This guide resulted from the work of 14 colleges and universities participating in the Red River Valley Inter-Institutional Project, which related to the education of the culturally disadvantaged child. The project included two field experiences, one urban and the other rural; orientation meetings; and discussions. The aims of the Red River Valley project were fivefold: a) the development of a model for interinstitutional development projects for the disadvantaged child, b) an awareness of the problems in teaching the disadvantaged, c) an exploration of this kind of field experience in relation to other teacher education experiences, d) the comparison of rural and urban disadvantaged youth, and e) an exploration of teaching the disadvantaged and teaching in general. (The guide presents the assumptions of the project, an outline of data to be collected during the field experience program, and selected quotations from six books dealing with the disadvantaged.) (BRB)
THE CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED: A FIELD EXPERIENCE GUIDE

Calvin Eland
North Dakota State University
Fargo, North Dakota
February, 1967

"This guide consists of three parts:

- Assumptions upon which the project plan was built;
  It is not essential that you agree with the assumptions; our experiences may suggest that there are more fruitful ones upon which we may operate. The [visitation] teams may wish to modify the assumptions.

- A proposed outline of data which might be collected during the field experience;
  The list certainly is not exhaustive. You will probably add some things to the list before you go [on the field experience] and some things while you are there.

- Selected quotations from literature dealing with the disadvantaged.
  This includes a short bibliography of paperbacks that are relatively accessible. The quotes from them are intended to stimulate some discussion."

—Calvin Eland, to the participants when they received the Field Experience Guide.

The materials in the Field Experience Guide were developed for the use of participants in two field experiences during the Red River Valley Inter-Institutional Project. Charles R. Bruning, University of Minnesota, Morris, directed the project, and a twenty-five Inter-Institutional Program Development project supported by the NDEA National Institute. The Red River Valley Project is described on page eight of this publication.
1. Assumptions of the Project

- All groups are entitled to respect, to a chance to live within the framework of their own values as long as those values do not limit the rights and freedom of others; to a chance to live with dignity within the system; to a chance to be mobile if they choose. Therefore, it is not proposed that value systems should be changed; it is proposed that the disadvantaged be helped to gain that toward which they aspire. Such elements as seem to characterize the middle class—the moral, the antiseptic, the thrifty—ought not be major emphases unless the parents in disadvantaged communities so desire.

- Since one's perceptions set the limits for one's achievement, the development of an adequate self-concept is crucial to the disadvantaged student. Since, moreover, student self-expression within a supportive climate contributes substantially to “self-concept,” warm, sensitive, responsive teachers are the most important element in that environment.

- Creativity contributes significantly to the development of self and should be encouraged in areas such as drama, art, music, dance.

- All persons, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to the basic rights of citizens in a democracy. Since one of these rights is the right to privacy, the home of the disadvantaged should not be invaded. When it is clear that the teacher is welcome, opportunities to visit should be accepted and utilized.

- People who are disadvantaged come from a number of different subcultures and while they may have some things in common, they differ in significant ways from one another.

- A paternalistic attitude produces few if any positive results.

- Effective teachers are primarily “people-oriented” rather than “task-oriented.”

- The school must accept the challenge to help bring about changed behavior.
2. Proposed Outline of Data for Field Experience

The Family Budget in the Community
2. How would you modify the budget as income decreased? Where would you begin to cut?
3. What is the income of families in the areas you visit? (See United States Census, 1960, and Agriculture Census, 1959.)
4. How do these families spend their income? What economies do they take advantage of? What kinds of expenses are higher for them?

The Family Dwelling in the Community
1. What is the pattern of home ownership?
2. What are the characteristics of communities where the ownership percentage is high? Low?
3. What kinds of accommodations are found in the areas you visit? (Census tracts give data.)
4. What is the owner's return on the investment in slum housing areas?
5. How do the poor react to public housing?
6. Do the restrictions on income tend to prevent these who might be models for their neighbors from remaining in public housing?

The Vocational Outlook
1. What is the employment pattern in the neighborhood?
2. What is the percentage of laborers, private household workers, service workers?
3. What is the percentage of persons dependent on financial assistance?
4. What is the unemployment rate? (See Census tracts and Employment Service data.)

The Educational Background and Facilities
1. What is the percentage of adults with less than eight years of education? More than twelve?
2. Are the schools in the neighborhood considered to be good? Are textbooks free?
3. Are there reading materials in the home? What kinds?
4. Are there library facilities nearby? What are their hours?
5. Is there an adult education program?
6. What is the effect of TV on the children?
7. Are there nursery schools?
8. What are the beliefs and attitudes of the teachers in the neighborhood schools?
9. Did they choose to teach where they are?
10. What is the teaching load?
11. Do the schools innovate?
12. Is there evidence of any effort to promote creativity?
13. Is there much use made of audiovisuals?
14. What is the dropout rate?

Community Health
1. How many physicians and dentists serve the neighborhood?
2. Is there provision made for children who need glasses?
3. Is there a mental health clinic or facility in the area?
4. What effort is made to help the elderly register for Medicare?

Community Life
1. Are the churches well attended? What percentage of the neighborhood goes to the churches?
2. What is the attitude of the ministers or priests toward the poor?
3. Are there labor unions?
4. Are there Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts? Boys Clubs or YMCA's?
5. Is there a city recreation program in the parks?
6. Have the public officials a positive attitude toward the people they serve?
7. Where can a person go to get help if he needs it?
8. Is there a system of defending those who cannot afford a lawyer?
9. What are the crime rates in the neighborhood compared to those of other neighborhoods in the city?
10. Are there separate facilities for youth?
11. Is treatment primarily corrective or punitive in character?
3. From the Literature of the Disadvantaged

All quotations are taken from the following paperbacks:


Crow, and others
Page 5

"Life in a slum area tends to be self-perpetuating. It is natural for parents in any social group to prepare for survival in the kind of home situation to which they have become accustomed."

Lawwell, in Crow, and others
Page 48

"Studies of the reaction and outlook of depressed area residents found a widespread feeling of being 'out': of feeling worthless as 'non-people' who have no control of their own lives or of their surroundings. They have discovered that the people feel isolated and alienated, that theirs is a haven of anomie (breakdown of norms or standards that govern the aspirations and behavior of individuals); a place for the dispossessed. In short, people in these slum ghettos suffer, knowingly and unknowingly, from psychic isolation—alone, cut off, unwanted, unloved, and unvalued."

Bloom, and others
Page 8

"There is almost unanimous agreement that the prior satisfaction of the so-called basic needs is necessary before human beings can become concerned with performing higher-level functions."

Riessman, in Frost, and others
Page 52

"Most disadvantaged children are relatively slow in performing intellectual tasks. This slowness is an important feature of their mental style. . . . We reward speed. We think of the fast child as the smart child and the slow child as the dull child. I think this is a basically false idea. I think there are many weaknesses in speed and many strengths in slowness."

Riessman, in Frost, and others
Pages 53-56

"The assumption that the slow pupil is not bright functions, I think, as a self-fulfilling prophecy. If the teachers act toward these pupils as if they were dull, the pupils will frequently come to function in this way. . . . In the teacher training program future teachers should be taught to guard against the almost unconscious and automatic tendency of the teacher to respond to the pupil who responds to him."

". . . there is one basic limitation at the value level, namely the anti-intellectual attitudes of deprived groups. It is the only value of lower socio-economic groups which I would fight in the school. I want to make it very clear that I am very much opposed to the school spending a lot of time teaching values to these kids. I am much more concerned—and in this I am traditional—that the schools impart skills, techniques, and knowledge rather than training the disadvantaged to become good middle-class children. . . ."

"A brief list (of positive dimensions of the culture and style of educationally deprived people) would include the following: cooperativeness and mutual aid that mark the extended family; the avoidance of the strain accompanying competitiveness and individualism; the freedom from self-blame and parental overprotection; the children's enjoyment of each other's company and lessened sibling rivalry; the security found in the extended family and a traditional outlook; the enjoyment of music, games, sports, and cards; the ability to express anger; the freedom from being word-bound; an externally oriented rather than an abstract-centered approach; and finally, the use of physical and visual style in learning."

Havighurst, in Frost, and others
Page 22

". . . there is substantial doubt that the socially disadvantaged children in our cities have any positive qualities of potential value in urban society in which they are systematically better than the children of families who participate fully in the mass culture."
Bloom, and others
Page 35
"... the school with its emphasis on learning tasks, deferred gratifications, and adult-controlled social activity, has a difficult time in competing with a peer society which offers exciting and meaningful activity with immediate and powerful rewards quite independent of adult controls.

Bloom, and others
Page 8
"... the satisfaction of immediate goals becomes more important to these children and their parents and less energy is available for distant goals or long-range planning. Present-time orientation becomes far more central in their conception of things than future-time orientation—and much of education and learning is necessarily for some future time."

Frost, and others
Page 10
"Because of the effeminate content of many basal readers, some boys give up any aspirations they may have for literacy in order to preserve their masculinity."

Bagdikian
Pages 44-45
"The total family budget for Mr. and Mrs. Johnson and their eight children is $165 a month
It is the Federal Aid to Dependent Children, administered by the local county and, under its rules, the highest family payment possible. From this the Johnson's pay $27 a month rent for which they get a former company cottage of four rooms with no running water except for the copious amounts that come through the roof when it rains. They pay $7.50 a month for electricity which goes mostly for their stove and refrigerator, appliances from their affluent past. To keep the electricity bill low they cook over an open fire in the back yard whenever possible. This leaves $130.50 for everything else. For a family of ten $130 a month means food.

"Shopping is in a nearby small store. To be without an automobile costs the American family a certain amount of social status, which the analyzers of the middle class like to dwell on. But for the poor, in addition to the symbolic loss, there is the very real disadvantage that they cannot often get to supermarkets where prices are lower, the choice of goods wider, the packages larger, and where there are weekly bargains. Most low-cost family budgets are based on careful buying at the cheapest prices, but for the poor this may be impossible."

"First two weeks we have it right smart," Willie Johnson says of the family diet.

"When the welfare comes in they walk down to the store and load upsacks of flour, corn meal, condensed milk, bags of pinto beans, pecks of potatoes, fryers. For breakfast those first two weeks they have eggs and soft bacon with brown gravy. For lunch? A bowl of beans for lunch. 'For supper one day we'll have beans and fried potatoes and next night beans and boiled potatoes. Next night she may make bean cakes. She's pretty good at all the ways she can cook beans."

"The last week? It all depends. The $130 left each month after rent and electricity represents 43 cents a day per person for food. The Department of Agriculture estimates that the lowest-cost adequate diet for a family of ten based on sophisticated shopping with nutrients in mind, will cost $224 a month. ... Because they live at the edge of adequate nutrition, a pair of new shoes is, for the poor, an economic catastrophe. ... At maximum, if the Johnsons each have three meals a day for the whole month, they will have an average of only 14 1/2 cents to spend per person per meal. One pair of the cheapest shoes represents the loss of twenty-eight meals a month. Eight dollar shoes represents a loss of fifty-six meals. The actual need at the moment, to keep the Johnson children in school and their parents clear of the truancy law, is four pairs of shoes. If the flimsy shoes are bought the food loss is 110 meals a month; if the sensible $8 shoes are bought, the loss is 220 meals, or 25 percent of the family's monthly food intake. These are not just theoretical equivalents—They are simple, inescapable substitutions—shoes for food.

"This equation demonstrates two rules in the bitter arithmetic of the poor:

"One, the poor cannot afford to spend money wisely. ... Two, expenses that are incidental or annoying to ordinary families are the harshest possible sacrifices for the poor."

May
Page 61
"In a report to its taxpayers, Monroe County (Rochester, New York) noted that it cost an average of $38.16 a month to keep a child in its own home. Placing it in a foster home would cost $67.71 a month, while institutional care ranged from $141.90 to more than $300 a month."

May
Page 52
"(Greenleigh's ADC study of Cook County) "Of all the children born out of wedlock in Cook County, the chance that a white child will be adopted in the first year of life is 166 times as great as that of a Negro child."

Strom, in Frost, and others
Page 60
"In some cases, educators have shown a remarkable ability to resist new knowledge and research findings. This has been especially true in the area of individual difference, where resistance to innovations of proven value would seem to indicate a belief that it might be easier for youngsters to modify their needs than for the school to change its requirements. Every year a significant number of basically sound young Americans discover that they are not really wanted and that neither their teachers nor their curricular experiences seem to pay any attention to who they are, what they have and what they have not, what they can do and what they cannot do. Instead, imposed upon them is a nonsensical experience which goes under the name of education."

5
Heald, in Frost, and others
Page 79

"Condemn middle-class values? No, be proud of them! Readjust or reorient them? No, but recognize their lack of inclusiveness and expand them to the point where the entire class, including its teachers, can find value and pleasure in improving the culture, the education, the morality and the social usefulness of the deprived, the impoverished, the destitute, and the abandoned."

Bagdikian
Page 14

"Most of the poor are caught in a vast convulsion in the human landscape of the United States, a change that reflects brilliant prosperity with deep shadows of persisting poverty. Farms are becoming great mechanized operations, surviving through science, size, and the big investment. In the process, country people are being squeezed off the land—more than a million a year—and are fleeing to the cities.

"Yet the cities are having their troubles. The traditional urban foothold for the novice from the country—the unskilled factory or construction job—is being eliminated by automation. . . . The tide continues toward metropolis. At this moment millions of rural Americans are merely waiting for a free ride, or the bus fare, or the hint of a job, or the last vestige of family loyalty to die so that they can flee the rural misery they know, for the risk of urban misery unknown."

Kirk, in Frost, and others
Page xii

"The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. Unfortunately, some of our programs are promoting the schism. For example, the poorer neighborhoods in urban society usually have the poorer schools. . . . The present trend toward giving the most to those whose need is the least threatens to broaden the gap between two subcultures of our society, and if it continues, one-half or two-thirds of our population will soon be supporting the other half or third through public assistance in our institutions."

Harrington
Page 14

"... the poor are politically invisible. It is one of the cruelest ironies of social life in advanced countries that the dispossessed at the bottom of society are unable to speak for themselves. The people of the other America do not, by and large, belong to unions, to fraternal organizations, or to political parties. They are without lobbies of their own; they put forward no legislative program. As a group, they are atomized. They have no face: they have no voice."

I. F. Stone's Weekly
December 19, 1966

"It may not be as emotionally satisfying as crying 'Black Power' but the idea of the guaranteed annual income is a lot less pie-in-the-sky. When the United States Chamber of Commerce listens as sympathetically as it did here December 9 to three different expositions of this idea, it is ripe for political action. The spokesmen were as divergent in their views as the radical Robert Theobald; the former member of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, Prof. James Tobin of Yale; and Barry Goldwater's economic adviser, Professor Milton Friedman of Chicago. Though they disagreed sharply on whether to use direct payments or negative income tax, they all agreed the easiest way to get rid of poverty and mushrooming welfare costs was for the government to guarantee a minimum income for every family. When Henry Harlitt chimed in to suggest that relief recipients should not be allowed to vote, Friedman retorted that if this principle were extended logically most business men would also lose the right to vote since many businessmen benefit from government subsidies. 'Let us not be hypocritical,' Friedman declared. 'The poor are not the only people at the public trough.'"

Richard Cloward
in Nation
May 2, 1966

"... a vast discrepancy exists between the benefits to which people are entitled under public welfare programs and the sums which they actually receive. This gulf is not recognized in a society that is wholly and self-righteously oriented toward getting people off the welfare rolls. It is widely known, for example, that nearly 8 million persons (half of them white) now subsist on welfare, but it is not generally known that for every person on the rolls at least one more probably meets existing criteria of eligibility but is not obtaining assistance. The discrepancy is not an accident stemming from bureaucratic inefficiency; rather, it is an integral feature of the welfare system which, if challenged, would precipitate a profound financial and political crisis. The force for that challenge, and the strategy we propose, is a massive drive to recruit the poor into the welfare rolls. . . . The poor are most visible and proximate in the local community; antagonism toward them (and toward the agencies which are implicated with them) has always, therefore, been more intense locally than at the federal level . . . welfare practice everywhere has become more restrictive than welfare statute; much of the time it verges on lawlessness. Thus, public welfare systems try to keep their budgets down and their rolls low by failing to inform people of the rights available to them; by intimidating and shaming them to the degree that they are reluctant either to apply or to press claims; and by arbitrarily denying benefits to those who are eligible. . . . The ultimate objective [of the author's]—to wipe out poverty by establishing a guaranteed annual income—will be questioned by some."
"Today social workers cannot and do not fill the place of knowing friends and neighbors. Usually they can do little but maintain bookkeeping and conduct periodic inspections. They are under enormous pressures to spend their time saving money and detecting infractions of rules. They are not often selected and trained in a way that prepares them for close and sympathetic contact with the ugliness of the slums and the special psychology of the poor. There are, among social workers in the United States, dedicated men and women of skill and compassion, but for too many in this highly professionalized occupation it is a bureaucratic relationship of superior and client."

"Each child should be assured of an adequate breakfast to help him begin the learning tasks of the day. Each child should also be assured of a mid-day meal. If these meals cannot be provided by the home, they should be provided by the school or community in such a way that no child feels a sense of shame or special distinction."

"...it would seem that we have adequate knowledge for designing programs of intervention to counteract the devastating effects of poverty, socio-cultural deprivation, maternal deprivation, or a combination of these ills. This means making expenditures for prevention, rather than waiting for the tremendous costs of a curative nature." (Iowa experiment in which prevention treatment cost less than one thousand dollars per child, while in control group, public expenditures have been more than ten times greater for the twenty-one year period since the treatment was initiated.)

"The development of cognitive drive or of intrinsic motivation for learning—the acquisition of knowledge as an end in itself or for its own sake—is, in my opinion, the most promising concern, and life-adjustment problems of pupils."
"The disgrace of American vocational schools must be ended. In a nation of machines it is difficult to find men competent to maintain machines, yet more than 4,000,000 citizens are unemployed. Our technology is in a computerized, automated, transistorized age but our vocational schools are industry museums of the nineteenth century."

"In order for a child to handle multiple attributes of words and to associate words with their proper referents, a great deal of exposure to language is presupposed. Such exposure involves training in experimenting with identifying objects and having corrective feedback, listening to a variety of verbal material, and just observing adult language usage. Exposure of children to this type of experience is one of the great strengths of the middle-class home, and con-comitantly represents a weakness in the lower-class home. . . . An implicit hypothesis in a recent institute survey of verbal skills is that verbal fluency is strongly related to reading skills and to other highly organized integrative and conceptual verbal activity."

THE RED RIVER VALLEY INTER-INSTITUTIONAL PROJECT

During the five months, January to May, 1967, fourteen colleges and universities in the Red River Valley area (North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota) participated in an inter-institutional project relating to the education of the disadvantaged child. The project was one of twenty-five supported by the National Institute's Inter-Institutional Program Development Project.

The aims of the Red River Valley project were five-fold: 1. To develop a model for inter-institutional developmental projects specifically for the disadvantaged child; 2. To effect a greater awareness of problems in, and concerns for the teaching of rural and urban disadvantaged; 3. To explore the value of a designed field experience within a disadvantaged situation as an alternative to present teacher education group experiences; 4. To make comparisons of rural and urban disadvantaged youth; 5. To explore the relation between teaching the disadvantaged and teaching in general.

The project included two field experiences. The first was an urban field experience, designed so that participants could become involved in the inner city. City schools in Cleveland, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Omaha, Nebraska; and St. Paul, Minnesota, were visited. As an alternative, some participants went to an Indian reservation or a special school for delinquent boys to view and become involved in the process of educating other categories of disadvantaged youth. These other visitation sites were Rosebud Indian Reservation, Mission, South Dakota; Standing Rock Indian Reservation, Fort Yates, North Dakota; and Totem Town, Ramsey County Home for Boys, St. Paul, Minnesota.

The second field experience engaged all participants in a survey of poverty in a rural school district near their college. Each person was to obtain at least eight "long interviews" with persons classified in the poverty category according to the criteria that had been established for the program.

Prior to the visitations, the Field Experience Guide was distributed to all participants in the project.

The active participants in the two field experiences numbered 56 (four from each college). Each group of four included a student, a supervising teacher, a college of education professor, and a representative of another discipline of the college.

In addition to the one-week site visits and the survey, there were numerous meetings for orientation as well as for discussion of the discoveries, the insights, and further implications for teacher education.

Institutions participating in the Red River Valley Inter-Institutional Project were:

- Augustana College
  Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- Bemidji State College
  Bemidji, Minnesota
- Concordia College
  Moorhead, Minnesota
- Mayville State College
  Mayville, North Dakota
- Moorhead State College
  Moorhead, Minnesota
- North Dakota State University
  Fargo, North Dakota
- Northern State College
  Aberdeen, South Dakota
- Sioux Falls College
  Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- South Dakota State University
  Brookings, South Dakota
- University of Minnesota, Morris
  Morris, Minnesota

- University of North Dakota
  Grand Forks, North Dakota
- University of North Dakota, Ellendale
  Ellendale, North Dakota
- Valley City State College
  Valley City, North Dakota
- Westmar College
  LaMars, Iowa