

# *The Dynamic Duo: A Two-Intern Model*

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"I like it."

"It has been a lifesaver to us."

"We want to continue it."

"We'll even use our own funds to pay for it."

THESE were some of the comments recently made by superintendents of five rural mountain school districts located in the shadows of the Smoky Mountains. Within the past few years these school districts, in cooperation with Western Carolina University, have been participating in a unique transitional team teaching program. The program was initially financed and implemented by both local education agencies and the federal government. School officials have been pleased with the project and feel that its progress was primarily due to the high motivation and exemplary performance of the participants. Also, school children were recipients of numerous benefits from the program. Teachers and other school officials are vitally interested in continuing a refined version of the program after the limited amount of federal funds is removed this year.

What is so different or interesting about this program? What would motivate local school districts with extremely limited funds to continue the program and assume total

financial responsibility for it? Keep in mind that these are rural Appalachia school districts that operate under low tax structures and have limited resources. All of these districts can afford to pay teachers only the minimum state teaching salary.

Let us briefly examine the background of this situation. A few years ago Western Carolina University and certain local school districts implemented a Teacher Corps program in the rural mountainous region of North Carolina. It was the intent of the participants to secure federal funds that could be used as seed money to stimulate educational program development, not financial support to gain publicity or to be labeled as an "innovative" institution.

The emphasis of the project for the first three years was on providing opportunities for meaningful educational experiences for the deprived mountain school children. University and local school officials indicated their satisfaction with the results of the program.

### **A Model for the Future**

One noticeable outgrowth of the earlier program was the desire to initiate and develop an effective educational model for the

future. Such a model would assist the local schools by providing competent new teachers to the field. It would also assist the university by providing innovative and relevant teacher education experiences for aspiring teachers. After many thoughtful planning sessions and hard work, a new model was developed by concerned individuals and agencies.

An exciting teacher education program was initiated. This unique experimental project was developed in cooperation with six rural mountain school systems in Western North Carolina. It was initiated through the joint efforts and contributions of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the School of Education and Psychology at Western Carolina University, six North Carolina county school districts (Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain, and Transylvania), and the Teacher Corps.

The pilot program was designed to develop effective staff utilization on an experimental basis in 10 intermediate or middle grade schools (grades 4 through 9). The State Board of Education was very interested in this program because the board had approved new certification requirements and teacher education programs for intermediate education.

This project was the first transitional program in the nation to grow out of the Teacher Corps. It was transitional in that the State Department of Public Instruction and local school systems took a national leadership posture by initially assuming approximately 50 percent of the financing of

the program. Heretofore, federal funds had provided 90 percent financing and the state's share had been 10 percent.

The financial arrangements concerning this model were quite revolutionary. At the outset, local schools planned to assume total financial responsibility for the program after federal resources were used to initiate the program and refine it.

The best example concerning financial responsibility can be found in the way the teachers' salaries were handled. During the first year of service the salary for each teaching position, as established by the state and local education agencies, was divided between two interns. This salary, which amounted to approximately 60 percent of the interns' salary, was paid from state and/or local funds. The remaining 40 percent was provided by Teacher Corps.

In the second year of teaching, the state salary for each teaching position was increased by approximately \$1,000. The increase was based on a new state salary schedule and the teaching experience of the interns. This salary was again split between two interns. Federal funds were used to make up the difference between the amounts paid from state and/or local funds and the amounts which were due the interns in salary increases (\$75 to \$90 per week) and dependency allowances. During the second year, the school system's share was approximately 80 percent.

## The Teaching Teams

The two interns joined a teaching team for two full years of teaching service. There were 10 teams and 20 interns at the start of the pilot project. Each team was usually composed of:

1. A team leader (an experienced and competent teacher in the school system with a master's degree)
2. Two interns (Teacher Corps members with a bachelor's degree in fields other than education)
3. One or more student teachers each quarter (Western Carolina University education majors completing their bachelor's degree)



Interns in team teaching receive helpful supervision from experienced teachers.

4. Teacher aides (members of the team when made available by the principal)

5. Regular classroom teachers and their students (teachers instructing the same grade level or subjects in the pilot school).

It should be noted that team leaders occupied individual state or locally allotted teaching positions, and their basic salaries, as established by the state, were paid from state and/or local funds. Each leader received a \$500 supplement from the Teacher Corps but was required to take certain courses at the university which he paid for from his own funds. Since each team member received compensation commensurate with his competencies, the beginnings of differentiated staffing arrangements were introduced.

The team gained its strength through the variety of experiences and professional training of its members. One member would be strong in language arts, another in math and/or science, and the third in social studies. With the help of the experienced team leader and through team planning, presentation, and evaluation, each member had the opportunity to try many methods, teach in a variety of subject areas, and work with many sized groupings of children.

The number of students which each team was responsible for ranged from 40 to 120. Each team was assigned to the equivalent of two to four traditional size classrooms. Creative use also was made of other existing facilities throughout the school, such as gyms, stages, storage areas, offices, hallways, vacant classrooms, outdoor areas, and even the principal's office.

The students' ages and grade levels



The two-intern model sensitizes students to the talents of different teachers.

varied within each school. Some teams taught entire grade levels, while others instructed the equivalent of three grade levels or portions of one grade level. These arrangements also served as a vehicle to examine the rigid grade level systems and to provide a way to incorporate nongraded systems into the school program. In order to meet the needs of each student, the teams began to use large group instruction methods, discussion group activities, small group study sessions, and independent study for remedial work or individual research.

## Feedback and Revision

The pilot program operated for two academic years and two summers. Continuous feedback processes were in evidence, and periodical revisions and refinements were made during these years. School officials in one county (Haywood) were encouraged by the program, and implemented a refined ver-

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Teaching teams utilize large group, small group, and independent study approaches.

sion of the pilot program in 1970-71. This was primarily due to the progress of the pilot program and the numerous benefits received by the children, teachers, schools, and the university.

A capsule summary of the new model that was operated cooperatively between the university and the school district follows.

Education majors elected at the end of their junior year to become interns for their senior year. They were screened by the Student Teaching Department staff at the university and interviewed by local school officials. These aspiring teachers then entered into a special contractual arrangement with the local school district and agreed to teach for a full school year as interns. There were two interns assigned to a teaching team, which included one master teacher (team leader) and one other regular teacher. Eight teams were organized and housed in a new seventh and eighth grade school which was designed for eight team teaching areas of instruction. The school district split a regular teacher's salary, and each intern received the equivalent of one-half of a beginning teacher's salary.

During the year the interns received helpful supervision and instructional support

at the model school from college supervisors, clinical professors, and fellow team members. Each intern completed the requirements for a teacher's certificate and received additional graduate credit during the remainder of the academic year. At the end of the year each intern had completed these courses: Fall Quarter—15 qtr. hrs. student teaching; Winter Quarter—3 qtr. hrs. graduate seminar; Spring Quarter—3 qtr. hrs. graduate seminar; and 3 qtr. hrs. elective.

Local and state education officials have been observing this arrangement and have endorsed this new model. Five other school districts are now planning to initiate or continue this model next year. One school has already inaugurated a similar model which is designed for graduate interns. Participants believe that the children, teachers, public schools, and the university will greatly benefit from such an experience.

The *children* will be exposed to the talents of different teachers and hopefully will participate in an individualized prescribed education program.

The *teachers* will discover that when they move out of their self-contained rooms and share materials, as well as ideas, education becomes more exciting and meaningful. Teachers are able to specialize in their areas of interest and their weaknesses are minimized.

The *school districts* will provide, with a minimum amount of expense, a more effective education program through the use of teaching teams and full year internships.

The *university* will gain by providing innovative and relevant teacher education experiences for aspiring teachers.

This paradigm is no substitute for hard work, and it is certainly not a panacea for all educational ills. Participants are excited about the effects this model is having on their schools. Hopefully, the new model will prove to be a success and schools and universities throughout the country will implement similar models.

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