

Revolution in the Teaching Profession: A Comparative Review of Two Reform Reports

Both the Carnegie Task Force and the Holmes Group stress similar points—essentially the need for cooperation at many levels—but in going forward we must not forget our past mistakes.

The current educational reform movement was triggered in 1983 by *A Nation at Risk*. Along with the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education came a spate of over 30 others, including the perennialist report of Mortimer Adler and his Paideia Group, and John Goodlad's comprehensive study, *A Place Called School*. Those reports threw a caustic spotlight on America's public secondary schools, giving scant attention to the elementary schools or to higher education.

The subsequent report of the National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education, *A Call for Change in Teacher Education*,¹ has not been as widely read. The 17-member commission, consisting of a governor and congresspersons, deans, presidents, and a state superintendent, also included NEA President Mary Futrell and AFT President Albert Shanker. That landmark report set the stage for more reform reports to come.

The national spotlight now moves to the teacher education arena, as two additional reports come to the fore, those of the Holmes Group² and the Carnegie Task Force.³ Both merit the critical attention of professional school and university personnel, as well as those within state departments of education. In their 1986 conventions, both the NEA and the AFT took official stands on portions of the Carnegie Task Force Report, and the AFT has issued its own report, "The Revolution That Is Overdue." The AFT has made a creditable effort to put the interests of the union in fine tune with the needs of the schools. We may see the reform movement in teacher education and the teaching profession reach a new peak in 1987 as the American spotlight focuses on it.

The Formation of the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Task Force

The Holmes Group was convened in formally in 1983 by a small "job alike"

group of 17 education deans from research-intensive universities offering doctoral programs in education. The Holmes Group is chaired by the highly esteemed education dean of Michigan State University, Judith E. Lanier. (The group was named in honor of Henry Holmes, the graduate education dean of Harvard University in the 1920s. Holmes argued, eloquently but to no avail, that universities should strengthen their commitment to teacher education.)

The initial focus of the Holmes Group was on improving teacher education programs in their own universities and in others sharing a kindred institutional allegiance to research, in which teacher education had been relegated to a subordinate role. The universities, however, are quite diverse, ranging from the University of California in Berkeley, where the School of Education was nearly wiped out a few years ago, to Teachers College, Columbia University, where graduate teacher education and related research remain

its historical *raison d'être*. The Holmes Group was initially assisted by former U.S. Secretary of Education Terrel Bell and has enjoyed the financial support of several foundations, including the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Johnson Foundation. It initially consisted of 17 education deans. Later, in 1984, the Holmes Wingspread Conference was held, consisting of 23 deans and a few chief academic officers of "research institutions."

The Carnegie Task Force was a sharp contrast in its composition. A creation of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, it was chaired by the eminent vice president and chief scientist of IBM, Lewis M. Branscomb, and consisted of more than a dozen political and civic leaders, again including Albert Shanker and Mary Futrell. Judith Lanier, chair of the Holmes Group, served on the Carnegie Task Force as well.

This review provides a comparative sketch of the two surprisingly similar reports and ventures an observation about their effect on the reform movement. In the interest of brevity, I will refer to the Holmes Group as the "Group" and the Carnegie Task Force as the "Task Force."

Teacher Education and the New Professional Hierarchy

Both the Task Force and the Group deplore the imposition of bureaucratic authority in the schools, emphasizing the need to increase professional autonomy in school affairs. The Task Force puts it bluntly: "Bureaucratic management of schools proceeds from the view that teachers lack the talent or motivation to think for themselves." In the process of restructuring leadership, both reports propose a three-tiered hierarchy, or "differentiated profession." The Task Force's triad consists of Teacher, Advanced Teacher, and Lead Teacher. Highly regarded by their colleagues, Lead Teachers would also possess a *national* advanced teachers certificate.

The Group's triad consists of the teacher novice as Instructor (the label now applied to the lowest faculty rank within universities). Second is the Professional Teacher, who requires a master's degree in teaching and must pass written examinations in academic and pedagogical areas (variations of cur-

rent National Teachers Examinations). Finally, the Career Professional license would typically require "successful doctoral study and demonstrations of practical competence." Approximately one-fifth of all teachers would ultimately attain such licensure, and the Holmes Group universities would be uniquely fitted for offering appropriate doctoral programs. Both the Task Force and the Group emphatically recommend abolishing undergraduate degrees in education. (The American Federation of Teachers overwhelmingly endorsed this proposition in its 1986 convention.) The Group, however, cautioned against the simple elimination of the education degree, saying that "it would probably worsen things." With this change is the imperative need to dramatically improve the academic components. To do otherwise "would make a horrible joke of educational reform."

Career Opportunities and Salaries

The Task Force describes a scenario in which teachers effectively assume control of the management and instructional programs of schools. In one version of this development, a teacher committee would replace the principal in running the school. A Lead Teacher would be a managing partner

of the team. (The Task Force is evidently unaware of the Portuguese fiasco, in which such a plan was tried after Portugal's revolution in the '70s.) Another prospect would be for teachers to hire their principals rather than the other way around. Details were unspecified.

At its 1986 convention, the NEA showed skepticism of such a move that put teachers in too much of a managerial role. In defense of its proposal of the career ladder for teachers, however, the Task Force projected a salary structure compensation for Lead Teachers as high as \$72,000, for advanced certificate holders up to \$46,000, and for certified teachers as much as \$39,000. (The Carnegie Forum's executive director estimated the price tag for such boosts at about \$48 billion.) Both the Task Force and the AFT believe that impressing taxpayers with advanced degrees and tough, standardized exams will influence them to loosen the purse strings for education.

Unlike the Task Force's report, the Group's does not deal explicitly with salaries or career incentives. While teaching is recognized as an underpaid and overworked "occupation," the deans do not include salary improvements among their goals. One may infer, of course, that the provision of the career ladder will improve teacher incentives as the profession puts in place the clean distinction among the novices, the "competent members" of the profession, and its top level, elite "professional leaders."

Clinical and Professional Development Schools

Both reform reports emphasize the academic and field experience components of professional education and their close articulation. The Task Force recommends establishing "clinical" schools within public school districts analogous to teaching hospitals. Lead Teachers would serve as the core teacher education staff and hold adjunct appointments within the schools of education.

The Group also sees the availability of demonstration sites as indispensable and proposes professional development schools as the exemplary school sites. Similarly, the "clinical faculty" would have attained the status

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of Career Professional Teachers with their advanced studies in teacher education, would be granted university appointments, and would be "reimbursed" for their contributions to the training program.

Neither report refers to the historic rise, decline, and demise of demonstration schools, both on and off university campuses a generation ago. We could profit from a careful analysis of our unsuccessful ventures to minimize the risk of repeating them.

Minorities in the Teaching Task Force

The national alarm over dwindling minorities within the teaching task force was first sounded in 1983 by the National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education in this statistical projection: "Minorities constitute 26 percent of the American population; yet they comprise less than 12.5 percent of the K-12 teaching task force. By the 1990s, the respective figures are projected to be 30 percent and 5 percent" (p. 6).

The Task Force's report picks up this clarion call with a recognition of the social impact of the disappearance of minority teachers and a series of proposals for rectifying the situation. The roots of the problem go deep. For example, only 7 percent of Hispanics complete college, so the pool from which those teachers are drawn is quite shallow. Stated in broader terms, to hire new teachers so as to achieve a rough 25:75 ratio of minority teachers would call for about 50,000 minority teachers annually. This represents 50 percent of the total baccalaureate degrees currently awarded to all minority students.

The Task Force develops four categories of substantive proposals, emphasizing the importance of selective recruitment as early as the middle and senior high school levels. In the higher education sector, emphasis is placed on strengthening black colleges, from which more than 48 percent of black education baccalaureates come, and on recognizing institutional performance and practices affecting minority teacher prospects. (The Task Force perceptively recognizes the inequity of comparing performance between selective admission universities and those universities championing

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open admission policies, thus including the poor, blacks, and students with marginal high school records. Performance is properly gauged on the risk level of students.)

The Group's report disposes of the minority dilemma in a single paragraph. Recognizing the difficulty of the problem, the research-intensive universities commit themselves to a significant increase in the number of minorities in their teacher education programs. This will be achieved, the Group believes, through increased precollege recruitment (although teacher education is postponed until the graduate years), endorsement of loan forgiveness programs for minority students who become teachers (which may be illegal), developing student retention programs for minority students, and assuring the minimizing of "the influence of handicapping conditions, poverty, race, and ethnicity on entry to the profession" (p. 66). The question of how the last two steps will be implemented is not addressed.

In fairness to the Holmes Group, however, it is important to remember that the Task Force addresses the total spectrum of teacher education and the teaching profession, while the Group appropriately narrows its target to the band of its schools of education, now numbering some 40 to 50, which have pledged allegiance to the Holmes

Group's agenda. In this regard, they have cut out a big slice of homework for themselves.

Taking Charge—Who's at the Switch?

The Holmes Group, with its limited focus of commitment, has extended invitations for charter membership to 123 institutions, including members of the American Association of Universities. Eligibility requirements for membership include "ongoing related research," "active efforts to implement the reform agenda," and "payment of initial membership fee." The Holmes Group becomes the self-appointed "quality check" (i.e., accreditation agency) for research universities and their respective professional schools or colleges of education. Whether this monitoring strategy supplants or only supplements the accreditation of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is the "other shoe" that hasn't dropped. NCATE is in continuing contact with the Group to explore possible cooperative resolution of this sticky issue. Meanwhile, the University of Virginia has reportedly committed itself to a pilot Holmes Group teacher education program, to be initiated shortly. The Group's movement, though yet somewhat amorphous, is picking up momentum.

The Task Force places its faith in future professional autonomy in the establishment of a National Board for Professional Teacher Standards, to be composed of governors, chief state school officers, superintendents, and classroom teachers. The board, to be formed from state and regional structures, would develop standards for national certification (not licensure). The Task Force is hopeful that individual states will require board certification as a prerequisite for their state licensure (at the three suggested levels of certification). This would symbolize the clout of the profession, all on a strictly voluntary compliance basis.

The NEA, after two days of steamy debate, endorsed this recommendation at its July 1986 convention, emphasizing that each of the several states should retain full authority and responsibility for its separate licensure controls. (The AFT holds the contrary

view that national standards, including national testing for licensure, is the surest route to professional autonomy, distinction, and faculty remuneration.) Unofficially, the NEA would also insist upon the Standards Board consisting of a majority of classroom teachers. Allowing for AFT representation, the hand calculator indicates that this would assure a board membership of 38 percent NEA representation—not a paltry minority.

A Note of Forecast

The force of illusion approaches its zenith when groups, commissions, and task forces sequester themselves in a futuristic enterprise. Yet the idealism expressed, both in the reports of the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Task Force, is tempered with the limits of reality, as well as the euphoria of optimism. The theme of both reports is that of cooperation—between labor and management, between schools and universities, and between the lib-

eral arts and pedagogical components of professional teacher education programs. Yet we see evidence of inevitable confrontation each step of the way. The next five years may prove to be a turning point for the teaching profession and for American schools. The future depends on our individual and collective ability to go for the slow dime instead of the quick nickel.

Finally, to steer a clear course to a better future, we can ill afford not to look hard and long at our own unpublished "Journal of Negative Findings." Why did Dean Holmes' efforts prove to no avail at Harvard University? Why did Portugal's liberated scheme of management by faculty committee go on the rocks? What were the underlying reasons for the failure of the demonstration schools of yesteryear? James Conant, as president of Harvard in 1936, instituted the Master of Arts in Teaching concept. Was he only a half century ahead of his time, or is there an undiscovered Achilles heel in the

argument for abolishing professional education programs at the undergraduate level—in the face of massive new teacher shortages, where is our institutional memory?

Study these controversial reports, and stay tuned... □

1. National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education, *A Call for Change in Teacher Education* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1985).

2. The Holmes Group, *Tomorrow's Teachers* (East Lansing, Mich.: The Holmes Group, Inc., 1986). (501 Erickson Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824-1034, \$6.50.)

3. The Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (Hyattsville, Md.: The Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986). (P.O. Box 157, Hyattsville, MD 20781, \$9.95.)

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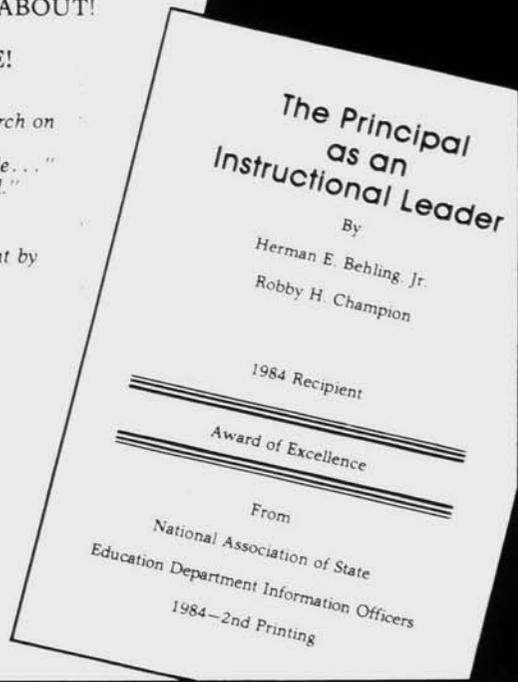
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