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NETWORK A MEETING RECORD

**Network A Plenary Meeting
May 20-21, 2002, Athens, Greece**

Participants

Friedrich Plank, Austria
Christiane Blondin, Belgium (Fr.)
Luc Van de Poele, Belgium (Fl.)
Michael O’Gorman, Canada
Jerry Mussio, Canada
Jana Straková, Czech Republic
Jørn Skovsgaard, Denmark
Pirjo Linnakylä, Finland
Jochen Schweitzer, Germany
Gella Varnava-Skoura, Greece
Benedek Péter Tóta, Hungary
Gerry Shiel, Ireland
Ryo Watanabe, Japan
Fernando Cordova, Mexico
Arnold Spee, Netherlands
Anne-Berit Kavli, Norway
Glória Ramalho, Portugal
Guillermo Gil, Spain
Erich Ramseier, Switzerland
Mariann Lemke, United States
Andreas Schleicher, OECD Secretariat
Jay Moskowitz, Network A Secretariat
Maria Stephens, Network A Secretariat

Presenters and Observers

Stella Vosniadou, Greece
Daniel Gonzalez Spencer, Mexico

Regrets

Wendy Whitham, Australia
Jacqueline Levasseur, France
Chiara Croce, Italy
Kyeyoung Lee, Korea
Jean-Paul Reeff, Luxembourg
Jules Peschar, Netherlands
Lynne Whitney, New Zealand
Eva Schøyen, Norway
Vladislav Rosa, Slovak Republic
Anita Wester, Sweden
Şevki Karaca, Turkey
Lorna Bertrand, United Kingdom
Eugene Owen, United States

Summary of Major Outcomes

- The Network A Secretariat agreed to distribute to members any documentation produced as a result of the Education International (teacher union) meeting, which was held in Paris in April 2002.
- Regarding the preparation of indicators for EAG generally, Network members asked that the Secretariat circulate, now and in the future, the outlines for indicators planned by other Networks, and they agreed with the general direction of the three-year plan for indicators presented by the Secretariat. Regarding the preparation of indicators for EAG more specifically: for 2003, the Network agreed to present all the proposed indicators both overall and disaggregated by gender and to explore the thematic report on reading literacy for an additional indicator to supplement the indicators proposed by the Secretariat. For future years, the Network agreed that non-PISA sources of data should not be cut from the proposal

at this point and agreed to reexamine these sources—paying particular attention to ensuring that a minimum number of OECD countries are represented—once data actually are available.

- The Network A Secretariat will draft a written response on behalf of the Network regarding the draft conceptual framework from the Task Force on Teaching and Learning. Members are encouraged to dialogue with their Network C counterparts at the country level regarding the further development of the framework.
- The OECD Secretariat will draft an agenda for the PISA Symposium and circulate it to members for comment. [This is expected by mid-June.]
- The Network A Secretariat requested that members send any information on the use of video in their countries for the study of education to the Network A Secretariat. The Network Secretariat also agreed to try to reschedule the presentation on the TIMSS / TIMSS-R Video Studies for the BPC-Network A joint meeting day in October.
- It was requested that members send information about their research interests in the problem-solving domain to Stella Vosniadou (svosniad@compulink.gr), as the expert group is exploring the possibility of additional analytic work. It also was requested that members review the proposal for a study on entrepreneurial spirit by Austria and contact Friedrich Plank (friedrich.plank@bmuk.gv.at) if there is interest in collaborating on the study, which could be implemented as a national option in PISA.
- The Network A Secretariat will circulate the original data strategy and original PISA terms of reference for members' information and will consult with the Chair about a process for drafting the Terms of Reference for 2006.
- Regarding development work in ICT literacy, the Network suggested that: (1) the OECD Secretariat draft a letter to solicit financial support for an ICT expert group to be convened; (2) the ICT subcommittee revise the definition according to members' comments; and (3) the Network A Secretariat establish, in consultation with members and the subcommittee, an expert group to advance the ICT work and to make a presentation of the next iteration of the definition paper at the meeting in Prague. The expert group will be charged with examining the existing frameworks, particularly (but not limited to) the ETS framework, in light of Network A's definition of ICT literacy and existing PISA frameworks and identify aspects of our definition that are not covered by or that differ from existing frameworks. Members are requested to send their specific comments on the definition and suggestions for experts to serve on the expert group to the Network Secretariat.
- Finally, the OECD Secretariat will write to countries in order to resolve the issue of whether or not countries would be interested in supporting the development of an instrument to measure foreign language literacy in PISA 2006.

Welcome and Introduction

Jay Moskowitz opened the Network A meeting, expressing regrets from Eugene Owen, who was not able to attend and chair the meeting, and passing along Eugene's sincere thanks and appreciation for the expressions of friendship and concern while he has been in the hospital. Jay

noted that, although Eugene has remained engaged in the work of the Network remotely, he is very much looking forward to being released from the hospital in a few weeks and in rejoining the Network in person in Prague.

Jay then welcomed new participants, including: Michael O’Gorman from Canada, Anne-Berit Kavli from Norway, Jose Maria Fraustro Siller and Daniel Gonzalez Spencer from Mexico, and Mariann Lemke from the United States. He also offered regrets from Australia, France, Italy, Korea, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Sweden, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

Then, he turned the floor to Mr. Alexis Demaris, the President of the National Center for Educational Research in Greece, to give an official welcome. Mr. Demaris welcomed members to Athens and noted the increasing importance of INES and PISA in Greece and their participation in all aspects of INES. Mr. Demaris also spoke on behalf of the Greek Ministry of Education, describing their particular interest in the Network’s work to develop a framework for measuring ICT literacy and noting the usefulness of PISA as a mechanism through which all countries can work to improve their educational programs. Finally, Gella Varnava-Skoura welcomed members to Athens and provided some information about the meeting’s hospitality.

After a detailed review of the agenda and approval of the minutes from Budapest, Jay turned the floor to Andreas Schleicher.

Updates from the OECD

Andreas Schleicher then provided an update on the progress of various OECD activities, taking members’ questions throughout the presentation. Topics addressed included:

- *INES National Coordinators and Steering Group Meetings.* Several topics were raised in these meetings in early January. Of note, the Network chairs and SMG chair will be meeting in the future to discuss how to improve information flow on resources, costs, and activities. A paper on budgeting options for INES activities that might utilize a BPC-type model is being prepared.

At the Steering group meeting, participants noted the importance of work to develop indicators on teaching and identified it as one of four top priorities, along with developing information on the internationalization of education, on early childhood education, and on adult skills. On the matter of an adult skills survey, there will be a meeting at the OECD in June to discuss and develop a position paper that can be presented to the Education Committee and CERI Governing Board in October.

- *Technical Review of PISA 2000.* Since the last meeting of Network A, a technical review meeting was held to identify the strengths and weaknesses of PISA 2000; assess the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms; assess the adequacy of the instruments; and discuss the quality of implementation. The meeting was very useful, prompting important discussions on design issues, such as better integration of grade-based sample or balance between questionnaires and assessment, and on the context questionnaires, including the need to improve measurement and develop a long-term analytic agenda. Andreas noted that a subgroup of the BPC would be established to deal with the latter. The meeting produced

many recommendations, including: strengthening the technical standards, conducting earlier monitoring of school response rates, developing tools and interfaces that improve accessibility of the data—Andreas noted this had been done; examining the balance of response types; examining the value of double-digit coding; and considering ways to expand the role of the NPMs.

- *Network C Survey.* The report from the International Survey of Schools at the Upper Secondary Level is expected in early 2003, and Network C is planning indicators based on ISUSS for EAG 2003; this year's EAG will include indicators from PISA. Arnold Spee suggested that the two Networks meet jointly sometime in the future (e.g., at the Fall 2003 meeting in Portugal).
- *World Education Indicators.* The WEI project continues to gain momentum. A third report from the project is currently being prepared. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics will take on a larger role in management of this project.
- *Education International Meeting.* This was a meeting of teacher unions, which was held in Paris in April and which included agenda items on PISA results. Andreas and Jay both noted the positive tone of the meeting, and the growing awareness and interest among the union representatives present in moving from being ideologically based institutions to more evidence-based institutions. Members requested follow-up information from the meeting.

Presentation and Discussion on EAG Indicators

In the later morning session, Maria Stephens gave an overview of the proposal for EAG indicators for 2003, 2004, and 2005. She noted that the goal of the session was to come to agreement on the indicators to be prepared for 2003, which will be prepared over the summer, and to come to consensus on the general direction of the proposal overall. She described the approach to the proposal, which was to: (1) use information from multiple studies; (2) group information from multiple studies together thematically, where possible; and (3) highlight relevant PISA thematic reports. Maria briefly characterized the suggested indicators for the respective years as focusing on additional outcomes from PISA and the CivEd study in 2003, on reading literacy in 2004, and on trends (mainly in mathematics and science) in 2005.

In the subsequent discussion on the proposal, members were generally favorable about the overall direction of the proposal. Some comments included:

- Pirjo Linnakylä suggested that the indicators for 2003 each be examined in terms of gender and that the reading literacy thematic report be mined for an additional indicator, an idea that was supported by other members.
- Fernando Cordova raised the question of whether or not the Network should consider or establish a minimum number of OECD countries that should be represented in any data set in order to be presented in EAG, considering, for example, the relatively small number of OECD countries participating in ALL and CivEd relative to other possible data sources. Other representatives, including Fritz Plank, Christiane Blondin and others, supported this idea.

- Building off this issue (and others noted later), there was some discussion if studies other than PISA should be considered versus presenting more in-depth information from PISA. Guillermo Gil was the most vocal supporter of the use of multiple studies and broad indicators. Mariann Lemke also supported the use of multiple studies, noting the value added of EAG in being able to juxtapose results from different studies. Andreas suggested that an important criterion for the use of non-OECD data should be that these provide significant added value to what can be obtained through data sources developed by and for OECD countries.
- Arnold Spee suggested that the plans for 2003 and 2004 be reversed, although it was pointed out that, because of the release dates for ALL and PIRLS, it would not be possible to move the 2004 plan forward in the schedule.
- Jerry Mussio inquired whether or not there was an underlying framework that guided the selection of indicators for the proposal [which there was not]. He described a similar exercise in Canada to select indicators in which a framework, or set of criteria, had been developed to guide the process and justify the selections, and suggested this might be a useful activity for the Network in thinking about the future of EAG.
- Several members raised concerns about the presentation of trend data from multiple sources in the suggestions for EAG 2005. For instance, Jana Straková cautioned about the combining of TIMSS trend data, which uses grade-based samples, and PISA data, which uses age-based samples. Erich Ramseier also cautioned generally against mistaking possible errors in measurement for changes in performance.
- Some members, such as Jochen Schweitzer, Gerry Shiel, and Anne-Berit Kavli inquired about the general lack of contextual information, for instance, on school variables and ICT. It was noted, that in most cases, such data fall within the domain of Network C. In response, members requested that the Secretariat send information on the other Network's plans so that they can assess the fit of the Network A submission and potential gaps overall. Christiane Blondin voiced support for the inclusion of additional information from the CivEd study, such as information on attitudes.

In summarizing the comments, Jay suggested and members agreed that: (1) the Network Secretariat would distribute information about other Networks' indicators to members; (2) the indicators for 2003 would be disaggregated by gender and supplemented by an additional indicator from the reading literacy thematic report; and (3) the plan for future years would stand with the inclusion of multiple sources but could be reexamined in subsequent years, especially with regard to ensuring country representation.

On a related note, Arnold suggested that the Network's EAG 2002 indicators be revised, disaggregating by gender. Andreas said that this was not possible since the country review process was completed, but that it might be possible to add references to sources where information on gender is available (e.g., in the PISA international report).

Update and Discussion on the Task Force on Teaching and Learning

Following the lunch break, Jay introduced the next topic: an update and discussion on the Task Force on Teaching and Learning. After providing some background on the Task Force (i.e., it

was established as a joint activity of Networks A and C in response to the General Assembly's call for information on teaching and the impacts of teaching on learning and growing out of an existing Network C subgroup and other OECD activities led by Paolo Santiago), Jay turned the floor to Gerry Shiel to describe the outcomes of the first meeting of the Task Force and describe the draft framework that was produced.

Gerry reviewed the Terms of Reference guiding the work of the group; described the first meeting of the Task Force (which occurred in March 2002); provided an overview of the two approaches taken in the draft framework (i.e., the top-down and bottom-up approaches); described the Task Force's notation of observable and unobservable characteristics; and referred to a paper recently produced for NCES (and shared with the Task Force) on issues in measuring instructional processes. Gerry noted that the existing document was very much a draft document and urged the Network to provide input to help guide the further development of the framework. The floor was then opened for discussion.

On the whole, Network members were supportive of the activity and appreciative that the work was moving forward. However, overall, members were concerned that the current draft of the framework focused too heavily on what we already know how to measure and rather should go beyond this to development work on the interaction of teaching and learning, from both the teacher and student perspectives. Particular comments included:

- The framework should explore the relationship between teachers and students, which is the real source of learning; and it needs to consider different learning needs and learning styles, acknowledging that there is no "one best approach."
- The current schedule is overly ambitious. In order to develop the areas in which the Network is interested (i.e., fleshing out the classroom and student levels of the framework), additional time and effort would be required. The work should proceed steadily, not hastily.
- The framework needs to determine how to measure factors now classified as "unobservable," which, in fact, are not unobservable but merely more difficult to measure than those classified as "observable."
- It might be desirable to conduct small-scale experiments to pilot the measurement of "unobservables" such as student engagement and instructional processes.
- The title, which leaves out the phrase "teaching and learning," gives away the current focus of the paper and should be re-titled and expanded to better incorporate this aspect of the framework.
- There is less of a need to produce indicators (as the term is currently used in INES) than on developing useful international comparative information. For instance, although the emphasis on supply and demand in the current draft could yield indicators, such indicators would not be as useful because of local market conditions and limited teacher mobility (e.g. curriculum and language issues).

In addition to these comments, members suggested that future iterations should: (1) explore the bridge between teaching and learning; (2) take into account differences in teaching/learning across subjects, gender, and other characteristics and also across countries and cultures; (3) stay

focused on the value added by exploring these topics comparatively; (4) expand the information that could be collected from students; and (5) emphasize affective teacher behavior. Members suggested that some exploratory work (e.g., an expert group) could be built into the PISA 2006 TOR regarding these issues.

Summarizing the discussion and proposing next steps, Jay suggested that the Secretariat would prepare a summary of the Network's comments, with the input and review of the members of Network A who also are on the Task Force, and forward them on the Network's behalf to the Task Force Chair. And, as members had suggested, he encouraged Network A representatives to discuss the framework and the Task Force with their Network C counterparts at the country level to encourage the development of the parts of the framework dealing with the interaction of teaching and learning.

Working Session on PISA Symposium

In this final session of the day, Network members were asked to help brainstorm ideas for planning and organizing the PISA symposium that will take place in November in Germany. In particular, Jay called members' attention to open issues, such as: who should speak and present, who should be invited, and how the meeting should be structured. On the other hand, the relative emphasis on policy and practice first and then on research in the symposium agenda was considered more set based on discussions in the BPC.

Members were supportive of the symposium and the directions established by the BPC but suggested that:

- The research perspective (and the related study implementation perspective) not become too marginalized and that at least one session should be devoted to this perspective and audience;
- Organizers find a balance between presentation and discussion, with significant time devoted to the latter; and
- There be caution with regard to the practice perspective, as there has not been enough time for impacts in this area yet.

Several organizational strategies also were suggested, including: (1) identifying key questions and organizing small group sessions for individuals grouped by levels (e.g., practice, policy, research) to discuss the questions; (2) asking journalists to help identify key questions of interest related to policy and practice; and/or (3) drawing on themes from the thematic reports as an organizing principle.

With regard to determining speakers for the conference, several members were against the idea of inviting mainly speakers from the high-performing countries. They suggested that a wider representation of education systems would be more informative and that some countries with low or surprising performance may, in fact, give greater reflection to the reasons for their results and policies for improving them. Another suggestion was to have speakers from countries with varying performance answer the same question to encourage interesting discussion.

The next steps will be for the OECD Secretariat to draft an agenda and circulate it among members for their comments.

Update on the TIMSS/TIMSS-R Video Studies

To begin the second day of the meeting, Mariann Lemke gave a brief update on the TIMSS video studies. [Because of a combination of factors, including both scheduling and technological difficulties, we were not able to arrange a presentation on the studies by the organizers at Lessonlab in Los Angeles. A presentation will be scheduled for the next meeting.] Three countries, Germany, Japan, and the United States, participated in the 1995 study, which focused on mathematics teaching in the eighth grade and which examined a sample of teachers of the TIMSS students. By contrast, 7 countries (Australia, Czech Republic, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and United States) are participating in the 1999 study, which focuses on both mathematics and science teaching in the eighth grade and which is examining a nationally representative sample of teachers. Similar to other international studies, the sampling procedure was to sample schools and then teachers within schools. Also, in the second study, two cameras were used in the shoots, with extensive training of the videographers to ensure methodological rigor. Participating countries last met in January 2002. The draft report on mathematics teaching is now undergoing review and is expected to be publicly available in the Fall of 2002, and the report on science teaching is expected to follow by about a year. Mariann noted that the other major product expected is a public release video showing a subset of teaching examples from a subset of countries, and she noted the power of the software that has been developed for using and viewing the tapes.

Jay then invited representatives from the countries participating in the 1999 study to add comments on their experience with the video studies. Arnold concurred with Mariann about the power of the software. Erich noted that Switzerland was planning a workshop on how to analyze data from the study. Jana noted that the video study, in the Czech Republic, would be a powerful tool for teacher education and complemented the work of Lessonlab in this direction. Jay requested that countries send any examples of the use of video to study education at the national or sub-national level to the Network A Secretariat.

Update on PISA and the Science Framework Committee

Andreas Schleicher then gave an update on several PISA-related issues:

- *Context questionnaires.* In discussing the context questionnaires, Andreas noted short-term objectives (e.g., to review the 2003 field trial results, finalize the instruments, and establish decision-making processes and roles); medium-term objectives (e.g., to develop a reporting plan or 2003); and long-term objectives (e.g., to address issues such as the balance between questionnaires and assessment in 2006 and 2009, alternative means and methods of data collection, and generally improving measurement). Some of these tasks can be undertaken by a new subgroup of the BPC to consolidate policy priorities, scientific and practical considerations. Members also saw a role for Network A, especially in terms of long-term questions such as on the balance between questionnaires and assessment. Much of this discussion related to the development of the next TOR, which was discussed in the

subsequent session. Andreas noted that there also would be a line item in the PISA budget for research, so questions, such as what are the implications of changes in study design on comparability over time, can be answered. Members also discussed issues related to the degree of prescription of the next TOR.

- *External evaluation.* The Consortium is preparing the written review of the mathematics framework and items, undertaken by the expert panel, which will be reviewed by the BPC. Overall, the review was positive, although there was some suggestion that not all items lived up to the conceptual framework. Also, an analysis of PISA 2000 results was undertaken of whether or not country standing would change if countries were assessed only on those items rated “familiar.” It showed that there would be no change in relative standing for all countries except two. On the question of impacts of the possible lack of motivation of students on performance, there has been little evidence that there were widespread student motivation problems.
- *Problem solving.* The BPC has posed several questions to the expert group, including: what is the contribution of problem solving over and above the other domains; is there good fit of items to the framework; can interpretable and useful scales be developed? If necessary, a meeting similar to the Math Forum meeting will be convened to deal with any outstanding issues after the field trial. At this point, Stella Vosniadou, an expert group member and former representative from Greece to the BPC, requested that members send to her information about their research interests, as the expert group would be exploring additional analytic work. Members noted their interest in developing proficiency levels for problem solving and generally cautioned about the difficulty of relating performance in problem solving to practice in part because of the expected influence of familiarity on performance.
- *Science framework development.* Andreas noted that the BPC had accepted the Network’s recommendation and proposed process for establishing a committee to get a head start on advancing the science framework—a committee that would not necessarily come from the existing expert group. The Consortium and member countries have been asked to submit nominations, which will be selected by the BPC, and the committee will be established by October.

Data Strategy and Analysis

Following on the discussion begun during the BPC update, members turned to a discussion on the long-term data strategy and analytic planning. Jay asked members what issues we should be thinking about now in planning for the 2006 and 2009 cycles. To begin with, Mariann requested that the Secretariat circulate the original data strategy to members so we could begin thinking about long-term issues. Erich noted that since 2009 will be the year that PISA “starts over” with reading literacy, we should keep in mind broader design issues that might be open for change, such as moving to a 4-year cycle and strengthening a grade-based sampling option. Other issues noted included finding ways to: get better information on school variables and the “culture of learning” (Jochen and Arnold); better coordinate with IEA (Guillermo); and achieve strategic coordination (Arnold). Members were somewhat divided, however, on how much change should be considered when it comes to 2009. Luc Van de Poele reminded members that PISA has been “branded” as having certain unique characteristics—the maintenance of which should be a

primary guiding criterion in decision making about the future. Jana also was concerned above moving too far from the original conception of PISA. In terms of process/next steps, Jay said that he would talk to Eugene about the possibility of convening a drafting group that would meet in the early Fall to begin to discuss the TOR for 2006 and other long-term planning considerations.

Discussion on ICT Literacy and Planning for Experts Day

Following the lunch break, Arnold gave a presentation on the work of the ICT subcommittee (including Jerry Mussio, Erich Ramseier, and Luc Van de Poele) to develop a definition of ICT literacy to guide development of a framework for assessment. He first described the key features of existing definitions, including those from the ALL study, the ETS ICT literacy panel, Eurydice, the OECD ICT project, and IEA SITES. In presenting the existing definitions, he noted that SITES provided perhaps the broadest view of ICT literacy as “knowledge management competencies” and that the ETS framework focused mainly on the application of skills, including both technical and cognitive skills. The Network A definition of ICT literacy:

ICT literacy is an individual’s ability to achieve their goals and participate effectively in society by using computers and related information technologies, employing a strategic approach to access and manage information, reflecting on information and constructing new knowledge products and by collaborating and exchanging knowledge with others.

is intended to be consistent with definitions of other literacies in PISA. To close the presentation, Arnold directed members to several discussion questions, including: (1) should we aim to be coherent with the existing PISA frameworks; (2) should we concentrate on technical and/or social competencies; and (3) which do we prefer: a test or self-report?

The Network then had a lively and useful discussion. Members were appreciative of the work of the subcommittee in advancing the ICT work. Jay read aloud comments from Wendy Whitham, who was not at the meeting, on the definition and the subcommittee agreed to revise the definition accordingly and also to take Jørn Skovsgaard’s comment to include “contemporary” technologies in the definition. It was noted that in advancing the ICT work, it should be kept in mind that that young people view technology as a “part of life.” Several members, though they recognized the differences between the Network A and ETS and IEA definitions, also saw some parallelism. Erich noted that the subcommittee’s view of the weakness of the ETS framework was the lack of emphasis on production or creation, favoring instead application. Jerry noted that the Network A definition aimed to be comprehensive yet, at the same time, realistic for the PISA context. He noted that next steps might require piloting components of the definition. Since any future work would likely require financial support, Jay suggested that the OECD write to countries about their support for the ICT activity. In terms of next steps, Arnold suggested convening an expert group to meet prior to the next meeting in Prague. Building on that, Mariann suggested that, as a process, the group should be asked to examine, in particular, the ETS framework and identify any areas that are not addressed in the framework but that *are* addressed our definition. In other words, the group could start with the ETS framework and add in what it thought was missing, also drawing from the IEA framework, as suggested by Jerry.

In summary, the Network agreed that: (1) the OECD Secretariat will draft a letter to solicit financial support for an ICT expert group to be convened; (2) the ICT subcommittee will revise the definition according to members' comments; and (3) the Network A Secretariat will establish, in consultation with members and the subcommittee, an expert group to advance the ICT work and to make a presentation of the next iteration of the definition paper at the meeting in Prague. The expert group will be charged with examining the existing frameworks, particularly (but not limited to) the ETS framework, in light of Network A's definition of ICT literacy and existing PISA frameworks and identify aspects of our definition that are not covered by or that differ from existing frameworks. Members are requested to send their specific comments on the definition and suggestion for experts to serve on the expert group to the Network Secretariat.

Updates on Related Projects

To open this session, Jay turned the floor to Fritz to make a brief announcement to the Network concerning a project being proposed in Austria. Fritz introduced a paper proposing a study—which, with the interest of other countries, could be implemented as a national option in PISA—on the entrepreneurial spirit of 15 year-old students. Fritz requested that members review the paper, discuss it with their colleagues, and contact him if there was an interest in developing and participating in the project.

Jay then provided updates on related international activities.

ALL Study

The ALL field test has been completed, and there will be a meeting of the National Study Managers on June 12-16 in Costa Rica to review the field test items and determine the items that will be in the main data collection in Fall 2002. The general sense among participants is that the field test went well. Test developers are comfortable that they will be able to develop scales for the analytic reasoning assessment. The ICT survey also was successful, although some scaling back of the instrument is expected to deal with repetitive items. The items on teamwork, as expected, worked less well and likely will be cut. A core group of countries participated in the field test and have committed to participating in the main data collection, and there is another handful of countries that intend to participate in the main data collection without having participated in the field test. Another option being considered is launching a second wave, such as was done in IALS. The sense is that some countries that are “on-the-fence” about participating in the study are waiting to make a final decision until after the June meeting on the OECD's possible adult skills activity, which they hope will clarify the relationship of the two activities.

PIRLS

The main data collection for PIRLS, the assessment of 9 year-olds in reading literacy, was completed in 2001—in the Spring for Northern Hemisphere participants and in the Fall for Southern Hemisphere participants. Thirty-five countries participated in the study, including many developing countries. Boston College is currently analyzing the data; the National

Research Coordinators are expected to receive the final data in November 2002 and meet in December 2002. The current release date for the international report is early April 2003.

DeSeCo

The 2nd international DeSeCo Symposium took place in February 2002 in Switzerland and was well attended by OECD member countries, INES participants, and others. The purposes of the symposium were to discuss issues related to the conceptualization of competencies; create a dialogue among researchers, policy analysts, and policy makers at the national level on these issues; and to discuss possibilities for the eventual development of assessments of competencies. The DeSeCo organizers are currently working on several products that will be completed by the end of the summer, including: (1) a strategy paper, which will be presented to the Education Committee and CERI Governing Board at their meetings in October and which is to provide a frame of reference for the discourse on competencies and elaborate on the implications of DeSeCo for an international assessment program; and (2) a 5-chapter final report that is expected to be published commercially as a follow-up to the first DeSeCo volume. The next meeting of the DeSeCo Steering Group will be June 1-2 in Washington, DC.

On the topic of other studies, Mariann noted for members' interest that the United States and Canada would be undertaking a joint study to explore in more depth the performance of students functioning at level 1 and below in reading literacy.

Finally, Jay announced that the publishing company Routledge Falmer had accepted the Network A chapters for publication. The Network A Secretariat will send additional information about the provisions of the contract as soon as it is available and will notify the authors regarding the review and (possibly) updating of their respective chapters.

Next Steps and Closing

In conclusion, Jay reviewed the major decisions taken at the meeting (a summary of which can be found at the beginning of this document).

Jay thanked Gella and her staff for their hospitality and warm welcome in Athens; Gerry Shiel and Arnold Spee for their presentations on the Network's development work; the members for their participation, as always; and the OECD and Network Secretariats for their work and support. The next meeting will be October 10-11 in Prague, preceded by a joint day with the BPC on October 9, on ICT development work, and by the BPC meeting on October 7-8.

The meeting was adjourned.