



TEACHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The key to good education is the teacher. Any effort to improve the quality of education in the inner city must concern itself with teachers. Three programs developed in Buffalo under Title I were designed to assist the teacher to do a better job of helping children. These programs provided for a series of in-service education courses for public and private school teachers, for the assignment of teacher aides to all Target Area schools, and for the preparation of a number of curriculum guides related to the problems of the educationally disadvantaged child.

These programs gave an opportunity for many teachers to gain new understanding of the challenges and responsibilities of teaching in the schools of a large city. The Teacher Aide program made it possible for teachers to devote more time to individualized instruction.

IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

Under Title I the Buffalo Public Schools initiated a program for the in-service education of teachers of educationally disadvantaged children in the Target Area of Buffalo. Traditional teacher training programs do not usually adequately prepare prospective teachers to meet the specific needs of multi-ethnic children in inner-city schools. A lack of understanding and awareness of the problems faced by children seriously impedes the learning process. The middle class values possessed by most teachers produce attitudes which may limit the development of satisfactory teacher-pupil relationships.

If these teachers are to become more effective and to make maximum use of the children's learning potential, they need to know more about the behavioral characteristics of children and the social and economic factors which have caused these characteristics to develop. They also need to have a better understanding of those techniques and methods of instruction which are effective.

To achieve these objectives, three series of in-service courses were offered to teachers from the public and private schools in the Target Area. The first series of ten courses was held on five successive Saturday mornings during March and April 1966. Each session was three hours long. The instructional program consisted of intensive studies of the complex social, economic and psychological factors affecting the learning process. Courses focused on the teaching of handwriting, reading, mathematics, social studies and science. Particular attention was given to ways of developing the art of creative writing. Each course enrolled 25 teachers.

The second series of ten courses, initiated in April, acquainted inner-city teachers with new materials and equipment especially