



May 23, 1968

To Members of the Faculty:

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Jerrold R. Zacharias as the Director of the Education Research Center of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, effective June 1, 1968. Dr. Zacharias will succeed Dr. Robert I. Hulsizer, Jr., who wishes to devote most of his time to teaching in the Department of Physics and to research in the Laboratory for Nuclear Science.

The Education Research Center was started in 1960 as the Science Teaching Center by Dr. Francis L. Friedman and Dr. Zacharias in order to facilitate innovation and experimentation for the improvement of content and teaching of science courses at the college level. Dr. Friedman, the Center's first Director, was deeply involved in plans, with many members of the Physics Department, for new undergraduate physics courses until his untimely death in 1962. A growing staff, under the direction of Dr. Anthony P. French, has been carrying this work forward. Dr. Zacharias became acting director of the Science Teaching Center until Dr. Hulsizer joined the M.I.T. faculty in 1964 and accepted the directorship.

Between 1962 and 1968, the program was expanded in several directions. The reform of science courses included some attention to other sciences as well as physics. In addition to texts, films, and laboratory experiments and demonstrations, the experimental program dealt with computer aids to learning, such as direct visual representation of complex molecules and computer-generated animated films representing phenomena in nuclear and quantum physics. Progress has been made toward programming the computer to carry on a dialogue with students. And substantially increased attention was given to the psychological reactions of students to the courses that they take at M.I.T. and to the psychosocial environment which M.I.T. provides.

Clearly the number of problems in education that a center for research in education should take up is countless, but equally clearly the effective focus of any one group of people on such problems requires careful selection and balance, taking account of need, human capability, and funds. The primary intent of the Center is to provide a focal point for faculty and departmental interests in educational research, to participate in the development of new educational materials and to make available at M.I.T. a level of facilities and support which otherwise could not exist for educational experimentation. In particular, one aim of the Center is to stimulate cooperative programs among the various departments.

The Director of the Center will be assisted in his operations by a small group of active participants who will provide leadership in specific areas. This group will consist of

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Dr. French, whose responsibility will be largely with reform of course materials, especially in the sciences; Dr. Benson R. Snyder, who will deal primarily with the study of the students and the faculty in their environment; Dr. J. C. R. Licklider, who will be concerned with uses of computers in education, both as the objects of study in the field of computer science and engineering and as an aid to teaching and learning in other fields. In this work, in which the Education Research Center will interact closely with other M.I.T. computer activities, he will be joined by Dr. Hulsizer.

In addition to his activities as director of the Center, Dr. Zacharias will be involved in the preparation of materials in mathematics, natural science, and social science aimed at the student who may not become a professional scientist or engineer. Dr. Zacharias will continue to be a vice president of the Educational Development Center of Newton, which has had a long association with M.I.T., involving many groups of faculty members of M.I.T. (including those in the Education Research Center), in the area of education innovation, beginning with the P.S.S.C. physics course.

Jerome B. Wiesner  
Provost