

and self-sufficiency. In this case, it is necessary to rigorously test clear hypotheses in order to answer important policy questions.

The conference impressed upon us the fact that evaluation of comprehensive family service programs is in its infancy; as a result, hypotheses are not explicitly stated and analytic plans are not specific. We believe there must be some tolerance for this ambiguity, as long as researchers strive to incorporate findings into a growing knowledge base.

Consequently, we believe that researchers in every social science discipline have a role to play in refining conceptual frameworks, developing interdisciplinary hypotheses, and specifying research questions in the area of comprehensive family services.

These three major developments have led to a new and visionary approach to evaluation. The report "Head Start Research and Evaluation: A Blueprint for the Future"¹ has led the way to rethinking how to evaluate multisite national programs. We view this as containing three steps. The first step consists of outlining the scope of the evaluation by framing the issues, clarifying the analytic plan, and specifying a common set of input and outcome measures. The second step consists of allowing the local program to operate as usual, with local evaluators collecting the process and impact data. The last step consists of drawing conclusions on major themes within and across programs in order to help explain variations in outcomes as site and program characteristics vary. At this point, research findings can be translated into practice and policy.

Next steps

It is precisely because of the difficulty in evaluating comprehensive family service programs that it is so important to conduct research systematically and begin to build upon previous work in order to push forward the field of research on family service programs. This task entails conducting a synthesis of research activities and disseminating the findings to researchers, policymakers, and analysts. To facilitate this process, ASPE and IRP should consider options for follow-up to the conference. Activities could include commissioning monographs or sponsoring technical working groups to address some of the methodological issues and recommendations that emerged at the conference. IRP should be actively involved in developing methodology and in structuring future evaluations. Such technical assistance would encourage researchers to both draw upon and add to the existing knowledge base of social science research. ■

¹Recommendations of the Advisory Panel for the Head Start Evaluation Design Project," prepared under contract no. 105-89-1610 of the Office of Human Development Services, DHHS, with Collins Management Consulting, Inc., September 1990.

Because of an error in weighting data from the October Current Population Survey, Figures 7 and 8 are incorrect in Robert M. Hauser, "What Happens to Youth after High School," *Focus* 13:3 (Fall and Winter 1991). The correct figures are shown below. The correction does not change major trends and differentials. However, corrected rates of college entry are lower than those originally estimated in each racial-ethnic group.

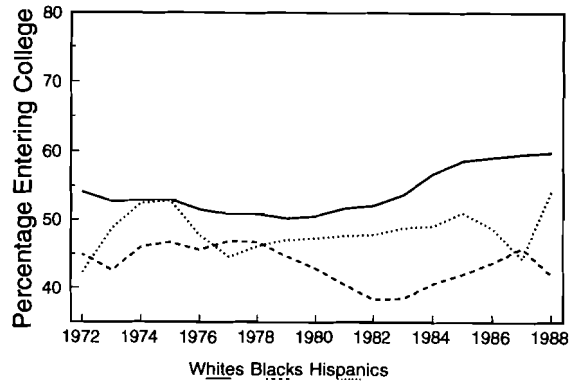


Figure 7. College Entry among Recent High School Graduates: White, Black, and Hispanic Men, 1972-1988

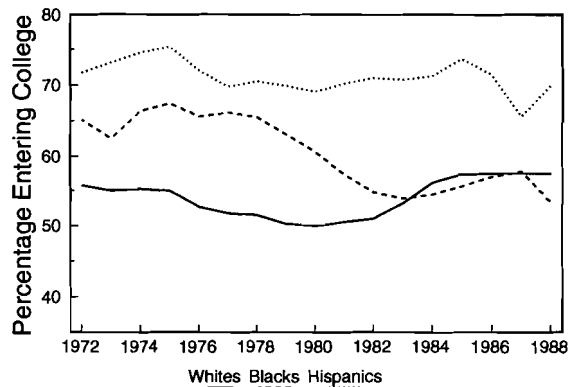


Figure 8. College Entry among Recent High School Graduates with the Average Social Background of Whites: White, Black, and Hispanic Men, 1972-1988