

DIAKONIA PAIDEIA
and the
SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

By Donald J. Eberly

The Resource Development Project of the Southern Regional Education Board offers internship appointments to a limited number of college upperclassmen and graduate students who demonstrate an interest in the processes of social and economic change. The program is designed to provide service-learning experiences for students through assignments to specific projects of developmental agencies, community action programs, and to other local, state, or regional organizations concerned with developmental change.

Financial support is provided by public agencies interested in economic development, resource development, community action and related fields. They include: Appalachian Regional Commission, Coastal Plains Regional Commission, Economic Development Administration, Office of Economic Opportunity and Tennessee Valley Authority.

This report, prepared by Mr. Donald J. Eberly, Executive Director of the National Service Secretariat, evaluates the SREB Resource Development Internship Programs and recommends directions for future service-learning activities.

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It is useless to try to report on SREB's Resource Development Internship Programs (RDIP) in one dimension, albeit that is the traditional approach taken to problem solving. If we want a job done, we hire someone to do it. If we want someone to learn, we teach him and thereby, the assumption goes, he learns. If we want to promote university-community relations, we establish a Committee for the Promotion of Relations between the University and the Community. But that kind of uni-dimensional approach just won't work with the Internship Program. However, it is reassuring to note that if we took a series of snapshots of the program along different axes, we would see everyday occurrences. Looking along one dimension, we would see a person doing a job; along another, a person learning in the field of law or economics; along another, a person experiencing life in a poverty area for the first time; along still another dimension, a person deciding upon a career. And so on. The list is a long one.

The beauty and strength of the RDIP is that all these things can happen to the same person at the same time, for the internship concept rejects the notion that learning can occur only at school as firmly as it does the notion that a job is a job, and has no business being examined against the writings of Plato, or Spinoza, or Frost, or Keynes, or King.

Yet there seems to be no word or phrase that captures the essence of this kind of service-learning program. On such occasions, it has been helpful to borrow from ancient Greek, as Norbert Wiener did in coming up with the word "cybernetics," to try to symbolize the project. In this paper we use diakonia and paideia, two Greek phrases that carry with them the concepts of teaching and learning through activity, and of a style of life geared to contributing to the welfare of others.

In our special shorthand, then, this paper is a report on the diakonia paideia concept as implemented and administered by the RDIP. It is based on the writer's interviews with several of the interns, counselors, government officials and administrators, his attendance at RDIP conferences in 1967 and 1968, his perusal of confidential reports of program participants, and his deliberate exposure to the diakonia paideia concept for the past two decades.

Unfortunately, the medium in which this report is rendered does not permit a simultaneous examination of all aspects of the concept and the program, so it will look separately at three major components: manpower for service, the learning aspect, and community-university relationships. Then it will explore areas where all components meet; namely, program balances and imbalances, funding, and the future. The report assumes the kind of familiarity with the program that can be obtained by reading the 1966 and 1967 reports of the RDIP.

Manpower for Service

A fundamental change that is occurring in the American concept of work was emphasized by the interns in their application forms

and evaluation reports. According to their statements, only three percent of the interns in 1967 and 1968 sought internship appointments in order to get a job. The other 97 percent applied in order to:

1. Relate academic theory to the real world
2. Contribute to developmental activities
3. Acquire research experience
4. Work with people
5. Help with career choice

Traditionally, a job is something obtained to enable a person to make ends meet. One doesn't go to his job a minute early or remain a minute overtime without remuneration. It is something to be scorned. One feels a sense of relief on Friday afternoon, and Monday morning is blue. Economists can control the flow of manpower into industries and services simply by regulating salaries and wages, because employees automatically seek the highest level of emoluments.

John Kenneth Galbraith punctured this picture of a job when he noted, in The Affluent Society, that some middle-class college graduates would prefer low-pressure jobs in pleasant surroundings to better-paying jobs that involve high tension and long commuting time. It has been further punctured by some 25,000 Peace Corps Volunteers--most of them college graduates--who have sometimes chosen a primitive existence in a strange land at subsistent wages over more "attractive" offers at home. And today it's being further

deflated by thousands of ministers who turn down suburban churches for ghetto parishes, lawyers who choose legal aid help for the poor over prestige law firms, and business graduates who are more interested in a firm's social involvement than its corporate profits.

Most interns appear to have similar attitudes. They want a job with meaning, where they can learn and serve and work with people.

The internship concept gives to government officials, private employers and educators an opportunity to transform the classical notion of a job into one that has the characteristics described above. Today's youth is searching for meaning and relevance and many have found that jobs can be structured to include these attributes by assigning much of the drudgery to automation.

Many business and labor officials are actively concerned with restructuring jobs so that the worker performs more effectively and gains satisfaction from learning and serving. But there is little evidence to suggest that the spirit which motivates such officials is at all pervasive, or that it stems from little more than a reaction to demands and events. It should be clear from recent upheavals on campuses and in major cities that more than "reacting" is required. Imagination and initiative is needed in the realm of transforming jobs into experiences with greater meaning, relevance, and satisfaction for the worker. The internship program offers an ideal setting for such a transformation.

Interns are young. They possess the energy, imagination, ideals and mobility of youth. Further, they serve only a short time (12 weeks in the case of RDIP) which permits a wide array of experiments with little risk of loss from those which fail. Also,

internships occur at the interface of the generation gap, and at a point where the academic world and the world of work meet.

At the same time, the internship program is far from ethereal. Real work is done--real services performed. It was reported that research done by a two-man intern team was the basis of a \$500,000 grant to the agency where the interns were engaged. Another's research contributed to passage of a new law in Tennessee which put controls on loan sharks. We know that interns undergo real training and career development in the fields in which they serve. These results can be seen in the intern's evaluation reports, in job offers received from their summer employers, and in changes in educational programs such as the shift of a law student's career from corporation law to poverty law.

With a firm foundation in manpower development and accomplishment of useful services, the diakonia piadeia concept and the RDIP's implementation of it gives today's leaders in business, government, labor and education a model for the transformation of the classical notion of a job into one that has meaning and relevance. It also offers a constructive alternative to the confrontations taking place across the nation: provides internship openings for all youth who seek them and are willing to participate.

With the changing attitude toward jobs goes greater unpredictability about jobs. It has recently been reported that 10 years ago half of today's jobs for college graduates didn't exist. While we can guess the future on the basis of extrapolation of current trends, history suggests that more important criteria are scientific

discoveries and international events, neither of which yield to extrapolation. We cannot be very specific in attempting to define jobs that will have to be performed in 1980.

Hence it is a disservice to students and to society to regard the training element of any educational program as a uni-dimensional assembly line operation. Rather, there must be several degrees of freedom within the training process to enable the student to probe and explore related areas of interest, and to do so on his own initiative. RDIP interns seem to possess this freedom to a greater degree than do their colleagues in other older intern programs. The traditional, vocationally-oriented intern programs (e.g., medicine, education, public administration) were seen by conferees at a recent RDIP Review Conference as over-programmed, offering too little exposure to other fields, and giving the intern little chance to free himself from feeling like a student. There seems to have been very little mutual exploration between the RDIP organizers and those who administer traditional internship programs. It would appear that both groups could benefit from discussions and, perhaps, cooperative programs.

Similar exploratory discussions should occur with leaders of student-sponsored community service projects, which can be found on most campuses. Typically, these are part-time programs, with no academic credit given, with little academic consideration of what is observed while serving, and with little feedback to the classroom. Here again all parties could benefit from a mutual exploration of interests and activities.

One vital, unanswered question in the manpower field is how many jobs exist? This question should have high research priority because of its implications for the eventual magnitude of internship programs. One or more small areas should be selected and approaches made to all organizations where interns might be placed to determine how many could be used and in what capacity. Both summer and academic year interns should be considered. It is strongly suggested that this survey be linked with a promise of interns for agencies which want them and are qualified to receive them. Just another survey would mean that some administrators would pull numbers out of a hat or throw the surveyor out of the office in order to get rid of a useless intrusion. To be done properly, there must be community backing, wide publicity, full explanation, a comprehensive survey and, of course, interns and funding.

The Learning Dimension

It is well established that what is learned in an educational setting may bear small resemblance to what is taught. An intern spends very little time in a classroom but most of the summer, whether he is on the job, at a counseling session, or in an intern seminar, is spent in a learning environment. The same is true of the other full-time participants, members of the SREB staff, and to a lesser extent, of the part-time participants, the counselors, supervisors and consultants. What, then, is learned?

Written reports and comments by all conference participants emphasize these kinds of learning:

1. The participant learns interpersonal skills which contribute to being an effective person, and discovers

- his strengths and weaknesses in sensitive situations.
2. He learns the consequences of putting to the test his ideas conceived in a theoretical or vicarious setting.
 3. He learns how to identify a problem and bring appropriate resources to bear on its solution.
 4. He learns what moves people and what prevents movement.
 5. He learns something about the totality of facts and forces involved in resource development.
 6. He learns strategies that can maximize service-learning opportunities for himself and others.
 7. He learns some of the characteristics of the cooperative and competitive process and the strengths and weaknesses of the two.
 8. He learns that the actual accomplishment of something is inevitably more complex and difficult than is studying, planning, dreaming.
 9. He learns how creative freedom and imaginative guidance can be combined in enabling a person to accomplish things and become a constructive force.
 10. He learns of deficiencies in his regular academic work and feeds back this information to his academic colleagues.
 11. He learns vital techniques in interviewing people, conducting research, and writing reports.
 12. More prosaically, he gains knowledge of the one or several disciplines related to his assignment--knowledge that was not in the textbooks or lectures.

Obviously there is overlap among the 12 types of learning described above. Perhaps they could be fully covered in three statements. Perhaps 30 statements are needed to differentiate sufficiently.

The critical question is what produces these learnings? Some agency representatives and counselors participate in as many as seven different internship programs, yet they consistently and independently

point to the RDIP program as having much the biggest "payoff."

What strikes the observer as the prime ingredient came through most clearly in the dramatic presentation of a case study at the 1968 RDIP Review Conference. The lonely intern, surrounded by a supervisor who was pushing him to complete an application for a federal grant, a counselor from the university who was trying to pull him into producing research data of interest to the counselor, and an attractive technical representative who was trying to lure him into an extended visit to her agency, turned to the RDIP official and asked, "Who am I responsible to?"

"You are responsible to yourself," came the reply.

In short, an intern is seen by the RDIP staff as an adult and is treated in that manner. He is expected to give evidence of having learned without resorting to a multiple-choice exercise or the rephrasing of his counselor's pet theories. He is expected to seek outside aid while seeing that it remains secondary to his main project.

Secondly, the RDIP insists on maintaining an even balance between service and learning. This attitude frustrates the impatient official and professor who think in only one dimension at a time. "What is the real purpose," they demand, "to learn or to serve?" When the answer "both" comes back, the inquirer is dumbfounded and may want no more to do with the idea. Receptivity for the concept is more likely to be found among those who have themselves experienced service-learning and by those who commonly practice multi-dimensional thinking.

Third, it's well managed. Interns show up at the appointed time, stipends arrive on schedule, interns' reports are published

as promised. This aspect does not require a detailed analysis, but must be included in a list of attributes because too many good concepts have foundered in the sludge of technical incompetence and mismanagement.

Fourth, the seminars and reports appear to be valuable learning instruments. Several interns came to the seminars with problems they thought were unique to themselves, but discovered they were common to most of the other interns, and everyone benefitted from the ensuing discussion. Both seminars and reports produce some tension in interns because they must assume responsibility for something that will be publicly assessed. On the whole, the tension so produced does not seem inordinate; after the internships, some students look upon their responsibilities in the seminar or report writing as the most valuable part of the internship.

Fifth, off-campus experience appears to be a crucial ingredient of the internship program. On campus, even in a work situation, the usual protective forces and pecking orders are at play. Off campus, the intern encounters the real world, with its loneliness, its demands, its unreasonableness, its rewards.

Academic credit for internships is certainly justifiable on the basis of the above 12 points. However, credit is not essential to the learning process, although it may be helpful in some cases and perhaps harmful in others. In 1968 about 40 of the 150 interns received credit, although few expected it at the beginning of their program. While the promise of academic credit might stimulate some interns to learn more, it might constrain others from giving full reign to their ideas in deference to doing what they think will produce the best grades.

Of course, academic credit, like a dollar bill, has no intrinsic value. It is simply an arbitrary measuring device which is convenient to many people and institutions. Learning went on before academic credit was invented, and will continue after it is discarded. But it exists, and must be considered. The way a student regards academic credit might provide a clue to its proper relationship to the internship program. The student who views credit requirements as a series of undesirable hurdles to be gotten rid of would benefit little from receiving credit because that attitude by a student won't permit him to learn much as an intern. On the other hand, the student who regards academic credit as accurately reflecting the importance of a series of experiences appropriate to a person of his age and background and interests will benefit from receiving credit because it will be consistent with his outlook.

Apart from the intern himself, academic credit for internships is a means of getting one's foot in the door of the academic establishment. The program can be listed in the college catalogue and the administration can decide that counseling five interns is the equivalent of teaching a class of, say, 20 students. Thus, academic credit for internships would give the program institutional backing as well as higher esteem in the eyes of government officials and others who look for evidence of institutional support as a major index of the merits of a program. What has to be guarded against in this kind of situation is a slackening of standards.

Unless more detailed studies reveal that academic credit for internships leads systematically to a strengthening or weakening of learning, it is probably the course of wisdom to continue the

practice of treating each case on its merits. At the same time, RDIP officials should remain responsive to requests for help in handling the issue of academic credit.

Two factors that one might assume to be crucial are not. One, the nature or content of the intern's assignment is not necessarily important. For example, a chemistry student conducted a survey of county purchasing procedures and in so doing produced a useful document for the agency. He came away feeling that he had learned a great deal. Two, it's not necessarily important whether the agency where the intern works is efficient or inefficient, whether his supervisor is strong or weak. Each kind of situation provides a setting for a learning experience, given the interest of the intern and the support and guidance of the counselor.

What is important in regard to the preceding paragraph-- and this gets us back to the heart of the concept--is that the total operation not be thought of as the addition of its parts, in which a "good" agency is rated +2, a bad supervisor as -3, but as a process that includes a multitude of inter-relationships. This holistic perspective is held by members of the SREB staff and many others involved in the internship program. An applicant for an intern program need not have it, but many acquire it in the course of their internship, as is evident from their reports.

"The university and public service" has been the subject of a much publicized, on-and-off debate in recent months among such men as Jacques Barzun, Clark Kerr, Alan Pifer and Mark Rudd. It is disappointing that the debates have emphasized the role of the university in providing institutional support for presumably beneficial

programs, to the virtual exclusion of the importance of community service by staff, faculty, and students in the performance of its teaching function.

Whether, how much, and how the university as an institution should serve the community may be debatable issues. Whether the university should be a seat of learning is not. The embarrassing question for educators is how do you expect to prepare your students to become competent in their fields, and more importantly, to become effective and constructive citizens unless you arrange for them to experience meaningful involvement in the real world and to reflect upon this involvement in the company of your learned faculty?

William James tells us that reading and listening can enable us to know about something but not to know it until we have experienced it. For example, it has been reported that a full-year internship for Ethiopian university students typically teaching in village schools added nothing to the students' awareness of rural poverty and its associated problems. But what did happen to the average intern was that he moved from the level of awareness to the level of commitment to do something about rural poverty. In the United States, the problems of today and tomorrow can be identified through awareness, but they cannot be solved without commitment.

For university leaders who consider knowing something to be a higher form of learning than merely knowing about something, the time has come to introduce internships of the RDIP type as an integral part of the learning process.

The University and the Community

As with the awarding of academic credit, the fostering of university-community relationships is almost impossible to institutionalize from the outside. Clearly the thrust of RDIP interest is

to move beyond the traditional town-grown kind of relationship common to academic institutions into patterns of real participation. At one university, businessmen and others in the community serve as visiting lecturers and discussants and are listed in the catalogue. Much more common is the practice of professors engaging themselves, sometimes with pay and sometimes without, in community affairs. The RDIP is another bridge between community and university over which mutual participation can flourish.

At the RDIP Review Conference in the fall of 1968, most of the discussion on university-community relationships centered around strategies for expanding the RDIP type of internship program. Conferencees were unanimous in urging program expansion, but RDIP officials cautioned that, as presently constituted, its ceiling has almost been reached in terms of administrative capability.

It was generally agreed that some kind of decentralization was in order, but where responsibility should rest was a point of major disagreement. The case for university administration was espoused by those who saw the internships as primarily a learning experience, and who believed that the learning dimension would wither away under auspices outside the university. Also, it was suggested that university students be involved in program policy and administration. One problem, of course, would be the location of the program in the university. For example, one would envision the type of program administered by the School of Public Health, and quite another type by the School of Education.

Persons who argued for state sponsorship seemed to feel that a state agency would maintain a better balance of interests between

doing a job (many of the agencies where interns serve are state-related) and learning. (Most interns serve in their respective states so the states have a vested interest in them as human resources.)

What is so clear is that the SREB-RDIP has the confidence of all parties in the intern program and any new agency, wherever it is based, will be suspect by one or more parties, perhaps to the extent that it would never be able to get off the ground. Further, any attempt to create an entirely new set of agencies would give rise to in-fighting that could well defeat the program.

Given the magnitude of good will and breadth of support for the program, SREB-RDIP will be delinquent in its responsibility to the South, and to the nation, if it fails to continue to play a central role in building the internship program. This can be done in ways that do not necessarily mean a greatly expanded administrative role for the RDIP. For example, the RDIP could establish guidelines for internships, act as a conduit of funds for programs, and evaluate programs. This kind of arrangement would permit a variety of sponsors--a university here, a state agency there--to evolve on the basis of merit and in the image of the SREB-RDIP.

Another possibility would be for the RDIP to create or to contract to a separate agency the bulk of administrative chores which it presently carries. In this way, the RDIP could maintain its present small staff who could concern themselves with keeping on the right track a greatly expanded internship program.

Balances and Imbalances

To return to the multi-dimensional view of the internship program, it is obvious that a number of balancing acts must be carried on simultaneously. Among these are:

1. A balance between elements of rigidity, e.g., the writing of reports on schedule, and elements of flexibility, e.g., scope for intern initiative
2. A balance between the intern's particular assignment and exposure to new fields and situations
3. A balance between making suitable arrangements for learning to occur, but not making things so easy that little or no learning will occur
4. A balance between an intern's performing a useful task and gaining knowledge and wisdom
5. A balance wheel to maintain a dynamic equilibrium among the program objectives and among the sometimes competing forces that come into play (Review Conference participants felt that SREB-RDIP is just the right kind of balance wheel)

Two important aspects of the internship program seem to be seriously out of balance: the program is far too small in comparison with the need for it and it appears to receive its money from sources out of proportion to the returns. For reasons cited earlier, this kind of internship is one that should be within reach of every college and university student, all 6,000,000 of them. It should not be restricted to one region of the country, nor to students who just happen to hear about it. It is certainly not foreseen that every student will want to participate in this program, for some are in a position to set up their own internships and others will prefer alternative uses of time. But no one should be excluded from this kind of experience simply for lack of funds, information, job

openings, supervision, or counseling.

To try to analyze costs and benefits is difficult because of several unknowns. We do not know, for example, what overhead costs to assign to the participating university or host agency. We do not know what dollar value to assign as the benefits of an internship received by the federal or state government or by the university.

In spite of these unknowns, certain conclusions can be drawn from what we do know, and from assumptions that seem reasonable. Not every case yields a savings comparable to the two-man team which, at a total cost of \$5,000, completed an analysis and report which the host agency had been prepared to contract out at a cost of \$51,000. But reports from supervisors and others give clear evidence that the overwhelming majority of interns make a contribution to the host agency at least equivalent to the stipend they receive as interns. Only in a minority of internships does the host agency even make a contribution to the stipend. The first conclusion, then, is that full payment of the intern's stipend by the host agency is economically justifiable.

We also know that the internship process generates a significant amount of learning by the intern. This outcome is seen in the awarding of academic credit to interns, and in reports of the interns and their advisors. While impossible to quantify exactly, it would seem to be fairly comparable to what is learned in half a normal semester.

Judging by tuition charges at institutions receiving the lowest amounts of public subsidies, the cost to the student of a half-term's learning is at least \$500. Hence, the second conclusion is that the amount of relevant learning derived from the internship process

justifies full payment of the university counselor's fee (\$300) by the university. (Also, the university overhead appears to be at least offset by the learning gained by the professor and benefits gained by the institution, as a consequence of participation in the internship program.)

Benefits to the several governments--federal, state and local--are more general. The expectation is that interns will select careers consistent with the needs of society, that they will be better citizens and more productive members of the economy. Whether or not these expectations materialize will not be known for 20 or more years. At this stage, it can be reported that the internship process is having the kind of effect on interns that they are moving themselves in these directions. Here again, quantification is impossible, but in comparison with the magnitude of public support for classroom education, and considering the assumptions upon which it is based, financial support for experiential education of the RDIP variety certainly appears to be a better investment than support for classroom education. The objective should be to achieve a proper balance between classroom and experiential education which, in financial terms, will be reached when the rates of return on investment become equal.

In addition to the federal agencies supporting the RDIP, experimentation with the diakonia paideia concept can be found in such programs as the Peace Corps, College Work-Study Program, Neighborhood Youth Corps, Job Corps, VISTA and Teacher Corps. This experimentation should continue, and changes should be made where needed.

From where this observer stands, the RDIP offers a unique experiment in the diakonia paideia concept and, as may be inferred from foregoing observations, more advanced than other experiments in several important respects. Hence, while a re-alignment of financial support is appropriate, continued support from government agencies is warranted during this experimental period.

As the internship program becomes institutionalized, it should endeavor to alter its support pattern in three ways, as follows:

1. The university should cover the cost of fees for the counselors and should assume a greater role in the recruitment of interns, development of projects, seminars and report writing.
2. The host agency should pay a share of the intern's stipend that reflects the real worth of the intern to the agency, but not so much as to make the agency feel it can exert an employer's control over the intern. Thus, the agency's contribution should always be less than the salary or wage a regular employee would receive for doing the intern's job. Using these criteria, a typical agency could be expected to contribute from 50 percent to 75 percent of the intern's allowance.
3. Government, at all three levels, should provide general purpose support of sufficient magnitude to enable researchers to determine the appropriate balance between classroom education and experiential education for college and university students.

In addition to altering the support pattern, SREB should look for savings. Consider the team concept. A team of four interns could have one basic task, one university counselor, and one technical advisor, and write a single report, thereby reducing the number of consultants by 75 percent.

Another saving in scale should result from more concentrated recruitment and placement efforts. The administrative backstopping for 100 interns from one campus or at one agency should be only a

fraction of the present administrative costs for one intern multiplied by 100.

One important funding feature to retain is use of SREB as a conduit of funds. Both the government agencies and the universities much prefer dealing with one place having fiscal responsibility than several. Of course, SREB does not want to become a large operating agency, but there is really little problem here because the SREB-RDIP could allocate funds just as foundations do. Project submissions could be made to the SREB-RDIP for approval, payment and evaluation. Much of the legwork now done by the RDIP staff could be assumed by the institutions submitting the projects.

The Future

The inevitability of change is truer today than ever, for changes occur more quickly than before. Yet the RDIP is in danger of stagnation. As presently constituted and sponsored, the numeric ceiling has been reached and, because of general program excellence, qualitative changes can be expected to lead to incremental improvement only.

Given this rather constraining situation, what should be the future course of the RDIP? In reviewing the observations and suggestions contained in this paper, the following activities should be carefully considered:

1. Experiment with larger-scale programs. This academic year, pursue aggressively the possibilities for larger programs in North Carolina, Georgia, and Atlanta. Next year, concentrate on one or two campuses, guarantee internships to all who genuinely seek them, discover what percentage of students come forward. At the same time, saturate a community or region to determine the number of internships available among a given population. Include semester-long and academic-year internships.

2. Encourage campuses to share the counselor's allowance and agencies the intern's allowance.
3. Encourage universities, agencies, and consortia to sponsor internship projects on their own, but tied in with the RDIP for standards, consultations and, where appropriate, funds.
4. Spread the word. Proceed with the conference being planned for 1969. Invite a few representatives from outside the domain of SREB. Make it a setting for the strongest kind of endorsement possible for the RDIP program and discuss future plans.