

contacts, she distributed GHOSTWRITER materials and saw that they were used in schools and in school-based Saturday child-care programs. She distributed copies of the show for use in such settings, copies made by taping the signal from satellite broadcast. She attracted local press coverage and, throughout the first season of the project, added to the list of users. There was also a local CES staff member in Jackson, MI (not quite the Delta, but a city with interest and outreach in the area) who, in her role as a member of the school board, introduced 20,000 magazines into the schools, and provided even more contacts in the Delta to receive GHOSTWRITER materials.

In both sites, multiple sources of interest in the project served to generate awareness of the GHOSTWRITER television show and the print materials. Perhaps even more importantly, effective individuals in each site assumed responsibility for educating potential users about GHOSTWRITER, for distributing the materials initially, and for mid-course corrections of the distribution system.

Each of the target sites offered its own combination of individual and organizational interests, modes of promotion and distribution, and blends of school and after-school materials use. Some were more successful than others in creating a local presence for GHOSTWRITER, yet all served the essential goal of extending GHOSTWRITER outreach to settings where groups of children gathered.

In sum, CTW established linkages with youth-serving organizations through alliances with five national partner organizations, and through special efforts in six geographic areas. The experiences generated by these linkages take several different forms: the narrative description of day-to-day managerial issues, formal and informal surveys of penetration and use of GHOSTWRITER materials, and ethnographic or naturalistic studies of actual use over time. Such outcomes are reported in the following chapters.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF GHOSTWRITER

During the first year of the project, the distribution process was revised and refined many times over owing mainly to the massive scale of the distribution effort and the inexorable demands of the learning curve for the five partner organizations, local groups, as well as for CTW. Initially, for example, some calls came from individuals who wanted GHOSTWRITER materials but were not receiving them from intermediate distributors. Others came from intermediate distributors themselves, who didn't know why they were receiving materials and wanted to stem the flow. It took time to work out such start-up problems.

The initial plan had been for CTW to provide approximately 100,000 GHOSTWRITER magazines each month in bulk to the national youth-serving organizations for further distribution through their structures to local programs. To justify their efforts and expense, each organization was allowed to customize one page in each issue of the magazine to speak directly to their members. Information for this page was to have been developed jointly by CTW and the youth-serving organization. But once organizations calculated the amount it would cost them to distribute 100,000 magazines each month, they reported that they could not afford it, and drastically reduced the number of magazines they wanted. Since this jeopardized CTW's plan to distribute a million magazines monthly to after-school programs, a compromise was adopted. CTW assumed the expense of distribution; the fully customized magazine page was abandoned (though the partners were given the option to provide a small amount of text that would go in the magazines distributed to their organization); and more stringent demands were made of partners to promote GHOSTWRITER and to assist with research.

Variations in structure among the five partner organizations required separate arrangements for getting materials through them into the hands of potential users. While four of the organizations were willing to supply CTW with mailing addresses of individuals at the state or local level who might effect local distribution, one, the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., required distribution to regional councils, which, in turn, distributed to troop leaders.

Anyone seeking to distribute materials to youth-serving organizations on a mass basis must factor in the high cost of distribution, no matter what method is used. Furthermore, the effort requires working very closely with both national and local facilitators to ensure materials get to the end users in the correct quantities and on schedule. List management becomes a time-consuming and an on-going function requiring regular communication with facilitators. Each week, CES staff revised, updated and refined the mailing lists and provided monthly updated lists to its magazine distributors. Eventually, CES arrived at a combination of direct-to-end-user and pass-through methods of distribution, in which facilitators received bundled packets of magazines and arranged delivery of the magazines to appropriate sites or leaders.

Although PBS stations proved to be valuable in targeting teachers and schools, CTW found that they had limited funds and staff time for distributing materials to after-school settings, and that these were groups with which PBS stations were unfamiliar. The guiding principle here is: play to the strengths of your facilitator.

Organizations differed with respect to the amount and quality of information that they supplied to potential GHOSTWRITER users at the local level. CTW staff made presentations to

all of the organizations except the Girl Scouts. Boys and Girls Clubs of America invited CTW staff to make GHOSTWRITER presentations to a national meeting of program executives and to gatherings of between 200 and 300 people at each of its six regional program institutes. In addition, Boys and Girls Clubs produced a “program-planner” poster that was distributed to and posted at local clubs and served to spotlight GHOSTWRITER. CTW staff spent considerable energy during GHOSTWRITER’s first year educating program administrators and leaders in the partner organizations about the materials and answering questions about their availability and purpose. Over time, strong bonds were formed between CTW staff and individuals at various levels of the partner organizations.

Merging information from all available sources, such as feedback gathered by CTW staff in telephone conversations and meetings, and through attendance at conferences of the five organizations, one can recreate the typical initiatory GHOSTWRITER experience as follows:

- Diffusion of information about the project, its nature and purpose, and the use and arrival schedule of the materials;
- Interest based on one or several of the following factors:
 1. the appeal of the materials themselves (many leaders said that they used the materials because they were good);
 2. facilitation (e.g., overcoming a distribution barrier) by CTW staff or an intermediate- or local-level program administrator;
 3. recognition of a connection between GHOSTWRITER and a program goal or child need;
 4. use by a colleague; or
 5. initial positive reaction on the part of children.
- Exploratory use, followed by a decision about regular use;
- Experimentation with the materials and formats for their use, usually over several months;
- Institutionalization of GHOSTWRITER.

One national program administrator reported that it typically takes two years for new initiatives to “take,” and that it is probably premature to look for integration within the first year. By the end of the first season, however, there were numerous instances of “institutionalization” of GHOSTWRITER, that is, of regular use of GHOSTWRITER in ways that integrated the project materials into the program of the club or troop or program in question. In many instances, the process of adoption had been marked by delays, false starts, changes in staff or local program conditions, and a subsequent need to reposition GHOSTWRITER in the light of the changes. In others, the process was marked by increasing levels of understanding and comfort on the part of users, both with the materials themselves and with the connections between the materials and their own (and their programs’) objectives.

In principle, surveys could provide information about the extent and overall patterns of use, but would not be as well suited for providing details about *how* the materials were used in specific settings and integrated into local programs. In practice, however, largely because the multilayered connections to the GHOSTWRITER project were in constant evolution, it was difficult even to collect information about the rates and patterns of use of GHOSTWRITER

during the first season; methodological compromises were unavoidable. Four surveys that yield information about different aspects of **GHOSTWRITER**'s distribution and use were conducted.

By the end of the first season, there were multiple indications that **GHOSTWRITER** had been successfully integrated into many youth-serving organizations. Evidence of such integration came from national administrators of the five partner organizations, from survey results and, most compellingly, from the naturalistic study (see Chapter Six).

GHOSTWRITER SURVEYS

<p>Leader Survey</p> <p>Hezel Associates, <i>Evaluation of GHOSTWRITER Magazine, Activity Guide and Teacher's Guide: A survey of program leaders</i> (Syracuse, NY: Author 1993).</p>	<p>A telephone survey of approximately 200 after-school program leaders to whom GHOSTWRITER materials had been sent to determine leader's awareness, use, and impressions of these project elements.</p>
<p>Administrator Survey</p> <p>Children's Television Workshop, <i>Survey of GHOSTWRITER Use Among Administrators in Youth-Serving Organizations</i> (Unpublished raw data).</p>	<p>An informal, small-scale telephone survey of administrators in the five national partner organizations, with selected follow-up interviews at regional and local levels. The focus was on perceptions of how well the processes of distribution and implementation were working.</p>
<p>Nielsen Recontact Survey</p> <p>Nielsen New Media Services, <i>GHOSTWRITER Study, Wave I: March, 1993</i> (Dunedin, FL: Author 1993).</p> <p>Nielsen New Media Services, <i>GHOSTWRITER Study, Wave II: May, 1993</i> (Dunedin, FL: Author 1993).</p>	<p>A telephone survey of a national sample of children to assess their television viewing patterns and, for viewers of GHOSTWRITER, their use of and reactions to the show and other project materials.</p>
<p>Awareness Survey</p> <p>Rockman, et al., <i>A report on the GHOSTWRITER audience in four selected ADIs: Awareness, viewing, magazines, and activities</i> (San Francisco: Author 1993).</p>	<p>An in-classroom survey (questionnaire) of approximately 6,000 children in four cities to assess awareness and viewing of the TV show and awareness and readership of the <i>GHOSTWRITER</i> magazine.</p>

From these surveys and CTW's project experience generally, it is possible to develop a general picture of GHOSTWRITER's distribution and use. At least two general themes emerge: (1) the five partner organizations used the GHOSTWRITER materials in quite different ways; and (2) the GHOSTWRITER magazine was the most frequently used project element. A precise accounting of the rates of use of the materials is difficult, owing to confusion in terminology and potential overlap in distribution lists, but, according to the leader survey, at least 91 percent of the respondents in any category of sendees reported having received GHOSTWRITER magazine, at least 80 percent reported having used the magazine, and at least 64 percent reported using the Activity Guide.

Respondents who reported that they had used GHOSTWRITER were asked whether they used it in one or more of the following contexts: academics, enrichment, free play, health, or social skills activities. The data displayed below show that each organization configured its use of GHOSTWRITER differently.

**GHOSTWRITER Use in After-School Programs:
Percentages of Respondents Who Used GHOSTWRITER
in Specified Program Areas**

Program Areas	Boys and Girls Clubs of America	The YMCA of the USA	Girls Scouts of the U.S.A.	Girls Incorporated	4-H Youth Development Education*
Academics	51%	21%	28%	40%	16%
Enrichment	44	33	26	55	-
Free Play	40	50	28	40	-
Health	-	-	26	30	-
Social Skills	42	40	31	50	-
Sports	-	-	23	-	-

Source: Hezel Associates, *Evaluation of GHOSTWRITER Magazine, Activity Guide and Teacher's Guide: A survey of program leaders* (Syracuse, NY: Author 1993). [Results smaller than 10 percent not listed. Totals of more than 100% are due to multiple responses; i.e., when organizations used GHOSTWRITER in multiple contexts.]

*Use of GHOSTWRITER by 4-H did not conform well to the categories used by the interviewers; consequently, the majority of 4-H responses were in the category called "other," which was not tallied for this analysis. The data above, therefore, do not completely reflect 4-H use of GHOSTWRITER.

Results of the informal survey of administrators have been blended into the narrative description of GHOSTWRITER's implementation, and are not reported separately. The two other surveys, the Nielsen Recontact Survey and the Awareness Survey, addressed youth-serving organizations only minimally, but nevertheless provided interesting insights.

The Nielsen Recontact Survey reached a national sample of children in their homes.⁸ Respondents described viewing patterns and use of print materials. Two survey items identified the place of viewing, including schools and after-school programs. The broadest form of the question: "Have you ever watched **GHOSTWRITER** at any of these places?" yielded about a 1 percent response for "an after-school or weekend club or program." This statistic, although low, is believed to be a conservative estimate because (1) the survey itself was home-based, (2) the sample was drawn with disproportionate numbers of identified home viewers of **GHOSTWRITER**, (3) Nielsen methodology ignores institutional viewing, such as in school or after-school settings, and (4) the content of the interview itself focused almost entirely on home-based viewing. Even under these conditions, a presence of viewing out-of-home and out-of-school was detected, and it is known on other grounds that most use of **GHOSTWRITER** by youth-serving organizations did not involve on-site viewing.

A survey of large numbers of third- and fourth-grade children (about 6,000 total) in intact classrooms in four sites described awareness of **GHOSTWRITER** vis-à-vis other programming.⁹ One item asked if the children went home after school or went someplace else. More than 4 out of every 10 children went someplace other than home at the end of the school day. Twenty-three percent went to one of the after-school youth-serving organizations listed on the questionnaire: Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts; Boys Clubs or Girls Clubs; Girls Incorporated; 4-H Youth Development Education; the YMCA of the USA. As an interesting side note, among the four sites, Baltimore children had the highest self-reported readership (50 percent vs. 26-35 percent) of **GHOSTWRITER** magazine. To the extent that magazine distribution is dependent on the assistance of youth-serving organizations, this may be an indication of a very successful utilization program in Baltimore.

The report now turns to two ethnographic studies of **GHOSTWRITER** use in selected youth-serving organization settings.

⁸ Nielsen New Media Services, **GHOSTWRITER** Study, Wave I: March, 1993 (Dunedin, FL: Author 1993); Nielsen New Media Services, **GHOSTWRITER** Study, Wave II: May, 1993 (Dunedin, FL: Author 1993).

⁹ Rockman, et al., *A Report on the **GHOSTWRITER** Audience in Four Selected ADIs: Awareness, Viewing, Magazines, and Activities* (San Francisco: Author 1993).

VI. INSIGHTS AND OUTCOMES FROM ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDIES

A. Introduction to the Ethnographic Studies

Research methodologies commonly used by evaluators include experiments, surveys, content analyses, focus groups, and ethnographic or naturalistic studies.¹⁰ Because each method has particular strengths and limitations, there are advantages in using a variety of complementary methodologies. This was the evaluation strategy employed with GHOSTWRITER; in varying degrees it used all of the methods above except a formal experiment.

When it came to assessing the interrelationship between GHOSTWRITER and youth-serving organizations, there was a particularly strong rationale for using ethnographic studies, the primary one being that such studies are able to account for wide variations in observed phenomena in disparate settings. Naturalistic researchers can witness, record, and interpret significant events and human interactions that would be impossible to capture or interpret in a formal experiment.

With the linkages between GHOSTWRITER and youth-serving organizations, variability was not so much a methodological problem to be controlled or eliminated as it was the central, defining attribute of the linkages themselves. Remove the variability, and the phenomena would no longer be real. The very ethos of these programs was one of variability and creative response to change. For example:

- Different organizations often had distinct goals and used GHOSTWRITER within their own traditions to achieve them;
- Local groups operated in unique social settings--ones that frequently defined the focus of their programs, the composition of their memberships, and even such important nuts-and-bolts questions as their hours of operation;
- National organizations distributed and implemented GHOSTWRITER materials in different ways;
- The needs and attributes of the children who belonged to these youth-serving organizations varied;
- Differences in the personalities of adult program leaders were often key to the specific forms GHOSTWRITER's informal education initiative took at the local level.

The ethnographic methodology accommodates such variability. Its qualitative data do not yield "scores" or "percents," nor is it possible to determine their generalizability, but a socially complex act can be carefully described and interpreted, thus making ethnographic methodology a logical choice for studying the phenomena of youth-serving organizations as they encountered and used GHOSTWRITER materials in highly variable ways.

Primary data for this report come from two ethnographic studies. Both were conducted by principal investigators from the Education Development Center (EDC). The first study, "A

¹⁰ For the purposes of this report, "ethnographic studies" and "naturalistic studies" are used interchangeably.

Naturalistic Study of GHOSTWRITER Use in After-School and School Settings,"¹¹ was partially funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York. It represents our fullest ethnographic record. The second, smaller in scope and conducted later in time, was part of a CTW evaluation of prototype GHOSTWRITER-based video and print materials being developed for after-school use.¹² The materials were pilot tested in Los Angeles at youth-group sites operated by LA's BEST (Better Educated Students for Tomorrow). A follow-up CTW survey at this site will be cited as well.¹³

THE NATURALISTIC STUDY. Through observations, interviews, case studies, and the collection of written work, the EDC study sought to ascertain and describe how GHOSTWRITER was used in after-school programs. The study documented the response to and use of various GHOSTWRITER TV and print materials, the effect of the local setting on use (and vice versa), and the incentives and barriers to use. These "unfolding uses," along with the educational effectiveness of GHOSTWRITER itself, form a learning ground for understanding youth-serving organizations as they integrate innovative educational programs. Observations were made at twelve after-school sites in four cities (Baltimore, Indianapolis, San Antonio, Los Angeles) over an eight-month period (October 1992-May 1993). Sites were selected for their complementarity and diversity, not on the basis of how well or how often they used GHOSTWRITER materials. Of the twelve test sites, ten were associated with CTW's national partner organizations, while two were independent after-school groups. All told, the ethnographic researchers observed 420 children using GHOSTWRITER over the course of the study in the 12 study sites. In the organizations' full programs (i.e., sessions including and not including GHOSTWRITER, and sessions formally observed and not observed), these sites were serving between 1,000 and 2,000 children per day on average.

Some of the general characteristics of the youth-serving groups at these sites are detailed in the following section.

B. Observed Characteristics of Youth-Serving Organizations

Participating GHOSTWRITER youth-serving organizations differed considerably in the types of facilities in which they operated, their program offerings, their organizational structures, their missions, the training and educational backgrounds of their staff, and their access to resources. Few had discrete literacy programs. Youth-serving organizations were marked by fluctuations in group size, and interruptions in program offerings over the eight months of the study, due to staff reassignments, budget cuts, and competing club activities.

¹¹ Education Development Center, *A Naturalistic Study of GHOSTWRITER Use in After-School and School Settings*.

¹² C. Char and S. Isaacson, *A Study of "Building Bridges" Materials in Three After-School Settings* (Newton, MA: Author 1994).

¹³ CES Research, Children's Television Workshop, *Appeal, Usability and Impact of the Prototype GHOSTWRITER "Building Bridges" After-School Package: Results from LA's BEST Leader Telephone Interviews* (New York: Author 1994).

The majority of youth-serving organizations:

- Had a high proportion of minority children--either predominantly African-American or Latino;
- Served boys and girls (a few were just for girls; some served entire families);
- Served children from early elementary-age through early adolescence;
- Were open during after-school hours and on into the evening. (Several were open on weekends, and one organization was open during school hours to provide a place for children who were on break from the city's year-round school schedule.)
- Were facility-based--meaning that programs were offered in a dedicated building (e.g., a YMCA site). Several, however, had no "home" sites of their own, and were forced to operate out of host facilities--a school classroom or cafeteria, a local library or recreational center. One program moved from site to site with a program director who covered a large territory.

In cases where programs were not facility-based, adult leaders often had predictable problems preparing activities for the children. Not only did they need to transport, set up, and take away equipment and materials for each session, but they also had higher out-of-pocket expenses if the materials they needed were not readily available at the host site.

VARIETY OF OFFERINGS AND ACTIVITIES. Many of the youth-serving organizations offered a wide range of after-school programs: sports and recreation, arts and crafts, health and drug awareness, cultural awareness, field trips, and homework assistance. Several had informal education programs in science, mathematics, or computer education. Literacy was typically addressed in the context of homework assistance, essay contests, and silent or group reading (usually older children reading to younger). Because few youth groups had explicit literacy programs, there was a dearth of child-oriented books and magazines at virtually all sites. While several groups had a room or area designated as the facility's library, it was usually stocked with donated or acquired materials that did not circulate widely. Thus the all-important literacy "carrots" needed to attract reluctant readers--colorful and well-illustrated books and magazines written and edited with kids in mind--were almost entirely absent. Significantly, when *GHOSTWRITER* magazine--which is written and designed specifically for 7-to 10-year-olds--was introduced into many of these settings, the publication became a prized possession. Each child was allowed to have his or her own copy, adding to the delight.

In Boys and Girls Clubs of America settings, *GHOSTWRITER* activities often took place in "clubs" within clubs, adding cachet to the educational experience and helping some children overcome their initial hesitations about joining a reading or writing activity. A downside of this approach was that when *GHOSTWRITER* clubs lost their focus on literacy or social issues, they at times devolved into conventional clubs, with reduced opportunities for informal education.

In settings where *GHOSTWRITER* was a group experience (e.g., children reading and writing together, families participating in organized literacy activities), researchers observed personal growth in some children as they learned to help one another and not fear "making mistakes." In one family-oriented setting, *GHOSTWRITER* became a vehicle for parents and

children to talk out and work through issues. In another after-school group, children joined together to write their own **GHOSTWRITER** script.¹⁴

PROGRAM LEADERS. The adults who served the children in these after-school settings shared certain characteristics. Out of a total of 14 program leaders:

- Twelve were African-Americans;
- Two were Latino;
- The majority were female;
- The majority had worked in the after-school field for two to five years;
- A minority had worked in the field for 12 to 18 years;
- Many had college degrees or backgrounds in social work, counseling, or education.

Few after-school program leaders had the luxury of using educational materials with children of approximately the same age and skill levels. The typical age spread between older and younger children participating in **GHOSTWRITER** activities in a youth program was five to six years. Another characteristic of after-school settings was fluid attendance and participation. Program leaders could rarely predict how many--much less which--children would show up on a given day. And some group leaders, because of lack of facilities, at times could not even predict where children might be meeting with them.

C. The EDC Case Studies

In the naturalistic study, EDC researchers described 5 of the 12 after-school settings they visited in a series of mini-case studies. These studies gave CTW the opportunity to observe the **GHOSTWRITER** experience as it took root and evolved in distinct community-based youth groups. The following sections of this chapter highlight some of the observations and findings of EDC researchers at the five designated test sites. Each of these studies suggests that there is, indeed, considerable potential for informal education initiatives in youth-serving organizations.

The five mini-case studies to be presented here are:

1. Northfield Boys and Girls Club, Los Angeles
2. Wilson Unit Boys and Girls Club, Indianapolis
3. Sheridan Center, Girls Incorporated, Indianapolis
4. Greene Boys and Girls Club, Los Angeles
5. Bethune Family Learning Circle, Baltimore

¹⁴ The most detailed reporting on these settings is found in the EDC study itself. See the bibliography in Appendix B.

1. NORTHFIELD BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB, LOS ANGELES

NORTHFIELD AT A GLANCE

- **Children ages 7 to 15 years, including some 12- and 13-year-old nonreaders.**
- **Informal education offerings: a daily reading club, homework assistance, and computer instruction; Reading club featured a “library on wheels” (a shopping cart filled with books and magazines).**
- **Education director: female, African-American; former teacher and school probation officer.**

“CREATING A COMMUNITY OF READERS”

For “Sandra,”¹⁵ Northfield’s education director, *GHOSTWRITER* presented an opportunity to involve a large number of children interested in reading and writing. Heretofore, the only literacy activity offered at Northfield was a silent reading “club.” In the case of *GHOSTWRITER*, Sandra formed a club within a club (the “*GHOSTWRITERS*”) and cannily positioned it as a special program, lending it a mystique. In the “*GHOSTWRITERS*” club, children took turns reading aloud and doing activities in *GHOSTWRITER* magazine. Wherever possible Sandra made literacy activities a game. Sessions usually ended with a “Trivial Pursuit”-type contest. She also created a dictionary relay race in which children looked up words. Club members won prizes and snacks.

The club originally met once a week, at 3 p.m. After Sandra received positive feedback from parents as well as children, she scheduled meetings on more and more days until ultimately *GHOSTWRITER* became a daily experience. Sandra shifted its meeting time to 3:30 p.m. to accommodate children who wanted to participate but could not get there immediately after school, as well as those children who could get there on time but had to leave early. Due to such factors the size of the club on any given day could vary anywhere from 7 to 35 children, with about 10 children forming the core group of regulars.

Sandra characterized the “*GHOSTWRITERS*” club as “a community of readers” who helped each other overcome their reading and writing problems.

THE STORY OF ASHLEY. One child who benefited greatly from the “*GHOSTWRITERS*” club was nine-year-old Ashley. Ashley was a nonreader, a bright fourth-grader whose natural abilities, Sandra feared, were being overlooked. At Northfield, Ashley could not participate in the reading club, because it excluded nonreaders. But the “*GHOSTWRITERS*” club offered her another chance to address her fears of reading. Watching how readers in the club helped nonreaders, and how all the club members had different reading strengths, she was able to see that there were no “perfect” readers and that everyone needed help with words. This reassured her and gave her the necessary self-confidence to persevere.

¹⁵ All names of adults and children mentioned in the case studies below are pseudonyms.

Ashley began calling out words during group reading. Sandra observed that her membership in the "GHOSTWRITERS" club had helped Ashley overcome the stigma of being a nonreader and had enabled her to participate in activities that built her literacy skills. Sandra then took matters a step further. She involved Ashley's mother in the situation. Ashley's mom now helps Ashley at home with her reading and has also hired a tutor for her daughter. Even more encouraging, Sandra has noted that Ashley's progress has had a domino effect at Northfield: other children, having seen that a nonreader like Ashley could progress, came to believe that they too could succeed.

IMPACT ON ADULT LEADERS. Sandra is herself a good example of a person whose perspectives and horizons were expanded by the GHOSTWRITER experience. When asked about what she intended to do in the future, she said: "Whether the magazines come or not, I would still call [the club]GHOSTWRITERS." She said she would still do the same activities and games, substituting books, magazine articles, and newspapers for GHOSTWRITER stories. In other words, having worked with the materials and learned how to modify them and integrate them into her program, she now felt confident she could act independently. And presumably, she could teach others to do the same and adapt the methods to other curricula--science, math, history, etc.

Postscript: In May 1993, the sign announcing the times for GHOSTWRITER and other educational offerings was moved from the narrow entrance hallway, enlarged, and posted in a more prominent central location in the Northfield Boys and Girls Club.

IMPLICATIONS. For purposes of this report, some preliminary conclusions can be drawn from the Northfield Boys and Girls Club case:

- Nonhomogeneous age groupings, say 7 to 15 years old, place greater demands for flexibility and broad appeal on materials than would be the case in groups of the same age;
- The adult leader transformed the GHOSTWRITER materials into her own lesson. Adaptability of the materials to widely varying circumstances is therefore an important design feature;
- Materials that lend themselves to group activities are useful, both for pragmatic reasons (i.e., the leaders dealing with the group) and pedagogical reasons (e.g., group reading of appealing stories helps dispel the notion that reading is a silent, solitary act);
- Leader-generated games and fun activities with informal educational content may not be sufficiently "academic" for use in school classrooms, but they can nevertheless be well suited to after-school settings;
- Adult leaders can simultaneously pursue social development aims with educational and recreational aims, given appealing materials and social settings for their use;
- Once adult leaders acquire experience and skill in implementing an informal education program, they can apply those skills in other informal education curricular areas.

2. WILSON UNIT BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB, INDIANAPOLIS

WILSON GHOSTWRITER CLUB AT A GLANCE

- **Membership:** approximately 15 to 30 boys and girls.
- **Children between the ages of 7 and 12.**
- **Met two afternoons per week.**
- **Activities:** working with magazines (doing activities, codes, summarizing stories, dictionary word searches).
- **Education director:** female, African-American; working in field for 15 years.

“MAKING A DIFFERENCE”

After founding a *GHOSTWRITER* club at Wilson Unit Boys and Girls Club in October 1992, funding cuts and staff shortages forced Mary, the education director, to discontinue the program as a formal activity. (Among other changes in her routine, she was obliged to work the front desk during *GHOSTWRITER* hours.) Nevertheless, she continued using *GHOSTWRITER* magazine with two to four children at a time while she performed her extra duties.

RECOGNIZING POTENTIAL. When funding and staffing conditions improved in December, she reinstated the *GHOSTWRITER* club and inaugurated a tradition of monthly parties as a means of attracting more children. (As a result of the hiatus, *GHOSTWRITER* club attendance had fallen to 15 from its original 30 members.) Mary urged the children in her group to watch *GHOSTWRITER* at home as a means of reinforcing the magazine-based literacy activities of the after-school program. But she viewed the club as an opportunity to do more than just expose children to an informal education program. She saw it as a way to help the children explore their potential--a potential that they themselves sometimes failed to recognize.

THE STORY OF KEISHA. One child whose life was dramatically affected by Mary's insightfulness was outgoing 11-year-old Keisha. She had been acting out and was in danger of becoming cast as a “problem.” Rather than give up on her, Mary appointed Keisha president of the *GHOSTWRITER* club when it resumed in December. As Mary put it, she wanted to give Keisha “something to keep her going, something to keep her in the club and allow her to be able to express herself.” As the group leader, Keisha was responsible for reviewing issues of the magazine and activity guides and identifying the activities she thought others might enjoy. She would then write a lesson plan, which she would discuss and revise with Mary before presenting it to the group. The following is drawn from one of Keisha's lesson plans:

- “Talk about what leaders do, then assign some people to play as those characters”;
- “Write one of your favorite movie stars on a piece of paper and tell me, if you could ask them any questions, what would it be”; and
- “[Write] a list of four vocabulary words from the magazine.”

Following each session Keisha would write down the names of all members who had attended and would then summarize the activities completed. Through the *GHOSTWRITER* club,

Keisha developed a sense of leadership and responsibility. Keisha grew so much from this experience that Mary nominated her for an organization award.

What made things especially frustrating at times for a leader like Mary, however, were the nitty-gritty organizational problems--such as financial instability of the Wilson Unit and its periodic staff shortages--that prevented her from achieving everything she wanted to do with the children. Then, in mid-March, Mary was appointed the interim director of another Boys and Girls Club affiliate, a change in jobs that she could not afford to refuse. When she left the Wilson Unit, the GHOSTWRITER Club was discontinued. Keisha moved with her to the new location, and together they built another GHOSTWRITER program at the new facility. Mary still hopes, however, to find a way of helping to reinstitute the GHOSTWRITER club at Wilson.

In Mary's view, GHOSTWRITER, used as a group activity, had a clear impact on the Wilson children. "The children got a better insight into what GHOSTWRITER was about--teamwork," she told researchers, plus, she added, they "are reading more ... using the dictionary ... GHOSTWRITER is a vocabulary builder."

IMPLICATIONS. The story of the Wilson Unit Boys and Girls Club is a poignant example of the shifting circumstances at many after-school sites, and of a leader's commitment and perseverance. It also shows that:

- An adult leader can encourage home viewing of educational television programs that are then tapped for discussion and use in the organizational setting;
- The highest flexibility of use is with print materials. Activities can be tailored to work in virtually any situation with a wide range of children;
- Adult leaders can track the educational progress of specific children in the same way that classroom teachers can and do, only it's not part of an official "record";
- The basic attractiveness of GHOSTWRITER materials, and the pleasure associated with their use are powerful motivational tools in the hands of a knowledgeable adult leader;
- Innovative adult leaders and successful informal education programs need to be recognized and supported by the youth-serving organization--or the good work both of them accomplish can be lost.

3. SHERIDAN CENTER GIRLS INCORPORATED, INDIANAPOLIS

SHERIDAN CENTER PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

- **Overall mission: promoting gender and racial equity and empowering girls to be leaders.**
- **Offers “structured” and “focused” programs.**
- **Structured programs meet for a minimum of 6 weeks with the same groups of children; children are broken down into 3 age groups (6-8, 9-11, or 12-14 year olds); programs involve sequential learning, and have written goals and an evaluation at the end.**
- **Focused programs meet weekly; participants are drawn from members who express interest in a given topic (e.g., “Brain Power,” “Computer Input”), grouping is not by age as in structured programs.**
- **GHOSTWRITER evolves from a focused to a structured program for 9- to 11-year-olds—a slightly older age grouping than its core target audience.**

“EMPOWERING GIRLS”

Ellen, director of after-school programs at the city’s two Girls Incorporated centers, was attracted to GHOSTWRITER after previewing the television series because she felt that its priorities matched those of Sheridan Center, which include promoting gender and racial equity and empowering girls to be leaders. Once Ellen made the connection, she began taping GHOSTWRITER off the air, distributing the tapes to staff in her organization, and developing strategies for implementing a GHOSTWRITER program at Sheridan Center with 9- to 11-year-olds.

Unlike most Sheridan Center programs, however, GHOSTWRITER did not come with a prepackaged curriculum or set of objectives from Girls Incorporated. So Ellen planned to hold informal training sessions with program specialists from both centers. Later, however, she decided it would be easier for program specialists to figure out how to incorporate GHOSTWRITER materials for themselves.

CUSTOMIZING GHOSTWRITER. Krystal, a 22-year-old African-American program specialist at Sheridan Center, developed her own set of goals and format for a weekly GHOSTWRITER program for 9- to 11-year-olds. Eventually she turned it into a program that included reading and writing activities but went beyond literacy per se. Krystal used GHOSTWRITER to discuss social and moral issues--lying, teamwork, peer pressure, cheating, taking better care of the environment. She made journals for the girls, but gave them only to kids who pledged to come at least two times in a row. The girls kept journals with casebook-like notes, as well as personal diaries.

Krystal did advance planning before every session. She wrestled with logistics, such as whether or not to alter the length of activities to fit the 30-minute time frame or whether to extend the activities over two to three weeks. Each activity that Krystal developed, including ones that incorporated television viewing, had a clear focus. The program specialist told EDC researchers that GHOSTWRITER was the first television program that the center had used on a regular basis, and she hoped that it was teaching the girls to watch television “for a purpose.”

One key measure of the program's success was that when the initial **GHOSTWRITER** program offering ended in the spring, the children requested that it be continued into the summer.

IMPLICATIONS. The Girls Incorporated Sheridan Center case study suggests that:

- Even if a decision is made at the national level to incorporate a given informal educational program, this does not necessarily mean that the program will automatically be introduced "down the line." Local leaders must be personally convinced of its value;
- Local leaders must inevitably find ways of customizing informal education programs. The higher the expectation of conformity to an organizationally based tradition, the more the effort that may be required for local tailoring;
- If **GHOSTWRITER** works in highly unstructured programs, it will also work in highly structured ones;
- The goals of a local youth-serving group may be placed in dominance over the originally planned goals for the imported educational program;
- The latent content of an informal education initiative (e.g. **GHOSTWRITER**'s social and moral messages) can provide a means for exploring values and other issues of concern to a local youth-serving organization.

4. GREENE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB, LOS ANGELES

GREENE AT A GLANCE

- **Club serves a large population of children in the L.A. Unified School District.**
- **Mission: to be responsive to needs of lower-income, primarily African-American and Latino children; to help kids stay off the streets and focus on their goals for the future.**
- **Because the school district holds year-round sessions, every three months or so, a large number of children are "off-track" (i.e., on school break). The club remains open during school as well as after-school hours (from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.).**
- **This creates a great deal of flux in the groups of children availing themselves of club programs.**
- **Programs include sports, arts and crafts, community service, support to children with problems in school.**

"DOING THE RIGHT THING"

For Wesley, an African-American recreational aide at Greene Boys and Girls Club, **GHOSTWRITER** was not a program he ordinarily had time to prepare for. He had multiple responsibilities and barely had enough slack in his schedule to get from one activity he led to another. His **GHOSTWRITER** program met every Thursday in the library at 10:30 a.m. It was open to all children between the ages of 6 and 13. Paper and pencils were not available in the library so, by default, activities focused on the magazine.

Wesley had himself come up through the ranks of the Boys and Girls Club, and he saw his role as one of trying to provide to children the kinds of support and encouragement he had received from staff. In his hands, *GHOSTWRITER* became a vehicle for helping children think about what it meant to “do the right thing, not the wrong thing.”

IMPORTANCE OF THE MAGAZINE. *GHOSTWRITER* magazine was the experience at this club. Typically, Wesley and the children would begin at the front of the magazine and work to the back. Children spent time mainly in oral reading; individual children were called upon to come to the front of the room and read a paragraph or activity aloud to the group. Then Wesley would ask questions about what was read, and the group might complete an activity from the magazine together, again with selected children reading the directions out loud. Although occasionally children would read silently or work on an activity independently, the emphasis was usually on working through the magazine as a group.

There was a wide difference in the age range and reading skills of the children in the program, which limited some of the things Wesley could do. He would have liked to split the large group into two to give younger children more support in their reading, but he couldn't do so because of the limitations of time, space, and adult supervision. His strategy became one of having the more proficient children read aloud to those with more limited skills and of focusing the group's attention on understanding the main idea of a story or an activity. The program became a means for kids to practice their reading and writing skills, but not with any specific instructional goals in mind.

Wesley accepted the fact that, because of the high turnover, he could not know every child well, but he tried to offer a consistent *GHOSTWRITER* program nevertheless. He wanted to get the kids to understand the social messages that underlay *GHOSTWRITER* episodes--messages that emphasized the virtues of teamwork, conflict resolution, and being true to oneself.

IMPLICATIONS. The Greene Boys and Girls Club experience suggests that:

- The goals of a youth-serving organization may be proactive (enhancing literacy) or preventative in nature (e.g., avoidance of harm, “staying out of trouble”), and there is no necessary conflict between the two;
- During school vacations or intersessions there is an increased need for youth-group services so that children can use their spare time constructively and safely;
- In the absence of basic supplies--e.g., pencils or paper--free print materials can help fill the void and serve an important educational purpose;
- For leaders with little or no preparation time, magazine activities need to be workable “right out of the box.” Scheduling and managing group television viewing becomes too difficult in those trying circumstances.

5. BETHUNE CIRCLE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER, BALTIMORE

BETHUNE CIRCLE AT A GLANCE

- Warm, supportive environment; with staff, parents, and children forming an “extended family.”
- Mission: an educational enrichment program for building skills in literacy and mathematics.
- Serves about 40 families with children between the ages of 5 and 13.
- Children and parents have a wide range of skills (some adults have high school or college degree, other parents are seeking their GED).
- Families and staff are African-American.

“REACHING FAMILIES”

The Bethune Circle Family Learning Center program is run by two facilitators: Angela, who is also a full-time teacher, and Theresa, a parent specialist. Each session is divided into three segments:

- Staff working directly with children on homework and literacy;
- PAK (parents and kids) time, which begins with a meal and is followed by group/family activities; and
- A final session during which Theresa works with parents alone.

The conceptual framework for the existing literacy curriculum at Bethune Circle is based on a family-literacy model, one that involves planning, working, and reviewing work in a structured fashion. The program stresses parental involvement and enhancement of the parent-child bond. It has an intergenerational, community emphasis and a multicultural focus. Leaders and parents perceive their goals as academic and purposefully work to build their skills.

Given the program’s literacy focus, there was a clear intent from the beginning to use **GHOSTWRITER** for skill building. At first, the leaders thought about using **GHOSTWRITER** for kids’ individual work, but the parents showed so much interest that the leaders decided to offer it during PAK time. Magazines were sometimes used during kids-only time, but both the magazines and the TV programs were used primarily during PAK time, because it was felt that parents and kids could work on them together. PAK time included activities such as parents and kids reading aloud together, writing dialogue or story endings, and viewing and discussing the television program in a group setting.

EXTENDING GHOSTWRITER TO PARENTS. One notable aspect about **GHOSTWRITER** use in this environment was that parental involvement increased over time. Moreover, **GHOSTWRITER** was later incorporated into the parents-only time. Parent involvement “added a special dimension to the **GHOSTWRITER** experience,” the researchers observed. In January, a new program director took over and introduced Afrocentric elements into the curriculum, such as African language and proverbs, Kwanzaa principles, and the achievements of Africans and African-Americans. These elements were simply incorporated into the existing pattern of **GHOSTWRITER** use.

“What was striking about GHOSTWRITER use in this setting,” the researchers noted, “was not only the consistent, explicit literacy focus [in the setting] but also GHOSTWRITER’s continued integration into key aspects of the program. Over time, GHOSTWRITER grew into the program, as leaders found more ways to make connections between GHOSTWRITER and the community. Moreover, the flexibility of the GHOSTWRITER materials allowed GHOSTWRITER use to continue without significant change when an Afrocentric approach was added to the program.”

IMPLICATIONS. The Bethune Circle Family Learning Center experience suggests that:

- Local youth-serving organizations can be vehicles for involving parents and families in supportive roles for informal educational purposes;
- A highly appealing informal education program can provide a common basis for discussion among parents and children;
- GHOSTWRITER’s modeling of multiculturalism became an important factor in its ability to retain its appeal when focus of Bethune Circle’s activities shifted toward African-American-centered themes.

D. Test of the “Building Bridges” Prototype

This study is separate from the case studies reported above. LA’s BEST (Better Educated Students for Tomorrow) is an after-school education and enrichment program under the auspices of the Los Angeles Mayor’s office. It is operated by the Los Angeles Unified School District at 19 elementary schools, serving about 3,800 children, located in neighborhoods vulnerable to gangs, crime and drugs. With gangs making their presence felt in schools and in youth centers, CTW’s CES wanted to test supplementary materials, based on GHOSTWRITER, that might help child-care professionals and families explore those issues with children. One of the GHOSTWRITER arcs, called “Building Bridges,” which centered on the theme of gangs and neighborhood violence, was a natural inspiration for this project.

The GHOSTWRITER package consists of:

- A videocassette of the four half-hour “Building Bridges” episodes,
- An Activity Booklet divided into three sections:
 1. **Act It Out!**--scripts of thought-provoking scenes adapted from the show that children can read and talk about;
 2. **Put On Your Own Community Jam**--how to stage a talent show that brings people together;
 3. **More Awesome Activities**--simple hands-on activities and projects that make it fun to read, write, and solve problems together.

Suggestions in the booklet for activities to get children to talk about their experiences, fears, and concerns about gangs and violence; activities designed to extend the literacy and pro-social behaviors featured in the story;

- A Leader’s Guide that includes a list of conflict-resolution and peace education resources.

The LA's BEST study has a distinctive primary focus on violence reduction through group discussions and in-depth extended activities. The TV programs and the discussion follow-up materials provided a good basis on common ground for initiating these talks. LA's BEST was started in 1988 to address the need for a safe, supervised after-school environment for children. The program fills a void in the lives of many youngsters in inner-city Los Angeles as lack of funding forces schools to cut back on their organized sports and arts programs.

METHODOLOGY. Forty LA's BEST leaders received a two-hour orientation training conducted in October 1993 by CES staff. Three prototype test sites were located in low-income neighborhoods. The centers had age groupings corresponding roughly to school grade levels. This stood in contrast to the age groupings in many other after-school programs (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA) in which the age range of children coming together for a single program typically spanned five or more years.

The LA's BEST sites chosen were usually open between 2:20 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.. As parents picked up their children, the size of groups dwindled. The test groups were composed of roughly equal proportions of boys and girls; and were either predominantly Latino or African-American. Data were collected through observations of materials being used, initial and exit interviews with program leaders, and group interviews with children in each site. The studies were conducted between mid-November and mid-December 1993, during GHOSTWRITER's second season.

FINDINGS. Many leaders found the prototype package exciting and the videotapes highly appealing for kids in their program. All but one of the activities of the Activity Guide received strong favorability ratings. Although some children whose first language is not English had problems with the materials, many leaders reported that the materials, taken together, provided their children with opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings about gang violence (both in group discussion and writing). Significantly, some leaders noted a decrease in fighting among children after exposure to the activities,¹⁶ and others noted that the materials helped them to draw valuable connections between social issues and literacy skills and many said the materials helped them develop their own skills and self-esteem as leaders.

As one leader put it, "[Before 'Building Bridges'], we didn't have anything that deals with gang violence. We were never prepared to deal with the issue.... [The activities] are good because there's much gang violence only a block away from the school. Lots of people are being killed around here, and the kids have become callous to what's going on." Another noted, "It gives the kids a chance to talk and work together as a team. They got a chance to talk about other things that's going on."

A third leader indicated that discussing important issues had a cathartic effect. "It gives me an avenue to show kids how to deal with the problems [of violence]. There are a lot of angry kids here, and it helps them to express their feelings."

A CHILD'S VIEW. As CTW discovered in its naturalistic study, children made sense of the story by relating it to their own personal frames of reference and contexts. For example, in some cases the kids projected anti-drug messages onto the "Building Bridges" story. The fact that this story elicited such a wide array of positive social messages and interpretations suggests that these positive messages can possibly help combat some of children's fears and concerns about gangs.

¹⁶ One said, "Everything connects in these activities, because the children relate to the story. It's cut down on fighting among the kids, because they learned from 'Building Bridges'."

Many children spoke of their first-hand experiences with and knowledge of gangs. The video's central social issues--gangs and violence, and the positive message of how people coming together can make a difference to stop the violence--were ones that seemed to relate powerfully to children's lives.

This was made dramatically clear during one round of the site visits. At two of the three sites there were drive-by shootings either earlier that day or during the time of the visit. During another visit, as a group of children watched the video, another group outside was rushed inside because the police were picking up some gang members off the street.

Although few children commented on the relation of the videos to literacy, one girl said: "[I]f you don't tell your friend how you like a person, and tell them what you gonna do and everything, you should just write 'em and tell them how you really feel."

LEADER PERSPECTIVES. Leaders at all three sites acknowledged the difficulties many of their children had with writing, particularly among those children for whom English was a second language. They tended to think of the video experience as separate from those of the print-based activities. Thus, print materials have untapped potential to provide important opportunities and outlets for kids' concerns about gangs and violence. Some leaders candidly expressed dislike for activities that focus self-consciously on writing (e.g., casebooks, which they said kids regarded as too much like schoolwork). Leaders said they preferred giving children activities that encouraged drawing, acting, and performing. As one put it about one writing activity, "I feel this [activity] eliminated a lot of children that are very bright and active and wanted very much to do it. And we did let them go ahead and come in, but they couldn't write anything, because they can't spell that well."

COMMUNITY JAM AGAINST VIOLENCE

As the denouement of the "Building Bridges" arc, members of the GHOSTWRITER team and friends in the neighborhood join together to put on a "Community Jam Against Violence." The centerpieces of the "Building Bridges" after-school kit are materials to help program leaders and children put on their own community jam.

Each year, the LA's BEST children put on a major talent show that features the best acts from each of its 19 sites. Traditionally, the show takes place on the day of the Los Angeles marathon on a special stage set up at mile 8. In 1994, the theme of the LA's BEST talent show was a "Community Jam Against Violence," based on the culminating events in "Building Bridges."

The LA's BEST jam took place on March 6, 1994, from 8 a.m. to 12:00 noon. It involved 20 anti-violence-themed acts in which more than 200 children and adults performed skits, raps, dance, music, and poetry for over 1,000 spectators. The age of the performers ranged from 5 years old to 45 years old.

All participants spoke out against gangs and community safety. Two members of the GHOSTWRITER television cast, "Jamal" (Sheldon Turnipseed) and "Gaby" (Mayeana Morales), helped emcee the event. During the event, the Hon. Mayor Richard Riordan presented a condolence proclamation to the family of "Crystal" Kim Bracey, a seven-year-old LA's BEST girl shot and killed with an assault rifle while playing, unsupervised, at a neighbor's home. The event was dedicated to her memory.

BUILDING ON “BUILDING BRIDGES.” CES hopes to be able to improve its “Building Bridges” prototype by organizing activities more explicitly around each of the four video episodes, and by developing other materials such as:

- A letter to be taken home to families, written in English and Spanish;
- Tips for family involvement;
- Lists of children’s and adult books and other resources available;
- A game to get kids reading and writing about different points of view and making safe choices.

CES hopes to enlist the help of conflict resolution and cultural sensitivity consultants to review its materials, and is looking toward expanding its work into other areas of potential interest to after-school groups, with the intention of producing other themed kits like “Building Bridges.” One topic under consideration, for example, is drugs. The kit would be based on a GHOSTWRITER arc dealing with drugs and peer pressure.

IMPLICATIONS. The “Building Bridges” studies suggest that:

- GHOSTWRITER’s dramatic vehicle for its literacy modeling can itself be a form of content that is useful for adult leaders and easily identified with by children;
- GHOSTWRITER can serve as a social catalyst, starting otherwise difficult conversations between adults and children;
- The deeper the child’s personal identification with GHOSTWRITER characters, the more readily she or he can identify with the issues. When bringing their own experiences to bear on the interpretation of the dramatic story, these interpretations will reflect the differences in those experiences. For example some children inferred a “don’t do drugs” message. Others, however, interpreted a negative message such as “you can’t ever get out of a gang”;
- The general model implemented here--dramatic content as stimulus for follow-up discussion and extended activities--is in principle applicable to and effective for a wide range of social issues.

Taking into account all the material presented so far in this report, the next and final chapter will summarize a set of conclusions--important lessons learned, insights gained, and principles implied.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

Many forms of data and descriptive narrative in preceding chapters have told of CTW's experiences in linking its GHOSTWRITER project with a variety of youth-serving organizations. It will be useful now, as prelude to a set of conclusions, to recall at a general level the purposes and goals for this research effort, then to summarize in that light what lessons have been learned, what insights gained, what principles implied.

GHOSTWRITER is an innovative educational project in its own right, complete with its carefully constructed curricular goals and appropriate pedagogy for informal educational purposes, multimedia materials, formative and summative research capabilities, and a mass media distribution system. It was GHOSTWRITER's outreach effort--attending to issues of distribution, adult mediation, leadership guidance, and locally tailored and monitored utilization--that stimulated interest in the particular focus of this study and report. Linkages with youth-serving organizations were planned from the beginning as an integral part of GHOSTWRITER's design, and these linkages themselves became objects of study. What would the linkages mean for GHOSTWRITER? For CTW? For the youth-serving organizations? For a general policy interest in using combinations of informal education entities in other subject matters and with different sets of players? These are the big questions to which these final conclusions will be addressed.

To begin with an almost self-evident point, the reach and effectiveness of GHOSTWRITER was extended greatly through the linkages with youth-serving organizations. Large national structures with thousands of local settings and adult leaders serving the informal educational needs of millions of children provide a significant boost to what educational media, powerful as they are, cannot do by themselves.

As partners, the youth-serving organizations were not in competition with GHOSTWRITER; instead, they sought similar goals. The common ground is easily visible from an overview of mission statements. Converting general congruity of purpose into active and effective alliances, however, transforms the challenge from the theoretical to the pragmatic, requiring significant effort, resources, management skills, development time, and field experience. This report contains descriptions of procedures that work well and others that do not. These insights come both at the aggregate level, across a variety of experiences, and at a very detailed and concrete level through a series of case studies.

When a youth-serving organization incorporates an educational project such as GHOSTWRITER, it does so for its own purposes, for pursuit of its own goals. The relationships of control could not be otherwise: the organizations and on-site leaders are dominant; the imported project is subordinate. GHOSTWRITER brings added value to whatever environment is there already. This research has shown how widely these environments vary from organization to organization, site to site, and person to person. While some settings featured support that would rival a formal school environment, many adult leaders performed what could only be described as "heroic efforts" to serve children, sometimes under very trying and austere circumstances. The commitment of the adult leader, as well as a host of environmental factors

in the group setting, are critical to success in youth-serving organizations, regardless of which organization it is, or what array of materials is supplied to them.

Experience showed that the original GHOSTWRITER literacy goals were not always identical to the ones pursued within the youth programs. When the goals *were* complementary, GHOSTWRITER displayed its utility and power as an educational aid in the literacy domain. But the linkages with youth-serving organizations also brought many variations on this model. A good example is the uses to which the social and moral themes of the mystery stories were put. CTW did not frame any specific goals for the social messages, and no formal summative assessment of their effects was made. Nevertheless, there is substantial evidence that these social messages were themselves a critical ingredient in the GHOSTWRITER mix.

GHOSTWRITER's social messages provided adults and children with a common basis for useful discussions and learning, sometimes as a means to learning more about literacy, sometimes as a means to another end entirely.

With the youth-serving organizations, it was repeatedly the case that GHOSTWRITER was principally a print experience. Access to television may be simple to manage in the home, and achievable in a school classroom, but in many after-school settings it represented a major barrier. The bulk of the television viewing was in the home; the bulk of the magazine reading and related activities took place in organizational settings. All things considered, this is an efficient allocation of resources. Field experience confirmed repeatedly the need for simplicity, flexibility, high user-friendliness, and sufficient child appeal to be fun in widely varying circumstances.

While mass media programs for voluntary home-based audiences can communicate directly with the target-audience children, adult participation and mediation are essential features of youth-serving organizations. The incorporated project must succeed with both children *and* adults. Adult gatekeepers decide whether to adopt an educational program, how to use it, and how long to retain it. In this regard, GHOSTWRITER's literacy content was attractive to a range of adult gatekeepers who brought their own criteria to bear on these decisions. Literacy is widely adaptable to different ages of children, and is fundamental to goals in virtually any other domain. There is reason to believe, however, that the models developed in this project would apply to other areas as well, such as science, mathematics, the arts, and social relationships.

Interestingly, adult leaders were more than mediators of the GHOSTWRITER experience; they were also beneficiaries of it. With many leaders lacking formal training in educational methods, GHOSTWRITER was a source of ideas for designing activities, as well as a model for pedagogical procedures and principles in literacy education.

The weight of evidence and experience leads CTW to conclude that when youth-serving organizations adopt and adapt GHOSTWRITER (and the reference here is to the entire GHOSTWRITER system, including materials for children and leaders, promotion, sustained communication links with CTW, and of course the compelling television series itself), the combined effect is synergistic and multiplicative.

Nationwide linkages between innovative educational projects such as GHOSTWRITER and youth-serving organizations are complex, challenging, and imperfect. Within those constraints, this report has described models of alliances that work to the mutual benefit of the project, the youth-serving organizations, and, most importantly, the children.

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