

# A New Move Toward and In-Service Teacher

**C**AN preservice teacher education programs and in-service teacher education programs become integral parts of a planned continuum of educational professional development?

At the present time, the answer would appear to be "yes, but . . .!"

Yes, because the teacher preparation institutions faced with reduced student enrollment are exploring alternatives to some of their practices. Yes, because public schools are being faced with a greater demand for accountability and the resulting growing concern for improving the competencies of the teaching staff.

One evidence of the influence of these factors can be seen in the cooperative relationship that has been developed between public schools and teacher preparation institutions operating in Macomb County, Michigan. This relationship has resulted in the development of the Macomb County Teacher Education Council (MCTEC). The Council is made up of representatives from eight teacher preparation institutions, representatives from the 21 Macomb County school districts, and representatives from the Macomb County Intermediate School Dis-

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*A new, vital relationship has been created between the public schools and teacher preparation institutions in Macomb County, Michigan. The object of this is to ensure continuing improvement in teaching and learning practices.*

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trict. The purpose and the principles of MCTEC can be seen in this excerpt from the by-laws:

The MCTEC shall be considered to be a cooperating unit of the Michigan State M-Step Council. (Originally, a federally funded state supported program.)

*Purpose.* The purpose of this organization is to provide a structure for representative decision-making processes aimed at the ongoing improvement of teacher training within Macomb County. It is intended that MCTEC be an organization that is responsive to changing needs in teacher training while adhering to the following broad principles.

*Principles.* School districts and institutions by attaining membership in the Council signify their willingness to be guided by the following principles:

A. Commitment to increasing the degree of genuinely shared responsibility and authority

# Preservice Education

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for developing and implementing teacher training programs.

B. Commitment to development of teacher training programs with strong field experience emphasis.

C. Commitment to development of programs which embody a sequential series of field experiences of increasing responsibility which provide:

1. Genuine learning assistance to children,

2. A basis for self-screening or increased commitment to the teaching profession by the teacher trainee,

3. Exposure to a variety of social, cultural, racial, and ethnic factors which affect the teaching-learning situation.

D. Commitment to genuine reciprocity in sharing mutual resources of facilities, personnel, materials, and time.

E. Commitment to coordination and facilitation of information and paperwork which foster the principles above.

F. Commitment to ongoing evaluation and recommendations pertaining to the degree of attainment of the foregoing principles.

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MCTEC meets monthly during the school year and employs a variety of committees as well to conduct its business. The Council is in the process of establishing an Educational Professional Development Center and is seeking operational funds from the Michigan Department of Education.

The basic goal of this Educational Professional Development Center (EPDC) is to promote changes in the attitudes and behaviors of educational personnel (classroom teachers, administrators, intermediate school district staff, State Department of Education staff, and university staff) which result in improved learning opportunities for children.

Two of the 15 major objectives established for the EPDC have become the basis for immediate program action. These objectives are:

To tie preservice teacher education into a curriculum improvement and professional development program in an effort to ensure that more teachers learn the new methods of teaching for the new curricula in realistic settings where experienced teachers are actually developing new programs.

To involve as many schools as practical each year as pilot schools (needs assessment, program planning, implementation evaluation, progress evaluation, and outcome evaluation) for curriculum development and teacher training schools.

Rather than postpone action upon these objectives until the EPDC is funded, a consortium composed of 17 local school districts, the Intermediate School District, and four teacher preparation institutions was formed to develop programs relating preservice teacher education to in-service teacher education. A statement of goals and operating principles reflects the following:

The consortium will employ a steering committee composed of one representative from each participating school district and teacher preparation institution to conduct its business in pursuing the following goals:

1. To promote activities involving educational personnel, parents, children, and other persons who enhance the learning opportunities for children in Macomb County.

2. To develop a variety of in-service education activities which will encourage the continued professional development of contract teachers.

3. To involve student teachers in a variety of teacher in-service activities which broaden the learning opportunities of both teachers and student teachers.

4. To make recommendations from time to time to universities and local school districts that are designed to improve the student teaching experience and the preparation of teachers in general.

Universities placing student teachers in Macomb County Schools would attempt to cluster these students wherever it was possible.

These clusters of student teachers would be placed in a local school district which had identified teachers on the staff who would make a voluntary commitment (a) to accept the responsibility of working with a student teacher and (b) to become involved in a planned program of professional development. The student teacher would take over the classroom for a two hour period once a week to free the supervising teacher for involvement in a planned program of professional development.

The teacher's professional development could relate to (a) taking a course in the supervision of student teachers, (b) a variety of in-service education programs, and (c) a graduate course specifically related to the teacher's area of teaching responsibility. The nature of these professional development activities could be developed jointly by the local education agency, the Intermediate School District, and university representatives.

## **New Practices**

The following practices will be pursued:

Each participating teacher preparation institution will provide a list of the names of the student teachers and their vitae to the Division of Instruction of the Macomb Intermediate School District well in advance of the expected placement time.

The Division of Instruction will main-

tain this central roster of all student teachers to be placed in Macomb County as a service to the constituent districts.

A local district which wishes to cluster a group of student teachers for in-service education would inform the Division of Instruction of its requirements for student teachers. The Division of Instruction would contact the university representative having student teachers fitting the desired category and refer them to the local district contact person.

The university representative would be responsible for contacting the person in the local district to work out all details of student teacher placement, supervision, and evaluation.

A student teacher may be considered for involvement in a local district in-service project as either part of a cluster or as an individual. The local district should have the prerogative of determining and planning the nature of the student teacher's formalized in-service program and whether or not it will involve local district personnel, MISD personnel, university personnel, or any combination. This should not suggest that local districts would not welcome opportunities to share ideas for program development with other districts, the MISD, or any university.

The university has the prerogative of deciding whether or not it wishes to involve its students in a particular activity.

If a university or an individual student teacher does not wish to participate in a particular project, placement in other projects within Macomb County will be available.

As these activities are undertaken, further elaboration of the procedures by the steering committee can be expected.

One hundred and twenty student teachers have been placed for the fall semester in seven of the 17 consortium districts. The great majority of the students are clustered for work in teacher in-service projects that are progressing very satisfactorily.

Another noteworthy activity by a member of MCTEC is the action of Saginaw Valley College to offer in Macomb County a fully constituted field oriented, field based M.A.T. degree program. Six to nine hours of the

degree program can be earned through approved programs of local district in-service education. Saginaw Valley College has operated the program for a two year period in the Saginaw area. Seventy-two Macomb County teachers are enrolled for the first regular semester of this program.

Despite human foibles, tribal rivalries, numerous obstructions, and several insurmountable obstacles, a dedicated group of educators has formed a school-university partnership. This partnership is demonstrating that a local school district, an intermediate school district, and a university can develop working relationships which enable them to meet more effectively their own responsibilities while at the same time adding substantially to the ability of the others to meet theirs. The *student teacher* preservice experience is enhanced materially as is the *teacher* in-service experience with no compromise to either effort.

The model that is emerging is one in which a team consisting of a Wayne State University faculty member and a Macomb Intermediate School District consultant works

with both the preservice needs of the student teacher and the in-service needs of the classroom teacher. This program has not required the expenditure of additional funds. It has been accomplished through the reassignment of responsibilities and the coordination of staff activities.

It would appear that these partnerships will survive despite the real problems they face. They will survive because of the good will of the educators involved. It can be anticipated that the areas of mutual interaction will increase.

To ensure this, the Macomb County Teacher Education Council will be seeking the involvement and official support of the Michigan Department of Education.

If the many improved practices in teacher preservice education and teacher in-service education that are being developed are to survive the next rise in the numbers of student teachers to be trained, help will be needed. For this extra assistance, the Michigan Department of Education will have to become a full partner by providing its direction and support to the program. □

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