



# To Effect Change in Teacher Preparation

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**A** NOTABLE attempt to break down the discontinuities that have traditionally existed when colleges of arts and sciences, education departments, and the public schools have operated separately in their responsibility for the training of teachers is now in its second year of progress. Funded by the U.S. Office of Education, the Triple T Project (Trainers of Teacher Trainers) at Washington University, St. Louis, seeks to unite scholars, both experienced and preservice teachers, school administrators, and persons in the community in a coordinated effort to combine their unique talents and influences to effect change in teacher preparation.

One major coordinating effort of the Washington University Triple T Project was to establish a new professional role—the “Clinical Associate.” A clinical associate is an experienced public school teacher whose career identification is with the schools, but who now assumes university responsibilities for teacher preparation. An important function of the clinical associate is to coordinate preservice and in-service teacher training programs using a public school designated as a Triple T teaching center as a base of operation.

This article describes a series of related

programs which focus on the specifics of the “teaching act,” and which emphasize the role of the clinical associate. Although programs within each teaching center vary according to the many factors characteristic of the school and community, all clinical associates participate in activities designed to bring university and school expertise to bear on three levels involved in teacher training.

## Targets of Triple T

The three levels of teacher training, or targets of the TTT Project, are distinct, but not isolated, from one another. Single T's are conceived as preservice students including interns or novice teachers in their first year of teaching. Double T's are experienced teachers who serve as cooperating teachers training single T's during their practice teaching. Double T's include those who participate in implementing innovations which involve teacher retraining activities within the school or district. Triple T's are those who have been identified as the Trainers of Trainers of Teachers and include doctoral candidates and

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professors in the department of social sciences and in the foundations areas.

Clinical associates serve on the double T level as they work with preservice people and on the triple T level as they work with cooperating teachers. Perhaps the unique feature of the total TTT Program at Washington University is that people can be operating at different levels at different times. The tendency to break down the barriers of hierarchical control is maximized, and teams formed as task forces can function and work together most effectively without regard to the sometimes stifling restrictions of assumed lines-of-command. Freedom of interaction is thus fostered.

As one of the clinical associates, my goal was to develop a close-working relationship between my two elementary teaching centers, Blackberry Lane and Nathaniel Hawthorne schools in University City, and the university.

One of our first activities was an intensive examination of teaching skills by teams comprised of all three Ts. The development of collegial relations was stressed. With instructional help from a visiting professor from New Zealand, Clifford Wright, Triple T central staff member, elementary clinical associates were trained in the micro-teaching pattern. A multiplier effect was utilized to extend the proficiencies the micro-teaching techniques try to develop.

The program was carried on during team planning time, lunch time, school time provided by coverage of class by team partner, and after-school workshops. Teams of six or eight in-service teachers, student teachers, clinical associate, professor, and occasionally the principal of the building joined to view and discuss materials geared to teach an isolated teaching skill.

Then subteams of two (an experienced teacher and a novice teacher) jointly planned a ten-minute lesson, focusing on the application of that specific skill. This lesson was videotaped as taught by each teacher individually to a small group of six to eight students. Joint viewing for critique purposes was aided by specific feedback forms pertinent to the acquisition of the skill. The lesson

was then jointly replanned on the basis of the feedback forms, retaught, and retaped.

These final lessons were critiqued by the total team. All levels of T's-scholars worked simultaneously with an open attitude toward peer critique, thus bringing about not only improvement in the instructional act through skill performance, but growth in personalized interaction. In addition, cooperating teachers evidenced growth in their ability to verbalize precisely concerning specifics of the teaching act to student teachers and experienced teachers alike. Using this model of professional training, another elementary clinical associate and I prepared materials on additional skills for subsequent use this year.

Similar attitudes of professional analysis of teaching were sought when a university instructor came into the teaching centers to teach units of a new social studies curriculum. He achieved both the analysis of the curriculum and the training of teachers for innovative curriculum change by using the skills of all concerned in a close functioning team.

Selected classroom teachers, practice teachers, clinical associates, and graduate students observed and took extensive field notes.

Tim Tomlinson, co-author of the Berlak-Tomlinson elementary curriculum project and now director of the TTT Project, did pilot teaching of a social studies unit four days a week for six weeks to fourth and fifth grade students. The classroom teacher, and/or practice teachers, and/or clinical associate taught the same lesson to a different class that afternoon. Each Friday, those who had been involved in the week's lessons met and analyzed that segment of the unit. In this way, a commitment to seek critique from all three levels of Ts was realized, providing the professor with insight from experienced teachers who ultimately will handle the material. The teachers came away with firsthand knowledge of the complexities of curriculum writing and implementation.

Recognizing the validity of the role of the experienced teacher in teacher preparation, TTT established a special course in Supervision Techniques in the following

semester. Alan Tom and a subcommittee of the TTT Project, including those clinical associates interested in the supervision aspect of training teachers, created and implemented a departure from the usual university course. The fully accredited course was developed to meet the need of cooperating teachers in the teaching centers as they worked with practice teachers and also those involved in direct retraining of teachers for curriculum change. The course was designed to provide maximum opportunities for practice in the field. Weekly sessions alternated between total group meetings at the university and small groups in individual teaching centers. With an emphasis on communication models, various approaches to supervision were studied and discussed in the university classes. The participants then applied the techniques studied in the teaching centers. Video tapes of these supervisory conferences were used for critique in both the field settings and university sessions.

## Theory and Practice

The cycle set up, in which there is no dichotomy between theory and practice, works in another way also. Many students have been placed in the teaching centers as participant observers through their course work. For instance, students in Educational Psychology or The American School work as teaching assistants one-half day a week in lieu of a class session. As they report their experiences to the professor at the university, these scholars are able to react to real situations and relate practice to theory.

A significant problem that has existed in the preparation of preservice teachers is the gap between the theoretical and practical. If we view the theoretical as represented by the university scholar and the practical as represented by the school people, the Washington University Elementary Social Studies Methods course can be seen as an attempt to close this gap.

The emphasis on practical application inherent in the TTT Supervision class is clearly apparent here. Tim Tomlinson, Jean Young, another elementary clinical associate,

and I assumed responsibility for team teaching this preservice course, at the beginning of the second year of the project. Students examined the basic philosophical considerations which govern the development of social studies programs, and which assist teachers and curriculum people in the decision-making process. These considerations were not viewed in the abstract but rather in the context of traditional social studies programs and new models for social studies curricula.

After extensive analysis, including the observations and discussions of videotaped models of social studies curriculum and instruction, students were involved in a short but intensive teaching experience. Pairs of students jointly planned a lesson, conferred with one of the course instructors, and then taught in one of the teaching centers observed by the same instructor. In some cases, these sessions were audiotaped. Critique sessions followed each lesson and then the analysis of the experiences, both the teaching and the critique, was shared with the total class.

Similar teaching efforts provided a closely supervised field experience for these same students in the Reading Methods course. Three clinical associates worked with Joan Beaning to utilize the Blackberry Lane Teaching Center. Students worked with an individual child whom they tested and analyzed as to interests, needs, etc.; they then devised a lesson especially for that child. Clinical associates were used to confer about lesson plans and observe the teaching experiences. Dr. Beaning also served as consultant for operationalizing in-service efforts in both University City teaching centers in individualizing instruction in reading.

These professors in education and scholars in other disciplines act as osmotic agents as they influence the clinical associates and all who come in contact with the program. For it is not only the development of specific skills, techniques, and programs that results from this type of interaction. There is also a mutual appreciation between scholar and practitioner of shared goals, shared problems, and shared dedication. This may be the least obvious, yet the most long range influence of the Triple T Project. □

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