EDUCATING AT-RISK STUDENTS

One Hundred-first Yearbook of the
National Society for the Study of Education

PART II

Edited by
SAM STRINGFIELD AND DEBORAH LAND

Distributed by THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS • CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

CHAPTER 4

Issues in Educating Hispanic Students

YOLANDA N. PADRÓN, HERSH C. WAXMAN,
AND HÉCTOR H. RIVERA

The education of Hispanic[1] students in the United States is at a crisis stage. Although the number of Hispanic students in public schools has increased dramatically in recent decades, Hispanic students as a group show the lowest educational achievement and the highest dropout rate. Poverty, poor health, and other social problems have made it difficult for Hispanics to improve their educational status. Consequently, one of our most pressing national educational priorities has been closing the achievement gap between Hispanic and White students (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2000). The focus of this chapter is to examine factors that may contribute to Hispanic students' success and to address the complex issues created by cultural diversity among Hispanics in relation to their values and beliefs, since any single approach may not address the needs of all Hispanic students.

The educational crisis for Hispanic students has been discussed at length at local, state, regional, and national levels, and there are several excellent reports and documents that have highlighted some of the critical problems facing Hispanic students (U.S. Department of Education, 1998, 2000). This chapter summarizes these issues and offers some recommendations to alleviate the problems. The chapter is divided into four major sections. The first section focuses on the educational status of Hispanic students in the United States. The second section discusses factors associated with the underachievement of Hispanic students, including a lack of qualified teachers, inappropriate teaching practices, and at-risk school environments. The third section examines factors associated with the success of Hispanic students. It provides a brief summary of programs and instructional strategies that have been found to significantly improve the academic achievement of Hispanic students. The final section of the chapter addresses some of the implications of our current knowledge of effective practices and programs for teacher education, teachers' professional development, policy, practice, and future research.

Yolanda N. Padrón is a Professor in the College of Education at the University of Houston and Co-Director of the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence. Hersh C. Waxman is a Professor in the College of Education at the University of Houston; Principal Researcher in the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence; and Principal Investigator in the U.S. Department of Education's Mid-Atlantic Regional Laboratory for Student Success. Héctor H. Rivera is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence at the University of Houston.

A basic educational premise is that all children can learn. There are cultural and sociohistorical practices, however, that have placed Hispanic children at risk for educational failure. Recent research on these practices has emphasized the importance of trying to understand the role and the impact of cultural-historical factors on children's educational success. Previous research focused on the home environment as a prime factor in school failure. In the past, low academic achievement in African American, Hispanic, and American Indian populations was interpreted by some as resulting from a "deprived" home environment (Schneider & Lee, 1990). A focus on cultural-historical context, however, allows researchers to move from a deficit model to a model that takes into account eco-cultural niches (social/cultural backgrounds) and the funds of knowledge available within the community. These strengths need to be integrated into our understanding of the factors that lead to the educational success of Hispanic students (Goldenberg, Reese, & Gallimore, 1992; Gonzalez et al., 1993).

The Educational Status of Hispanic Students in the United States

Hispanic students comprise 15% of the elementary school-age population and will comprise nearly 25% of the total school-age population by the year 2025. Over the past 20 years, the enrollment of Hispanics in public elementary schools has increased dramatically—over 150%, compared to 20% for African American students and 10% for White students (USDE, 2000).

The U.S. Hispanic population is also quite diverse. There is great variability among Hispanic students in terms of country of origin, levels of primary language, prior educational experience, and socioeconomic status (García, 2001; Peregoy & Boyle, 2000). According to the 2000 U.S. census, 66% of Hispanics were of Mexican origin, 14% were of Central and South American origin, 9% were of Puerto Rican origin, and 5% were of Cuban origin. The remaining 6% were designated as "Other." Hispanic students also have diverse academic and social

needs. Nearly half (46%) of all Hispanics live in central cities of metropolitan areas, compared to 21% of non-Hispanic Whites. Hispanics constitute about 75% of all students enrolled in programs for limited English proficient students (LEPs), including bilingual education and English as a second language (ESL) programs.

In terms of educational achievement, the 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores for 17-year-old Hispanic students were well below those of their White peers in mathematics, reading, and science. The dropout rates for Hispanic students were also much higher than for other ethnic groups. The high school completion rate for Hispanics was 63%, compared to 81% for African American and 90% for White students. In 1998, 30% of all Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds, or 1.5 million people, were dropouts—more than double the dropout rate for African Americans (14%) and more than three times the rate for Whites (8%). Only 63% of Hispanic kindergartners graduate from high school. Thirty-two percent enroll in college; of that 32%, only 10% complete 4 years of college. These percentages are significantly lower than those of White and African American kindergartners. Hispanic children under age 5 are less likely to be enrolled in early childhood education programs than African American or White children. This is a gap that continues to widen for Hispanic students. In 1998 only 20% of Hispanic 3-year-olds were enrolled in early childhood programs, compared to 42% of Whites and 44% of African Americans.

In addition to the problems of underachievement and low educational attainment, many Hispanic students live in households and communities that experience high and sustained poverty. About 35% of Hispanic children (18 years of age or younger) are living in poverty, and Hispanic students attend schools with more than twice as many poor classmates as those attended by White students (46% vs. 19%). Hispanic students reside primarily in cities and are immersed in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty where the most serious educational problems exist (García, 1994). Schools with high concentrations of poor students tend to be poorly maintained, structurally unsound, fiscally underfunded, and staffed with large numbers of uncertified teachers (García, 2001). Furthermore, classrooms that serve predominantly Hispanic students often lack the technology to meet the needs of students.

All of these sociohistorical factors contribute to the complexity of the problems that Hispanic students face, in their quest for educational success and in general. In the following section, we discuss critical educational factors related to the underachievement of Hispanic students.

Underachievement of Hispanic Students

Although some educators have argued that the most serious concerns for Hispanic students are a lack of basic funding for programs that address their educational needs, along with political opposition to programs that focus on linguistically diverse students (Melendez, 1993), there are several "alterable factors" that have been found to contribute to the underachievement of Hispanic students. This section discusses three critical factors that have been related to Hispanic student underachievement: a lack of qualified teachers, inappropriate instructional practices, and at-risk school environments.

LACK OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS

One of the most serious problems associated with the educational failure of Hispanic students is the shortage of qualified teachers and the lack of appropriate preparation of credentialed teachers (García, 1994). Teachers of Hispanic English Language Learners (ELLs), for example, have to address the "double demands" of ELLs, which include acquiring a second language while learning traditional academic content (Gersten & Jiménez, 1998). It is estimated that nearly half of the teachers assigned to teach Hispanic ELLs have not received any preparation specific to the education of ELLs (García). Presently, about 56% of all public school teachers in the US have at least one ELL student in their class, but less than 20% of these teachers are certified ESL or bilingual teachers (Alexander, Heaviside, & Farris, 1999).

In a recent profile examining the quality of our nation's teachers, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) found that most teachers of ELLs or other culturally diverse students did not feel that they were well prepared to meet the needs of their students (Lewis et al., 1999). In another recent national survey of classroom teachers, 57% of all teachers responded that they either "very much needed" or "somewhat needed" more information on helping students with limited English proficiency achieve high standards (Alexander et al., 1999). Alternative forms of teacher preparation and teacher staff development are being implemented by local school districts to meet the needs of ELLs, but they have generally not been effective in training qualified teachers of Hispanics and/or ELLs.

INAPPROPRIATE TEACHING PRACTICES

Another critical problem related to the underachievement of Hispanic students is the inappropriateness of current teaching practices. The

most common instructional approach found in schools that serve Hispanic students is the direct instructional model, where teachers typically teach to the whole class at the same time and control all of the classroom discussion and decision making (Haberman, 1991; Padrón & Waxman, 1993). This teacher-directed instructional model emphasizes lecture, drill and practice, remediation, and student seatwork consisting mainly of worksheets (Stephen, Varble, & Taitt, 1993). Some researchers have argued that these instructional practices constitute a "pedagogy of poverty" (Haberman; Waxman, Huang, & Padrón, 1995) in that they focus on low level skills and passive learning.

Several studies have examined classroom instruction for Hispanic students and found that this "pedagogy of poverty" orientation exists in many classrooms with Hispanics, ELLs, and other minority students (Padrón & Waxman, 1993; Waxman et al., 1995). In a large scale study examining the classroom instruction of 90 teachers from 16 inner-city middle schools serving predominantly Hispanic students, Waxman et al. (1995) found that students typically were involved in whole-class instruction. About two thirds of the time students were not involved in verbal interaction with either their teacher or other students, and there were very few small group activities. Students rarely selected their own instructional activities and were generally very passive in the classroom, often just watching or listening to the teacher, even though they were found to be on task about 94% of the time.

In another study examining mathematics and science instruction in inner-city middle school classrooms serving Hispanic students, Padrón and Waxman (1993) found that science teachers utilized whole-class instruction about 93% of the time, while mathematics teachers utilized whole-class instruction about 55% of the time. Students in mathematics classes worked independently about 45% of the time, and no small group work was observed. In science classes no independent work was observed, and students worked in small groups only about 7% of the time. Questions about complex issues were not raised by any of the mathematics or science teachers. Teachers rarely (4% of the time) posed open-ended questions for students in science classes; they never posed such questions in mathematics classes.

The results of these and other studies show that classroom instruction in schools serving predominantly Hispanic students tends to be whole-class instruction with students participating passively (i.e., watching or listening) in teacher-assigned and teacher-generated activities. Teachers also spend more time in these classrooms explaining things to students rather than questioning, cueing, or prompting students to

respond. Teachers were not often observed encouraging extended student responses or encouraging students to help themselves or help each other. Thus, research has suggested that instructional inadequacies or pedagogically induced learning problems may account for many Hispanic students' poor academic achievement and low motivation (Fletcher & Cardona-Morales, 1990). These problems create severe inequities in our schools that counteract democratic policies supporting all children's right to learn (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

AT-RISK SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

Past research on deficit models of education for at-risk students has suggested that it is individual children, their family, or their ethnic group that is deficient, rather than the circumstances in which they live. Bronfenbrenner (1979) created a paradigm that addressed the concerns of child development and educational success in the context of the family and the surrounding ecology, one that can aptly be applied to issues related to the poor academic success of Hispanic students.

The term "at-risk school environment" suggests that it is the school rather than the individual student that should be considered at-risk. For Hispanic students, schools that are poorly maintained and teachers who are not qualified contribute to a school environment that can be characterized as at-risk. Numerous educators have begun to argue that school systems, school programs, and organizational and institutional features of the school environment contribute to the conditions that influence students' academic success or failure (Kagan, 1990; Waxman, 1992; Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, & Fernandez, 1989). As a result, proposed strategies for reforming schools call for changing the circumstances in which children attend school rather than trying to change the children themselves.

Several studies have found that many features of schools and classrooms are alienating and consequently drive students out of school rather than keep them engaged (Kagan, 1990; Newmann, 1989). Sinclair and Ghory (1987) maintained that it is the school environment that encourages or discourages student learning through a series of interactions. Waxman (1992) identified several characteristics of an "at-risk environment" that included alienation experienced by students and teachers, low standards and low quality of education, low expectations for students, high noncompletion rates for students, classroom practices that are unresponsive to students, high truancy and disciplinary problems, and inadequate preparation of students for the future. Hispanic students who experience these at-risk school environments merit

special attention because if we can alter their learning environment, we may be able to improve both their education and their overall chances for success in society (Waxman).

It appears that the factors associated with underachievement are malleable, and that the slightest positive changes in these areas may significantly improve teaching and learning conditions for Hispanic students. The following section summarizes some of the factors associated with educational improvement for Hispanic students.

Critical Factors Associated With the Educational Success of Hispanic Students

Educators concerned with the schooling of Hispanic students have generally focused on the development of language skills. Recently, however, researchers have begun to investigate other critical issues, such as improving classroom instruction (Padrón & Waxman, 1999; Tharp, Estrada, Dalton, & Yamauchi, 2000) and developing effective programs in schools with predominantly Hispanic students (Slavin & Calderón, 2001; Slavin & Madden, 2001). This section examines both effective teaching practices and effective programs for Hispanic students. It is important to note that effective practices for at-risk students are also beneficial for successful students.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES FOR HISPANIC STUDENTS

Many educators have maintained that the best way to improve the education of Hispanic students is to provide them with better teachers and classroom instruction (Padrón & Waxman, 1999; Tharp et al., 2000; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). In order to determine which practices are most effective, educators need to focus on instructional practices that are research-based. Teaching practices need to specifically address the concerns of Hispanic students who come from different cultures and who often are trying to learn a new language. Tharp and Gallimore provided a definition of teaching that effectively describes the conditions for successful learning. In their words, teaching is "assisting the performance of students through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)" (p. 31). The ZPD is the distance between the child's individual capacity and the capacity to perform with the assistance of others (Tharp & Gallimore). The relevance of the ZPD to teaching practices lies in the belief that learning and development occur through assisted performance in the home/community environment as well as in the classroom. This neo-Vygotskian perspective

finds support in the educational literature on development of effective reform programs as well as in the developmental psychology literature on child development and socialization (Tharp & Gallimore).

Padrón and Waxman maintained that there are five teaching practices that have been found to be successful for Hispanic students (Padrón & Waxman, 1999; Waxman & Padrón, 1995; Waxman, Padrón, & Arnold, 2001). These research-based instructional practices are culturally responsive teaching, cooperative learning, instructional conversation, cognitively guided instruction, and technology-enriched instruction. These studies also suggest that education needs to be meaningful and responsive to students' needs, as well as linguistically and culturally appropriate (Tharp, 1997; Tharp et al., 2000). The following sections discuss each of the teaching practices.

Culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teaching emphasizes the everyday concerns of students, such as critical family and community issues, and tries to incorporate these concerns into the curriculum. Culturally responsive instruction helps students prepare themselves for meaningful social roles in their community and larger society by emphasizing both social and academic responsibility. It addresses the promotion of racial, ethnic, and linguistic equality as well as the appreciation of diversity (Boyer, 1993). Culturally responsive instruction improves the acquisition and retention of new knowledge by working from students' existing knowledge base, improves self-confidence and self-esteem by emphasizing existing knowledge, increases the transfer of school-taught knowledge to real-life situations, and exposes students to knowledge about other individuals or cultural groups (Rivera & Zehler, 1991). When teachers develop learning activities based on familiar concepts, they help facilitate literacy and content learning and help Hispanic students feel more comfortable with and confident about their work (Peregoy & Boyle, 2000).

Cooperative learning. Cooperative learning has been described as an effective instructional approach that stimulates learning and helps students come to complex understandings by discussing and defending their ideas with others (McLaughlin & McLeod, 1996). The implementation of cooperative learning involves "the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning" (Johnson & Johnson, 1991, p. 292). In general, this approach requires that the teacher facilitate the learning process by encouraging cooperation among students (Bejarano, 1987). In addition, this instructional approach is student-centered and creates an

interdependence among students and their teacher (Rivera & Zehler, 1991).

As an instructional practice, cooperative grouping affects Hispanic students in several ways. Cooperative grouping: (a) provides opportunities for students to communicate with each other, (b) enhances instructional conversations, (c) decreases anxiety, (d) develops social, academic, and communication skills, (e) enhances self-confidence and self-esteem through individual contributions and achievement of group goals, (f) improves individual and group relations by helping individuals learn to clarify, assist, and challenge each other's ideas, and (g) develops proficiency in English by providing students with rich language experiences that integrate speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Calderón, 1991; Christian, 1995; Rivera & Zehler, 1991). These aspects of cooperative learning are particularly beneficial for Hispanic students, providing an instructional environment where their particular educational needs can be addressed—where students feel comfortable and more willing to practice a new language and have more opportunities to do so. Furthermore, cooperative learning activities provide Hispanic students with "the skills that are necessary to function in real-life situations, such as the utilization of context for meaning, the seeking of support from others, and the comparing of nonverbal and verbal cues" (Alcala, 2000, p. 4).

Instructional conversation. Instructional conversation is a teaching practice that provides students with opportunities for extended dialogue in areas that have educational value as well as relevance for students (August & Hakuta, 1998). The instructional conversation is an extended discourse between the teacher and students. It should be initiated by students and used to develop their language and complex thinking skills and guide them in their learning process (Tharp, 1995).

August's and Hakuta's (1998) comprehensive review of research found that effective teachers of Hispanic students provide students with opportunities to initiate this extended dialogue. Rather than limiting expectations for Hispanic students by avoiding discussion during instruction, instructional conversations emphasize dialogue with teachers and classmates (Durán, Dugan, & Weffer, 1997). Limited mastery of English may prevent some Hispanic students from participating in classroom discussions. One of the major benefits of instructional conversation for these students is the opportunity for extended discourse, an important principle of second language learning (Christian, 1995).

Cognitively guided instruction. Cognitively guided instruction emphasizes the development of learning strategies and teaches techniques

and approaches that foster students' metacognition and cognitive monitoring of their own learning (Padrón & Knight, 1989; Waxman, Padrón, & Knight, 1991). From an instructional perspective, this approach emphasizes the need for teachers to focus on students' psychological processing as well as what is taught and how it is presented. This instructional approach can be very beneficial for the large number of Hispanic students who are not doing well in school, because once students learn how to effectively use cognitive strategies, individual barriers to academic success may be removed.

One example of cognitively guided instruction is reciprocal teaching, a procedure in which students are instructed in four specific comprehension-monitoring strategies: summarizing, self-questioning, clarifying, and predicting. Studies on reciprocal teaching have found that the use of these strategies by Hispanic elementary school students increases reading achievement (Padrón, 1992, 1993). Another example of cognitively guided instruction is Chamot's and O'Malley's (1987) instructional approach/program for limited English proficient (LEP) students. Their Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) is designed to develop the academic language skills of LEP students in upper elementary and secondary schools and focuses specifically on strategy instruction. Chamot and O'Malley found that when cognitive learning strategies are modeled for the student and opportunities to practice the strategy are presented, learning outcomes improve.

Technology-enriched instruction. Several studies and reviews of research have found that technology-based instruction is effective for Hispanic students (Cummins & Sayers, 1990; Padrón & Waxman, 1996). Web-based picture libraries, for example, can promote Hispanic students' comprehension in content-area classrooms, e.g., science and mathematics (Smolkin, 2000). Other types of technology (e.g., multimedia) are effective for Hispanic students because they help connect learning in the classroom to real-life situations, creating a meaningful context for teaching and learning (Means & Olson, 1994). Multimedia technology can be especially helpful for Hispanic students because it can facilitate auditory skill development by integrating visual presentations with sound and animation (Bermúdez & Palumbo, 1994). Digitized books that are now available allow Hispanic students to request pronunciations of unknown words, seek translations of sections, and ask questions (Jiménez & Barrera, 2000).

Another area that holds promise for improving the teaching and learning of Hispanic students is the use of computer networks and

telecommunications. Hispanic students can communicate with audiences through the Internet and other technologies. The use of computer networks and telecommunications helps Hispanic students access a wide variety of information in their native language as well as in their second language. As a result, these students can continue to learn new information while learning their second language.

These teaching practices foster more active student engagement and change the teachers' role. Instead of delivering knowledge, teachers must facilitate learning (Padrón & Waxman, 1999). Glickman (1998) referred to this approach as "democratic pedagogy," describing it as instruction that "respects the students' own desire to know, to discuss, to problem solve, and to explore individually and with others, rather than learning that is dictated, determined, and answered by the teacher" (p. 52). These student-centered instructional practices represent a model of classroom instruction that has not been used very often for Hispanic students and/or Hispanic ELLs.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS FOR HISPANIC STUDENTS

In general, there are three preconditions for any educational program or intervention to be effective: a sense of community in the classroom, student and community empowerment, and prevention or intervention programs based on the educational goals that have been identified by each of the groups involved (O'Donnell, Tharp, & Wilson, 1993). Several programs aimed at improving the effectiveness of schooling for Hispanic students illustrate these conditions.

Creating a sense of classroom community. Co-construction means using students' experiences to make learning meaningful to them. Any program that allows for the co-construction of educational activities and knowledge in the classroom can significantly improve a classroom learning environment (O'Donnell et al., 1993). The Hispanic Dropout Project, for example, found that it is important for Hispanic students and their families to be treated fairly and with respect (Lockwood & Secada, 1999). This respect would include the development of curriculum that is relevant to the Hispanic student and that conveys high expectations (Mehan, 1996). The co-construction of knowledge between teacher and students helps provide a sense of classroom community while ensuring that instruction is relevant to students' previous knowledge (Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992).

Hispanic students need to be assured that they are important and that they can make important contributions to society. When students

are not given the opportunity to participate in the development of classroom activities, and when their involvement in discussions is minimized, the implicit message is that teachers do not care about their experiences, feelings, or thoughts. Therefore, students miss out on the type of classroom discourse that encourages them to make sense of new concepts and information.

Student and community empowerment. In order to empower students, school staff must first respect and empower students' communities and immediate families. Hispanic parents should be provided with opportunities to participate in school activities that are connected to their community. They should also be provided with information regarding their children's performance in school. Contrary to stereotypes that Hispanic parents are not interested in their children's education, research has shown that Hispanic families value learning and seek to support their children in school (August & Hakuta, 1998). Delgado-Gaitan (1991) found that parents of ethnically and linguistically diverse students participate in school in numbers comparable to other majority group parents. However, she also found that their participation tends to be limited by school administrators' and other school personnel's beliefs about the role parents should play in schools (e.g., bake sales and clean-up activities). The problem is not that Hispanic parents are uninvolved in school activities, but that they are not given the opportunity to participate in meaningful activities that could expand students' opportunities to acquire knowledge and information. For example, parents might be asked to share information with a class about a particular area of study with which they are familiar.

Hispanic students have indicated that their parents and families want them to aspire to a better life. Gallimore, Reese, Balzano, Benson, and Goldenberg (1991) reported that most Latino parents hold relatively high aspirations but low expectations for their children. They found that 80% of the families surveyed hoped their children would receive a college degree, yet only 44% expected that their children would do so. This discrepancy between aspiration and expectation is common in many populations, but should be considered in light of the particular social, historical, and economic circumstances that contribute to lower expectations for educational success among Hispanic families. These circumstances include living in economically and socially disadvantaged communities, a lack of resources (e.g., financial), and negative societal and political attitudes toward Hispanic immigrants.

School-based intervention programs. In recent years, a number of academic, school-based prevention and intervention programs have been found to be effective for Hispanic students. One of the common goals of these programs has been to organize and restructure learning activities so that they address the goals and concerns of the community. This means creating a sense of community among participants and empowering community members by allowing them to participate for the first time in the design of school-based intervention programs. Interventions need to occur in specific social and cultural contexts, accounting for components such as: (a) the meaning of the intervention, (b) the relevance and appropriateness of the specific intervention, (c) the validity of the constructs involved for the particular population, and (d) cultural and contextual factors that affect the intervention's durability over time (West, Aiken, & Todd, 1993).

Success for All (SFA) is one of the largest comprehensive reform programs for elementary schools serving students at risk of academic failure. The program's premises are that children must succeed academically and that it is possible to provide school personnel with the skills and strategies they need to ensure academic success for students. A key goal of the program is that students be able to read at grade level by the end of third grade. Therefore, SFA is an intervention that begins early in the student's academic life. It utilizes a great deal of tutoring, which takes place in 20-minute blocks and is done by certified teachers. Student progress is monitored on an ongoing basis. The program also includes a reading component for students whose native language is Spanish. Evaluations of SFA have indicated that the program has demonstrated consistent positive results for Hispanic students (Lockwood, 2001; Slavin & Madden, 2001).

Another program that has been effective for Hispanic students is the Reading Recovery or Descubriendo La Lectura program. This is an early intervention tutoring program that focuses on the lowest achieving readers in the first grade (Pinnell, 1989). Students receive one-on-one tutoring for 30 minutes a day for 12-20 weeks. Tutors are certified teachers who have received a year of training in Reading Recovery. The tutor first gets to know the student and determines the student's reading difficulties; later, there are more structured activities, including reading familiar stories, writing a message, or reading a new book (Escamilla, 1994).

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Project (VYP) (Lockwood, 2001) has been an effective intervention for older Hispanic students. The VYP is a program for students in middle school and high school who

are at risk of dropping out. The students who are selected to be in the program become tutors for elementary school students who are at least four grade levels below them. The tutors, under the supervision of the elementary school teacher and the VYP coordinator, work with the elementary school students 4 days a week. On the fifth day, the tutors participate in a class that strengthens their academic skills as well as their tutoring skills. The tutors receive a small stipend for their participation in the program.

The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program (Mehan, Villanueva, Hubbard, & Lintz, 1996) is another successful program for older (Grade 6-12) Hispanic students. AVID places low-achieving students believed to have college potential in the same college preparatory courses as high-achieving students. AVID students receive special counseling, tutoring, and instruction in study skills, writing, and test-taking strategies. A comprehensive team of administrators, counselors, AVID teachers, and regular content-area teachers who work with AVID students also receive one week of training in the summer and monthly follow-up training during the school year on the teaching practices (e.g., cooperative learning and inquiry-based practices) that are utilized in the program. AVID has been successful in reconnecting students to school. College enrollment rates and graduation rates for AVID students have dramatically increased as a result of the program.

Syntheses of research on effective school-based programs for Hispanic students have found that there are several characteristics common to successful programs (Fashola, Slavin, Calderón, & Durán, 2001; Lockwood, 2001). Effective programs typically have well-specified goals, provide ample opportunity for teacher professional development, begin early and are maintained throughout the schooling experience, include ongoing assessment and feedback, incorporate the use of tutors and other support staff, and focus on the quality of implementation. The school-based interventions outlined in this section exemplify the features that previous syntheses of research have found to be characteristic of successful programs (Fashola, Slavin, Calderón, & Durán; Lockwood).

Implications for Policy and Practice

The research cited in the previous sections indicates that there are several instructional practices and programs that significantly improve the academic success of Hispanic students. The success of these programs is documented by systematic, long-term studies and reviews of

research. It is important to note that even if only a few factors associated with students' educational success are present, the programs seem to have a positive effect on student achievement and persistence in school. What would happen if most effective practices associated with students' academic achievement were incorporated into policy decisions and implemented in the classroom? This section focuses on the changes that must occur in educational policy and practice in three selected areas of current concern—teacher education, teachers' professional development, and high-stakes testing. These three areas have been found to be particularly important in improving the academic success of Hispanic students (Padrón, Waxman, Powers & Brown, in press; Waxman & Padrón, in press).

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

Research on teacher education has suggested that teacher educational programs should provide a knowledge base about cognitive and affective processes that influence learning, include information about metacognitive strategies to address the needs of students of differing abilities and backgrounds, encourage preservice teachers to "think aloud" during explanations so that they can model metacognitive thinking for their students, and focus on learner-centered instructional approaches (Presidential Task Force on Psychology in Education, 1993). In order to carry out changes, prospective teachers need more opportunities to learn how to restructure classroom environments. Furthermore, prospective teachers should be active participants and collaborators in the training process (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1992).

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The professional development of teachers needs to be addressed if the teaching of Hispanic students is to improve (Jiménez & Barrera, 2000). Most teacher professional development in schools lasts a day or less. Many teachers report that they need long-term professional development in order to use new methods of classroom instruction (e.g., cooperative grouping), integrate educational technology in the subject they teach, and address the needs of ELLs and other students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Lewis et al., 1999). Classroom teachers want more information related to the teaching of Hispanic students, more time for training and planning, and more opportunities to collaborate and learn from other teachers. Research has shown that professional development approaches are more successful when they aim to enhance and expand a teacher's repertoire of instruction strategies

rather than radically alter them (Gersten & Woodward, 1992; Richardson, 1990; Smylie, 1988). Reforms that simply add work to an already crowded teaching schedule and that are not perceived by teachers as helpful in meeting their teaching goals will be rejected (Mehan, 1991).

IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGH-STAKES TESTING

How high-stakes testing affects Hispanic students is an important issue that needs to be addressed by state and national policymakers. There are several examples of how high-stakes testing has helped states, districts, and schools reduce the achievement gap between Hispanic and White students (Fuller & Johnson, 2001; Koschoreck, 2001). The emphasis on standards and testing has helped state, district, and school administrators stimulate higher achievement for Hispanic and other minority students by holding educators accountable for the success of their students.

But there are a growing number of educators who argue that the emphasis on testing does not motivate students, nor does it assist students in becoming knowledgeable, responsible, caring, and competent learners (McCombs, 2001). Some educators are critical of high-stakes testing because they see such testing as inappropriate for Hispanic students. The Assessment Committee of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (2000), for example, warned that high-stakes testing jeopardizes the educational future of Hispanic students by making high-stakes decisions based on "inaccurate and inadequate testing information" (p. 3). The report maintained that "state policies often require that Hispanic students be assessed in English with tests they may not even understand or with alternative, but less rigorous tests in Spanish, whether or not they are receiving instruction in that language" (p. 3). The report also stated that more than 2 million Hispanic students have been underrepresented or ignored because they may have been excluded from state testing programs. It listed inappropriate practices, such as using standardized tests that are translated from English into another language without assessing the degree of difficulty and validity of the test items in Spanish.

Critics have also argued that the emphasis on high-stakes testing has created a stressful climate for students, teachers, and administrators. The pressure on low-achieving and minority students has been so intense that it has caused many of them to drop out of school (McNeil, 2000; Valenzuela, 1999). State-mandated testing also contributes to

teachers' feelings of powerlessness and alienation, resulting in a diminished sense of self-efficacy and self-belief (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). As Merrow (2001) wrote: "This constant focus on high-stakes tests creates intense pressures on teachers and administrators and unfortunate decisions are being made as pressure for 'accountability' overwhelms common sense" (p. 655). McNeil and Valenzuela further argued that the emphasis on high-stakes testing in Texas has reduced the quality and quantity of the curriculum and forced teachers to focus on test preparation and drills, using inappropriate teaching practices that are aimed at low-level basic skills.

Discussions of high-stakes testing tend to become polarized (Trueba, 2001). We need to move beyond the debates and examine ways to improve high-stakes testing practices so that they can provide an accurate assessment of the ability of Hispanic students. In addition, we need to ensure that the emphasis on testing does not hinder the quality of classroom instruction or curriculum for Hispanic students.

Conclusion

This chapter describes some of the research-based school improvement approaches that have been found to be successful in improving the education of Hispanic students. It discusses several key elements or components that have proved successful in a number of different settings. No program, however well implemented, will offer a panacea for the educational problems of Hispanic students. For the most part, each school must concern itself with the resolution of its own specific problems (Schubert, 1980), and educators should choose research-based practices and programs according to the needs of the Hispanic students they serve. Furthermore, critical out-of-school factors that affect the outcomes of schooling for Hispanic students must also be addressed. If we focus only on school factors and ignore the importance of family and community influences on the education of Hispanic students, we will fail. As E. García (2001) wrote, "An optimal learning community for Hispanic student populations recognizes that academic learning has its roots in both out-of-school and in-school processes" (p. 239).

Improving the education of Hispanic students, however, will take more than just awareness of the problems and knowledge of solutions. It will require the concerted efforts of all educators to respond to this crisis by insisting on immediate solutions and accepting "no more excuses" (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). It will require a call to action and collaboration among teachers and administrators; university

professors, deans, and presidents; parents and students; and the government. But first it will require a change in attitudes—one that will move educators to awareness of the severity of the problems *and* to commitment to reversing the cycle of educational failure for Hispanic students in our schools.

Note

1. While this chapter focuses on Hispanic students, some of the reports, studies, and articles reviewed use a variety of terms, such as immigrant students, English language learners (ELLs), language-minority students, and limited English proficient students (LEPs). Similarly, the term "Latino" is often used interchangeably with the term "Hispanic" in the literature. For the purposes of this chapter, we have tried to use the term "Hispanic" consistently, but we have also taken care not to misrepresent the literature cited.

References

Alcala, A. (2000). A framework for developing an effective instructional program for limited English proficient students with limited formal schooling. *Practical Assessment, Research, & Evaluation, 7*(9), 1-6.

Alexander, D., Heaviside, S., & Farris, E. (1999). *Status of education reform in public elementary and secondary schools: Teachers' perspectives.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Assessment Committee of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. (2000). *Testing Hispanic students in the United States: Technical and policy issues.* Washington, DC: Author.

August, D., & Hakuta, K. (Eds.). (1998). *Educating language-minority children.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Bejarano, Y. (1987). A cooperative small-group methodology in the language classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 21,* 483-504.

Bermúdez, A. B., & Palumbo, D. (1994). Bridging the gap between literacy and technology: Hypermedia as a learning tool for limited English proficient students. *The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students, 14,* 165-184.

Boyer, J. B. (1993). Culturally sensitive instruction: An essential component of education for diversity. *Catalyst for Change, 22*(3), 5-8.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). Beyond the deficit model in child and family policy. *Teachers College Press, 81,* 95-104.

Calderón, M. (1991). Benefits of cooperative learning for Hispanic students. *Texas Research Journal, 2,* 39-57.

Chamot, A. U., & O'Malley, J. M. (1987). The cognitive academic language learning approach: A bridge to the mainstream. *TESOL Quarterly, 21,* 227-249.

Christian, D. (1995). Two-way bilingual education. In C. L. Montone (Ed.), *Teaching linguistically and culturally diverse learners: Effective programs and practices* (pp. 8-11). Santa Cruz, CA: National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning.

Cummins, J., & Sayers, D. (1990). Education 2001: Learning networks and educational reform. *Computers in the Schools, 7*(1 & 2), 1-29.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *The right to learn: A blueprint for creating schools that work.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1991). Involving parents in the schools: A process of empowerment. *American Journal of Education, 100,* 20-46.

Durán, B. J., Dugan, T., & Weffer, R. E. (1997). Increasing teacher effectiveness with language minority students. *The High School Journal, 84,* 238-246.

Escamilla, K. (1994). Descubriendo La Lectura: An early intervention literacy program in Spanish. *Literacy, Teaching, and Learning, 1*(1), 57-70.

Fashola, O. S., Slavin, R. E., Calderón, M., & Durán, R. (2001). Effective programs for Latino students in elementary and middle schools. In R. E. Slavin & M. Calderón (Eds.), *Effective programs for Latino students* (pp. 1-66). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Fletcher, T. V., & Cardona-Morales, C. (1990). Implementing effective instructional interventions for minority students. In A. Barona & E. E. García (Eds.), *Children at risk: Poverty, minority status, and other issues in educational equity* (pp. 151-170). Washington, DC: National Association of School Psychologists.

Fuller, E. J., & Johnson, J. F., Jr. (2001). Can state accountability systems drive improvements in school performance for children of color and children from low-income homes? *Education and Urban Society, 33,* 260-283.

Gallimore, R., & Goldenberg, C. N. (1992). Tracking the developmental path of teachers and learners: A Vygotskian perspective. In F. K. Oser, A. Dick, & J. L. Patry (Eds.), *Effective and responsible teaching: The new synthesis* (pp. 203-221). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gallimore, R., Reese, L., Balzano, S., Benson, C., & Goldenberg, C. (1991, April). *Eco-cultural sources of early literacy experiences: Job-required literacy, home literacy environments, and school reading.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.

García, E. E. (1994). *Understanding and meeting the challenge of student cultural diversity.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

García, E. E. (2001). *Hispanic education in the United States: Raíces y alas.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

García, G. N. (2001). The factors that place Latino children and youth at risk of educational failure. In R. E. Slavin & M. Calderón (Eds.), *Effective programs for Latino students* (pp. 307-329). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Gersten, R., & Jimenez, R. (1998). Modulating instruction for language minority students. In E. J. Kameenui & D. W. Carnine (Eds.), *Effective teaching strategies that accommodate diverse learners* (pp. 161-178). New York: Prentice Hall.

Gersten, R., & Woodward, J. (1992). The quest to translate research into classroom practice: Strategies for assisting classroom teachers' work with "at-risk" students and students with disabilities. In D. Carnine & E. Kameenui (Eds.), *Higher cognitive functioning for all students* (pp. 201-218). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Glickman, C. D. (1998). Educational leadership for democratic purpose! What do we mean? *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 1*(1), 47-53.

Goldenberg, C., Reese, L., & Gallimore, R. (1992). Effects of literacy materials from school on Latino children's home experiences and early reading achievement. *American Journal of Education, 100,* 497-536.

Gonzalez, N., Moll, L., Floyd-Tenery, M., Rivera, A., Rendon, P., Gonzalez, R., & Amanti, C. (1993). *Teacher research on funds of knowledge: Learning from households* (Educational Practice Report No. 6). Santa Cruz, CA: National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning.

Haberman, M. (1991). Pedagogy of poverty versus good teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan, 73,* 290-294.

Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (1998). *What's worth fighting for out there.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Jiménez, R. T., & Barrera, R. (2000). How will bilingual/ESL programs in literacy change in the next millennium? *Reading Research Quarterly, 35,* 522-523.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (1991). Classroom instruction and cooperative grouping. In H. C. Waxman & H. J. Walberg (Eds.), *Effective teaching: Current research* (pp. 277-293). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Kagan, D. M. (1990). How schools alienate students at risk: A model for examining proximal classroom variables. *Educational Psychology, 25,* 105-125.

Koschoreck, J. W. (2001). Accountability and educational equity in the transformation of an urban district. *Education and Urban Society, 33,* 284-304.

Lewis, L., Parsad, B., Carey, N., Bartfai, N., Farris, E., & Smerdon, B. (1999). *Teacher quality: A report on the preparation and qualifications of public school teachers* (Report No. 1999-080). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics.

Lockwood, A. T. (2001). Effective elementary, middle, and high school programs for Latino youth. In R. E. Slavin & M. Calderón (Eds.), *Effective programs for Latino students* (pp. 101-124). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Lockwood, A. T., & Secada, W. G. (1999). *Transforming education for Hispanic youth.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

McCombs, B. (2001, February). *Putting learner-centered principles into practice.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southwest Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

McLaughlin, B., & McLeod, B. (1996). *Educating all our students: Improving education for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds* (vol. 1). Santa Cruz, CA: National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning.

McNeil, L. M. (2000). *Contradictions of school reform: Educational costs of standardized testing*. New York: Routledge.

Means, B., & Olson, K. (1994). The link between technology and authentic learning. *Educational Leadership, 51*(7), 15-18.

Mehan, H. (1991). *Sociological foundations supporting the study of cultural diversity* (Research Report #1). Santa Cruz, CA: National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning.

Mehan, H. (1996). *Contextual factors surrounding Hispanic dropouts*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Hispanic Dropout Commission.

Mehan, H., Villanueva, I., Hubbard, L., & Lintz, A. (1996). *Constructing school success: The consequences of untracking low-achieving students*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Melendez, M. (1993). Bilingual education in California: A status report. *Thrust for Educational Leadership, 22*(6), 35-38.

Merrow, J. (2001). Undermining standards. *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*, 653-659.

Newmann, F. M. (1989). Student engagement and high school reform. *Educational Leadership, 46*(5), 34-36.

O'Donnell, C. R., Tharp, R. G., & Wilson, K. (1993). Activity settings as the unit of analysis: A theoretical basis for community intervention and development. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 21*, 501-520.

Padrón, Y. N. (1992). Strategy training in reading for bilingual students. *Southwest Journal of Educational Research into Practice, 4*, 59-62.

Padrón, Y. N. (1993). The effect of strategy instruction on bilingual students' cognitive strategy use in reading. *Bilingual Research Quarterly Journal, 16*(3 & 4), 35-51.

Padrón, Y. N., & Knight, S. L. (1989). Linguistic and cultural influences on classroom instruction. In H. P. Baptiste, J. Anderson, J. Walker de Felix, & H. C. Waxman (Eds.), *Leadership, equity, and school effectiveness* (pp. 173-185). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Padrón, Y. N., & Waxman, H. C. (1993). Teaching and learning risks associated with limited cognitive mastery in science and mathematics for limited English proficient students. In Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Third National Research Symposium on Limited English Proficient Students: Focus on middle and high school issues* (Vol. 2, pp. 511-547). Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

Padrón, Y. N., & Waxman, H. C. (1996). Improving the teaching and learning of English language learners through instructional technology. *International Journal of Instructional Media, 23*, 341-354.

Padrón, Y. N., & Waxman, H. C. (1999). Effective instructional practices for English language learners. In H. C. Waxman & H. J. Walberg (Eds.), *New directions for teaching practice and research* (pp. 171-203). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Padrón, Y. N., Waxman, H. C., Powers, R. A., & Brown, A. (In press). Evaluating the effects of the Pedagogy to Improve Resiliency Program on English language learners. In L. Minaya-Rowe (Ed.), *Research in bilingual education*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Peregoy, S. F., & Boyle, O. F. (2000). English learners reading English: What we know, what we need to know. *Theory into Practice, 39*, 237-247.

Pinnell, G. S. (1989). Reading Recovery: Helping at-risk children learn to read. *Elementary School Journal, 90*, 161-182.

Presidential Task Force on Psychology in Education (1993). *Learner-centered psychological principles: Guidelines for school redesign and reform*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Richardson, V. (1990). Significant and worthwhile change in teacher practice. *Educational Researcher, 19*(7), 10-18.

Rivera, C., & Zehler, A. M. (1991). Assuring the academic success of language minority students: Collaboration in teaching and learning. *Journal of Education, 173*(2), 52-77.

Schneider, B., & Lee, Y. (1990). A model for academic success: The school and home environment of East Asian students. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 21*, 358-377.

Schubert, W. H. (1980). Recalibrating educational research: Toward a focus on practice. *Educational Researcher, 9*(1), 17-24.

Sinclair, R. L., & Ghory, W. J. (1987). *Reaching marginal students: A primary concern for school renewal*. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Slavin, R. E., & Calderón, M. (Eds.). (2001). *Effective programs for Latino students*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Slavin, R. E., & Madden, N. (2001). Effects of bilingual and English as a second language adaptations of Success for All on the reading achievement of students acquiring English. In R. E. Slavin & M. Calderón (Eds.), *Effective programs for Latino students* (pp. 207-230). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Smolkin, L. (2000). How will diversity affect literacy in the next millennium? *Reading Research Quarterly, 35*, 549-550.

Smylie, M. A. (1988). The enhancement function of staff development: Organization and psychological antecedents to individual teacher change. *American Educational Research Journal, 25*, 1-30.

Stephen, V. P., Varble, M. E., & Taitt, H. (1993). Instructional strategies for minority youth. *The Clearing House, 67*, 116-120.

Tharp, R. G. (1995). Instructional conversations in Zuni classrooms. In C. L. Montone (Ed.), *Teaching linguistically and culturally diverse learners: Effective programs and practices* (pp. 12-13). Santa Cruz, CA: National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning.

Tharp, R. G. (1997). *From at-risk to excellence: Research, theory, and principles for practice*. Santa Cruz, CA: Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence.

Tharp, R. G., Estrada, P., Dalton, S., & Yamauchi, L. (2000). *Teaching transformed: Achieving excellence, fairness, inclusion, and harmony*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Tharp, R. G., & Gallimore, R. (1988). *Rousing minds to life: Teaching, learning, and schooling in social context*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Trueba, H. T. (2001). Polar positions on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS): Pragmatism and the politics of neglect. *Education and Urban Society, 33*, 333-344.

U.S. Department of Education (1998). *No more excuses: The final report of the U.S. Hispanic dropout project*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

U.S. Department of Education (2000). *Key indicators of Hispanic student achievement: National goals and benchmarks for the next decade* [on-line]. Available: http://www.ed.gov.pubs/hispanicindicators/

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U. S. Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Waxman, H. C. (1992). Reversing the cycle of educational failure for students in at-risk school environments. In H. C. Waxman, J. Walker de Felix, J. Anderson, & H. P. Baptiste (Eds.), *Students at risk in at-risk schools: Improving environments for learning* (pp. 1-9). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Waxman, H. C., Huang, S. L., & Padrón, Y. N. (1995). Investigating the pedagogy of poverty in inner-city middle level schools. *Research in Middle Level Education, 18*(2), 1-22.

Waxman, H. C., & Padrón, Y. N. (1995). Improving the quality of classroom instruction for students at risk of failure in urban schools. *Peabody Journal of Education, 70*(2), 44-65.

Waxman, H. C., & Padrón, Y. N. (In press). Research-based teaching practices that improve the education of English language learners. In L. Minaya-Rowe (Ed.), *Research in bilingual education*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Waxman, H. C., Padrón, Y. N., & Arnold, K. A. (2001). Effective instructional practices for students placed at risk of failure. In G. D. Borman, S. C. Stringfield, & R. E. Slavin (Eds.), *Title I: Compensatory education at the crossroads* (pp. 137-170). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Waxman, H. C., Padrón, Y. N., & Knight, S. L. (1991). Risks associated with students' limited cognitive mastery. In M. C. Wang, M. C. Reynolds, & H. J. Walberg (Eds.), *Handbook of special education: Emerging programs* (vol. 4, pp. 235-254). Oxford, U.K.: Pergamon.

Wehlage, G. G., Rutter, R. A., Smith, G. A., Lesko, N., & Fernandez, R. R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of support.* London: Falmer.

Wells, G., & Chang-Wells, L. (1992). *Constructing knowledge together: Classrooms as centers of inquiry and literacy.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

West, S., Aiken, L., & Todd, M. (1993). Probing the effects of individual components in multiple component prevention programs. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 21,* 571-605.

Section Two
EDUCATING AT-RISK STUDENTS FROM PRESCHOOL THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 5

Educating At-Risk Preschool and Kindergarten Children

BARBARA A. WASIK, MARY ALICE BOND, AND ANNEMARIE HINDMAN

A diverse body of research suggests that early experiences have an important impact on children's later achievement in school (Barnett, 2001; Ramey & Ramey, 1998). This is especially true for children who come from high-poverty homes where opportunities to learn can be limited or can be inconsistent with the expectations of the majority culture (Alexander & Entwisle, 1988; Barnett). Historically, the solution has been to provide at-risk children with more early intervention, beginning with increasing kindergarten participation from half- to full-day, and, at present, to call for universal preschool (Karweit, 1994b). With the existing equity gap between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers, increasing the amount of time disadvantaged children spend in early intervention programs without addressing the content of the intervention is a one-dimensional solution to a complex problem. The quality of the intervention plays a significant role in the effectiveness of the intervention experience. Evidence from the Family and Child Experience Survey (FACES) suggests that the quality of the

Barbara A. Wasik is a Principal Research Scientist in the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University, where she studies early language and literacy development. Mary Alice Bond is a Senior Curriculum Specialist and a Program Facilitator for the Early Learning Program in the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University. Annemarie Hindman is a Research Assistant with the Early Learning Program in the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University.