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NETWORK A MEETING RECORD

Network A Plenary Session
October 28-30, 1996, Paris, France

Participants

Friedrich Plank (Austria)
Aletta Grisay (Belgium)
Luc Van de Poele (Belgium)
C. Jean Britton (Canada)
Jana Straková (Czech Republic)
Niels Plischewski (Denmark)
Kimmo Leimu (Finland)
Jacqueline Levasseur (France)
Dieter Schwedt (Germany)
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Thomas Kellaghan (Ireland)
Chiara Croce (Italy)
Jean-Paul Reeff (Luxembourg)
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Jules Peschar (Netherlands)
Arnold Spee (Netherlands)
Rosemary Renwick (New Zealand)
Marit Granheim (Norway)
Gertrudes Amaro (Portugal)
Guillermo Gil (Spain)
Sten Petersson (Sweden)
Uri Trier (Switzerland)
Michael Richardson (United Kingdom)
Eugene Owen (United States, Chair)
Jay Moskowitz (United States)
Shelley Kirkpatrick (United States)
Tom Alexander (CERI/OECD)
Andreas Schleicher (CERI/OECD)

Observers and Guests

Ray Adams (Australia)
Pierre Foy (Canada)
Anne Savant (France)
Judit Kádár-Fülöp (Hungary)
Sietske Waslander (Netherlands)
Jaap Scheerens (Network C Chair)
Ola Moe (Norway)
Pascal D. Forgione, Jr. (United States)
Ina Mullis (United States)
Jarl Bengtsson (CERI/OECD)
Norberto Bottani (CERI/OECD)
Georges Lemaitre (CERI/OECD)

Welcome

Mr. Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., the U.S. Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, warmly welcomed participants to the meeting. Mr. Forgione expressed his enthusiasm toward Network A and his desire to see the Network's collaborative efforts continue. He emphasized the strength of partnerships among the OECD countries to accomplish the goals of Network A.

Statement by the OECD Secretariat on the Future of INES

Tom Alexander discussed the future objectives and program of work for the INES Project and described the organizational framework for Phase 4. At the Lahti General Assembly, it was agreed that Phase 4 of the INES Project would focus on the following domains: cognitive and non-cognitive student outcomes (including cross-curricular competencies), school-age and nonschool-age populations, school-to-work transition, lifelong learning, human capital investment, and disparities within each country. Fewer indicators with a broader scope were called for. Indicators for this next phase will be chosen according to the extent that they are: (a) policy relevant, (b) examine important aspects of education, (c) conform to high quality standards for reliability, validity, and comparability, and (d) are accessible for a range of users.

To achieve these objectives, the INES Project's structure for Phase 4 will consist of the following: (1) a Steering Group will provide the overall policy direction and will be larger than the PRAG; (2) a group of 20-30 scientific advisors will provide expertise on an as-needed basis; (3) national coordinators will advise the Steering Group and assist with dissemination; and (4) networks will be given specific charges to be achieved within a given time period.

Review of the Management of the Data Strategy

Tom Alexander opened the review of the paper, *A Strategy for Producing Student Achievement Indicators on a Regular Basis*. He stated that there was consensus on the general management structure described in the paper – that is, with participating countries serving on the data strategy's Steering Group that will be responsible for setting policy (Note: to avoid confusion with the INES Steering Group, the Steering Group for the data strategy was renamed the Board of Participating Countries; this new name will be used below.), the Secretariat functioning as overall project manager and Secretariat to the Board, and the new prime contractor carrying out the implementation activities. However, issues that still needed to be resolved regarded the chair of the Board, the roles that countries would have, and the tendering restrictions. He also clarified the roles of the Education Committee and CERI Governing Board in the approval process for the paper by stating that the paper will go to both entities for approval.

Next, Andreas Schleicher summarized the comments received from countries on the paper. He said that all comments and questions regarding classification would be taken into consideration when revising the paper. Major substantive issues that were expressed in the comments were the following: (a) the chair of the data strategy's Steering Group; (b) the mechanisms that will be available to participating countries to voice their input into the project and the roles that participating countries will take on; and (c) whether the tendering process would be restricted. Based on much discussion, Eugene summarized the key points and Andreas distributed them in writing. A copy of the key points is presented below:

Meeting of INES Network A, Paris, 28-30 October: Clarification of key points

The INES Network A invites the OECD Secretariat to submit the document on the strategy for producing student achievement indicators on a regular basis, revised in light of the comments and discussions at the meeting of Network A 28-30 October, to the OECD Education Committee and CERI Governing Board for consideration and approval in principle at their forthcoming meetings.

Concerning the recommended model for project structure and management the meeting takes the following positions:

- (1) Participating countries will take responsibility for the project at the policy level. Through a Board of Participating Countries, they will determine, in the context of OECD objectives, the policy priorities for the project and oversee adherence with these priorities during its implementation. This includes the setting of priorities for indicator development and reporting, the instrument development as well as the determination of a scope of work that will afterwards be translated into a Request for Proposal for the international contractor.
- (2) The OECD Secretariat will take overall managerial responsibility for the project, monitor the implementation of the project on a day to day basis, build consensus among countries and act as the interlocutor to the prime international contractor charged with the implementation of the activities specified by the Board of Participating Countries.
- (3) The design and implementation of the surveys, within the framework established by the Board of Participating Countries, will be the responsibility of a contracted institution or agency that will be selected through an approved and transparent tendering process. Participating countries will serve on working groups that will provide input to the development of the assessment instruments in order to ensure that the diverse cultural and curricular contexts are accounted for in the assessments.
- (4) The Board of Participating Countries will be composed of countries participating in the project. Non-participating OECD Member countries may be invited as observers at the discretion of the Board. The OECD Secretariat will act as the Secretariat of the Board.
- (5) The tendering process will be open to all qualified bidders. Criteria for qualification will be developed by Network A and the Secretariat.
- (6) The proposed project design specified in Section 2 of the document represents a point of departure to meet the initial goals approved by Network A in its meeting in Dublin (November 1995). The design may need to be modified over time, in response to changing policy priorities.
- (7) Countries are encouraged to draw upon National expertise as needed.

Additionally, in response to concerns about the paper being overly specific, Andreas and Eugene pointed out that the reason for the specificity was to permit costs to be estimated. However, bidders will be free to suggest other arrangements in their proposals.

As noted above, the paper will be revised by the Network A chair and the Secretariat to reflect the above key points and then will be presented to the Education Committee and CERI Governing Board for approval in principle at their meetings in November. (Note: This version is attached.) Assuming Education Committee and CERI Governing Board approval, work also will begin on drafting the scope of work; the draft will be presented at the Spring meeting.

Discussion with Experts

Before preparing *A Strategy for Producing Student Achievement Indicators on a Regular Basis*, several experts were consulted at a meeting in September regarding the costs, sampling design, and proficiency levels. We were pleased that three of the experts who attended the meeting – Ina Mullis (of the TIMSS International Study Center at Boston College), Ray Adams (of the Australian Council for Educational Research), and Pierre Foy (of Statistics Canada) – could attend the Network A meeting to address the Network’s questions regarding these topics. Specifically, Ina addressed questions regarding costs, Ray answered questions on proficiency levels, and Pierre provided information on the sample design.

A major discussion point was possible ways to reduce costs. Possibilities suggested included reducing the sample, reducing the amount of testing time, and collecting data on a four-year cycle. The Board of Participating Countries will need to make the final determination about the level of reliability desired, which then will have implications for the exact final sample size. Reducing the amount of testing time would lower development, translation, and scoring costs but may not yield the breadth needed to produce the desired indicators and may reduce the correspondence between the test and national curricula. The experts also pointed out that a less frequent schedule of data collection may lower the annual costs but the overall costs would remain the same. The three-year cycle was chosen to maintain momentum, to avoid uneven demand for national staff, and to ensure that policymakers receive major domain indicators at least every 10 years.

Another issue was school-level analysis. The present design and sample size will not permit inferences to be made at the school level. To perform such analyses, the sample size would have to increase to 400 or 500 schools per country, and an even larger sample size would be needed to perform regional analyses within countries. Eugene stated that the design, as initially intended, will provide information on schools from the students within those schools.

Andreas provided a table listing the percentage of funding that each country provides to CERI. This information will allow countries to calculate their own estimates of their share of the international costs.

Eugene will contact Geoff Masters to obtain more detailed information about developing and implementing proficiency levels.

Formation of a New Working Group

A new working group was formed. The purpose of the group is the following: (a) for current data sources, to develop indicators and ways of presenting indicators for *EAG*; (b) to develop

options for the analytical use of curriculum-based and noncurriculum-based data resulting from the Network A data strategy; and (c) to develop ways of examining the relationships among different types of student outcomes data (and with other parts of the INES Project).

The countries initially expressing an interest in serving on this working group were the following: Austria, Belgium (French), Czech Republic, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland, and the United States. A draft charge was distributed, and based on comments during the meeting, a revised charge will be distributed to Network members.

Presentation of Draft GOALS Report

Marit Granheim presented the draft GOALS Report to the Network. She emphasized that she needs to receive comments from Network members no later than November 25 so that she can incorporate them in time to send the revised report to OECD by December 1. She recommended further GOALS work be carried on in OECD outside of Network A.

CCC Update

Jules Peschar reviewed the CCC subgroup's progress. The pilot study examining the feasibility of using CCC instruments is complete and the resulting publication, *Prepared for Life*, is scheduled for release from OECD at the end of this year. Jules suggested some next steps, which included improving the problem solving and communication instruments via an instrument test and then standardizing all four instruments and data collection procedures in another field test. Additional steps also could include holding a policy makers conference, having an experts seminar on the conceptual basis of the instruments, conducting a graphics test of ways to present CCC data, and expanding the countries participating in CCC efforts.

Uri Trier described Switzerland's proposal to OECD for creating a CORE group (which stands for Competencies Reference Group). The purpose of this group would be to create a frame of reference for selecting core competencies indicators. Uri said that a document outlining the proposed purpose and activities of this group will be available at the Spring 1997 meeting.

IALS and SIALS Update

Albert Tuijnman briefed the Network on the status of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and the second wave of IALS data collection (SIALS). The first wave of data collection was completed by eight countries. The second wave has been completed by the countries in the first wave plus an additional six countries. Furthermore, another 10-12 countries have expressed interest in completing the second wave of data collection.

A report that includes all countries that have completed the second data collection to date (e.g., the original group of eight countries plus the additional six countries) is scheduled for release on September 8, 1997, and the report on all countries that will have completed the second wave is scheduled for release on September 8, 1998.

Currently, no third or fourth waves of data collection are planned, although Albert presented the ideas that were being considered for continuing related efforts. One idea is to examine “life skills,” ten of which are being examined by a group of experts to see if a survey could be developed. The ten domains under consideration include reading (with linkages back to IALS), writing, oral communication (listening and speaking), problem solving, numeracy (as a concept different from quantitative literacy), learning to learn, computer and information technology, team work, social skills, and metacognition (e.g., perseverance, motivation, decision making). A new survey could include an original IALS scale, which would permit linkages back to the IALS data collections, as well as three or four new domains.

Network C

Jaap Scheerens, Network C Chair, summarized the status of Network C activities, discussed future activities that Network C is considering, and presented potential ways in which Networks A and C could collaborate. To produce its school process indicators, Network C has employed several methodologies for producing indicator data, including a multi-respondent procedure for collecting data on locus of decision making, a system-level survey on teachers and curriculum, secondary analyses of IEA data, and a school survey.

Network C’s school survey could guide Network A’s determination of the type of data collected on its school survey. However, Network C’s school-level data and Network A’s student-level data may not be directly comparable; the relationship between the two types of data will need to be considered further. Eugene stated that Network A would continue to work with Jaap and the Secretariat to determine concrete ways of coordinating with Network C.

Spring 1997 Meeting

The Spring 1997 Network A meeting probably will take place in Lisbon in April. No firm dates have been set, and to assist with meeting preparations, Network members should remember to contact the chair regarding their availability during April.