the luxury of indefinite, loosely structured probing of a subject field, unless all of the class members have the experience and "intuitive" understanding of that field, yielded by years of trial and error, successes and failures, satisfactions and dissatisfactions. Pointedly, the two situations are not similar enough for any valid conclusions to be drawn.

A reasonable attempt to assess the sucess of the Minnesota Project should be directed at recognizing that: (1) Teachers in Minnesota are concerned with reassessing the task of language arts; (2) Teachers of language arts are willing to join forces for reassessment and redirection; and (3) The project should be seen as only a beginning of a long and tedious task.

The Minnesota Project should not be evaluated on the basis of a comparison with the task of colleges to provide preliminary course work. Neither should it be considered a panacea for solving the problems in the field. Hopefully, it may have made a beginning--a very worthwhile beginning--toward awakening teachers and administrators to the need to work more intensely toward solving the problems in the local areas. Hopefully, too, the project may have made its contribution--along with teachers who have participated in all the other efforts to improve language arts--toward developing more leaders and strengthened lines under and along which the problems might become more solvable.

REPORT TWO

By MARY K. BISSELL
Bemidji State College,
Project director at Bemidji

When we arrived at the project planning center in late August we were convinced that in one week we were going to clarify and solve some of the problems we, as English teachers, faced in our classrooms. Our first hang-up was deciding where to begin. With composition? But that included related areas such as grammar. With curriculum? But that led to justification of our choice of teaching units. And somewhere in the questioning of why one teaches what one does, someone asked, "Why teach English at all?" The reply was another question, even more basic, "Why educate?"

Those questions, deceivingly simple, provided a place to begin. Writing in groups of five, we listed all the anwers suggested. Some answers were full of educational jargon; some answers were the old standards. Each participant vociferously defended his favorite. The result was the following set of statements:

1. Education is essential to human survival.
2. Communication is primary to human survival.
3. English is the study of the processes of communication
4. All communication depends on a system of symbols.
5. Symbols are arbitrary signs.
6. Arbitrariness of symbols can lead to variability of meaning.
7. Communication depends upon the mutual agreement of sender and receiver between symbol and referent.
8. The process of learning is more important than learning facts.
9. Students learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process.
10. Success in learning stimulates learning.
11. Learning is a creative process.
12. Immediacy and relevancy are essential to learning.
13. To teach is to stimulate the student to demand information for his survival.

By the time we had formulated the above statements, half of our week had passed. During our shouting, arguing, and compromising, we had thoroughly convinced each other of those thirteen statements. Our very involvement had changed our minds.

The next consideration was how to spread our enthusiasm to other English teachers. How could we structure our discoveries to pass on to them a similar experience? We each agreed to meet for ten two and one-half hour sessions with selected teachers from our area. With time running out, we frantically tried to decide what we wanted to accomplish and how we could best accomplish it. Above all, the classes would have to actively involve the teacher-participants.

In December, having held our allotted ten meetings, the twenty-five of us got together to evaluate the classes we had organized throughout the state. We also met to consider our future needs.

Although our success varied from class to class, most of us felt that the participants had at least developed an awareness of the concepts we had articulated. All the classes used the same evaluation form at the end of the ten weeks. Seventy-five per cent of the participants considered this program of more value to them as teachers than any previous experience. Ninety-eight per cent indicated that this program affected the content and methods being used in their own classroom.

There were other worthwhile results. For some participants, the meetings provided the impetus to try new student-centered activities in the classroom. For many, the class provided a chance to share with eager listeners some of the creative activities they had tried. The week between meetings gave participants a chance to experiment with their ideas. The success of these classroom tests confirmed what we were doing at our weekly

meetings. What we did proved that teachers, too, learn best when they are actively involved in the problem solving process.

We must overcome our present fear of expressing our problems and needs to our administrators. We must convince them that we need school time to work on curriculum. We must accept the challenge to develop for each Minnesota school a plan of study which can effectively meet the needs of its varied students. And we must accept the reality that any curriculum must be continually reevaluated and modified as student needs change. It is proper that this curriculum should be developed by the people who are in the classrooms and know firsthand the problems involved. Finally, we must establish a greater degree of cooperation with our area colleges. If we are going to move away from a literature-centered curriculum, then colleges must adapt their course offerings so that new teachers are adequately prepared. These needs require that we develop local leaders who are knowledgeable and articulate.

REPORT THREE

By MRS. RUTH LYSNE
English teacher at Faribault High School
and Project director at Waseca

The opening of school the Fall of 1967 filled me with conflicting emotions. I was anticipating teaching in my classes a reorganized curriculum based on the concepts about the study of communications which had been developed at the week-long planning session by those of us who were to direct the Inservice Training Program for the State Department of Education at various locations later that fall. I was also a bit nervous at the idea of me, with only seven years of teaching experience and no Master's degree, directing thirty teachers, some of whom might have advanced degrees and a lifetime of experience, in a program designed to develop them as leaders in curriculum development in their own school systems. What sustained me and reinforced my belief in the validity of the concepts we directors had formulated at the planning session was what happened in my classroom during the month preceding the start of the Inservice Training Program in the Fall, and what continued to happen there as I directed the program. For the first time in my teaching career practically every student in both my high ability and low-average ability English 12 sections seemed to be actively involved in language study, and I could see some measurable improvement occurring in the language behavior. This was occurring for many formerly uninterested boys simply because they were actively confronting the material offered them. What had changed in my classroom was not so much the materials for reading, listening, viewing, or discussion, but the way in which I perceived their use by the students. I had given