

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

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SUMMARY MINUTES

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FEBRUARY 2-3, 2005

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The Advisory Board met at 8:30 a.m. in the Board Room of the National Institute for Literacy, 1775 I Street, NW, Washington, D.C. M. Carmel Borders, Board Chair, presided.

PRESENT:

M. Carmel Borders	NIFL Advisory Board Chair
Juan R. Olivarez, Ph.D.	NIFL Advisory Board Vice Chair [via Teleconference]
Douglas W. Carnine, Ph.D.	NIFL Advisory Board [via Teleconference]
Blanca Enriquez, Ph.D.	NIFL Advisory Board
Carol Gambill	NIFL Advisory Board Secretary
William Hiller, Ph.D.	NIFL Advisory Board
Phyllis Hunter	NIFL Advisory Board
Jean Osborn	NIFL Advisory Board
Richard K. Wagner, Ph.D.	NIFL Advisory Board
Mark Yudof, LL.B.	NIFL Advisory Board
Sandra L. Baxter, Ed.D.	NIFL Interim Director

ALSO PRESENT:

Mason Bishop, *Deputy Asst. Secretary for Employment & Training Administration, U.S. Department Of Labor*

Marty Dannenfelser, *Deputy Asst. Secretary for Policy & External Affairs, Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department Of Health And Human Services*

Reid Lyon, *Chief, Child Development & Behavior Branch, National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health*

Susan Sclafani, *Assistant Secretary, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education*

PRESENTERS:

Jay Diskey, *Principal, Diskey and Associates*

Catherine Snow, Henry Lee Shattuck Professor of Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education Vocabulary, she said, is always the bottleneck for English language learners.

Bobbi Stettner-Eaton, *U.S. Department of Education*

WEDNESDAY, February 2, 2005

Approval of Minutes

Chairperson Borders called for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting and Ms. Enriquez so moved, Dr. Hiller seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Board Chair's Report

Chairperson Borders began the meeting by observing that the June and October Board meeting minutes show that the Institute has moved forward in addressing issues that need to be addressed for the Institute to become effective. She noted that the Institute's culture is changing. She also cited Doug Carmine's work with Sandra Baxter and Lynn Reddy, and Bill Hiller's work on strategic planning as areas in which there is progress on key issues. Chairperson Borders also noted that the LINCS evaluation is almost complete and will produce recommendations on making LINCS stronger and more effective and that there is progress on Mark Yudof's research agenda motion. Implementing takes some time because thorough background work is being done.

Chairperson Borders pointed out the alignment between the spending plan and Board recommendations. She also noted that the Board needs to know what products come out of the recommendations.

Chairperson Borders urged the Board to bear in mind the crosswalk throughout the next two days. The crosswalk is used to assure us that programs goals, research agendas, interagency work and everything else is in step. She said at tomorrow's meeting the Board will discuss the internal quality assurance process, which will strengthen and guide our work and increase our accountability. The Board's input into the discussion will be essential because the process will be absorbed into the crosswalk. The Board also will get a branding report and an update from Sandra Baxter on hiring and where we hope to go on that.

Dr. Wagner's Report on Vocabulary

Dr. Wagner said it's very clear that the development of vocabulary is critical for reading comprehension, but beyond that, things aren't so simple. Part of the solution to the problem of vocabulary is the development of a research agenda. A recent conference in Captiva supported by the Florida Center for Reading Research and the Florida State University College of Arts and Sciences explored issues concerning vocabulary development and implications for reading comprehension.

Dr. Wagner highlighted several of the issues from the Captiva meeting. Many researchers have discovered the "not so complicated news" that "if you don't know the words, you can't comprehend the passage." While that's true, he said, it's more complicated than that because vocabulary develops over time, reading comprehension improves over time, and the ways that these two processes interact is complicated. Dr. Wagner discussed some data from a study he conducted with 250 fourth and fifth grade children. There was a strong correlation between vocabulary and reading comprehension in fourth grade. In addition, a key determinant of fifth grade reading comprehension was fourth grade

reading comprehension. The same was true of fifth grade vocabulary, which was strongly predicted by fourth grade vocabulary.

However, it emerged that there is a causal relationship between fourth grade comprehension and fifth grade vocabulary and a casual relationship between fourth grade vocabulary and fifth grade comprehension. These bi-directional causal relationships suggest that something really important is happening. Effects of vocabulary also go beyond comprehension, Dr. Wagner said. If you know a word and are asked to use it in a phonological awareness exercise, you'll find the task easier than if you have to use an unfamiliar word.

Training the knowledge of word meanings to improve vocabulary has mixed results. If training programs are done well, they have an effect. Students learn the meanings of those words in the training program. On the other hand, the knowledge doesn't appear to generalize automatically to reading. Learning about a word meaning in training doesn't help comprehension when the word is encountered in text.

There are reasons why teaching vocabulary is hard. The best indicator of general verbal cognitive ability is vocabulary knowledge, according to Dr. Wagner, rather than the kind of fancy reasoning measure you might expect. So "simple vocabulary" isn't really that simple. Vocabulary isn't just a list of words people carry in their heads. Rather, vocabulary is a byproduct of the ability to infer meanings of words and the patterns of usage that contribute to vocabulary retention. It's a byproduct of a lot of cognitive activity and language exposure over the course of years.

Dr. Wagner said that there are promising approaches to more effective vocabulary training. The first is morphology, or the study of roots and suffixes and prefixes. Developing children's morphological awareness and showing them how to use this knowledge can multiply the effectiveness of training. For instance, if the word "know" is taught, then it can be used to figure out related words like "knowledge" and "knowingly" and "unknowingly."

Another possibility is to use computer aids to improve vocabulary and comprehension. Children increasingly read text on a computer screen, which makes this kind of assistance very possible. For example, there could be a preview of some difficult vocabulary that will appear in a passage or a mini assessment of vocabulary that might be troublesome. Clicking on a button could provide the meaning and pronunciation of those difficult words.

The Department of Education is funding research into the assessment implications of reading online to understand more about whether an assessment would be required before every passage or whether a general vocabulary test at the beginning of a lengthier reading assignment would suffice. Another part of the research has to do with identifying the underlying dimensions of vocabulary knowledge – like usage - to inform assessment as well as training.

Dr. Wagner observed that everyone may be thinking about vocabulary the wrong way by focusing on individual words. Vocabulary knowledge is really knowledge distributed across multiple sets of words rather than an individual word alone. Acquiring a new word or refining knowledge of one word can improve understanding of related words and concepts. So we might need to think of relational

databases of word sets or concepts rather than individual words when it comes to thinking about assessment and training.

Dr. Wagner also provided a list of presenters at the Captiva conference and several chapters from a forthcoming book on vocabulary and reading development.

Ms. Enriquez remarked that Dr. Wagner's presentation suggested that the implications of research on vocabulary could change spelling curriculum. Dr. Wagner agreed. A brief discussion followed, and Dr. Hiller asked whether any differences had been noted between struggling fourth and fifth grade spellers and struggling 21-year-old spellers. Dr. Wagner said that it was a good question and noted that one of the most important factors contributing to vocabulary development and retention is usage, which varies extensively from person to person. Ms. Osborn asked whether the Captiva conference touched on the issue of repeating words, phrases, and concepts in both spoken and written language. Ms. Osborn further noted that the value of having children read longer books rather than short selections in basal readers is that novels tend to use the same domain of words repeatedly, which gives children a chance to learn them. Dr. Wagner agreed, noting that idiosyncratic vocabulary that only appears once or twice doesn't provide enough exposure to develop long term retention. Ms. Hunter mentioned the impact that Isabelle Beck's work has had on classroom teachers and her own experience developing her child's vocabulary.

There was general agreement on the Board that it would be important to make vocabulary a prominent issue at the Institute. Ms. Hunter suggested a product that highlights the importance of vocabulary while Dr. Wagner suggested the need for a research agenda. Chairperson Borders suggested that a revised LINCS should incorporate information on vocabulary.

Interagency Management Group Members' Report

Dr. Susan Sclafani

U.S. Department of Education

Dr. Susan Sclafani said she would discuss two things: professional development and adolescent literacy research. She stated that the Department has funded six studies in adult literacy and five studies in adolescent literacy. The Department is working to bring the two groups of researchers together because each group's work should inform the other's work. She then named the researchers for the adolescent literacy studies: *James McPartland, study on supporting teachers to close the adolescent literacy gaps*; *Paula Scarborough, behavioral and neural effects of adolescent reading programs*; *Elizabeth Moje, social and cultural influences on adolescent development*; *Laurie Cutting, the Kennedy Krieger Institute, cognitive and neural processes in reading comprehension*; *Bennett Shaywitz, adolescent literacy classification mechanism outcomes*; and *Mary Beth Calhoun, adolescent remedial reading project*.

Dr. Sclafani stated that the researchers are developing common protocols and assessments so they can compare at least some results across studies. The researchers are presenting a symposium at IRA in May 2005, and have submitted a proposal for doing a presentation at the

International Dyslexia Association in November 2005 where they'll talk about preliminary findings.

She then named the researchers involved in the adult literacy studies: *Daphne Greenberg, reading instruction for low literate adults; Susan Levy, impact of health literacy and adult literacy in integrated family approach programs; Darryl Mellard, improving literacy instruction for adults; John Sabatini, relative effectiveness of reading programs for adults; Frank Wood, prevalence and treatment of young adult literacy problems; and Charles MacArthur, building a knowledge base for teaching adult decoding.* She said that they had identified certain challenges in working with adults, such as problems with recruiting subjects, gaining support from the host settings, and assessing literacy skills. In particular, there were findings that the literacy tests were not appropriate for testing literacy at the lowest levels. She also mentioned that a major random assignment study in adolescent literacy would soon begin, and that more intensive interventions were being developed through Striving Readers for those students who are dramatically behind.

Dr. Scalfani then said that the Department was going to do an ESL curriculum study in adult education but couldn't find a program that would justify an efficacy study, so a curriculum is being developed instead. It is a direct instruction model, and once it is completed, its efficacy will be tested. Dr. Wagner asked if a meta analysis had been commissioned. Dr. Scalfani replied that an attempt had been made, but that there were not enough studies of high quality to use in a meta analysis.

Dr. Scalfani noted the importance of making the adult literacy field aware of how important it is to collect evidence on programming, which can lead to research. Efficacy studies can't be conducted until there is a hypothesis that something might be effective. The field can't move forward without better evidence, and the Institute can help make that point.

A general discussion of the value of on-line resources in adult education ensued, after which Dr. Carnine asked Dr. Scalfani about the methodology project. Dr. Scalfani replied that originally a joint effort had been planned with the Institute developing a methodology for identifying high performing programs and OVAE "claiming to use that methodology and issue some reports of the information about high performing programs." She said, however, that the data will not be available at the program level to identify programs using the methodology but that "it's a good idea to move forward with the methodology because what it will do is provide a framework for programs to know what kinds of data they should be collecting and, in fact, could become leverage for some policy in this area."

Dr. G. Reid Lyon National Institutes of Health

Dr. Reid Lyon said two new initiatives came out this year: the Early Childhood School Readiness Program, which concentrates on the factors that influence language and literacy development in children from birth to five years, and a new research network in math development and learning disabilities. Dr. Lyon then stressed the importance both of

collaboration among the various government agencies, and of communication between these agencies and the community, stakeholder groups, governors' associations, and Chief State School Officers. He also addressed the need to bridge the gap between research and its practical applications, as well as to set criteria as to what constitutes good research.

The birth to five initiative is concentrating on the skills and knowledge children need to have in place and the environments that support the development of those skills and knowledge that lead to better-than-expected language and literacy development later on. There are 22 sites in the initiative, and the cost is \$14 million. The work on language and literacy development in very young children led to a realization that there aren't well developed measures of young children's social and emotional development, so a "request for applications" has been release for the development of those measures. There are eight sites in the math development and learning disabilities initiative, and several of them are looking at the influence of reading on mathematics reasoning and calculation.

Dr. Lyon emphasized the President's desire for more interagency coordination on education activities and his belief that some progress is being made. Dr. Lyon also mentioned a new effort to be launched by Mrs. Bush concerning struggling boys. He observed that reading failure often co-occurs with boys who are experiencing other problems such as dropping out of school, depression, violent or aggressive behavior, and the like.

Dr. Lyon expressed dismay over the gap between what is known and what is in legislation at the state level and educational practice at the local level. He said that the Institute needed to be deeply involved in helping key stakeholders fully understand scientifically based reading instruction, Reading First, and NCLB and implement scientifically based instruction. Dr. Lyon observed that research is very important but what's even more important is when findings are used and produce effects on children.

Dr. Lyon explained why it's important for the Institute to sponsor another reading panel and cited the need to review more recent research; contribute to a culture changes that highlights distinctions between research you can trust and research you can't; and examine qualitative research. Dr. Lyon said that qualitative research needs to be applied to the right questions. When it is, it's just as important as quantitative research.

Dr. Baxter asked Dr. Lyon to suggest priorities for the Institute's future work. Dr. Lyon responded that the first priority has to be that any work has to be integrated and coordinated with all other efforts. Beyond that, he said that he sees the Institute as a teacher, based on its experience identifying stakeholders and developing ways of communicating with them so that the information communicated is fully absorbed.

In response to comments by Mr. Yudof about the challenges of defining a role for the Institute, Dr. Lyon identified a process that could point out a role for the Institute. He said that the Institute should look at data that describes stakeholders' knowledge of scientifically based reading instruction and NCLB and where the government has been successful in communicating information and where it hasn't and see where the gaps are. Dr. Lyon said that the Institute has

disseminated a lot of materials and helped understand what different target audiences need.

Following the presentation there was a general discussion, led by Ms. Hunter, on the gap between the merits of No Child Left Behind and the program's image and what can be done to ensure that correct information about NCLB is more widely available.

Mason Bishop
U.S. Department of Labor

Mason Bishop began by saying that there is a gap in the United States between those who have employment and training and those who don't, and that if we do not produce a work force with strong academic foundations, then we will see jobs leave the country. Mr. Bishop then said that the Employment Training Administration has two major youth programs: a billion dollar formula program under the Workforce Investment Act, and a billion and a half dollar in the Job Corps Program, with almost all of the money going out by formula to the states.

Mr. Bishop stressed the importance of collaboration with other federal agencies, and proceeded to outline the four major areas on which Workplace Investment Act funds would be spent: alternative education, business demands, needy youth, and improved performance. Under the category of needy youth he specified three primary target groups: school dropouts, youth in the juvenile justice system, and foster care youth who are graduating out of the foster care system. Mr. Bishop then said that they would begin resource mapping so that the governors can see how much money is coming into their states from the various funding streams. He also suggested that, since so many governors' campaigns in the past several years have been based on economic development agendas, they might have more interest in post secondary education programs.

On the subject of moving the education field and the country toward greater understanding and acceptance of NCLB, Mr. Bishop observed that in any change management situations, about 20 percent of people will be in favor of the change right from the start, 20 percent will be very opposed, and 60 percent will be uncertain. He said that the challenge is to identify the 20 percent who are supporters and encourage them to communicate with the undecided 60 percent.

A general discussion of various attitudes towards the funding of literacy and post secondary education programs ensued, including the inherent difficulty involved in the inability to cross-spend. Mr. Bishop linked the No Child Left Behind program to alternative education by saying that, as a result of NCLB, it will be in schools' best interests to ensure that their dropouts engage in other programs in order to ultimately receive their high school diplomas. He then announced that a small amount of money would soon be set aside for the purpose of finding replicable examples of limited English proficiency teaching, in order to help individuals gain the English skills they need to be successful in the work force. In general, he said that the Department of Labor and the Department of Education were working to partner on these issues.

Mr. Bishop stressed that the Department of Labor and the Institute could work on together helping youth and adults learn English to prepare for the workplace. He said he expects the challenge of helping Hispanic and Asian immigrants to continue to grow as increasing numbers

seek to learn English and enter the workforce. What instructional models should be used? How should proficiency levels be established? These are very important questions.

Mr. Bishop also described an effort begun by the Department of Labor to map the federal resources that come to each state. The Department has created teams within the Department to work with state teams to identify resources and develop coordinated plans across the agencies and funding streams.

Ms. Hunter revisited the issue of the loss of jobs for the United States workforce by saying that one reason for this is that other countries can provide labor more cheaply. Mr. Bishop took this opportunity to reemphasize his earlier point, saying that, although certain jobs are lost to Americans on account of the cost of labor, this is all the more reason to develop a highly skilled workforce, in order to compete in the area of innovation. Ms. Hunter then asked how much damage reports on fraudulent proprietary school programs did to the DOL's efforts in the area of post secondary education. Mr. Bishop replied that such reports are not so much damaging as interesting, insofar as such reports illustrate that simply cycling people through various programs is not effective unless people are being trained toward what a particular industry requires of its employees.

Marty Dannenfelser
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Marty Dannenfelser outlined various initiatives in the Head Start Bureau. He said during the past year the bureau has been focused on improving its operation and management. He pointed out that outgoing Secretary Tommy Thompson recently released a report called the Head Start Management Initiative, which focused on administrative practices and builds on earlier efforts to insure that Head Start children enter school ready to learn.

The initiative has two major goals: The first goal is to improve Head Start's monitoring system to address under enrollment, erroneous payments, child outcomes, and grantee compliance with regulations, including executive and personnel compensation. The second goal is to improve Head Start's training and technical assistance delivery system outcomes and impacts.

He noted that there is also a new training and technical assistance system, which will help Head Start and Early Head Start grantees in identifying training and technical assistance needs and assessing the training and technical resources. An additional feature is the electronic learning center, which when fully implemented will allow grantees and other early childhood professionals to have immediate access to any information they may need about early childhood development.

Mr. Dannenfelser identified the National Reporting System (NRS) as another key component of the bureau's management plan. Under the system, nearly half a million four- and five-year-olds received a common standardized assessment on the limited set of school key readiness indicators. He noted that more than 99 percent of all Head Start programs and families

participated, making the project the largest assessment of young children.

He said the first year of the National Reporting System implementation has been successful, although some critics have raised concerns about the reliability and validity of some of the assessments. As a result, substantial effort has been devoted to insuring the tests' quality and credibility.

Head Start also has been focused on program governance training. The training, he said, involves a formal structure of shared decision-making that supports the active participation of parents and is guided by current program performance standards.

The bureau also has been involved with the Parent Mentor Training Program, aimed at increasing the ability of parents to enhance their children's language and literacy skills and learn how to mentor other parents to do the same with their children. Head Start also has launched a fatherhood initiative, making \$10 million available to integrate fathers more into Head Start programs.

The agency also has a youth mentoring initiative, which grants about \$10 million to Head Start and Early Head Start programs to improve services to Head Start children and families through projects that promote the participation of youth in local Head Start programs.

The bureau also has awarded innovation and improvement grants totaling \$2.9 million for projects run by national, state and local organizations, many of them new to the Head Start community.

Phyllis Hunter asked whether any of the grants were connected to early Reading First. Mr. Dannenfelser said he had to check on an answer to that question, but he noted that awards ranged from \$50,000 to \$100,000.

Mr. Dannenfelser said his agency's Child Care Bureau is implementing the President's Good Start, Grow Smart initiative. He noted that the District of Columbia and Guam have completed their early learning guidelines, and 48 states have drafted them.

He then answered questions and responded to comments from various Board members. He said the bureau's information of early childhood reading is available on the agency's website, and Carmel Borders pointed out that such information should be linked to the Institute's LINCS pages. He described Head Start as primarily a half-day program, though some full-day programs exist.

In response to a question by Blanca Enriquez, he said the Good Start, Grow Smart initiative is helping his bureau link with others who are focusing on language and literacy and the cognitive development of young children. Enriquez commented that she would expect Head Start, as the nation's premier and largest federally funded childcare program, to "more [of a] leadership role" in training the field on what are the best and promising practices -- if the bureau is going to test children. Dannenfelser replied that Head Start is getting feedback from the field to do more

evaluation to see what needs to be improved to make the bureau “more responsive to different communities and what [is] culturally appropriate.” He described the process as a “work in progress.”

Phyllis Hunter and Richard Wagner pointed out some discrepancies, mistakes and outdated biographic information that Dannenfelter distributed to Board members and is available on the Administration for Children and Families website.

In response to questions regarding evaluation, Dannenfelter said his bureau would evaluate the tools that already have been developed and examine ways to improve them. He added that Head Start directors would form partnerships with local people to help with evaluation. Enriquez later asserted that “there are very few valid, appropriate instruments to test young children.”

Dannenfelter described Head Start as a unique program in that federal dollars are distributed directly to local grantees. He noted that the President has proposed getting the states involved, but such an idea is controversial because grantees view it as “somewhat threatening.” He acknowledged that it is a challenge for grantees to meet the federal requirements while teaching children and keeping families involved.

Several Board members contended that there is a gap between the training and what happens in the Head Start classroom. Dannenfelter urged NIFL to share feedback from its partners in the field to help close the gap.

Hunter asked Dannenfelter whether Head Start has a list of NIFL products that are aligned with Head Start’s goals. He replied that he did not believe such a formal list exists. Enriquez said that she has not seen NIFL’s products in the Head Start centers she has visited. Hunter then suggested that Institute leaders develop a list of products that would be helpful at a Head Start center.

Dannenfelter said he would obtain from the Child Care Bureau and provide to the Board the names of the 10 states that had early learning guidelines.

Director’s Report

Dr. Baxter began her report by stating that the LINCS project review is largely completed. She said that the final report would be delivered on June 5. Dr. Baxter also stated that it would not be possible to mount a new competition to reconfigure LINCS. She discussed that a new solicitation will be ready in August and recommended leaving it on the street for 60 to 90 days. She also provided the Board with a schedule of tasks completed.

Dr. Baxter discussed the differences in the House and Senate bills concerning the Institute’s reauthorization. She said that the Senate bill is similar to current law, but the House bill is significantly different. Dr. Baxter described the questions that will guide an Institute analysis of the two bills. First, Dr. Baxter said she is most concerned with determining whether the bills set forth achievable purposes for the Institute. For example, if a bill describes the Institute’s purpose as the

dissemination of scientifically based information (vs. the most rigorous research available), then there will be some limits to the extent of the dissemination that the Institute can do given the size of the scientific research base in many areas.

Dr. Baxter also said she is asking a question about whether the work authorized for the Institute would allow the Institute to show value added. Dr. Baxter referenced Ms. Stettner-Eaton's presentation on performance measures and the emphasis on measuring outcomes rather than outputs or processes. Dr. Baxter noted that it has been extremely difficult historically to measure the outcomes of dissemination, so Dr. Baxter said she would be questioning whether it would be possible to measure the outcomes of activities authorized by the two bills.

Finally, Dr. Baxter said she use the crosswalk to ask a question about whether any of the Institute's current work could not continue under either the House or Senate bill.

She added that the House has requested information from NIFL regarding the amount of money it has given the Department of Education for administrative support. Dr. Carnine said it is important to make a decision about the math content in the two bills and communicate them to Dr. Baxter.

Chairperson Borders suggested that a draft letter be circulated to the Board for review concerning its thoughts on the bills, and that the letter be forwarded to the House and the Senate. Dr. Wagner asked if it would be possible to entice people like Catherine Snow to interact with the Board on major issues, and suggested that experts be a regular part of the Board meetings.

Dr. Baxter and Mr. Yudof discussed the matter of filling vacancies on the Board. Chairperson Borders said that all appointments would end soon.

Presentation: Jay Diskey, Diskey and Associates
NIFL Branding Project

Jay Diskey said this project stemmed from a discussion he had with Sandra Baxter and Lynn Reddy about developing a plan that would analyze NIFL's brand and recommend ways to enhance the brand or create a new one.

Mr. Diskey described a brand as "more than a name or a logo." He added, "In many ways, it's your organizational identity. It is who you are. . . . It's a promise to your audiences, to your consumers about what you are and what you do." He said a brand must "match to perfection your business or organizational strategy."

He identified three types of branding: product, organization and policy. For example, GEICO and Dairy Queen are popular products branded by the company Berkshire Hathaway, which is largely unknown to the public. No Child Left Behind represents an Education Dept. policy that is recognized by its own brand -- with logos and messages.

He cautioned that the work he has done on NIFL's branding needs is preliminary. He asked the Board members to analyze the National Institute for Literacy's logo and think about what it

signifies to them and to the people who use the Institute's products. He asserted that NIFL's brand must accurately reflect the organizations function and put the agency "on the map." Mr. Diskey conceded that making NIFL a household name, as some have urged, might be ambitious, given the millions of advertising dollars such an endeavor would entail. What may be more realistic is, he said, would be establishing the NIFL brand in classrooms, faculty offices and governors' offices. He said the goal of this project is to analyze the Institute's brand identity and develop criteria for updating the brand by May.

Mr. Diskey said NIFL's Partnership for Reading has, in many ways, overshadowed NIFL's brand. As a preliminary finding, he recommended that the Institute leaders pull back some of the heavy branding of Partnership for Reading and other individual products to raise NIFL's profile. He said more discussions and interviews are warranted.

Dr. Wagner asked to what extent the organization is committed to identifying itself by the acronym NIFL as opposed to the National Institute, which he contended "carries more weight and prestige." Mr. Diskey, Dr. Wagner and Chairperson Borders said the NIFL acronym evokes uncertainty or derision among those outside the organization. Other Board members discussed ways to shorten the phrase "the National Institute for Literacy" when referring to the organization unofficially. The consensus was that the Institute should consider developing a new logo that steers away from the NIFL acronym.

NIFL Board Committees' Reports

Budget Committee Report

Chairperson Borders began by informing the Board that it is challenging to discuss the Institute's budget in a public meeting because the budget includes a dollar figure for each line item and making that information public would give contractors a heads up on how much the Institute has allotted for particular programs. This would constitute an unfair advantage to any potential contractor that learned of the budget figures. Chairperson Borders said that when the budget was discussed in previous meetings we were not working with proposed allocations. Chairperson Borders stated that even though it appears that we are moving forward slowly, we are not. We are changing the culture and changing everything about the organization.

Chairperson Borders then informed the Board that the budget committee -- Blanca Enriquez, Juan Olivarez and herself -- had gone over every line item with Sandra Baxter and Lynn Reddy and the committee understands where the Institute is going. She said that we have correct numbers. Dr. Baxter and Ms. Reddy have worked to show total allocations, which are the broad strokes of the budget. The goals listed in the crosswalk and the amount of money allotted to each goal reflect the recommendations that the Board has been making for the last two years. Dr. Baxter noted that the Institute had not yet received OMB approval of the proposed spending plans.

Strategic Planning Committee Report

Dr. Hiller read aloud several passages from the staff report on strategic planning. He commented on the importance of leadership and literacy, and on the institute's focus on collaboration. Dr. Hiller then began to address the issue of the national research agenda, saying that he had broken it down into four categories for the sake of clarity: birth to five, K-5, adolescent and adult. He said that they were awaiting the publication of a report by the National Early Literacy Panel to aid in the development of a national agenda for early childhood. He further added that he felt this report to be the critical piece under early childhood. Dr. Wagner stated that he did not believe that the Early Literacy Panel report would be sufficient to define or advance a research agenda, and explained his reasoning.

Mr. Yudof suggested that the leadership and funding for the research agenda be focused on two groups: colleges and related institutes, and foundations. He then asked what mechanism would be used to start dialogue about the national research agenda, and suggested regional conferences. He also commented that there seems to be more knowledge of early childhood literacy than of adult literacy. Dr. Baxter commented on the need to review existing research agendas, and said that they could not proceed without an early collaborative planning meeting with IES and NICHD. A discussion of existing research agendas ensued. Mr. Yudof suggested that the agenda be developed through two stages: one for gathering opinions on what should be included on the agenda, and another for prioritizing the items on the agenda. The need to set a date for a summit was then discussed.

Dr. Hiller commented on the difficulty of addressing all four of the specified areas, and Ms. Hunter mentioned that the Alliance for Excellent Education had already begun to push the agenda towards a focus on adolescent literacy. A discussion on how NIFL should support this initiative ensued. Ms. Hunter mentioned that, since the Alliance had already held two summits on adolescent literacy, it might be redundant to hold another. The discussion then turned toward the difference between a push for more resources and a push for more research, with the Alliance focusing on the former.

Dr. Hiller said that he would like to make a motion to set a date for summit to start a national research agenda. The discussion then returned to the need to focus on fewer areas in the research agenda. Dr. Baxter suggested that they focus on adult and adolescent literacy. Mr. Yudof emphasized the need for both a summit and a conference, as parts of a multi-step process. Mr. Yudof suggested that a motion be made that the Director present a plan with elements of a pre-summit activity, a summit, and collaboration with partners. A discussion of possible means of funding the national research agenda ensued.

Mr. Yudof made a motion that within 60 days the Executive Director will submit a multi-step plan to establish a research agenda for the literacy ages 9 through 16, Dr. Hiller seconded, and the motion passed.

Dr. Hiller then led a discussion on how to respond to interagency recommendations. Dr. Carnine commented that there are two parts to the interagency relationship: what NIFL does in response to other agencies' requests, and what they do in response to NIFL's requests. A discussion ensued on how to make the relationship more reciprocal. Dr. Hiller then brought up the need to

serve audiences, such as teachers, as a final issue for strategic planning.

Presentation: Bobbi Stettner-Eaton, U.S. Department of Education
NIFL Performance Measures Update

Ms. Stettner-Eaton began by stating that she had been working in the area of strategic accountability, and attempting to fulfill several requirements of Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). These requirements are that every department must have a strategic plan and an annual plan as well as program performance reports. She said that they were getting closer to doing performance budget integration, and that they were being challenged by the President to make programmatic budget decisions based on performance. Therefore, they are working towards integrated performance measurement.

Ms. Stettner-Eaton continued by describing PART, the performance assessment rating tool developed by OMB. She described the various sections of PART, and stressed that there is no way to succeed on a PART rating without having data. She then outlined the three performance measures described by OMB: annual measures, long-term measures, and efficiency measures, and described some of the challenges involved in each of these measures. She then explained how it is important to keep measures consistent from year to year in order to have sufficient data.

Ms. Stettner-Eaton then described the types and weighting of questions within PART, and explained how PART could be a helpful tool for agencies even if they were not required to use it, especially since it is difficult to receive funding without demonstrable data.

Dr. Hiller asked how contractors can be made accountable before contracts are issued. Ms. Stettner-Eaton said that performance measures are included in all of the Department of Education's requests for proposals and contract documents. Ms. Stettner-Eaton advised the Institute to contact Blanca Rodriguez, who may have examples of how the performance measures are incorporated into the contract documents.

She also suggested that interagency units consider having measures to address their performance with each of their key partners. A discussion of databases for performance measures and public reporting ensued.

Presentation: Catherine Snow, Professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education
Author, *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy*

Dr. Snow began her presentation by giving some background on her relationship with the Carnegie Corporation and its interest in adolescent literacy. She described several reports and initiatives put together by Andres Enriquez, who also established the Advisory Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy. Dr. Snow also described how Andres Henriquez noticed that the pressure from school districts and foundations was not to do more research, but to get more children reading. For this reason, Reading Next became a discussion focused on the problem of balancing the need to provide short-term help to children, and the need to do more research to

provide more long term solutions. The conclusion was to promote collaborative research using various combinations of 15 elements for which there was some research evidence. These elements could then be combined in various ways for interventions, providing that there would be an overlap between the elements for which the strongest evidence exists. Dr. Snow observed that there are too many ideas about teaching adolescents to read and too few that have been rigorously evaluated.

Dr. Snow emphasized that there is very little information about the etiology of struggling readers beyond the fourth grade. She noted that there are lots of ways to be a poor reader in middle school and high school but that there are few assessments designed to elucidate those differences. For example, all failing eighth graders in California get extra phonics instruction. Dr. Snow said that perhaps 15-25 percent would benefit from that, but not 100 percent. In addition, there are no ways to measure student engagement, motivation, or vocabulary knowledge, all of which need to be measured, she said. She also observed that a big problem with teenage readers who don't read well is the scarcity of materials that they want to read and are able to read.

Dr. Snow, Ms. Hunter, and Ms. Enriquez discussed reading instruction for non-native English speakers. Dr. Snow said that there's good evidence that you can teach children to read in a language they don't speak if they receive excellent instruction. However, she pointed out that several studies have shown that children who are reading on par with native speakers in first grade have fallen far behind native speakers by third grade. Vocabulary, she said, is always the bottleneck for English language learners.

Dr. Snow and Ms. Enriquez agreed that distinctions need to be made between the different learning needs of recent immigrants with little or no knowledge of English and those students who may know much more English. Dr. Snow also noted that there are young children who have grown up in Spanish speaking homes who have very limited vocabulary in Spanish and English. Their English gets better over time, but it would be a real struggle for them to learn Spanish well, too, according to Dr. Snow.

Ms. Osborn emphasized the need to provide comprehensive information about school environments that incorporate what is known about the elements of effective adolescent literacy instruction. Dr. Snow agreed and said the information couldn't be just a list of characteristics, but "a kind of portrait of what's going on." Ms. Osborn suggested – and Dr. Snow agreed – that the information should include data about student improvement.

Dr. Hiller asked Dr. Snow for recommendations on what to do next to which Dr. Snow replied that, thinking as a reformer, she would recommend the establishment of a well integrated data system for a particular state that aggregated data from the district level to the state level that used unique identifiers for kids, linked to teacher names, linked to social services databases to see which children had early interventions. The first quick payoff, she said, would be longitudinal data. A second benefit would be to serve as a model for other states. Also, it would allow for better tracking of the most at-risk children who are transient and change schools often.

Thinking as a researcher, Dr. Snow said identify five large districts and set up planned comparisons of well tried comprehension instruction and intervention systems, varying some of the elements that are thought to be important. She also said that she would like to work with publishers to see more focus on materials and strategies for teaching vocabulary to students of all ages, not just adolescents.

Dr. Baxter asked Dr. Snow what she thought should be on the national research agenda, to which Dr. Snow replied that she would like to see comparative evaluations of programs and a multi-faceted portfolio of data collection. She also expressed her concern over adolescent literacy becoming the exclusive focus of the national agenda.

THURSDAY, February 3, 2005

Board Business Continued

Programs Committee Report

Mr. Yudof began by drawing the attention of the Board to a letter from Secretary Spellings to Chairman Specter and Senator Harkin in which she agreed to a review of a specific contract with the public relations firm Ketchum, Inc. and payments to Armstrong Williams. As a result, there is going to be a period of review of the proper role of the Department of Education in relation to public relations activities and the use of outside consultants. Mr. Yudof moved that until the review is completed, the National Institute for Literacy not enter into any public relations or similar contracts with outside private entities. Ms. Hunter seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Regarding the Institute's spending plans, Dr. Baxter informed the Board that the NIFL plan had been sent to interagency partners for review. Comments have been received from the Department of Education, Vocational and Adult Education Office, Susan Sclafani's office, and HHS. Dr. Baxter said she will be briefing the plan to Reid Lyon, Russ Whitehurst, and Emily DeRocco. Dr. Baxter also said that she is working with the Office of Vocational and Adult Education on certain items in the plan that they have agreed to refine. She stated that she anticipates going into formal review once comments have been received from NIH and IES.

Dr. Carnine said it is important that the plan contain performance measures for the contractors that will fulfill the NIFL PART requirement. Dr. Baxter noted that the spending plan would broaden the scope of the LINCOS project but also reduce funding for it. Dr. Baxter said that OVAE will be starting a math initiative, and that NIFL's participation in this area will follow OVAE's lead. Dr. Baxter and Dr. Carnine discussed the possibility of expanding NIFL's focus on both math and writing.

Dr. Baxter discussed that the committee is in the process of revising the Partnership spending plan, and that when it is done, it will be forwarded to the Department of Education. Dr. Carnine expressed concern that the Initiative on Minority Community Outreach does not have a clear focus. He asked for clarification regarding programs at the National Center for Family Literacy, and for stronger

contractor requirements in the Adult Reading Initiative. Ms. Reddy then discussed the three primary components of the NCFL work for the Institute.

Quality Assurance and Internal Accountability Discussion

The Board received a handout on “Items to Be Considered for NIFL’s Long-Range Plan,” as well as a memo proposing a quality assurance process. Dr. Carnine suggested that criteria for a quality review needs to be added to the process. He said that it would be worth the investment to bring in expert consultants during the solicitation and procurement process. He discussed the difference between internal and external review, and between product and process review. Dr. Carnine also stated he is concerned more with project review than with product review. He stressed the need for experts to be brought in to review the process either through new hiring or through outside contracts. He said that in the partnership, where the research partners are heavily involved, the expertise is already there, but that in other cases it is not.

Ms. Hunter moved for a motion on the process as outlined by Dr. Baxter’s document on quality assurance be used, with the inclusion of an expert specific to each project, be utilized. Dr. Yudof seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Baxter suggested that in its next meeting the Board discuss the roles of the project officers and the contractors.

Foundation Recommendations

The Board received a list of the Top 50 foundations.

Dr. Baxter said that she has attended funders’ meetings at the Carnegie Corporation and that people are aware of NIFL and its mission. Dr. Baxter stated that she would like to talk to Andres Enriquez at Carnegie about cosponsoring a national summit. She also stated that in her experience foundations value visibility and do not appreciate being involved with other foundations.

Dr. Baxter and Chairperson Borders discussed the matter of receiving funding from Verizon and the possibility of starting a 501(c)(3) subset of NIFL. Chairperson Borders stated that the Board need to be aware of the literacy work being done by foundations in order to avoid duplication. Ms. Enriquez suggested that it would be beneficial to make foundations aware of the Institute’s priorities. If foundations know where the Institute is focusing its attention and where we are spending our money, then it could be more likely that foundations would follow suit. Ms. Hunter said that she had once attended a funding meeting and had been told that “Educators do not know how to beg.” She said that this meant that their proposals were not specific enough.

Ms. Enriquez moved that NIFL design and develop a plan to possibly work with foundations. Ms. Osborn seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments

Ms. Edith Gower from Literacy USA addressed the Board. Ms. Gower stated that her organization's annual meeting would be in March and that 40 or 50 Executive Directors of Literacy Coalitions would be on the Hill to express their support for the Senate WIA bill. She commended the Board on its efforts to improve quality of instruction and on its use of the Margins to the Mainstream document. She said that NIFL should look at how national organizations can contribute to local ones and vice versa.

Ms. Leila Plassey, Executive Director of the National Coalition for Literacy, addressed the Board. Ms. Plassey described the history of the Coalition and distributed a list of its members. Ms. Plassey stated that the Coalition had received non-profit status in 2003. Ms. Plassey concluded by stating that its organizational goals were increasing public awareness of literacy issues, fostering collaboration, and promoting a comprehensive view of research dissemination.

Ms. Norene Lopez, Public Policy Director for NCL, addressed the Board. Ms. Lopez described to the Board the Commission on Adult Basic Education and expressed its support for NIFL. Ms. Lopez stated that anything NIFL does in the area of adolescent research would be extremely helpful in the field of adult literacy as well. She also said that NCL has a research committee that would be happy to work with the Board on identifying research needs. She concluded by stating that NCL would be supporting the Senate version of the WIA bill. Ms. Lopez invited the Board to the COABE conference in Anaheim during the week of May 4-7.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:26 p.m.