

# School-University Partnership for Teacher Growth

**Wendell M. Hough**

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*Various consortia involving schools and universities may emerge as the most promising response to pre- and in-service needs in education.*

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"SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY Partnership for Teacher Growth" seems to refer to such a natural and important relationship. One may wonder, then, why we are just recently creating and testing models that clearly are designed to satisfy such a mutual goal of improving learning. Modest proposals have been tried in the past, but these efforts have been sporadic and not sustaining.

Historically, departments and colleges of education have had almost exclusive responsibility for preservice education, and the schools have provided what in-service experiences have been available. Graduate degree programs have not, in the main, been designed to satisfy in-service needs of teachers and administrators. A speech here and there and brief consulting activities have been personally satisfying to professors and frequently well received, but really have had little chance for sustained impact.

Moreover, such activities, out of the context of some continuing relationship, run a high risk of being irrelevant, out of tune, and, at best, not helpful. With less and less money left available from the bargaining table for in-service education, the prospect of even minimal continuing education for teachers is dim without alternative models for delivering in-service activities. Furthermore, without such alternatives to bring the schools and colleges of education into truly collaborative relationships, the prospect of the colleges being something other than institutions "studying about" education is equally dim. Colleges cannot be responsive when their professors and their programs remain on the campus and the professors speak mainly to themselves and to classes of students.

## **Need for Parity in Relationships**

There is considerable evidence that past practices of the colleges and schools with regard to who is responsible for what are being changed. Good sense, economics, sur-

vival, recognition of need and of expertise, or for whatever reason, professionals in the colleges and schools are making greater efforts to join together on a parity basis to develop programs of preservice, in-service, and combination pre- and in-service which utilize the strengths of each.

Parity in programmatic decision making is a key to effective collaboration. Parity means, in this context, that personnel in the schools and the colleges have equal power in decision making and that programmatic decisions are made and implemented only when there is agreement. Important to this concept is an understanding of what institutions or individuals can do best in program development and implementation.

In a general sense, the colleges are equipped better than the schools to do research, and the schools are the adapters or adopters of innovation. However, even in the schema of research, development, dissemination, and adoption, in which one institution has greater capacity to carry out these respective activities, there needs to be considerable involvement and sharing of responsibility. Once this concept is clearly understood, accepted, and practiced by those who wish to collaborate, the possibility of effective programming and impact is greatly enhanced.

### **Programs Show Promise**

Many institutions are making efforts to provide a more viable program for improving learning for children. Several programs with which Wayne State University is affiliated are illustrative.

● *Interdisciplinary Teacher Education.* This is the principal undergraduate teacher preparation program initiated three years ago. Teams of professors and preservice teachers are assigned to schools on a continuing basis with a joint commitment by the schools and by the College to the preservice education of the student and in-service education of both the teachers and the professors. As a result, the credibility gap between the schools and the College has been greatly reduced.

● *Preservice-In-service Model.* Six to 12 student teachers are assigned to work in a school where 6-12 teachers have volunteered to work on their own professional development and to work with the student teachers. A College faculty member and a school supervisor are assigned to work as a team with the preservice teachers and the teacher. This model provides released time for teachers, opportunities to test new teaching strategies, time to plan, and a realistic setting for college personnel to be directly involved in the implementation of planned change.

● *Inter-Institutional Workshop.* In collaboration with several other universities and coordinated by the Wayne County Intermediate School District, Wayne State University offers graduate credit to groups of teachers and administrators of the 36 school districts in the County who successfully complete curriculum development activities within their own schools under the facilitating leadership of graduate faculty. This model has been extended to many parts of the state.

● *Inter-Institutional Research Seminar.* Professors from the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Wayne State University, three Detroit school administrators, and the Deputy Director of the Detroit Education Task Force comprise a faculty for doctoral students from the three universities who focus upon researchable problems relevant to Detroit school children. Meeting on the Wayne State campus, the program is strengthened by the parity arrangement between the professors and the Detroit school personnel serving as part-time faculty of the universities.

● *University-Intermediate (County) School District Office Collaboration with Local Districts.* In addition to the Inter-Institutional Workshop described above, the University, with part-time faculty from the Macomb Intermediate Office, offers specially-designed courses for the improvement of teaching and learning in local districts. Parity of programming and instruction occurs among the Intermediate School District,

the University, and local district leadership personnel.

● *Experimental Doctoral Program.* A second group of school administrators is pursuing doctoral study on sites closer to their position of responsibility. A greater effort is made to program academic study closer to the realities of administrative responsibility than is possible with a campus-based program. Although part of the doctoral program is campus-based, a substantial portion of the program is directed to the expressed needs of the participants.

Several other examples of collaboration are being planned and will be implemented. Others not yet conceived will be created because of a strong university-school commitment to joint programming for mutual benefit.

### What Are the Barriers?

There are many barriers to collaboration. One is that it is just hard work, and it takes time. Another is the difficulty of deploying resources from the schools and the College in the most efficacious way, utilizing the strengths of each.

With many of the "hang ups" and some of the institutional possessiveness of the past still present, there continue to be problems related to parity decision making. Bureaucratic structures make it very difficult to have co-equals in decision making, implementation, and responsibility for success and failure.

The question of institutional and academic integrity of credit programs is a serious one today and is under careful scrutiny,

particularly as a result of a proliferation of out-reach programs in a highly competitive market for in-service activities. There are agencies and institutions, both public and private, that today are responding to a perceived need for particular in-service, indeed degree, programs, and, in some cases, offering programs not adhering to traditional "academic standards." Because of this there is currently a great deal of discussion that could jeopardize legitimate, appropriate, and responsive in-service activities by colleges and universities.

There are some out-reach programs which lack academic integrity just as there are some academic programs which are irrelevant to the needs of teachers. Obviously it does not follow that responsive programs lack academic integrity. It is true, however, that the arguments ensuing from the question of academic integrity do get in the way of the school-university partnership and need early resolution.

A final concern in many states is the role and responsibility of the many public institutions in the partnership. Added to the school-university relationship is the involvement of state departments of education, intermediate or regional school district offices, regional offices of the U.S. Office of Education, and many local agencies with direct impact on the affairs of the schools. Various consortia involving schools and universities will likely emerge as the most promising response to pre- and in-service needs in education.

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## Future ASCD Annual Conferences

1975	March 15-19	New Orleans	Rivergate
1976	March 13-17	Miami Beach	Convention Center
1977	March 19-23	Houston	Civic Center
1978	March 4-8	San Francisco	Civic Center

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