

The Teaching Center Assists in Resource Use

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COLLEGES and universities, public schools, and sometimes state departments of education, in striving for relevant experiences in the preparation of teachers, are being driven toward deeper and deeper complementary relationships. A consortium approach, for example, is causing greater emphasis to be placed on the development of teaching centers.

Diverse functions of teaching centers make definition difficult. Most teaching centers concentrate on student teaching, attempting to provide a higher quality of student teaching experiences. Examples of such centers are the Multi-Institutional Kanawha County Student Teaching Center¹ and the Metro-Atlanta Teacher Education Center.² Some teaching centers facilitate programs which correlate methods courses as closely as possible with student teaching, the primary objective being to fuse theory and practice.

Perhaps the greatest impact of these centers is being felt in that educational no man's land, the gap between theory and prac-

tice. Methods courses taught on the site concurrently with classroom observations and student teaching help bridge this gap. BRUTEPE, a cooperative venture of the State University of New York, College of Brockport, and the City School District of Rochester, New York,³ is an example of such a center, as are the Wayne State University—Detroit Public Schools Teaching Centers⁴ and the Elementary Participation Program of the University of Wyoming and Laramie County School District Number One of Cheyenne, Wyoming.⁵

In any case, the teaching center be-

³ Colden B. Garland and Dorothy E. Foster. "BRUTEPE: A Response to Dr. Aspy's 'Maslow and Teachers in Training.'" *The Journal of Teacher Education* 23 (17): 47-49; Spring 1972.

⁴ "Wayne State University—Detroit Public Schools Teaching Center Models." Detroit: Wayne State University and Detroit Public Schools, 201 Mackenzie Hall, n.d.

⁵ Arnold L. Willems. "Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice—The Pilot Participation Program in Cheyenne." *Wyoming Education News* 38 (6): 16-17, 26-27; February 1972.

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¹ Kathryn Maddox. "Multi-Institutional Kanawha County Student Teaching Center." Charleston, West Virginia: Kanawha County Board of Education, 200 Elizabeth Street, n.d. 12 pp.

² Charles K. Franzen. "The Metro-Atlanta Teacher Education Center Model." Atlanta: Atlanta Area Teacher Education Service, n.d. 6 pp.

comes most meaningful when it functions as the agency responsible for increasing the utilization of all available resources in the teacher education process. Among many advantages, the utilization of indigenous human and physical resources is perhaps the key to the unique success of the teaching center. Effective use of these resources increases the responsibility and somewhat changes the role of the college supervisor or, in some cases, a resident faculty member who is assigned to the center. This person is often designated as center director.

Certainly the center director's role is extended and made more complex than that of the traditional college supervisor. No longer is he merely an observer and evaluator of student teachers. He may teach methods courses. He is involved more than ever with public relations. Most important, his tasks as teaching center director include identification of physical and human resources and planning and coordinating their effective use.

The center director must know the community well. A thorough knowledge of its physical facilities is of great importance. Institutions, both public and private, are potential contributors of needed resources. Museums, industry, state and local public libraries, and welfare agencies can contribute unique and valuable services. For example, state libraries and museums can contribute specialized materials about state and regional history. Welfare agencies can provide information concerning the social background of the schools' children and youth and the relationship of the school to the community.

The public school system may make available for teaching center use its professional library and curriculum materials center, which may include professional books and journals, films, filmstrips, textbooks, kits, games, and various other instructional aids. If the public school system has a television studio, it can be utilized by university students for micro-teaching. Video tapes produced by public school educators and university instructors can be an invaluable aid in methods classes and in-service programs. Public school systems may provide

classrooms for student teaching seminars and methods instruction in one or more of their school buildings.

If, as in some cases, the teaching center is a separate entity with its own physical structure containing offices, classrooms, and library, public school and community personnel may avail themselves of these resources. Classrooms can be utilized for seminars, adult education classes, and extension courses. The community may borrow audio-visual equipment, such as video-tape recorders, and use the center's professional library. The use of physical facilities, then, can and should be a two-way street, with both the public and the teaching center gaining mutual benefits. A true sharing of resources enhances the educational experiences of all concerned.

The center director must have a good understanding of the people of the community, including their social, economic, and cultural differences. Effective lines of communication must be developed and maintained with the various agencies which contribute resources. The teaching center concept cannot be imposed upon a public school system and community by the university. It is essential that teachers and administrators, along with community representatives, be involved in cooperative planning.

The teaching center is in the favored position of having available practically unlimited human resources. As succinctly stated by Edward C. Pomeroy:

The way is opening up for the use of new resources to make the education of new teachers more meaningful and more directly associated with the schools, where the action is.⁴⁵

Public school students, classroom teachers, librarians, curriculum specialists, audio-visual coordinators, administrators, and auxiliary personnel are usually happy and willing to share their capabilities in providing educational experiences for university students. Pupils may be available for micro-teaching and for demonstration lessons. For

⁴⁵ Edward C. Pomeroy, *Beyond the Upheaval*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, 1972. p. 14.

instance, these lessons may exemplify methods of fostering an inquiring attitude through problem solving and guided discovery.

Increasingly, classroom teachers are being called on to share their expertise, to assist in planning, and to present demonstration lessons. In addition to assisting in methods classes, they may open their classrooms for university students to observe inductive modes of teaching and learning, classroom environments which are pupil oriented rather than teacher oriented, organizational patterns such as open classrooms and schools and individualization of instruction, and the use of interest centers to facilitate the teaching-learning process. The feedback and criticisms of supervising teachers and involved principals can assist the teaching center director in upgrading the quality of the entire program.

Curriculum specialists or resource teachers may assist in making methods instruction practical and down-to-earth. Examples of such practical instruction at the elementary level could be in handwriting, how children learn to spell, creative writing tips, and an introduction to a variety of language arts materials. These specialists may open doors for university students to become involved in workshops, in-service programs, and meetings with publishers' representatives. A hiring official may discuss with university students what they may expect during a job interview and what the interviewer may consider as crucial factors for employment.

State departments of education and professional education associations may contribute additional specialized personnel. Certification requirements may be presented and justified by the state department, while education associations may present information on the professionalization of teachers. These organizations may also serve as invaluable sources for program feedback and interpretation of the various aspects of the teaching center's operation to their wider memberships. One way this can be accomplished is through their publications.

The teaching center should reciprocate by serving as a clearinghouse for university information. Information about enrollment,

transfer of credit, correspondence courses, extension classes, and adult education programs may be readily available. The teaching center may also provide university catalogs, class schedules, and calendars of university events.

Teaching center personnel may serve as off-campus advisors in helping students plan their programs of study. They may develop in-service programs and serve as consultants for the public school system. Again emphasis must be placed on cooperative planning, which allows all agencies involved to realize the potential uses of the vast array of human resources.

Moving Toward Reality

The concept of the teaching center improves teacher education through a more systematic identification, categorization, and utilization of the resources existing within an educational community. This enables teaching center programs to:

1. Move toward the fusion of theory and practice in methods courses and student teaching
2. Through a mutual sharing of resources, strengthen the bond of cooperation between public schools, colleges and universities, and the community
3. Allow input of public school people into teacher preparation programs
4. Encourage professors of education to change their orientation from the university setting to the real world of the public school classroom.

The teaching center is an emerging institution offering great promise for improvement in the education of teachers. It brings the university to the practitioner and the practitioner to the university. By bringing these two together, the teaching center makes more effective and beneficial use of the many resources available. This pooling of resources for the education of teachers is a move toward reality. The resources of colleges and universities, public school systems, and the community become the process and the crucible for teacher education. □

THROUGHOUT the past decade, the nation's schools were challenged by the disruptions in the social, political, legal, and economic structures of the society. Through the massive intervention of the federal government and private foundations, the purposes and processes of education were extensively redefined. Educational practice underwent close scrutiny. New approaches concerning the more effective use of time, space, technology, and staff were initiated.

Again and again, new instructional methods, new administrative procedures, and new roles to be played made their appearance. Most were inadequate and altered the educational scene only slightly, if at all. Changes were shortlived or quickly superseded. Today, education still revolves around the one-dimensional textbook and traditional roles of students, teachers, and administrators.

The demands of the 1970's suggest that continuing pressures will be brought upon the schools to implement meaningful programs of change which will contribute to the solution of the nation's problems.

New Identities

Anticipating these pressures, Glatthorn (1970) predicted the advent of learning disabilities specialists, affective education specialists, and even student ombudsmen. Joyce (1968) suggested teams of diagnosticians, facilitators, and remediators, all backed up by an administrator who orchestrated the support systems for the benefit of the learner. Horvat (1970) wrote about specialists in instructional technology and specialists in evaluation. However, these fantasies were merely wishful suggestions of how it ought to be. Not until recently has there been any real indication that such predictions might become operational.

Several educational role developments have created some optimism. The paraprofessional role has received a genuine trial and is now widely implemented. An evaluation of federally-assisted differentiated staffing projects revealed the emergence of



NEW TASKS

innovative roles in participating schools (Beard, DeBloois, and Foster, 1971). These roles were not idle musings about what should be, but well-written job descriptions, approved by boards of education and reflected on revised salary scales.

In Temple City, California, the role of senior teacher is in actual operation. The master teacher in the Norwood Elementary School, Miami, Florida, is diagnosing student needs, prescribing learning activities, and directing a team of semi-professional assistants. In Mesa, Arizona, the Lincoln Elementary School principal has kept the traditional title, but has adopted a role description which allows him to exercise a new type of leadership in coordinating the instructional program, rather than administering the school from the traditional position of power and authority. Clinical teachers are in existence at John Adams High School in Portland, Oregon.

At another level, universities and research and development laboratories are developing programs to train teachers for new instructional roles. A consortium consisting of Michigan State University, Syracuse University, the University of Southern California, and the United States Interna-

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