outcomes are.
Philosophy professor commented that one Physics student's Philosophy paper was so well written that it made him (the teacher) "deliriously happy...the student had obviously been 'bitten by the [Philosophy] bug.'"

Of the four remaining original faculty participants, all were still teaching paired cross-disciplinary general studies courses at the time of my visit, though under the less-than-ideal registration arrangements. One of the departed faculty members, a Biology professor with whom I later spoke, viewed his participation as "an educational research project" and used his experience to help formulate a subsequent grant proposal for improved science teaching at his new institution. In his case, as is probably the case for others as well, the knowledge gained from this project has been exported and used elsewhere. But, unfortunately, the unique and powerful model that was proposed at UK hasn't survived in its ideal form due to the exigencies of the institution's size and make up. As the Biology professor noted, "This idea would work better at a 1000-student liberal arts college or in an Honors Program at a major university" than it did in UK's general studies program. Other solutions probably need to be sought in order to serve the literacy needs of the numbers of students who attend UK.

University of New Mexico

Like the University of Kentucky, the University of New Mexico (UNM) is the primary institution of higher education
in the state. UNM celebrated its centennial in 1989 and inaugurated its fifteenth president in 1990. Located in Albuquerque, it draws its 24,000 students not only from New Mexico but also from all fifty states and 77 foreign countries. The university reflects the multi-cultural nature of the state; one-third of the students belong to minority groups, primarily Native American and Hispanic. Like the University of Kentucky, UNM has recently instituted more rigid admissions criteria, resulting in a "noticeable improvement" in the academic preparation of its incoming students. Students' ACT and SAT scores are at the highest levels ever. UNM's graduates account for one-third of the state's lawyers and legislators, one-fourth of the state's teachers, three-fourths of its pharmacists, and one-fourth of its medical doctors.

Between 1983 and 1986 a UNM College of Arts and Sciences task force developed a new core curriculum intended to improve the college's general education requirements. But the college was forced to postpone implementing the plan due to severe budgetary problems tied to the state economy. University revenues depend on income derived largely from the petroleum and natural gas industries, which have declined substantially over the past several years.

The University of New Mexico received a phase two, two-year $50,000 grant beginning July 1987 to develop a series

Between 1983 and 1986 a UNM College of Arts and Sciences task force developed a new core curriculum intended to improve the college's general education requirements.
The seminars, to be offered in a variety of liberal arts disciplines, were intended to serve as short-term curricular enhancement in lieu of the postponed comprehensive revisions. It was hoped that the seminars would eventually be integrated into the core curriculum when financially feasible and that similar seminars would be imitated in other colleges in the university.

University of New Mexico's Literacy Project

As with the University of Kentucky, the timing of The Ford Foundation's invitation to apply for a Literacy and the Liberal Arts grant was propitious for UNM. The College of Arts and Sciences had for some time been discussing curricular reforms, had plans in place, and was predisposed to effecting changes when their efforts were put on hold. The grant would allow them to experiment with a new and much needed approach to teaching their students, many of whom—despite the improved academic preparation of recent entering students—fall into the "developmental" category. For many of the minority students at UNM English is a second language. Developmental students were one of the groups that the Foundation had targeted for possible impact with the Literacy and the Liberal Arts program. These students particularly benefit from the individualized instruction available primarily in small enrollment courses, courses which are always scarce commodities in large state-supported institutions. But small enrollment courses had become even
scarcer in recent years at UNM as hiring of new faculty did not keep pace with higher enrollments in the college.

The thinking-writing seminars proposed in the grant were devised as a way to offer intensive experience in reading, writing, and critical thinking to undergraduates who had completed the required second semester of freshman composition but who clearly needed to build on those skills in a continued small class setting. Many of these students, without the additional attention, would either drop out or manage to the extent possible without developing literacy skills to a fuller potential.

As at the University of Kentucky, planners at UNM reasoned that if in the future these courses could become a regular, required component of the undergraduate curriculum, the emphasis on literacy would transfer (more or less automatically) to upper-division courses. It was hoped that as faculty became more skilled with the teaching techniques and as students became more accepting of the value of literacy skills to enhance learning, Arts and Sciences faculty would be more amenable to making thinking-writing assignments an established part of their teaching. Faculty development, then, was seen a crucial to the project, dubbed the Arts and Sciences Participatory Seminars, or ASPS as it came to be known.

Seminars were to be limited to 25 students. Each was automatically) to upper-division courses. It was hoped that as faculty became more skilled with the teaching techniques and as students became more accepting of the value of literacy skills to enhance learning, Arts and Sciences faculty would be more amenable to making thinking-writing assignments an established part of their teaching. Faculty development, then, was seen a crucial to the project, dubbed the Arts and Sciences Participatory Seminars, or ASPS as it came to be known.
semester, the stages varying according to the nature of the discipline. The course was to be taken after completion of English 102 and before any upper-division coursework. Seminars were to emphasize reading, critical thinking, problem solving, and writing in a highly interactive setting involving both instructor and students. Enrollment in the initial seminars would be voluntary, with minority and non-traditional students targeted for special recruitment during summer advising. Proposal writers likened the format to a specialized writing across the curriculum scheme.

The project's short-term objectives included:

1) conducting necessary faculty development

2) implementing the thinking-writing seminars

Long-term objectives were:

3) increasing the number of seminars offered, based on the pilot project's success

4) integrating the seminars into the core curriculum

5) and most importantly, improving students' ability to read and think critically and to write and speak cogently.

Grant funds were to be used to provide released time for faculty and to conduct faculty development seminars with the aid of outside consultants. As in several of the projects described earlier, the first year of the grant was to be spent developing the courses and the second year of the grant implementing the design.
What Happened with the University of New Mexico's Literacy Project

The Arts and Sciences Participatory Seminars generated high enthusiasm from the majority of the students, faculty, and administrators who were connected with the program. Most of those involved with the ASPS project described the experience in positive, often eager, sometimes poignant terms. Responding to the ASPS director's memo announcing my site visit, participants arranged interviews on rather short notice. The personnel turnover that the University of Kentucky experienced had not occurred at UNM, and this site visit afforded the opportunity to talk with a large number of original participants. One ASPS student, who learned that I was on campus, even walked in without an appointment to relate his seminar experience to me. Like the pilot project at the UK, many benefits followed from UNM's project, which clearly showed in the appreciative comments during the site visit interviews. However, despite the project's reception by participants, the many exigencies facing UNM, as happened at UK, prevented UNM from reaching the grant's complete objectives.

A total of sixteen different undergraduate seminars were offered during the 1988-89 academic year, all of them in different Arts and Sciences disciplines. Courses were offered in a cross-section of humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences areas. Although enrollment was to be
capped at 25 students per course, not many of those I spoke with were enrolled in or taught classes that large. Most had around 15 with some having as few as five. Participants' comments, then, need to be considered in that light. Student course evaluations for the fall semester show overwhelmingly positive reactions. Students mentioned the development of writing and thinking skills as one of the more obvious advantages; their self-assessment of growth in speaking and interaction skills was more mixed. And, contrary to faculty expectations, many students indicated that content coverage was more extensive and intense than in other courses. "Covering all the necessary material" is one of the most frequently cited drawbacks when faculty are asked to incorporate new teaching methods, like additional writing assignments, into their courses. So, it is noteworthy that students at least perceived that they were getting as much "content" as in other classes.

Students' responses during the site visit interviews were similarly positive. For most, the small-enrollment seminar had provided a unique opportunity in their educational careers. All had taken other classes at UNM since the ASPS course and all reported that the seminar experience had helped them in the later courses, of any type or size. One noted that the seminar structure encouraged students to take responsibility for their own education. Noteworthy that students at least perceived that they were getting as much "content" as in other classes.

Students' responses during the site visit interviews
student noted that the text combined with the class discussions had helped him resolve issues that he had "hidden away" since his return from the Vietnamese War. He had, in fact, changed his major to History, based on his participation in the seminar.

Another student, of both Hispanic and Native American parents, said the course was instrumental in her learning to be "interactive" for the first time in her education. Realizing that her cultural upbringing had often put her in direct opposition to traditionally accepted classroom behavioral style, she became comfortable--finally--talking in class, sharing her opinions, and backing up her assertions. "Because of the small class size," she said, "every student is noticeable and we were forced to prepare." Her seminar, in Sociology, had engaged students in discussions and debates which encouraged them to examine their attitudes toward racism and pluralism, and she spoke movingly of the tensions that resulted in their racially diverse class. Asked whether she thought such an affective, emotional topic was appropriate for an academic class in the university, she replied, "Too many teachers take the easy way out. We had to critically examine why we think the way we do and that was very appropriate for this course."

Contrary to her earlier expectations, she has decided to go on to graduate studies, based in part on the affect this class has had on her academic success.
The student who stopped by without an appointment wanted his impressions of the ASPS program noted for the record. A junior at the time he took the American Studies seminar, he said that many of his courses at UNM had had 200 or more students; the ASPS class had 13. He and three other students collaborated in a semester-long project in contemporary popular culture which resulted in their presenting the papers they each wrote at two academic conferences, one of them an international meeting in Toronto. He related that

...the professor had us work as a team and, as a result, our panel was much better than many of the others [whose members were more experienced]. We were able to be a resource for each other. My writing definitely improved. I organize ideas better and expand on topics better.

Not having to listen to lectures, being able to participate in open discussion, being able to interact with other students, having a project to work on, and being able to bring together more concepts than in most courses were the features of his experience in the seminar that he appreciated.

The professional acculturation noted by the American Studies student was also noted by a social science faculty member. The 15 undergraduate students in her Developmental Psychology ASPS seminar wrote a research proposal and presented the results of their study to UNM graduate students and faculty. "I really looked forward to going to
this class," she said, adding that the involvement has enhanced her own research.

Faculty cited numerous other pluses accruing from ASPS as well. The Anthropology department had gotten an "extra" course as a result of ASPS offerings, and the Geology department gained two new majors. An English professor was able to teach one of his favorite, but not regularly scheduled, topics in Afro-American literature. A foreign language professor said that she had become "willing to give up control in the classroom" and that her former students "still talk about this class." Faculty had gotten both free time and the resources, through the faculty development seminars, to hone their teaching skills. Due to conflicting schedules, faculty had had to resort to meeting on Saturday mornings during the first year of planning, and even those who professed "not to like these things," found themselves "enthusiastic" about going. Camaraderie with faculty from departments other than their own was frequently cited as a positive feature.

Among the specific changes in teaching practices mentioned repeatedly were: lecturing less, using more class discussion, assigning more writing, placing an emphasis on multiple drafts and revision, arranging group work, and devising more creative assignments. Students seemed "less passive" and "gained self-confidence." A Geology professor, who professed "not to like these things," found themselves "enthusiastic" about going. Camaraderie with faculty from departments other than their own was frequently cited as a positive feature.
enrolling in his 400 level seminar designed for undergraduates, said the graduate students became, in effect, "free TAs" as the course progressed and they began mentoring the undergraduates on field trips. "We didn't just study Geology," he said, "we did Geology," adding that he believed the ASPS students to be "ahead of the others in this major." A Chemistry professor, whose ASPS seminar for non-majors dealt with problems of the environment, believes those students are now better citizens because they are more prepared to make informed decisions on environmental issues at voting time.

UNM's project was overseen by a professor of communication who had been involved with research on classroom communication and instructional skills for over 17 years. Several unique features of the ASPS program can be attributed to her influence. One is the emphasis on interpersonal communication in the faculty development seminars, which may help account for the careful handling of sensitive topics, such as racism, in the classroom. Another is the use of video tapes as a means of stimulating discussion in the faculty development meetings. Faculty had wanted to sit in on one another's classes, but kept postponing the visits due to conflicting schedules. In lieu of in-person visits, each fifty-minute seminar was taped once; from those, the instructor chose the best ten-minute segment from his or her class to share with colleagues.
during their ongoing ASPS staff meetings. The tapes were used to demonstrate how well (or not well) new teaching techniques had worked, and the taping itself was fairly inexpensive since a graduate TA did the taping on equipment already owned by the department.

With regard to program evaluation, like earlier projects, UNM's efforts fell short of what had been planned. Three modes of evaluation were outlined in the original proposal. One involved rating instructors based on a UNM-designed standard format. Toward what end this was going to be done was not clear from the proposal and whether it was done I did not ascertain; findings were not reported in the final report nor mentioned at the site visit. The other two involved different forms of comparing students' pre- and post-test essays. Had these been conducted as described in the proposal, they would have been rather elaborate and expensive measures. UNM did not follow through with this plan.

Students did respond to an eleven-item multi-part, open-ended questionnaire at the end of the course. As mentioned earlier, students' responses on this were overwhelmingly positive. To "What aspects of this course were less helpful to your learning?" most respondents left the space blank. To "Would you recommend this course to other students? Would you recommend continuing the ASPS seminars?" all students (except for two who did not respond)
replied "yes," usually with enthusiastic elaborations appended.

Though the outcomes were positive, the project encountered serious problems along the way. The seminars were intended to be small-enrollment courses, but not as small as many of them turned out to be. Lack of publicity and inadequate information seems to have hindered recruitment at the program's outset. Several instructors said the course somehow acquired the stigma that accompanies remedial preparation, because of its focus on writing and thinking skills, which deterred students from enrolling. As a result, the targeted population didn't take the courses; on the other hand, some academically better prepared students, who weren't put off by the course descriptions of intense work, did enroll. And while these more advanced students obviously benefitted from the courses, nevertheless the students for whom the new instructional format was intended missed out. Moreover, faculty reported that some of the targeted students who did enroll--students who earlier had been able to "hide" in large-enrollment classes but were now more noticeable--became intimidated and dropped the seminars early on.

Also, Arts and Sciences departments were reluctant to commit faculty members to the program. Of the twenty departments invited to submit proposals, five declined for a variety of reasons: previous course commitments, sabbatical
leaves, commitments to research or other already ongoing instructional projects, and inability to meet the proposal deadline. And all of the departments, whether they contributed faculty members or not, expressed a need for better compensation for the release time replacements than was offered. Of the fourteen ASPS faculty members I interviewed, many mentioned having received little departmental interest in their ASPS participation. As one put it, "UNM is wildly understaffed." The demand is such that large classes are the norm and departments simply have to provide teachers for them. Programs such as ASPS, while recognized as desirable for both students and faculty, just don't win departmental favor. It was originally hoped that the seminars would prove so successful that departments would require them of their majors. Yet the small class size is not something departments can afford to permit at the lower-division level.

One of the factors that accounts for the satisfaction faculty felt from participating in ASPS is that they so rarely get to teach a small-enrollment class. Several said they'd either forgotten what it was like or had never before done it. Of his involvement in the ASPS program, one of the latter remarked, "I learned what I didn't want to know--good teaching is labor intensive." Said another,

You don't need research to prove that students learn better in smaller classes. The problem is you can't turn a large state university into a small liberal arts college. There aren't enough
faculty to teach these kinds of courses to all the students. The program can't survive on a significant scale.

"There just aren't enough teachers to go around," said another frustrated professor. "We've reached hundreds of students with the ASPS seminars, but we need to reach thousands."

Another problem at UNM, as at Kentucky, is the reward system for faculty. As at any research institution, but especially at a state's primary institution of higher education, pressures on faculty to conduct research and publish are high. One aspect that had made UNM's grant proposal especially appealing to Ford Foundation readers was its institutional commitment to "guarantee to participating faculty members that their role will be given recognition in tenure, promotion, and salary decisions." Had this happened, the concept and mechanism for bringing it about might have influenced other institutions and become at least a shining example if not exactly a precedent.

This seems not to have been the case, however. Faculty were encouraged to note their ASPS participation on their vitae, but their involvement seems to have gained them few extrinsic benefits insofar as their departments are concerned. If a faculty member being reviewed for tenure was "borderline," I was told, the ASPS program would not be seen as an especially positive factor. There were, though, I was assured, "no penalties for having been involved." As
far as "salary decisions" were concerned, ASPS faculty received stipends for attending the faculty development seminars and for teaching their first seminar, but if additional recognition was given as a part of their performance review, faculty did not report it. Several faculty members said that their departments had specifically discouraged junior, untenured colleagues from participating because of the reduced time they would have available for research.

The dean of Arts and Sciences had hoped that the ASPS program would provide special opportunities for UNM's minority student population. UNM offers free tuition and fees to all New Mexico high school students who graduate in the top ten percent of their class. But this is not sufficient to attract the best minority students in the state, who are in competition for better scholarship offers nationally. "We're exporting our best minority students," he said. New Mexico's stagnant economy is the underlying factor in the university's ability to address many of these issues, of course. And at the time of my visit, there didn't seem to be much optimism about the state's economy improving.

A total of sixteen seminars were offered under the Ford grant which ended after the 88-89 academic year. The College of Arts and Sciences provided funding to offer ten additional seminars in 89-90. And the ASPS director had
submitted grant proposals to several other funding agencies to continue adaptations of the program, which had either been denied or were still pending. At the time of my visit, the director was moving ahead with a version of the program wherein graduate TAs, rather than faculty, would receive specialized training to teach lab/discussion sections of 20-25 students attached to large-enrollment lecture courses in their disciplines. Former ASPS faculty were to serve as consultants to the TAs.

There is no doubt that the Ford literacy grant which funded the ASPS program had a significant, if short-term, impact on faculty and students at UNM. At the time of my visit, many, though not all, of the faculty were still using techniques and ideas they had gained through their ASPS participation, though in various modified forms now that most were again teaching larger size classes. Students who had taken the seminars clearly benefitted from the experience. But the durability of the project at the institution is just as clearly in question. On the first day of my two-day visit, UNM inaugurated a new president. ASPS interviewees voiced a mix of uncertainty, optimism, and skepticism as they considered the meaning of that event for UNM's future. What is clear, is that the long-term impact of the program on the institution is questionable at best.
Chapter 9.

Looking Ahead: Establishing Literacy-Based Programs to Improve Undergraduate Education

As Chapter One pointed out, this study of the Ford Foundation's Literacy and the Liberal Arts program has had two distinct focuses: (1) individual case studies that described the implementation of literacy-based programs—which, collectively, constituted (2) one larger case study of the processes and effects of a foundation's grant-making activities. The individual case studies dealt largely with change in curriculum and instruction through faculty development. My concern has been primarily with the internal and external forces that facilitated, or impeded, those changes, and what educational administrators and foundation officers can learn from these cases.

From my study, I draw several generalizations that might help guide the development of academic programs in literacy. But my findings go beyond the development of programs explicitly designed for literacy; they deal with ways of teaching, with the motivation of faculty and students, with the development of communities on campus, with the impact of educational demographics and institutional politics, and with the implications of diminished national funding for higher education. In some ways, the specific topic of the grant program--literacy--seems almost beside the point. The case studies, for example, could have described a foundation's grant-making in literacy. But my findings go beyond the development of programs explicitly designed for literacy; they deal with ways of teaching, with the motivation of faculty and
curriculum. That is not to say that the study has yielded little information about literacy program development, but to point out that the research method used in this study could be applicable to studies other than those dealing with literacy and that the following recommendations apply not just to developing literacy programs but also to developing other kinds of academic programs intended to improve undergraduate education.

Recommendations for Institutional Administrators

These suggestions are intended for institutional administrators who are responsible for developing or supporting the development of literacy programs. This could include directors of freshman composition and/or writing across the curriculum programs, heads of departments under whose jurisdiction these programs may fall, and deans and higher level administrators whose support—or lack of support—often determines these programs' ultimate durability. These general suggestions arise from the experiences of those involved with the nineteen Ford-funded projects. Viewed in conjunction with the specific characteristics of successful programs listed in Chapter Eight, they may assist in furthering literacy instruction in undergraduate education. Following these is a list of specific recommendations for grantmaking agencies.

1. Recognize that enacting change in higher education (in curriculum, in instructional methods, in program development) is a complex process, involving many facets of the institution. Larger
matters of policy and politics, which are often overlooked in attending to specific details, must be addressed in order for a program to survive.

2 Work to better understand how literacy instruction fits into the general education reform movement. Take a more active role in structuring that reform, tying literacy instruction to the institution's mission and goals.

3. Continue to educate the academic community about literacy; and reinforce the idea that the entire academic community shares responsibility for literacy instruction and for producing an educated citizenry.

4. Be prepared to take a more "proactive" (i.e., politically aggressive) role in the institution in order to promote literacy-enhanced instruction. Realize that the explanation "lack of resources" can mean "different allocation of resources" and therefore that groups seeking to establish a new program must actively lobby for their cause.

5. Create a forum for discussion within the institution whereby the academic community can explore how best to reward faculty for participating in literacy-enhanced teaching. If the institution's reward system inhibits innovative instruction, find ways to change or circumvent it. See Ernest Boyer's Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate.

6. Become more knowledgeable about research and evaluation as they pertain to literacy-enhanced education. Determine how research and evaluation can work to improve instruction and programs.

7. Become more aware of the intersections literacy has with other activities in higher education (assessment, accreditation, institutional research) and exploit the connections in whatever ways might benefit literacy program development.

8. Start early in an externally-funded program to secure continued support when the grant monies expire. Waiting until close to the end of the funding period usually means missing out on the budget cycle or being unable to change administrators' attitudes quickly enough.

9. Avoid "blaming the victim" by seeking to
exclude from higher education those students who are underprepared or by faulting the secondary educational system for producing "remedial" students. Realize that our concept of educational democracy (which has resulted in the large-enrollment courses at state-supported universities) calls for creative solutions to ensure educational opportunities which are egalitarian rather than elitist.

Recommendations for Foundations Undertaking Similar Initiatives

These suggestions also arise from the experiences of the grantees in the Literacy and the Liberal Arts program. They would certainly apply to any foundation undertaking a literacy initiative similar to the one sponsored by Ford, but also would clearly benefit other kinds of grant-making in academic programs as well. Many of these suggestions call on foundations to consider assuming a role beyond that of the completely independent grantmaker who, once funds are disbursed, maintains the type of minimal monitoring usually assumed by Ford. Even within the Ford Foundation, though, precedent exists for closer involvement between foundation and grantees (Magat, 43-45). Still, these suggestions do not call on foundations to act as direct program managers, but as something in between. Without committing to an overly-long or paternalistic relationship with grantees, foundations which take a more active role in guiding projects and advising directors might better ensure that their philanthropic investment yields greater dividends for disbursed, maintains the type of minimal monitoring usually assumed by Ford. Even within the Ford Foundation, though, precedent exists for closer involvement between foundation and grantees (Magat, 43-45). Still, these suggestions do
Based on the experiences and comments of Literacy and the Liberal Arts participants, these recommendations are offered to foundations:

1. Decide and make clear the goals for the grant program. Specify to grantees, and then periodically remind them, what the program seeks to accomplish and why.

2. Offer specific, helpful guidance to institutions invited to submit proposals. Allow sufficient time for them to formulate proposals and put them in touch, if needed, with relevant consultants whose ideas might usefully inform their work. Urge that proposals be developed jointly by administrators and faculty (and students, if possible).

3. Require that a project director be designated in the proposal, preferably a person of stature who is capable of marshalling support, exerting influence, and who might reasonably be expected to stay in that position throughout the grant's duration.

4. Require that the proposal contain a specific, applicable research component and that personnel capable of overseeing it be available. Be prepared to advise potential grantees of appropriate research methodologies; clarify what is expected and why they are doing it.

5. Require that the proposal contain some method of ongoing evaluation, with procedures acceptable to all categories of participants (faculty, administrators, and students).

6. Require a specific, written commitment from appropriate institutional administrators clarifying what support they will offer during and after the grant to continue the project when funding expires. While it may not be possible to enforce this commitment, project directors could at least use the document as a political lever, if needed, to secure promised support.

7. Hold a preliminary conference (for multiple-grant programs) to give project directors guidance to advise potential grantees of appropriate research methodologies; clarify what is expected and why they are doing it.
8. Offer individual directors guidance in running their distinctive projects, when requested. Without being intrusive, maintain contact with projects and extend continuing support if needed.

9. Require regular reports of relevant, not bureaucratic, details. Offer specific guidelines on what information would be useful, encouraging reports of problems as well as accomplishments.

10. Maintain broad-based communication with projects, such as a newsletter, to share valuable ongoing research and information.

11. Build a sense of shared purpose and collaboration among grantees to reduce their feelings of isolation; actively encourage cross-fertilization by facilitating communication between projects with similar problems and goals.

12. Respond to the reports that grantees submit, and disseminate appropriate information to other grantees. Follow up to see that research and evaluation components are being conducted and the results used.

13. Hold a mid-program conference so grantees can discuss progress and problems and maintain contact with the foundation and with one another.

14. Work to influence the reward system, to assure that faculty are recognized for their work with the program both at the institutional level and beyond.

15. Hold a closing conference at the program's conclusion so that grantees can report on their work and develop strategies for future action.

16. Commit to sustaining the program's efforts if grantees' results seem promising. Pulling out too soon, just as projects are beginning to discover significant data, works to the detriment of the entire program.

17. Recognize the influence that the foundation's name and reputation exert; assist grantees in knowing how to subtly exploit that power in operating their project.

The ultimate success of any academic program originated by foundation funding, whether in literacy or some other
area, depends on the interactions of the granting agency and the administration and faculty at the receiving institutions, as well as communication between all grantees involved in the common effort. Greater collaboration among all parties could enhance the outcomes of any program and contribute to the desired goal, improved student learning.