Center for the Study of Evaluation
University of California, Los Angeles

Humanitas Program Evaluation
1991-92 School Year

Institutionalization of the Humanitas Program
Report of Interviews
Final Report

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Humanitas: A Synthesis of Four Years of Evaluation Findings
Humanitas Portfolio Project

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INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE HUMANITAS PROGRAM:
REPORT OF INTERVIEWS

FINAL REPORT, 1991-92

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Purpose

The Humanitas Program was initiated in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) in 1986 by Los Angeles Educational Partnership (LAEP) to promote the professional growth and effectiveness of teachers and to improve humanities education for the full range of students in an urban district. Grants from private foundations, partial funding from the LAUSD, and organizational leadership from LAEP have supported this model program for six years.

At the time Humanitas was created, LAUSD was a district with heavy central control. The original plan was to wean the program gradually away from foundation support towards support by the district. It was expected that by now the district would be able to provide approximately three-fourths of the total funding for the program. Over the past few years, however, the LAUSD system has begun to shift towards school-based management and has faced great financial difficulties. The central district office has become impoverished, with few people and little money to support programs like Humanitas. The district has been forced to make drastic budget cuts, resulting in increased burdens for teachers and administrators. Teachers are faced with greatly increased class size, reduced planning time, heavier preparation and grading loads, and transfers of students and teachers from school to school. Humanitas teams have been further disrupted by the threat of forced transfers of specially trained program teachers, loss of funding for field trips, loss of money for substitutes to cover some staff development time, and in some schools disruption of interdisciplinary teaching due to enrollment of some non-Humanitas students in some of the Humanitas classes. The
number of counselors has been reduced and their workload significantly increased, resulting in problems with recruiting, enrollment, and scheduling for Humanitas. Teacher morale throughout the district is very low as a result of the financial difficulties, concomitant changes in the work environment, and an uncertain future.

It was in this current climate of concern that the Center for the Study of Evaluation conducted a number of interviews with Humanitas participants about how the program has become institutionalized. Originally, we conceived of institutionalization as the establishment and nearly full support of the program by the central district office. As the structure of the district has changed, institutionalization has come to mean the establishment of the program within most of the individual schools in the district, with some support and recognition at the district level. We also attempted to identify features that are critical to the success of a program like Humanitas in this environment.

It should be noted that Humanitas is not alone in facing an uncertain future despite demonstrated positive effects. Most large innovative programs rely on external "seed" funding during their early years. With such widespread financial difficulties currently affecting education, however, the transition to self-sufficiency for such programs is growing increasingly problematic.

Method

During the fall and winter of the 1991-92 school year, we interviewed a number of key players in the Humanitas Program in Los Angeles: the Teacher Center coordinators (Neil Anstead, Cathy Nadler, and Sue Anderson) and a number of teachers at the three high schools that contain Humanitas Teacher Centers (Jefferson, Roosevelt, and Cleveland); additional coordinators and teachers at three other schools; and about a dozen Humanitas Program coordinators from additional schools around the district. We also interviewed principals and counselors at several schools as well as Judy Johnson (LAEP Humanitas Project Co-Director), Barbara Golding (district Co-Director of Humanitas and former Humanitas teacher), and Dan Isaacs (Assistant Superintendent for the Senior High Schools Division of LAUSD). Our purpose was to obtain information about the following concerns:
• institutionalization of the program,

• specific institutionalization strategies utilized by LAEP, and

• essential conditions or resources for a successful, effective Humanitas Program

The remainder of this report documents the results of those interviews.

Extent of Institutionalization

Program description. The Humanitas Program is based on the philosophy that virtually all students can profit from a conceptual, thematic, interdisciplinary approach to learning. It attempts to provide all students with opportunities to develop critical thinking, writing, and discussion skills and to offer them a sense of ownership in the learning process that many ordinary classes lack.

Humanitas teachers and students volunteer to join a team or small community-within-a-school, in which students take several "core" classes together, frequently English, social studies, and art. During the rest of their day, students and teachers have regular classes. The teachers work in grade-level teams to organize their curricula according to jointly agreed-upon themes. They relate assignments and essay exams across classes to emphasize interdisciplinary relationships.

As part of the emphasis on the arts within Humanitas, LAEP has supported concert series, theater, and museum trips, with free admission and transportation for students; leadership conferences; and special seminars and inservice training on arts and culture, all under the rubric "Cultural Collaboratives." There has been an ongoing collaboration with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra over the past six years as well as other collaborative efforts with the Los Angeles Theater Center, Music Center, CalArts, University of Southern California, University of California at Los Angeles, California State University at Los Angeles, and California State University at Dominguez Hills.

Six of the schools with Humanitas Programs also have a media artist in residence as part of the Humanitas Media Arts Mobilization Project (MAMP). The purpose of this part of the program is to broaden both teachers' and students' understanding of the media arts as a means of personal expression
and critical, interdisciplinary thinking. The artists guide students and teachers through collaborative production and direction processes in film, video and photography. Art projects are linked to the themes chosen by the Humanitas faculty.

To facilitate the Humanitas Program's continuation and expansion, LAEP provides inservice training meetings for its teachers throughout the year, a summer training and planning institute for one or two weeks (depending on available funding), and one week of training during the year at one of three Teacher Centers, located at Jefferson, Cleveland Magnet, and Roosevelt High Schools.

The Teacher Centers, created during the 1989-90 school year, are a major element in the institutionalization of the program. Their purpose is to train volunteer teachers throughout the district in the Humanitas model of team-based, thematic, interdisciplinary instruction in the humanities. This training is provided in a week-long institute during the school year for teachers who would like to be Humanitas teachers the following year and for those who are currently in the program, to extend their skills, thus providing for both quality control and program expansion. The training covers teamwork; thematic and interdisciplinary instruction and assessment; selection of materials; instruction in vocabulary building, writing, and critical thinking; motivation of students; integration of field trips and other external experiences into the curriculum; and structuring and scheduling of the program.

Program expansion. The Humanitas Program has succeeded in spreading widely across the district in only six years time. The program began in the fall of 1986 with 8 schools, and six years later it has expanded horizontally to 37 of the 49 comprehensive high schools in the district. Two additional schools participated for awhile but did not maintain programs of sufficient quality or adherence to the model to remain in the Humanitas Program, according to Johnson and Golding. In many of the high schools there has been vertical development of the program to include teams at all grades. There are now 267 teachers involved and about 4500 students (about 3.5% of the high school students in the district).
Three Teacher Centers have been established to provide training for new and continuing Humanitas teachers during the school year. During 1990-91, for example, approximately 100 high school teachers from 31 teams at 24 schools attended one of the two centers in existence at that time along with administrators from 5 schools. Virtually all Humanitas teachers have attended at least one of the centers during the past two years.

Last year, 50 middle school teachers from 12 schools also attended the Humanitas Teacher Centers for training in the model, and efforts are being made by LAEP to obtain funding for more formal implementation of the model at the middle school level, including middle school Teacher Centers for staff development. Currently many middle schools use team teaching and block scheduling, but they do not yet use a thematic, interdisciplinary curriculum like Humanitas.

Coordinators interviewed for this evaluation mentioned a few problems associated with program expansion. For example, they noted that the more teachers there are in a team, the more difficult it can be to develop interdisciplinary curriculum and instruction for several reasons. The more courses that are included in a core set of Humanitas classes, the fewer students there are who are willing or able to take that particular combination of classes and eschew other choices such as Advanced Placement, student government, or sports that might conflict with the scheduling of the Humanitas classes. Planning and developing the curriculum for a 3- or 4-course Humanitas core often takes more time and effort than for a 2-course core set of classes. In addition, the more teams there are at a school, the more scheduling, counseling, and communication problems there are that need to be handled by coordinators, counselors, and administrators. Clearly, solving the many problems that arise as a program grows and matures requires time. One coordinator said that a team needs about ten years to grow enough roots to be really established. Her program is six years old and the teams only now have a designated place to meet in the school, a Humanitas office.

Despite the current poor economic climate, the district is funding coordinator stipends ($1000 annually per Humanitas Program coordinator at each school), some planning time for teachers, and some release time for teachers to attend the Teacher Centers. In addition, some individual schools
have used some of their state funds for staff development ("1882 money") for teachers to attend the Teacher Centers.

LAEP has analyzed the costs of several levels of program support as follows:

A. Minimal support to keep the program operating:
   - Coordinators' stipends ($1000 per school)
   - Common planning period for each team member (no cost)

B. Teacher Centers for staff development:
   - Release time for each teacher who attends @ $750/week
   - Release time for resident teachers at the Teacher Center @ $5000/Center
   - Two periods off the norm for Teacher Center directors @ $16,000/Center
   - Materials cost @ $500/Center

C. Additional professional development and managing of program:
   - 3 meetings or cultural events for all teachers @ $1500
   - 5-day summer institute @ $30,000
   - salary for director (Barbara Golding), technical assistant (Neil Anstead), and clerical support

D. Extras:
   - Grants to schools @ $1000/school
   - Mini-grants to teachers @ $200/applicant
   - Field trips

Concern for the program's future. Many people involved with Humanitas fear that the formal program will not be sustainable once external funding (from various funders via LAEP) is gone. Most importantly, the program requires innovations in the schooling process that must be supported by teachers, counselors and administrators (e.g., recruitment of students into the program, special scheduling of core classes on the master calendar, special scheduling of teachers' conference periods, provision of substitutes or pay for
professional training). Furthermore, since the program is large and complex, it requires an overall director to plan and coordinate training and networking (a position now shared by Johnson and Golding and paid for almost entirely by LAEP's Humanitas budget). Without stable support for these necessary functions, many fear the formal program is likely to disintegrate.

Isaacs feels that with decent allocation of resources from the district, Golding (a former Humanitas teacher herself) could easily handle directing the program, and principals would be able to provide the support needed at the building level. The only problem then, according to Isaacs, might be strong union resistance to any district involvement, especially now during labor and financial disputes. Several teachers, however, expressed concern for the program's future if the district were responsible for it. Their doubts were related to pessimism about the district's financial future as well as to criticism of other kinds of district-sponsored programs and professional development.

Unfortunately, the current economic straits of the district do not bode well for the program. Teachers are well aware of the district's financial difficulties as many of them or their colleagues have lost their positions or have been transferred, class size has grown to 40 or more, and teachers were required to loan back to the district approximately 3% of their salary this year (a portion of what was won just last year after a difficult strike). Many teachers fear the district will never be able to repay this loan.

Given this concern for continuation of Humanitas as it currently exists, we considered two other ways in which the essence of Humanitas is becoming institutionalized: as a model of school reform and through its impact on teaching practices in general.

A model for school reform efforts. The Humanitas Program has served as a model for restructuring efforts at several schools. Eleven of the 21 approved site-based management proposals for senior high schools specifically mention Humanitas or refer to elements of the program.

For example, they have drawn upon the use of teams of teachers, interdisciplinary curriculum, and a challenging yet supportive environment for disadvantaged students. These school reform efforts are in a very early stage of development, and it is too soon to know how successful they will be in institutionalizing elements of Humanitas.
Humanitas has also become well known to a broad audience of practitioners, policymakers, and researchers as an effective program. When a national television program asked the union president to recommend an example of something positive happening in the schools, she directed them to the Humanitas Program at Jefferson High. The project has also been publicized as a worthwhile model of school reform in *Educational Leadership*, other professional journals, and at several annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association. It is known among the Rockefeller-funded CHART projects as one of the more successful model programs.

**Impact on teaching practices.** Anstead, one of the program's founders, has always felt that a formal Humanitas Program would not last forever, but that the best of the teachers would continue to use its philosophy and methods for years to come. Hence, LAEP's goal has been to involve as many teachers in the program as possible to maximize the number of teachers who will retain elements of the program in their future teaching. Anstead and Johnson both noted, however, that it takes years to develop a strong understanding of the program and enough sense of ownership to withstand lack of structural support for the program.

The degree to which even the best Humanitas teachers can retain elements of the program in their teaching remains moot. One of the more experienced teachers noted that lack of institutional support, such as reduced access to copy machines for curricular materials, lack of time to plan with colleagues or to expand one's knowledge of subject matter, lack of departmental support regarding allowable course content, and so forth, would eventually erode most teachers' attempts to continue Humanitas-style teaching. Most teachers interviewed said their teaching would never completely revert to their previous methods, particularly those who have been in the program for several years. They have seen evidence that students learn better in an interdisciplinary, thematic curriculum. However, they acknowledged the pressure from current conditions in the schools to return to less demanding teaching practices (such as use of multiple-choice tests rather than essay tests and a return to a discipline-based, text-based curriculum).
Institutionalization Strategies Used by LAEP

LAEP has been concerned with the issue of institutionalization since the program's conception and has used a number of strategies to encourage the school system to embrace the program and to empower participants to become responsible for a high quality program.

Gradual increase in district financial support for the program. One of LAEP's strategies was to get the district to contribute financially in increasing amounts over the past several years towards critical resources such as coordinator stipends and release time for training. When the program began, the district contributed Anstead's time and one bus per year per school for field trips, which has since been replaced by coordinators' stipends at LAEP's request, since, according to Johnson, people are more important than things to make the program work.

LAEP has also tried to encourage the district to cover the cost of directing the program, but they have had to help out in differing ways during the current budget crisis. Last year the district paid half of Golding's co-director salary, this year LAEP is paying all of it due to LAUSD's budget problems, and next year the district plans to cover all of it. As Johnson notes, the fact that LAEP still contributes something helps them leverage from the outside to maintain program characteristics.

The district has continued to invest about $200,000 per year, nearly one-third of the current funding (approximately $665,000), which is a considerable amount given the budgetary problems of the district but not as much as had been originally planned for this point (about 75% of total funding). Isaacs mentioned that Peggy Funkhouser, president of LAEP, has been very effective in securing continued support from top district administrators and some of the members of the Board of Education.

Program support from an influential district administrator. Another strategy that LAEP has employed to gain and maintain support for the program has been to work closely with someone of power in the school district. For the past several years that person has been Dan Isaacs, Assistant Superintendent for the Senior High Schools Division. Isaacs feels the program "has tremendous merit" and wants to expand it at each school to involve more students and teachers:
It's the quietest and best game in town. ... If we could get back to a minimal level of funding, not like this year, we could really show some growth in the program.

Not only is he himself supportive of the program, but Isaacs also encourages school administrators to be supportive as well. For example, one principal recalled that when he first took his position, he was quickly informed by Isaacs that the Humanitas Program at his new school was a "given" and was to be supported.

Each month for the past five years when Isaacs met with the senior high school principals, he has devoted some portion of the agenda to Humanitas. He often invites Humanitas teachers to these meetings to explain their goals and methods to the principals. During the past two years he has also written up and distributed a list of ways school administrators and counselors can strengthen the program and has described the program's successes in his high school division newsletter. He feels this sustained focus helps principals see that the district really values the program.

Isaacs feels it is important that a district administrator like himself meet with the principals, coordinators, and counselors at each school to be sure that all buy into the program and share a common understanding of its goals and methods. Principals have learned that the program has significant effects, and they know it helps prevent dropouts, but in times of stress they tend to react quickly to do what's necessary to make things run smoothly. For example, this year severe budget cuts required that many schools cut a significant number of teachers yet keep their same enrollment of students, thus increasing class size. Some principals "solved" the problem by simply assigning non-Humanitas students to Humanitas classes as necessary to fill up the class, but not enrolling them in the complete program. Of course that caused serious problems for the teachers and students involved. Isaacs plans to meet with the principals and coordinators this spring to see what steps can be taken in readiness for next year and to reinvigorate their support for the program after the buffeting all have suffered this year.

**LAEP meetings with principals and counselors.** LAEP also has tried several approaches to working with principals and counselors to help them understand the nature and importance of their role in making the program work.
One strategy has been to meet each year with the principals and counselors along with Isaacs at an off-site location. The meeting was an opportunity to acknowledge their contribution to the project, to review the major principles of the program, and to discuss what makes the program work at their individual sites. LAEP matched weak with strong schools in the discussion groups to facilitate problem solving. The turnover rate of principals and counselors is so great that it has been necessary to train or coach people every year. According to Johnson (and seconded by Golding):

A very weak head counselor can destroy the program. In some cases the counselor is so weak that the principal and Humanitas teachers have to plan together how to get around the counselor.

LAEP also tried a couple of approaches to educating administrators and counselors through the Teacher Centers. One method was to invite them to the Teacher Center for a half-day when one of their teams was there. The purpose was to involve them in a type of peer coaching by having them meet with the principal and head counselor of the Teacher Center's school to learn to solve typical problems. This approach was fairly successful when the principal and counselor showed up, but often they failed to come to the Teacher Center, and that was very disillusioning for their Humanitas teachers. Meeting with administrators several times a semester also became too demanding on the principals and counselors of the Teacher Center school.

Nadler said that some of the teams who visited the Jefferson Teacher Center brought their administrator to meet with Jefferson's principal and Nadler for a morning to fully explain the program and discuss the importance of administrative support. She commented that teams whose principal came to the Center seemed to have far fewer problems as a result of the understanding attained at that meeting, but that the failure of other teams' administrators to show up disillusioned those teams. Hence, Johnson and Anstead began to visit administrators in their home school to provide much the same sort of information. Nadler felt that it was important that the meetings include the coordinator as well as the administrators and LAEP representative in order to forge a team approach that includes all of them, not just teachers.
LAEP tried a second approach at the Cleveland Teacher Center. The team in training used some of their Teacher Center time to plan what they needed in administrative support and how they would negotiate for this support with their principal and counselor. The staff of the Teacher Center provided guidance in how to explain the benefits of the program for students and teachers and how to proceed. A portion of the Teacher Center training week was allocated to a meeting involving the team in training with their administrator and counselor at their school site. If they anticipated problems, Anstead or Johnson accompanied the teachers as facilitators. This approach was fairly successful. However, a few principals failed to follow through on agreements "out of a sort of benign neglect," according to Johnson. She noted that she and Anstead have discussed other ideas for involving the administrators but have not found a good solution yet.

**Staff development and teacher empowerment.** LAEP hopes that the Teacher Centers, demonstration sites, workshops, and summer academies it sponsors will sustain the kind of professional interaction and risk-taking that leads to improved teaching and learning.

LAEP established the Teacher Centers not just for training but also to encourage institutionalization. They felt this structure of training, with several schools having a vested interest in keeping the program running, would reinforce the program. Also, Teacher Centers help train new teachers needed for program expansion and replacement of teachers who leave the program. The Centers also help update the skills and interests of continuing teachers.

LAEP originally planned to establish four centers, which they hoped could serve as regional offices to provide academic and cultural events and coordinate the programs in their regions. But observation of the first two Teacher Centers made it clear that the school coordinator's job of running a team, teaching classes, coordinating all the teams at that school, and running a Teacher Center is so demanding that it's quite unrealistic to expect them to do more. Thus, LAEP has not asked the Teacher Centers to fill the role of regional offices.

LAEP recognizes the incentive value of providing teachers with opportunities to talk with their peers. According to Johnson, "That's perhaps
the most powerful tool we have." They required that every team that attended the summer academy make a presentation, and they found that:

It was one of the best things we did at the last one. People took away units, lesson plans, etc. That's not putting out the best standard but putting out everyone's standard as the model, but it was a way to get everyone to participate, and helped people show off their strengths.

One of the strategies LAEP wanted to pursue was to set up demonstration sites where teams could go for a couple of hours to observe a particular theme being taught or instructional method being used, reflect on their observations with colleagues, try out new ideas in their own classrooms, and continue the dialogue. Johnson mentioned that this approach could be a way of demonstrating high quality work without setting up standards from the outside or pointing out the "bad guys." To a limited extent the Teacher Centers offer this type of demonstration as part of the training experience. Visiting teachers observe resident teachers at work for several days and also get to observe at one or two other sites as well. The demonstration site idea could certainly be expanded if funds were available for substitutes while teachers visited other schools.

Johnson also mentioned that LAEP has considered building a "library" of Humanitas sample units and resources which could be shared across sites. They have not demanded that everyone contribute, but they have asked a few schools to contribute their ideas. The Cleveland Magnet School, which has operated on the model from which Humanitas was derived for nearly a decade, now has developed a rather large collection of unit plans to share.

Professional Responsibility and Self-Regulation

Like parents trying to raise a child to become a responsible adult, LAEP has created a program and has been trying for years to shift the locus of control from themselves to the teachers. However, while teachers seem to want empowerment, relatively few of the them have wanted to take on a leadership role beyond site coordinator. Most of those interviewed feel that they have little time for responsibilities beyond their full-time teaching loads.

When problems arise, teachers sometimes ask LAEP for advice or help in meeting with administrators. Sometimes they call Golding or Isaacs in the
district office. Johnson noted that LAEP has developed a coordinators' network structure that sometimes provides collaborative problem solving, often at the quarterly meetings of coordinators. However, coordinators and teachers still tend to see LAEP as controlling important and scarce resources. For example, one coordinator mentioned in an interview that some of the coordinators are reluctant to air all their problems at these LAEP-sponsored meetings (such as the problem of non-Humanitas students being enrolled in Humanitas classes) because they fear LAEP might kick them out of the program as it has with a couple of schools that failed to maintain the Humanitas model to a minimal extent.

According to Johnson, one of the more effective, but unfortunately short-lived, professional development opportunities that LAEP has provided for Humanitas teachers was peer observations. Each person in a team observed the others' teaching, and then they all sat down to discuss what they saw in each other's classes, what worked well with the theme, and so forth. LAEP provided funding for substitutes and even provided a list of questions for the team to explore together. Coordinators ensured that everyone participated in the dialogue. Teachers were also encouraged to observe different grade levels in the same school or classes in other schools. Some would say, "Gee, I'd love to see how you do this." Relatively few people, however, visited other schools because it was a bit intrusive and took more time. Once LAEP's funding for this activity was depleted, however, teachers stopped the peer observation even though state professional development funds (known as 1882 money) were available for such activities. Johnson notes, "...you have to remind them and make it very convenient and obvious."

Johnson mentioned that LAEP has also tried to encourage teachers to communicate with each other via electronic mail to solve problems and share ideas. They have been successful with math and science teachers in other projects, but Humanitas teachers never signed up for the training sessions or made use of the E-mail capabilities. Johnson hypothesized that a few math and science teachers may have already been experienced with using E-mail, so they saw its usefulness and helped initiate its use, whereas Humanitas teachers lacked experience with it and thus failed to recognize its potential.
LAEP is also trying to maintain a professional support network of teachers within the district, including those in Humanitas (as well as in math and science), to sustain improved teaching practices.

Quality control. Anstead originally favored inducting as many teachers as possible into the program in order to spread its effects. Now, however, Anstead, Johnson, Nadler and others have witnessed problems due to the misguided efforts and lack of quality from some teams who joined the program without sufficient understanding or planning. The faculty of the Teacher Centers share these concerns about the quality of some of the teams' implemented programs. When teachers, principals and counselors have a weak conceptualization of the program, they may create bad experiences for themselves and their students and may impugn the program's reputation among students, school counselors and administrators, district officers, and funders.

This year LAEP is attempting to ensure the quality of the program by requiring all of the teams to complete an application to begin or continue the program. In the past, only new teams had to complete an application. The new approach requires that the head counselor and principal actually plan together with Humanitas team members at each school and that all agree to support several key elements of the program: adequate recruitment of students, enrollment of Humanitas students in all the core classes, a common conference period for all teachers within a team, and a planning period for the school Humanitas Program coordinator. Statements of support by both the head counselor and principal at each school are required for the application. LAEP hoped that the application process would provide an opportunity for all key participants to articulate their goals, roles, and methods. This attempt at quality control was well received by the more experienced teams, who share LAEP's concern. Some others, however, took issue with the application requirement, with the attitude "How dare you question our commitment?" As Golding remarked, however, some administrators may say all the right things now but not adequately support the program later. Johnson worried whether LAEP has anything to offer that is sufficiently important to administrators that they will strongly support the program even in very difficult economic times. LAEP has provided a lot to the schools: staff development, technical assistance, public relations and recognition, and a $1000 grant to use as the
teachers saw fit. Teachers like having discretionary funds to cover buses or copying costs, and administrators like the fact that the program brings some resources of its own to their schools. However, the future of such grants is questionable. More importantly, how can some administrators be helped to value what LAEP has to offer highly enough that they will fully support the program even when faced with difficult problems?

LAEP has tried to encourage Humanitas teachers to take responsibility for quality control over time. Johnson feels an outside agency such as LAEP can set a direction but it cannot assure quality from outside. She feels that teachers must be the people who control the quality of their own program and teaching. She notes the trap of becoming a compliance agency or policeman rather than an organization that empowers teachers to do their best with their own professional experience. Johnson noted:

Nonetheless, someone has to call them on it, and they have to begin to call each other on it. Issues have to be discussed, and there have to be some reminders about quality of what you're trying to save.

Keys to Success

Interviews of persons involved with Humanitas revealed strong consensus regarding several key elements for a successful program, which echoed LAEP's initiatives for institutionalization:

- deep understanding, ownership, and support for the program by teachers, school and district administrators, and counselors;
- excellent ongoing training and quality control; and
- support at the school and district level, preferably with outside support from LAEP and local universities.

Perspectives on these elements, which emerged from open-ended interviews of Humanitas Program participants, are discussed below.

**Principals deeply committed to the program.** Teachers and coordinators agree that the principals, assistant principals, and counselors at a school can make or break the program. Principals, especially, need to have a strong sense of commitment to the educational goals and methods embodied by Humanitas so that, even in times of crisis, their decisions will support rather than undermine the program. As one teacher put it:
I see a crisis management response, rather than saying, "This is what I believe we should be about, this is what I'm committed to, this is what we need to do to support our goals." With a philosophy, people will stay on the path even in a crisis instead of listening to whoever cries the loudest or whoever cuts the budget the most.

It is vital that principals not treat Humanitas as just another annoying ball they have to juggle, which may get dropped in the face of teacher layoffs, severe budget cutbacks, and the change to year-round schools. For example, during the current year some teachers criticized their administrators for not fighting to keep Humanitas teachers who were about to be transferred by the district to another school. If administrators do not really understand what Humanitas is and how it works, they will fail to appreciate what the loss of a trained, experienced Humanitas teacher means to the team's morale, collaborative rapport, interdisciplinary knowledge base and curriculum development skills, and effectiveness with students. Coordinators really appreciate their principals' dedication to the program, as illustrated in this comment:

He is very supportive and really clears the way for us. I have to wonder what will happen to Humanitas here when he's gone.

The interview with this principal revealed that he does indeed understand the value of the program, its needs (for planning time, a special Humanitas counselor, and in-service for teachers), and the effects of the program on students. When asked to comment on the importance of his role in the program, he said that "the program has really caught on here and has deep enough roots that it would continue even without me."

In short, innovative programs like Humanitas require a "new breed" of principal who focuses on improving the learning and achievement level of students rather than on merely managing the building.

Principals also have the power to help shape the Humanitas Program in a school to meet a particular need or fill a niche. To be effective, however, such shaping needs to be done in conjunction with the Humanitas faculty and school counselors. For example, in one school, the principal decided that math should be included in the Humanitas Program because he noticed how Humanitas students' grades improved in every subject except math. The teachers at that school say they are willing to try this combination of classes for
a few years to see if they can make it work despite a few problems, such as which math course is most appropriate or feasible to combine with the core courses.

In several other schools, administrators and counselors have responded to the successful record of Humanitas with students at high risk of dropping out of school by loading the Humanitas classes with would-be dropouts, without consulting the teachers. Teachers complain that having a disproportionate number of unmotivated, low achieving students in a class can unbalance the learning environment and make it more difficult to maintain the high standards and level of personal attention students need to stay in school.

In some schools, the program is directed away from students already served by existing programs and heavily targeted to other groups such as transitional ESL students. This direction may come from the principal or from the Humanitas coordinator or team. For example in one school, teachers reportedly felt some pressure regarding which students they would try to serve:

[T1] When we looked for our target group, there were certain constraints on us as to which kids we could tap into. It was an unspoken thing: hands off the AP or honors kids. They have their niche. It was never directly put to us. But in wanting to start a new program and not wanting to step on toes or ruffle feathers, that was a wise decision. ...[T2] They did just tell us straight out. They told her, 'Don't touch honors, don't touch AP.' [T1] So the group we went with was the kids who are just coming out of ESL and are just starting to take regular courses.

Principals can also set the tone of professional interaction within the school, which may be particularly helpful with a program like Humanitas. Since Humanitas teachers work so closely together in groups, they tend to develop a strong rapport among themselves. Sometimes they become rather distanced from other faculty, with whom they have little time or opportunity to interact and may have relatively little in common. Principals can try to counteract the tendency for Humanitas teams to be isolated from the rest of the faculty by working with the entire school staff to articulate overall school goals and how each special program (ESL, honors, AP, Humanitas, sports, etc.) fits into the big picture.
Humanitas teachers said they sometimes face negative or derogatory feelings from other faculty who feel threatened by the amount of work Humanitas teachers do and the results they get with the students. Some Humanitas teachers remarked that they adopt a low profile so they can quietly build their program and avoid being torn down by comments such as "You get the best kids," "How much money do you get?" "How come you get common conference periods?" "Why do you get to go on field trips?" As one teacher put it:

Even though it's a small group who complain, it's a hassle. If we are mentioned in a positive way in faculty meetings, some teachers feel threatened and are then derogatory. So we try to do the best we can in our classrooms but try not to be visible. It's a no-win situation. You can't make those people be accepting. You just try to work around it. I know other schools have the same problem.

Teachers noted that such difficulties in faculty relations are always present to some extent, but many said they would really appreciate a principal who was able to minimize these difficulties.

One teacher also noted that knowledgeable and supportive principals can provide valuable influence on students as well as on teachers in the program.

Our principal visited the classroom and spent time with the kids a few times. He took an interest in the kids and called them in for a special meeting to talk about college, which gave them some recognition that what they were doing was worthwhile. Also he came to our gallery this year. It's good for kids to have someone beside the teachers looking at their work.

Dedicated, knowledgeable counselors. There was strong consensus among those interviewed that counselors, too, play a vital role in the Humanitas Program. Hence, they need to understand and value the Humanitas Program in order for it to be a success. They are responsible for two crucial tasks: organizing the master calendar and enrolling students in classes.

The severe budget cutbacks this year highlighted what can go wrong when counselors do not have sufficient knowledge about the program or dedication to its principles and effects: Appropriate students are not enrolled in sufficient numbers; non-Humanitas students are placed in one or more core courses in order to "make the numbers"; core courses are not scheduled in
adjacent time periods; and team members are not given a common conference period. According to one principal, "Scheduling is the key to making the program work."

As an example of the frustrations faced by Humanitas teachers, one coordinator mentioned that despite concerted and successful efforts by Humanitas students and teachers at their school to recruit incoming tenth graders for the program, most of the students who enter the class in the fall are not those who were recruited the previous spring! Although some of the students may have moved or dropped out, most were simply not scheduled by counselors into the Humanitas Program they had said they wanted to join. Hence, teachers need to recruit about three times the number of students they really need in order to be sure they will have enough to maintain their tenth grade teams. Such extensive recruitment takes a lot of time and energy on the part of teachers, which they would like to reduce. If or when Humanitas-type interdisciplinary studies are implemented at the middle school level, recruiting for the high school level may be less difficult. Both counselors and students will already have had experience with this sort of curriculum and will see the value of it. For now, a better counseling system is needed to make recruiting efforts far more effective and efficient. As one teacher said, "Teachers alone cannot make the program happen." Another noted that:

It would be nice to have a designated counselor to look for kids and gear them towards our program. We got them this year, but it was more like personal favors for people. Some counselors have seen the success of the program, so they help out.

Most of the counselors who agreed to be interviewed for this study understand the value of the program and support the teachers well, as illustrated by this comment from a counselor at one school:

Any program that builds self-esteem, that makes them feel good about themselves, is worth it. The sense of belonging, it's almost like a club. Those kids are together several periods a day. I just love this program. This is our second year. I just knew that's where my kids belong. I even send kids to them who are having trouble in other classes. Because the Humanitas teachers will work with the other teachers and the student. So the student has not only me trying to help them learn social skills and coping skills, but they have those four teachers who they can see care
about them outside the classroom and outside the academic areas. I think it's good for a student to know that.

Unfortunately, there is a high rate of turnover among head counselors in the district due to budget problems and stress. One head counselor remarked that "for the past 18 months her job has been nothing but cut teachers and cut programs." At another school, a typical counselor's load is now double what it was in the past, currently about 600-700 students, virtually all of whom are immigrant students who need lots of help. Counselors and teachers agree that many of the students are actually very bright and talented but they get little reinforcement at home and tend to see college as "for Anglos, not for them." They have no one to sit and talk to them about their strengths in a class, to assure them that they do have the potential to go to college. Counselors and teachers frequently mention that these students should be in the Humanitas Program because it is a very nurturing environment that helps students coming out of ESL or who are otherwise "at risk." Yet, in times of such duress, counselors are often too harried to truly counsel students about their potential and the value of various programs, or to take time to find good solutions to counseling problems.

Turnover and stress among counselors make it all the harder for Humanitas Program coordinators to educate the counselors about the value and characteristics of Humanitas, particularly as it relates to all the other special programs in the school, such as ESL, special education, college prep, teen mothers, Advanced Placement, and so forth. It takes more than an occasional five-minute talk to share with counselors the program's methods, goals, and effects. Counselors need to have a thorough understanding of the program, how students can benefit from it, and what students need to be willing to bring to it, so that the counselors can explain it to students and help them make a choice among the menu of available programs.

A few of the teachers complained that some counselors enroll in Humanitas a large proportion of students who do not want to be in the program and who may jeopardize the value of the program for others who chose it, as illustrated by the following comment from a teacher:

One-third of our students are demotes who did not sign up for the program. We were told, "If you want a program, you have to take 40 kids." ... We need a
counselor who understands the concept of our program so they know how to decide who to add to get the numbers.

Where counselors understand the goals and methods of the Humanitas Program, and when the demands of the job allow, teachers and counselors can work together to solve problems effectively, as noted by another teacher:

We worked with the head counselor to identify "invisible kids" who aren't a part of other groups or programs at school and are likely to just get lost in the shuffle and eventually stop coming to school. We looked for kids who needed some kind of personal connection at school.

Teachers and counselors agreed that the program often does motivate at-risk students to stay in school and aspire to college, but many teachers feel this is accomplished with a diverse group, not one overloaded with unmotivated students. It is not clear whether there is an optimal "mix" of student diversity enabling Humanitas to meet the needs of the low achievers as well as moderate and high achievers. However, one coordinator, at a school where the program mixes students of limited English proficiency in the same classes with English speakers, noted that the proportions of each are important. She said at least 50% of the students need to speak English well in order to provide enough help for those who do not. Counselors and teachers need to share such practical guidelines.

One coordinator defined a "good" counselor as one who finds the students who can benefit from what Humanitas offers. For the program at her school, students need to have had at least a fifth-grade education in their home country so that they can handle the concepts dealt with in Humanitas even if they have trouble with English. They need to be willing to attend school, to work in cooperative groups, and to handle frequent transitions (since they have to change courses and instructors every 5 weeks at this school). Teachers do not care about poor attendance records or achievement levels in the past as long as students are now willing to attend and work.

Coordinators lament that they cannot trust administrators and counselors to be steadfastly supportive of the program and must constantly check up on decisions being made that might adversely affect the program. Since coordinators teach several classes a day in addition to their other duties, constant checking is a drain on their time and energy. It is important to
recognize that the turnover of principals and counselors, increased in this era of dramatic budget cuts, can result in sudden reductions in administrative support for a program like Humanitas, with which the new staff may be unfamiliar. Several people suggested that the coordinator needs to meet with the principal and counselor on a regular basis, perhaps 15 minutes a week, to review relevant decisions and make sure that concerns are dealt with as they arise.

As mentioned above, LAEP tries to influence counselors in a couple of ways: through a joint meeting of counselors and principals each year to review the program and their roles in it, and through a joint meeting of principals and counselors of new schools with those from the Teacher Center or with Anstead and Johnson. It might be useful to have regular, one-on-one inservice for counselors where they can learn about Humanitas and effective strategies for counseling, enrolling students, and scheduling courses.

Some of the Humanitas coordinators or teams supplement LAEP’s efforts to educate counselors with other meetings of their own or by inviting counselors to participate in Humanitas activities. At one school the team has a lunch at the beginning of each semester including the counselors and administrators as well as the students. The teachers also give the students an assignment each semester that involves talking to the counselors and administrators to be sure that some interaction occurs and that counselors understand the program and see the positive effects on the students.

The counselors interviewed all claimed that they felt the program has positive effects on students. One indicated her respect for the program in the following comments:

I love that program. I've put a lot of kids in there because of the nurturing environment. It's a very kind, gentle environment, especially for a youngster who is just coming out of ESL or who I consider at risk, where if they're in a regular program, they may get lost, that they won't come to school. They'll just stop coming to school. And I've seen kids go into the Humanitas Program that were on the verge of dropping out and because those teachers were on the phone saying, "Where are you? You were not in fourth period yesterday." And the kids respond to this, they know somebody's looking for them. Only two of the kids I've put in the program have not been successful, and it was because they just quit coming to school. And in
both cases it was a personal issue, not the program. ... Sometimes they don't want to be in the program because it conflicts with an elective, but I make them stay in for three weeks, because I know if I can get them to stay in that long, the camaraderie of the group will hook them in. They know those teachers care about them. It makes them a person all of a sudden, of value. Especially a kid who is from another culture and is trying to understand both cultures.

**Teachers as risk-takers, scholars, and nurturers of students.** Humanitas requires teachers who are willing to take risks, are knowledgeable about their subject and willing to learn about other subjects, and able to patiently nurture a wide variety of students, many of whom have had poor educational histories. Team teaching by its very nature subjects teachers to peer criticism of both their knowledge and pedagogical skills.

According to one very experienced teacher, someone on each team has to have a good sense of overview of the content, and teachers need to develop strength in their own subject matter in order to provide the kind of rich, interdisciplinary, thematic curriculum that is the hallmark of the program. This may take several years to develop since many teachers have not been trained to give concentrated thought to curriculum or to the ideas they are teaching. This veteran teacher commented:

You have to know enough to question your colleagues about what they want to put in essay questions and the curriculum. Our essay questions are better (at this school) because at least our lead teachers have been here awhile so we have more knowledge and we can really question each other about what the theme and question are about.

As one teacher noted:

Most of the teachers who come through here (Teacher Center) are dependent on curriculum guides and texts, so they have a retarded sense of content and have no philosophy to guide them. There must be a series of leaders in the classroom at each level who are continually guiding each team ... that's where the mentor teacher money should go.

California provides a well respected curriculum framework in history and social science which teachers must follow, but they certainly have flexibility in what they cover and emphasize. Although it may take time and several inservice opportunities before Humanitas teachers realize how much
freedom they have to define and create their own curriculum, when they do embrace this right, a serious issue arises, as pointed out by Golding: To what extent should Humanitas teachers have free rein in deciding what to teach? How can they indulge their own personal passions yet still cover important content or viewpoints? While teachers’ passions about ideas and values enliven and enrich the curriculum, to what extent do they also restrict it? On the other hand, as Anstead noted, using "teacher-proof" curriculum leaves much to be desired. One of the strengths of Humanitas is the motivation to teach and learn that is kindled by the freedom to link learning and teaching to personal meaning and passion.

The theme packets we (at Cleveland) have developed are a result of our going through a long thought process. Getting this packet is okay but not sufficient. Teachers need to rewrite it and make it their own, to recognize the significance of these issues for today's kids. If they fall in love with these ideas, they will go beyond the set of essay questions and make the theme their own. If they are not interested in the ideas, the packet is useless—the same as external texts.

Humanitas teachers also need to have a dedication to nurture the potential scholar in all students. A counselor at one school noted that Humanitas teachers tend to have a special concern for students, and she suggested that perhaps such teachers tend to seek out the Humanitas Program and want to work together. As one teacher put it:

The kids sort of fight with you kind of all along the way because it's so different. It's not so much more work but different. They have to think, and they can't just memorize it for a multiple-choice test. It makes them mad. 'What kind of program is this? Why don't we have textbooks?' You have to continually address it. They don't like to work in groups. They would rather do it on their own. But the following year, the kids who complained last year really seem to miss those things if they're not in the program: working in groups, making the conceptual connections between classes. Every single student from last year wanted to continue in the program this year. So most of the pats come from the kids.

Several people interviewed also noted the value of having some Humanitas teachers in the district who have been the pioneers of the project, who have tremendous dedication and esprit, and who serve as an inspiration to others. Such teachers provide a kind of informal leadership function that is
useful at coordinators' meetings, Teacher Centers, summer academics, and in dealing with LAEP and the district administrators.

**Teamwork.** Principals, coordinators, and teachers noted another key element for success: a team of teachers with complementary talents who can and want to work closely together. Humanitas teachers do a lot of planning with one another and with the students. Yet changing the traditional, isolated existence of teachers is very difficult. Humanitas teachers noted that a team is much like a marriage, requiring:

- dedication to common goals;
- time to work together to develop the program itself (articulate goals for students and the team/program, develop themes and supporting curriculum ideas, materials, activities, and assessments; develop and share pedagogical methods; evaluate student outcomes);
- time to develop rapport among the members;
- compromises, flexibility, tolerance of differences.

Several teachers mentioned that one of the major barriers to a successful program is teachers who do not want to work with others or take risks by moving beyond the safe, traditional textbooks and prepared lesson plans. One coordinator described the time her team spent planning the first year:

> When you have multiple preparations each day, it takes a great deal of time to plan instruction and assessment and grade the essays. In our first year we met a couple hours every Friday afternoon, about one weekend day a month, plus our common conference period every day. ... Not every teacher is willing to do this.

Several teachers noted the difficulties of trying to be in two or more teams at once (like "multiple marriages"), and some mentioned it was important to share certain characteristics, such as all team members being smokers or non-smokers. They also provide a sort of balance for each other of creativity and reality. Team members frequently "hang out" with each other rather than with other faculty. The bonding that occurs slowly over time as they plan together, share their ideas, and dare to reveal their lack of knowledge makes them feel safer with and more accepted by teammates. They also tend to take care of each other. For example, they will give each other feedback when they feel one is in danger of burning out.
Teachers felt it would be hard to mandate that the program be expanded to an entire school or district due to the many teachers who do not want to work with others as closely as is required. Because of the self-selection of nearly all Humanitas teachers, they are the ones who enjoy teaming and like to discuss substantive issues. They know first hand how much work and emotional effort it takes, and they know that many of their non-Humanitas colleagues either would not choose to participate or would be difficult to work with. Isaacs noted that a few principals had tried to assign teachers to the program with poor results. He agreed that participation should be voluntary but said that principals may want to recruit certain teachers whom they feel would be particularly well-suited to it.

Most of those interviewed praised the value of group planning, retreats, Teachers Centers, and the summer academy in bringing the teams together. As one teacher put it:

Two weeks at the summer academy really helped us get to know each other. It would have been really difficult if we had not known each other before school started. Our original coordinator just picked people she liked, and then we got to know each other.

Several people asked whether the program could repeat the retreat of the first year so that teams would have to "re-enlist" to remain a Humanitas school. This would entail scrutinizing their purpose and re-establishing commitment and a sense of mission. This approach worked several years ago to forge the teams through the application and planning process itself. One principal who had participated in the original retreat commented that it played a key part in the program. He felt it was important that they all went away together, not just downtown to meet at the LAEP offices, somewhere they could think more creatively and flexibly. Unfortunately, a retreat requires considerable funds, which are unlikely to be available in future.

Several teachers also pointed out the invaluable contribution of an effective coordinator who coordinates the various teams at a school and communicates well with the teams, the principal and counselors, coordinators outside the school, and LAEP/district Humanitas Program directors. The coordinator, if an effective leader, can set the mission, professional tone, and pace for the teams.
Teacher training. There was unanimous agreement among those interviewed that the Teacher Centers help train teachers. For example, Isaacs remarked that one school’s teachers were amazed at what resident teachers were doing with students at one of the Teacher Centers and promptly expanded and enriched their program at their own school. Several people made the equally important point that lasting and significant change requires frequent, continual exposure to new ideas and opportunities to practice with constructive feedback. One resident teacher at a Teacher Center suggested that teachers could benefit from "living in" with a Teacher Center team for more than the current 5-day experience and from having multiple follow-up experiences to validate and reinforce what they have learned and are beginning to apply in their own classrooms.

In addition, the Humanitas model is more outcome-based than typical teaching, with its emphasis on getting the students to understand the interdisciplinary connections inherent in the chosen theme. Unfortunately, most teachers have been taught to "cover the text." Hence, it takes a real paradigm shift for many teachers to move away from this approach and towards a goal of achieving specified student outcomes.

Few teachers can write good end-of-unit essay questions after only a week at the Teacher Center. They have not had any prior background in thinking about essays as assessment, thinking in an interdisciplinary way, or focusing on what students should take away from a unit. So this approach is very new and difficult for them in several ways. Anstead noted that figuring out what would be an appropriate theme is very difficult for many teachers. They may be able to generalize about what a good essay question contains, but it is very difficult for them to actually generate good questions.

Teachers in general commented favorably on Humanitas in-service training and meetings, noting that the level of training quality and the attitude toward education in the Humanitas staff development is "much higher" than that provided through district training. One principal said that he had never heard teachers complain about having to attend "another stupid Humanitas meeting," implying that such comments were common with other sorts of training and meetings.
Quality control. As mentioned above, LAEP has concerns about the quality of the Humanitas Program and has implemented several quality control functions, including a new application procedure this year. Coordinators and teachers agreed that LAEP or a district staff person such as Golding serves a useful purpose to keep the program on track, help teams share and network across sites, encourage the "community of scholars," provide worthwhile in-service training opportunities, and encourage less accomplished teams or teachers to improve the program they offer. Teachers feel that the speakers and cultural events provided by LAEP are really valuable parts of the program. Clearly, however, the individual teachers and coordinators themselves do not have the time or incentive to maintain the program functions that LAEP has offered. A common theme among teachers interviewed was concern that district offices are subject to such "politics" that they prefer an outside agency such as LAEP house the oversight and quality control function.

School restructuring. Unfortunately, what often drives school decisions is expediency and tradition rather than consideration of what is best for students. A number of interviewees made the case that we need to consider restructuring the schools in a variety of ways to allow us to pursue our goals for students. Suggestions include: time for teachers for planning, professional development, and grading of complex, extended assignments; and establishment of an interdisciplinary department within a school.

Several teachers noted that most schools do not support the kind of teaching behavior advocated by Humanitas and similar programs. For example, essay writing is not emphasized in many high schools, and there is no real encouragement (professional, financial or social) for teachers to put in the time it takes to write good questions or develop other complex assignments and to read and grade the papers or projects.

Schools need to support the teachers who are willing to read 160 6-page essays every six weeks. I know the essays are really important opportunities for students to get their thoughts together, but I get no special rewards other than a period off, which is definitely helpful, but teachers who ask more from their students should be rewarded, not punished by being distanced from the rest of the faculty.
A number of teachers mentioned that Humanitas teachers need time to organize a team and maintain a thematic curriculum throughout the year. Least successful teams appear to be those who think they can implement the model without much team planning. Most teams have fought for a common conference period. It is important to note that in many schools they feel they had to "fight" for it rather be provided it as a necessary component of the program. In fact, due to district financial problems, Humanitas teachers (as well as other teachers, of course) are being asked to give up their planning periods to substitute for colleagues when money for regular substitutes runs out. Many Humanitas teachers give their own time and money to plan, study, work with students, and provide curricular materials, but one has to ask at what personal or health costs this is done and for how long they can or should sustain this. (This is a serious issue haunting the entire profession, not just the Humanitas Program.)

Another idea for restructuring the school to support the program more fully is to create a Humanitas department with its own chair and its own budget just like the other departments at the school. One teacher noted that most Humanitas teachers choose to spend their energy on their teams and the program rather than on their department.

Another aspect of restructuring that could benefit Humanitas students and teachers is a recognition at the post secondary level of the value of interdisciplinary studies. One teacher noted the lack of support for interdisciplinary education at the college level, which negatively impacts teachers' pre-service and in-service education. It also restricts the college majors open to students who graduate from the Humanitas Program, and can lead students to question the value of Humanitas as college preparation. There are frequent barriers and seldom any rewards or encouragement for the student who attempts an interdisciplinary major in college. Furthermore, Humanitas teachers who might like to increase their interdisciplinary understanding, develop interdisciplinary curricula, and obtain salary credits for such work at a local university during evening or summer classes are thwarted. One teacher mentioned that he would love to be able to work with a couple of university professors over the summer to develop thematic, interdisciplinary curriculum—and be able to receive salary credits for this
work. However, two barriers exist: the lack of interdisciplinary studies at the university and restrictions on the types of courses that earn credit for teachers.

District support. Anstead noted that he and LAEP had hoped the district would have provided a significant amount of leadership and support for Humanitas by now, but it has not been able to do so. LAEP has had to cover about two-thirds of the cost of the program. Of course everyone hopes the budget crisis will end shortly, but this seems unlikely given the current economic climate. Isaacs remarked that the fact that the district is currently sustaining the program at some level means that there is support, acceptance, and institutionalization of the program despite severe financial constraints.

Since the beginning there seems to have been some influential person at the district who was particularly supportive of the program. In the beginning it was the head of the Division of Instruction, who was in on the original planning. Unfortunately, there has been considerable turnover during the past six years, including three district superintendents and three heads of the Division of Instruction. For the past several years Dan Isaacs, Assistant Superintendent of the Senior High Schools Division, has been extremely supportive according to virtually everyone interviewed. He provides support through his leverage with principals, but he is only one person and his powers are limited. For example, he was able to help free up frozen funds at times but was able to do little to ameliorate the threat of teachers being transferred to different schools. According to principals, Isaacs always mentions something related to Humanitas at his meetings with principals and encourages them to support the program at their schools. He also invites Humanitas teachers to speak to the group about their goals and results, which helps the principals to understand the program better and to see options in the way the program is implemented in different sites.

Summary

The Center for the Study of Evaluation conducted numerous interviews of Humanitas Program participants to document how the program has become institutionalized over the past six years and to identify key elements in a successful program. The essential elements of Humanitas are:

- Thematic, interdisciplinary, writing-based curriculum which engages and challenges students;
• Coring of students around classes to build a "community of learners" and a support system of students and teachers who know, are involved with, and care about each other.

The Humanitas Program currently exists in 37 of the 49 regular high schools in LAUSD (about 75%), involving about 267 teachers and 4500 students. About 50 middle school teachers have also been trained in the model, and innovations are occurring at that level even as funding for fuller implementation is pending. Students served by the program represent the full range of academic level, motivation, and demographics of the district, and the program has become known for its success with students who have limited English proficiency, a background of failure in school, or appear otherwise at risk of dropping out of school. This success is attributed to the rapport and caring of the team or "family" of teachers and students who work together as well as to the interdisciplinary, thematic approach to instruction, which seems to improve motivation as well as the learning process itself.

Despite demonstrated success with students and positive impact on faculty morale and professionalism, the financial straits of the district appear to pose a significant threat to the future of the program as outside start-up funding from LAEP dwindles. Anticipating the need for a transition in support, LAEP has used a number of strategies to encourage the school system and its members to embrace the program, such as sending evaluation reports and recognition to the Board of Education and senior management. LAEP has had a plan for gradually shifting the financing of the program to the district, but unfortunately the district has not been able to provide as much support as expected due to the severe budget problems of the last couple of years. However, the district continues to be interested in the program and to provide about a third of the support needed. The Assistant Superintendent of the Senior High Schools Division, Dan Isaacs, has been a strong supporter of the program for several years and has used his monthly principals' meetings and division newsletter to encourage principals' support and understanding of the program. LAEP has also held annual meetings with principals and counselors to gain their support and more fully explain their role in a successful program. LAEP has also tried to provide more personal help to principals and counselors through the Teacher Centers and problem-solving visits to individual schools. Perhaps in future they might try to provide even
more explicit models of how to solve the common scheduling problems that many schools have faced.

LAEP has also provided extensive training and models of high quality work for teachers through a menu of summer academies, technical assistance, workshops, evening meetings and cultural events, and the three Teacher Centers. For the most part these efforts have been very successful, although many teachers seem reluctant to take full responsibility and initiative for their own professional development and support system, perhaps reflecting the limited time and resources available to them. LAEP plans to increase its efforts to encourage Humanitas teachers to network in the coming year so that they will be as self-sufficient and independent as possible. Perhaps internal checks on curriculum and instructional quality can be built into this networking system.

Clearly, six years of extensive training opportunities for teachers, principals, and counselors have resulted in lasting effects on many teachers' classroom pedagogy, despite school conditions hostile to innovative, time-consuming instructional methods. Furthermore, the program has also had an impact on the school restructuring plans of nearly a dozen schools to date, which are building elements of Humanitas into their school programs.

Interviews of Humanitas Program participants highlighted eight features that are critically important in making this kind of program successful:

- Principals deeply committed to the program;
- Counselors who understand and value the program;
- Teachers who are risk-takers, scholars, team players, and nurturers of students' talents;
- Teams of teachers dedicated to common goals, with sufficient planning and preparation time, who enjoy working together;
- Excellent and continuous professional training opportunities;
- Quality control mechanisms;
- Supportive school environment: time and rewards for good teaching; and appropriate decisions about recruiting, enrollment, scheduling, and so forth; and
- Supportive district environment: funding for curricular materials, community field trips, professional development time, and good coordination of the program at the school site and across schools.

Aspects of the Humanitas Program will no doubt live on in the teaching of many of the program's finest teachers whatever the district's financial future brings. However, the program has had such a positive effect on so many students and teachers over the past six years that one would hope to see sufficient support for the program that it could continue in its current form and even grow throughout the middle schools as well.