

the LETTER

Volume 4, Issue 2



THE PACIFIC INSTITUTE®

Summer 2001

The Schmitz Park Elementary School Project

by Dr. Glenn Terrell and Sharon Potter

Reference was made in the Spring, 2001 issue of THE LETTER to the pilot study being conducted at a school in Seattle, Schmitz Park Elementary School. This issue consists entirely of additional information about this study, and contains results that further support our belief that young children can learn and apply the cognitive skills contained in our programs, thus confirming the promise of the K-6 (kindergarten through sixth grade) initiative. Lou and Diane have felt, for many years, that our programs should be initiated throughout the K-12 system, believing that the younger children are when they learn the concepts contained in our curricula, the more effective our education will be in insuring "optimal human functioning" throughout life.

Two fourth grade classes were selected for this study, which was conducted from October 2000 to early June 2001, using forty-five minutes of class time per week. An adaptation of *Imagine 21*®, *Achieving Your Potential Through Education*® (AYPTE) for young children

was used in this study. The principal of Schmitz Park Elementary School was the facilitator for both classes. The teachers of both classes devoted much effort to applying the concepts throughout the fourth grade curriculum.

Methodology

Two teachers and eight parents were administered a nine-item questionnaire in individual interviews. (See Table 1 on page 3.) The items in the questionnaire were determined, by agreement, between the school principal and two members of The Pacific Institute's staff. The questionnaire appears in Table One. This instrument is designed to measure the children's ability to learn and apply the meaning of three cognitive skills: Self-talk, Scotoma, and Goal-Setting. Item Nine is an open-ended question, which generated valuable testimonials, some of which we have included in our discussion of the results of this study.

Your editor had many conversations with the facilitator, who did an excellent job conducting the classes, one of which your editor,

and another staff person from The Pacific Institute, attended. It was very obvious that the facilitator believes deeply in the mission of The Pacific Institute, in the efficacy-building power of our programs and their applicability to young children. It was also very obvious that the children responded enthusiastically to her and to what she was telling them.

Results

In order to quantify the responses of the teachers and parents to questions 1 through 8 on the questionnaire, a value of 4 was assigned to the responses that best indicated that the children had learned the concepts and their application. A value of 1 was assigned to those responses that reflected the lowest confidence level of the respondents that the children had learned the skills in question. The values 2 and 3 reflect intermediate judgments of the teachers and parents to items 1 through 8.

Table Two contains the mean values of the teachers' and parents' judgments about items 1 through 8.

Continued on page 4



A Message from Lou & Diane:

We have long believed that the earlier in life young people learn the message of The Pacific Institute the more likely they will reach their optimal human potential. The new adaptation of our centerpiece program, designed specifically for young children, Achieving Your Potential Through Education® was presented to two fourth grade classes at an elementary school in West Seattle. The current issue of THE LETTER is devoted entirely to this study.

We are pleased that the evidence presented in THE LETTER quite strongly supports our opinion that young elementary grade children are capable of learning the skills that we teach if the facilitator, teachers and parents are skilled supporters of the program. The results of this study will be encouraging to Jim Lambright, Vice-President, Director of the K-6 program, and to project directors interested in this initiative.

Lou & Diane Tice

Lou Tice
THE
PACIFIC
INSTITUTE®



1709 HARBOR AVENUE SW • SEATTLE, WA 98126-2049
Phone: (800) 426-3660 • Fax: (206) 587-6007
www.loutice.com

Dr. Glenn Terrell, Editor, gterrell@pac-inst.com
Christy A. Watson, Associate Editor, cwatson@pac-inst.com



The Letter was designed by The Pacific Institute. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior written permission of The Pacific Institute®, Inc. Copyright 2001.

Dr. Glenn Terrell earned his B.A. in Political Science from Davidson College, his M.S. in Psychology from Florida State University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa.



Dr. Terrell served as Chairman of the Department of Psychology, University of Colorado, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and as Dean of Faculties at the University of Illinois in Chicago before an 18-year tenure as President of Washington State University. He also served as President of the National Association of State Universities and Colleges, Commissioner for the State of Washington on the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, served on the Board for General Telephone Northwest and West for 23 years, was a Fellow for the Society for Research in Child Development, and a Fellow for the American Psychological Association.

Dr. Terrell has received numerous honorary degrees and awards, among them a listing in *Who's Who in America: American Men of Science*, and Distinguished Graduate of the Department of Psychology, University of Iowa. He has managed multimillion dollar technology transfers and faculty and student exchange programs throughout the world.

Christy Watson is Director of Marketing for The Pacific Institute, as well as acting as Associate Editor for *The LETTER*. In addition to her marketing responsibilities, Christy has played the editor's role in the creation and updating of many Institute programs. A Seattle native, Christy received her B.A. from the University of Washington.

Table One

Schmitz Park Elementary School Questionnaire

Circle the statements below that, in general, best describe the students' ability to learn Self-Talk, Scotoma and Goal-Setting:

1. Self-Talk

Learn very quickly Learn fairly quickly Learn slowly Do not learn

2. Scotoma

Learn very quickly Learn fairly quickly Learn slowly Do not learn

3. Goal-Setting

Learn very quickly Learn fairly quickly Learn slowly Do not learn

4. Ability to apply self-talk in a learning task

Excellent Fairly quickly Learn slowly Not at all

5. Ability to apply knowledge of scotomas in learning

Excellent Fairly quickly Learn slowly Not at all

6. Ability to apply knowledge of goal-setting

Excellent Fairly quickly Learn slowly Not at all

7. How has the TPI experience improved students' attitude toward the school environment?

Dramatically improved Noticeably improved Slightly improved Not at all

8. How has the TPI experience improved students' attitude toward the home environment?

Dramatically improved Noticeably improved Slightly improved Not at all

9. Please add any other observations you made about the impact of the AYPTE on the students.

Two additional questions asked of the parents were:

What have you heard about the program?

Would you recommend that the program be continued?

continued from cover

Discussion

Generally, and collectively, the two teachers and eight parents strongly believe the students demonstrated the ability to learn the meaning of Self-Talk, Scotoma and Goal-Setting. The fact that neither of the teachers nor any of the parents had a mean score less than 3.00, a very favorable rating, supports this statement.

The fact that the ratings were not quite so high on the Goal-Setting items as they were on the Self-Talk and Scotoma questions may be due to the fact that less classroom time had been devoted to Goal-Setting than to Scotoma and Self-Talk, at the time of the interviews.

Interestingly, the responses from the two teachers, although favorable, a mean of 3.05, were not quite as favorable as the parent ratings, an overall mean of 3.51. Perhaps teachers are more strict in some instances in judging the performance of their students than parents who, in typical middle-class fashion, want very much to see their child's school performance at a high level.

Anecdotal Data

The importance of the evaluation of the facilitator has been discussed briefly in an earlier paragraph. We turn now to testimonials given to the open-ended item (# 9) on the questionnaire, the two additional questions that were asked of the teachers and parents. These responses were offered by the teachers and parents, voluntarily, during the course of the interviews. Some of the comments follow:

Table 2			
	Mean	Average Mean	Overall Mean
Teacher 1	3.1		
Teacher 2	3.0		
		3.05	
Parent 1	3.6		
Parent 2	3.7		
Parent 3	3.6		
Parent 4	3.6		
Parent 5	3.6		
Parent 6	3.9		
Parent 7	3.8		
Parent 8	3.4		
		3.51	3.07

“The program is especially good for students who are struggling.”

“The concepts are outstanding.”

“Goal-Setting applies to many areas.”

“Helps students deal with new ideas.”

“Could be effective with schools with absenteeism.”

“Like the connection between students and principal.”

“Like the project-teaming.”

“Likes the principal — she makes students feel good, (like they can be somebody.”

“Students feel special.”

“Helps students believe in themselves.”

“Helps students be self-reflective and creative.”

“Talks to mom more after curriculum.”

“Daughter plans ahead more.”

“Daughter talks more about her feelings.”

“Brings children all together and puts them on an equal basis.”

“Next time I will strike out the player.”

“Your beliefs will help you.”

“Takes away power of other people to dictate your success.”

Most significantly, all parents and teachers recommended that the program be continued at Schmitz Park Elementary School.

Summary

Those of us who were involved in the Schmitz Park program are convinced that The Pacific Institute's education is very suitable for children in the 4th grade, most of whom are nine years old. What about its suitability for children ages 5 through 8? Using the data cited previously for 9-year-olds, it can be quite confidently predicted that at least half of a group of first, second and third graders in a middle-class school like Schmitz Park Elementary are quite capable of grasping concepts that comprise the TPI curriculum. Further support for this prediction is contained in a study by Mischel, Shoda and Rodriguez, which appeared in two previous issues of THE LETTER, Spring '99 and Spring 2000. The results of the Mischel, et. al. study, summarized in Table 3, indicate the percentage of correct responses by four year-olds, six—seven year-olds and adults to tests of "Inner Speech," or in Pacific Institute terminology, Self-Talk.

Clearly, a prediction of at least half of children, between the ages of four and eight, are capable of learning Self-talk and other cognitive skills. Given the degree of belief and dedication we observed in our interviews with parents and teachers, the extraordinary skill of the facilitator, and the enthusiasm of the children, this is not an outrageous prediction.

The Schmitz Park Elementary School project is a pilot program. We need more studies similar to the present one, with more students, randomly selected, if pos-

Table 3

Percentage of correct responses to tests of the inner-speech hypothesis:

	4 year-olds	6-7 year-olds	Adults
Question 1	20	65	90
Question 2	45	95	100

sible, which include children from grades Kindergarten through 6. Also it is recommended that the teachers be informed about The Pacific Institute and its programs, prior to introducing them to the children. We may not be able to exercise all of the controls necessary for publication purposes, but neither are we a research institute producing refereed publications.

The purpose of our research is to produce sufficient data to satisfy our clients and ourselves that we can deliver the results necessary for our clients to reach their goals. We believe the data from the Schmitz Park Elementary School study provide substantial support for our belief that *Achieving Your Potential Through Education*® helps schools reach the following goals:

- Improved attitudes toward school and home environment
- Improved relationships with teachers and peers
- Enhanced parent-child communication

Although we have no data to support our belief that our program helps students perform better - as measured by grades, test scores, and class attendance - we conclude that these improvements will take place as a consequence of improved atti-

tudes toward school and home, improved relationships with teachers and peers, and enhanced parent-child communication. At this particular school, absenteeism is not a problem. We look forward to examining the impact of our programs on absenteeism in future research.

One final word: The facilitator is strongly convinced that nine-year-olds are capable of learning the concepts taught by The Pacific Institute. This opinion must be taken very seriously, in view of her long experience teaching and in elementary school administration. Anyone visiting her class as an observer, as was your editor-author and one other TPI staff member with 15 years experience teaching and counseling in the K-12 system were privileged to do, would come away convinced that important learning was taking place. ♦

The authors gratefully acknowledge the cooperation of the teachers, the parents and the children involved in the study. Their participation was both inspiring and fun to observe. We also thank the school staff members whose help was very important. Many colleagues at The Pacific Institute helped in very supportive roles, especially Karin Ahlswede, Charles Young and Theresa Cole.