



Toward an Expanded View of Educational Resources: *Observations and Hypotheses*¹

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An expanded view of educational resources includes (1) an effort to identify *all* of a nation's resources for learning, both formal and nonformal, (2) an understanding of the capacities of different educational resources to perform given educational tasks, and (3) the development of strategies for employing all educational resources within a nation-wide learning system.

From this expanded view we can gain an appreciation of the range and variety of forms of educational experience, especially with reference to matters such as the following:

1. *Structure:* Formal school programs are highly structured in a coordinated and sequential system. Nonformal programs usually have much less centralization and common structure and are better described as a sector than as a system.
2. *Content:* Formal education is usually academic, abstract, and verbal. Nonformal education is usually task or skill-centered, with objectives easy to specify and measure.³
3. *Time:* Formal education is future-time oriented, nonformal education short-term and present-time oriented.
4. *Rewards:* In formal education payoffs tend to be deferred and are long range. In nonformal education the payoffs tend to be tangible, immediate or short term.
5. *Locale:* Formal education is highly visible and fixed in place. Nonformal education usually has low visibility and may be on the job.
6. *Method:* The method of formal education is to transmit standardized knowledge from teacher to student in the classroom. Nonformal education tends to be more content specific with the instructional efforts directed at application.
7. *Participants:* Formal school students are age-defined and predictable. Teachers are formally certified. Nonformal education students are from all age groups and teachers have a great variety of qualifications. In terms of social approval, students who reject or "fail" in formal schools may suffer social stigma; nonformal education participants may reject or "fail" with little or no social stigma.
8. *Function:* Formal education experiences are generally designed to meet needs that people are assumed to have; nonformal education is usually designed in response to needs people say they have.

From this expanded view we see the need to relate all sorts of formal and nonformal educational resources to each other in order to achieve the common purpose of human resource development.

1. When educational resources are made available to a larger percentage of the population the awareness of need for a variety of alternative forms of education increases.
2. It should not be assumed that providing nonformal education is a predictable way to

¹ Cole Brembeck and Ted Ward. Toward an Expanded View of Educational Resources: Some Observations and Working Hypotheses. Unpublished paper, Michigan State University, October 9, 1974

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³ Certain forms of nonformal education are focused on long-range and fundamental changes in a community or region, and thus their objectives, though measurable, are sometimes only remotely related to the basic goals.

“retrieve” people for the formal educational system. Experiences in nonformal education may cause one person to increase interest in formal education but cause another person to reduce interest in it.

3. Rejection of nonformal education by formal education is less likely in situations where formal education has been recognized as having valuable contributions to make to nonformal education.

Through an expanded view of educational resources we gain insights about what makes learning effective.

1. High motivation is seen in learning experiences that are clearly related to the world of work.
2. People engaged in nonformal education are usually able to specify what they hope to gain from the experience.
3. When commitment to a specific and immediate learning objective is strong, less specific and even remote educational goals may become important to learners if these are “carried along” as reasonable accompaniments of the more acceptable specific goals.

Summative Working Hypotheses:

1. The expansion of formal schooling, especially of the compulsory type, increases the number of people who either reject it or are rejected by it. The expansion of schooling therefore creates a continuing and permanent demand for alternative modes of education.
2. Key distinctions between formal and nonformal education are not to be found in the degree of formality or non-formality that a learning mode exhibits. Distinctions, rather, are to be found in the characteristics of the total learning environment, such as those cited above.
3. Nonformal education is the preferable mode where the objective is to change immediate action or to create new act/on within a short time.
4. Formal education is the preferable mode where immediate action is subordinated to abstract learning or concept building.
5. Future education policy will be more total in the sense that it will employ all the available means of education to meet increasingly diverse types of demands.
6. Until educational decision makers gain an expanded view of educational resources, they will continue to assume that even highly specific and relatively short-term goals are demands to which formal education can make the most appropriate response.

Expanding Your View of Educational Resources

In the instructional settings listed below, what consideration, selection, and/or use is made of the available resources for nonformal modes of education?

Pre-Service
Presently Available: Need to Improve: Need to Add:

In-Service
Presently Available: Need to Improve: Need to Add:

Community
Presently Available: Need to Improve: Need to Add:

Home
Presently Available: Need to Improve: Need to Add: