ABSTRACT
                Three main areas related to the school leader's
responsibility for continuous professional development are discussed. The
first of these is the necessity for school leaders to have an understanding,
or a theoretical framework, for how professionals learn. Serving as basis for
discussion is the Kolb's Cycle of Learning Experience which has four
movements: concrete experience (problem finding), reflective observation
(question asking), abstract conceptualization (answer seeking), and active
experimentation (portrayal of knowledge). The second part of the paper asks
the question, "Is it fair or ethical to attempt to balance needs when
planning for professional development?" The paper explains and challenges
John Adair's set of three overlapping circles, (team, school, individual) as
a means of initiating discussion about fairness when attempting to distribute
professional development. Orthodox management of balancing needs is offered
as an alternative approach. In part 3, the author encourages educational
professionals to make their own suggestions for strategies for continuous
professional development in busy schools. (JMD)

School-Based Continuous Professional Development: School Leaders' Responsibilities

Anne Gold
Institute of Education
University of London

A paper for:

Leading Education in the 21st Century

Conference of the European Network for Improving Research and Development in Educational Management

Riga, Latvia

1 - 4 October, 1998

Anne Gold
Management Development Centre
Institute of Education, University of London
55 Gordon Square
London WC1H ONU
UK
e-mail: a.gold@ioe.ac.uk

School-based Continuous Professional Development: School Leaders' Responsibilities

Our expectation of a really good lecture is to have a marvellous idea explained to us, magically and logically connected to other flowing and fluent ideas. The lecture will be woven like a beautiful delicate tapestry. It will probably conclude with a set of questions which will leave our minds buzzing, and us arguing with each other and everybody ready to run home to change the world (of education management).

Well, I have some tentative basic points to make to you about the school leader's responsibility for school-based continuous development. The problem that I have is how to weave them together into a logical paper which makes real sense to you. I can't always make clever and rational connections between these points - you may have to do that. Perhaps I just have to accept that they are separate statements which just need bullet points, not weaving!

And, I do not think that any of my ideas are particularly original - many people here are far more expert than me in this area. However, nothing I say now is to be interpreted as an apology - and later in this session, I will explain why.

Today, I have decided just to ask some questions which summarise where I am in my thinking about the school leader's responsibility for continuous professional development:

- **Why is it necessary for school leaders to have an understanding of (and a theoretical framework for) how professionals learn?**

- **Is it fair or ethical to attempt to balance needs when planning for professional development?**

- **What suggestions and strategies can *you* suggest for continuous professional development in busy schools?**

1

1. Why is it necessary for school leaders to have an understanding of (and a theoretical framework for) how professionals learn?

I want to argue that in order to make sure that everyone who works in a school is involved in continuous learning, the school leader must have a clear understanding about how professionals learn (hopefully the rest of the school knows how young people learn). Successful continuous professional development requires both careful planning and the development of an ethos which encourages life long learning - on-going and connected learning for both staff and young people. When it is embedded in the life of a school, it enriches the ambience of the school and makes it into a place of excitement, energy and direction.

Earlier this summer I was working with a group of educational managers on a course about developing management skills. When we came to talk about middle and senior managers' responsibility for professional development, it became clear that for most of them, *professional development* implied going out of school to attend courses. This might be to courses in the evenings, but most often it meant daytime or residential courses, which in the UK involve expensive cover (or substitution) for absent teachers. It didn't seem significant to them that as a result of the Education Reform Act (1988) there are now several school based professional development days in UK schools which all staff are expected to attend and when there are no young people present - a great possibility for formal and informal professional development. Unfortunately however, these days are usually taken over by workshops in which teachers often feel manipulated through highly managed sessions, or bored by endless and non-productive meetings. For many teachers, these professional development days do not offer real opportunities for development.
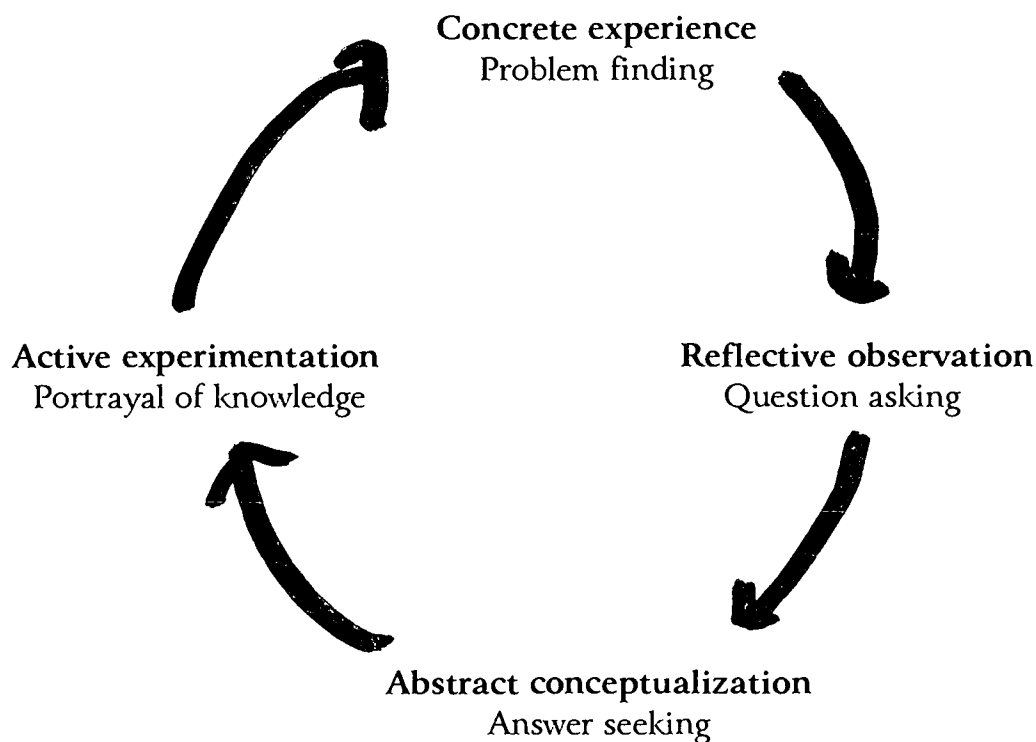
Most of the managers with whom I was working were clear that successful professional development did not happen very often within their schools. On the whole, development was either a marginal activity or an unplanned one in their professional lives, so they were surprised to find it on the programme as a central part of a management course. I am persuaded (and wanted to persuade them) that schools in which the managers are committed to continuous professional development [CPD] will have professional development policies which are accessible and transparent and will have an influence on all activities in the school. Everyone in the school is learning and extending themselves all the time. Even the way people greet each other in a school community will be affected by the school's energetic embrace of CPD - at some stage, the school leader will have transmitted a sense of worth and value and excitement about learning to the teachers which will permeate to everybody in the school and can be read in all interactions.

In order to explore CPD further, I would like to begin by thinking about how professionals learn most productively. There are many diagrammatic explanations

of adult learning, and each of us has our favourite. I am going to use Kolb's (1984) cycle of learning experience here because it is probably the best known, and although I would suggest additions and adaptations to it, I think it still offers us an important basis for discussion. Those who have responsibility for CPD in a school might add activities under each section heading which fit the school and its community most closely. For example, within our management programmes, we plan group learning activities which are linked with work or use participants' work as bases for activities (*concrete experience*); we suggest that participants keep course diaries and we plan for small group work and individual reflection (*reflective observation*); we suggest readings and give formal inputs during which we refer to recent research findings (*abstract conceptualization*); and we make sure that we have a space in every programme in which participants can make realistic and real plans for new strategies (*active experimentation*) when they return to their schools.

KOLB'S CYCLE OF LEARNING EXPERIENCE
David Kolb, (1984) **Experiential Learning** New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Concrete experience
Problem finding

Reflective observation
Question asking

Abstract conceptualization
Answer seeking

Active experimentation
Portrayal of knowledge

3

The uncomfortable position I find myself in at this moment (an expectation that I perform a lecture wonderfully and entrance you) and the seemingly apologetic introduction to this paper are both because it is taken for granted all too often that everybody learns best by listening to lectures - by the transmissional mode - characterised by Kolb as the abstract conceptualization stage. Those lectures that our teachers go out of school to attend are to be found here. Too much continuous professional development is dependent on the transmission of knowledge from someone who 'knows' to people who, it is thought, 'need to learn'. We encourage exaggerated and dysfunctional power relations in this equation, and it is unclear that learning in this way is effective.

I have been involved in education as a professional for 35 years this month, and I have had the privilege of being in the presence of and listening to several world-famous educators. I could tell you whether they were good speakers (whether they provoked and entertained me); I could tell you whether they had great charisma; I could tell you when I thought they had sprinkled me with magic dust and made me feel wonderful; but unless I combined listening to them with reading their work and talking about it to other people and thinking about the impact of their thinking on my own work (the other three stages in Kolb's cycle), I could not tell you now what they actually said in their lectures or about the thinking for which they were venerated.

This is not a new idea. All educators know this, but the courses and lectures that most people still go out of school to attend are to be placed at the abstract conceptualization stage. I would like to link this knowledge more closely and actively with the school leader's specific responsibility: it seems to me that the two parts of Kolb's cycle that are most important for school-based continuous professional development, but which are least often planned for in the busy lives of schools are **reflective observation** and **active experimentation**.

During my schoolteaching career I taught in some difficult secondary schools in inner London. Most of the teachers I worked with were young and new to the teaching profession, and many of the young people we taught were challenging and could be very difficult to teach. The most important professional development we older teachers could engage in (for both experienced and inexperienced teachers) was to work with those beginning teachers to work constructively with the young people. But we were not very successful: at the end of nearly every day, I would go into the staffroom and see the newer teachers sitting around exhausted, smoking, drinking coffee and talking, some of them in tears. When I listened carefully to the talk, I found that it had a repetitious, almost mesmeric tone to it: one person would tell another or a group how awful such and such a young person had been in their lesson. Usually the story was told and retold, and sometimes advice was given, but rarely were careful questions asked by the listeners which

would eventually move the teacher on to think differently about what had happened. This repetition cannot have been an extending, learning activity: it often didn't even help make the story teller feel better. Misplaced sympathy often silences real learning opportunities.

Stephen Brookfield writes about learning conversations in such as way as to show how skilled an activity it is to ask the right questions at the right time in order to encourage reflection and learning. He writes about encouraging critical thinking, and describes a learning conversation as an activity to do just that:

> ### 1. Good conversations are reciprocal and involving:
> in a good conversation, the participants are continually involved in the process; they are either talking or listening. Developing critical thinking is a process in which listening and contributing are of equal importance.
>
> ### 2. The course of good conversations cannot be anticipated:
> when we begin to ask people to identify assumptions underlying their habitual ways of thinking and learning, we do not know exactly how they are going to respond.
>
> ### 3. Good conversations entail diversity and agreement:
> a measure of diversity, disagreement, and challenge is central to helping people to think critically. Unless we accept that people have views very different from ours, and that a multiplicity of interpretations of practically every idea or action is possible, we will be unable to contemplate alternatives in our own thoughts and actions.
>
> Stephen A. Brookfield (1987) *Developing Critical Thinkers* Milton Keynes: Open University Press. Pages 238 - 241.

I think Brookfield's learning conversation fits perfectly into Kolb's **reflective observation** section. Senior teachers in a school need to be encouraged to develop the skills of critical thinking through learning conversations in order to model it to other members of staff. It is a difficult skill to learn. Careful examination of this excerpt from Brookfield's writing shows that nobody can know the answer at the beginning of the conversation. But so often, beginning teachers or struggling teachers ask for advice (or don't!) and more experienced teachers just give it, based on their own experience. The beginning teachers then try out strategies which fit more experienced teachers' ways of working but not their own. And indeed, they are not given the opportunity to analyse their problem or to try to make sense of it for themselves. The teachers most of us admire are those who have learnt to analyse a difficult or challenging classroom situation and who develop strategies to deal with them that are underpinned by a set of principles they have articulated

5

clearly (to themselves at least). This is an important set of skills that can be learnt and which are encouraged by reflective questioning.

A word of warning: school leaders who wish to develop critical and reflective thinking within their schools must be aware of the difference this will make to traditional power relations in the hierarchy of school staffrooms. As Brookfield says - 'a measure of diversity, disagreement, and challenge is central to helping people to think critically'. It is difficult for 'young' staff to challenge well-established staff without permission and encouragement. But ultimately the ensuing learning brings with it such rewards as mutual respect, understanding and closer working relationships.

There are many other ways of encouraging reflective observation in schools, but it seems to me that constructive talk is to be developed and promoted because it will become a pervasive habit. It evolves into a way of thinking more widely, it helps to create the ethos of a school, and it does not cost any money!

Returning to Kolb's cycle, the **active experimentation** stage is most often omitted because it must be planned for, otherwise it does not take place. Teachers know that it takes time to devise strategies for change, and the demands of the busy life of a school ensure that other immediately pressing activities are prioritised. It is clear however, that without time set aside to prepare strategies for change thoroughly, new knowledge cannot be put into practice, and the school will not have a sense of purpose and development. This section of the learning cycle can take place individually, in small groups, as a curriculum group, or as a whole school. It may be in the form of a highly complicated and sophisticated development plan, or it can be done on the back of an envelope with help from dates in a diary. But, if it isn't completed, good intentions to change evaporate or fall off the bottom of the list of important tasks to be accomplished. The school leader's responsibility here is both to help make sure that there is time for the planning to take place, and then to check gently that it actually has taken place.

Thus, a familiarity with a conceptual framework for successful adult learning is necessary for a school leader, both to encourage the learning to take place and to be able to explain to others why these particular aspects of learning are so important. But the traditional hierarchical structure of most schools and the work load demanded of teachers in the late twentieth century can mitigate against such development.

I will summarise the school leader's responsibility for ensuring that Kolb's learning cycle can be effective by listing some suggestions for change:
- plan enough time for everybody to talk and discuss critical incidents;
- welcome constructive questioning;

- encourage an ethos where everyone asks 'why?';
- allow for shifts in power balances;
- set up many different working parties;
- make sufficient time for staff to work across and between usual groups;
- promote team teaching and planning.

And another argument in favour of Kolb: the notion of continuity - *continuous* professional development - is rarely addressed. We are beginning to call it life long learning, and we are agreed that adults need to do it too, but it has a cyclical dimension. And the very nature of any cycle means that you go round and round it, and in and out of different parts of it, but that it always rolls along with you!

2.   Is it fair or ethical to attempt to balance needs when planning for professional development?

We often use a diagram based on John Adair's (1986) set of circles to think about fairness when attempting to distribute professional development. It suggests that a school leader makes sure the three (at least) sets of needs are kept in a sort of equilibrium.

Orthodox management literature says that school leaders need to become aware of different sets of needs and then to find ways of making sure that there is a balance between them. There may be times when one of the circles is larger than the other two - one set of needs is greater and must be met before the others. An example of this is when our National Curriculum was introduced in the UK, and curriculum/group/department development needs had to be met through courses and development days so that teachers were ready to teach the new material. This meant that individual teachers had to forego some professional development that was not seen as so immediately valid, and some whole-school work was not addressed until after teaching plans were drawn up by the curriculum teams.

There are also times when a curriculum team has a new member, maybe a beginning teacher, and for a while more attention must be paid to that teacher than to the rest of the group, so that eventually the team will be able to work well together.

By balancing the needs this way, it is argued, it is possible to have a framework which allows for a reasoned, ethical and logical response to outside demands while at the same time making sure that all professional development needs are met fairly. Well-balanced schools which have their development needs in equilibrium will be able to allow imbalance for a short time, because, it is said, everyone understands that their needs will be met eventually.
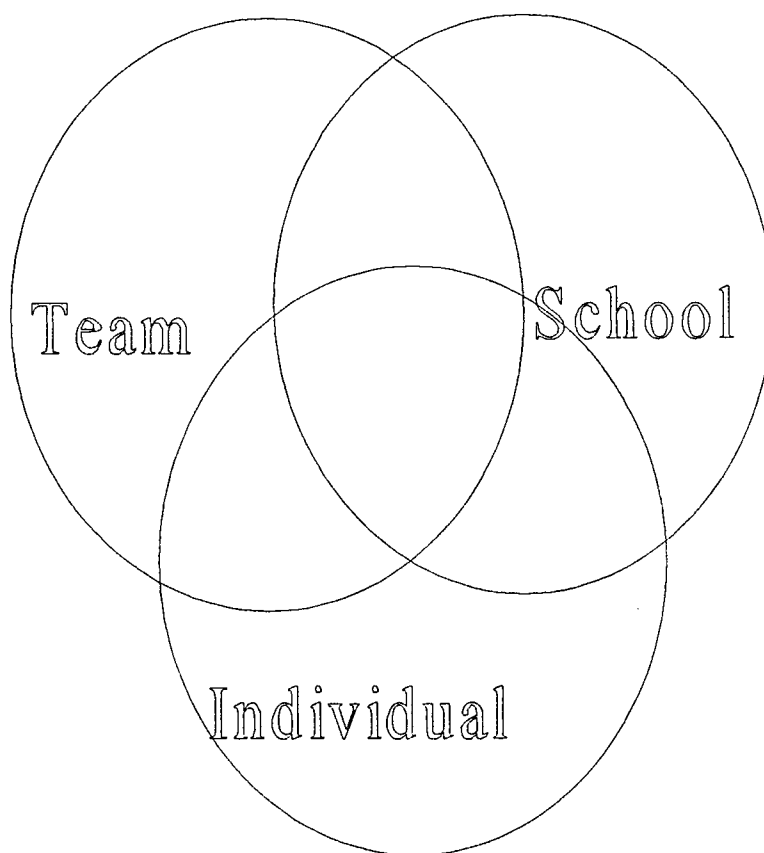
Balancing Professional Development Needs

adapted from John Adair (1986) *Effective Teambuilding* Reading: Pan

But I bring this to your attention because I am not sure now whether this really is an ethical framework. It is easy to forget that choices and needs are socially constructed: who frames the need? Who decides what is a need and how important it is? Some UK schools have introduced appraisal procedures in which teachers talk about their development needs with another member of staff. Although within this process, care is taken to recognise and reduce unequal power balances, the negotiations can still be complex. It is not always possible to take account of the power relations which make it more difficult for teachers being appraised by more senior members of staff to think objectively about their needs and then to argue for them.

10

Blase and Anderson (1995) in *The Micropolitics of Educational Leadership,* write about these sorts of mixed management messages. They explain that teachers are often made to feel that they have a say in decision-making and in discussions in their schools, but then they are manipulated very subtly into saying what their school leader wanted them to say in the first place:

> Ideological control, most often referred to in the educational administration literature as 'the management of culture', is increasingly being used to tighten loose coupling in hierarchical organizations. It remains unclear whether the current rhetoric of managing the organizational culture, 'empowering' teachers and sharing decision-making means anything more than new management techniques for greater control and efficiency. Teachers are right to examine critically empowerment movements promoted from above; they need to be aware of the subtle forms that ideological control can take. (Pages 127 - 128)

Earlier I described an organizational culture which makes for an exciting, energetic and directed school, and most literature describes this vitality and vigour as ideally coming from the teachers, encouraged by the school leader. The question for me is whether the school leader is to encourage, to develop, to implant or to enforce that culture? There are subtle nuances here which position the school leader differently in relation to those they manage, depending on where the culture comes from and whether or how it is developed or transmitted. Here we encounter complicated notions of empowerment, power-sharing, manipulation, and transmission, all of which link with ethics when they are connected to the source of the school culture: whose school is it, and who decides on the school culture?

Another problem with Adair's diagram is that individual members of staff cannot always argue for their own perception of their needs if they are regularly being told to think about the needs of the group and the school? To what extent can we demand or expect that teacher give up their own needs for others? Who can decide which set of needs is more worthy of attention?

I am not suggesting that we do not pay attention to this diagram, or use this idea. I am, however, suggesting that we treat it with caution, as we should all management strategies: a school leader will make decisions based on this balance of professional development needs within a framework of a clear vision of educational management. If the vision is really about empowerment, then the balance will be interpreted differently than if the vision is about leading or directing. And this balance will effect the school culture and the learning and teaching in the school.

3. What suggestions and strategies can you suggest for continuous professional development in busy schools?

Now I am going to summarise what I have said so far, and then hand over the session to you.

I am in no doubt that school leaders have full responsibility for continuous professional development in their schools. The challenge is to encourage a school culture which ensures that the school is a vibrant and learning school. The resulting ethos will be one which encourages talking, questioning, and discussing, where teachers and teachers, teachers and learners, and learners and learners will draw ideas and thinking out from each other in a constant learning conversation. Having encouraged and taken part in this continuing development, the school leader will be acutely aware of the need to be vigilant about the power balances and the definition and articulation of development needs within the school.

The problem for you today is to decide how this highly principled rhetoric might be put into real practice?

I'd like you, in your groups, to:
1. Suggest some realistic strategies for professional development in a busy school.
2. Argue the ethics of the balance of CPD needs.
3. Make any other comments?

References:
Adair, John (1986) *Effective Teambuilding* Reading: Pan

Blase, Joseph and Anderson, Gary (1995) *The Micropolitics of Educational Leadership* London: Cassell

Brookfield, Stephen (1987) *Developing Critical Thinkers* Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Kolb, David (1984) *Experiential Learning* New Jersey: Prentice Hall

12

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

REPRODUCTION RELEASE
(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: School - Based Continuous Professional Development:
School Leaders' Responsibilities

Author(s): ANNE GOLD

Corporate Source: INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON	Publication Date: October 1998

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

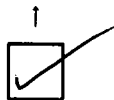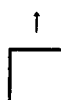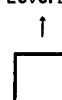| The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 1	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 2A	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 2B
Level 1 ↑ [✓]	Level 2A ↑ [ ]	Level 2B ↑ [ ]
Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) *and* paper copy.	Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only	Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here,→ please	Signature: Anne Gold	Printed Name/Position/Title: MS
	Organization/Address: Institute of Education, University of London 20 Bedford Way London WC1H 0AZ	Telephone: 00 44 171 612 6422 FAX: 00 44 171 612 6366 E-Mail Address: a.gold@ioe.ac.uk Date: 30 November '98

(over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management
1787 Agate Street
5207 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-5207

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
1100 West Street, 2nd Floor
Laurel, Maryland 20707-3598

Telephone: 301-497-4080
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-953-0263
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfac.piccard.csc.com