

A New Commitment to Teacher Education

Still hard at work, the Holmes Group is forming networks across the nation, framing a common discourse, and pursuing a new vision of teaching.

The Holmes Group, two years old this month, is in the position of the early pioneers—moving into new terrain for American education, looking for a new vision of teaching and learning, and seeking new alliances to make that vision become real. Most of the landscape is still uncharted.

A Progress Report

To the question of what the Holmes Group is about, there is a short answer: the reconstruction of the entire education profession, most especially, teacher education. Here are some pieces of a larger, more illuminating answer:

Item. A crucial element in constructing a teaching profession is the development of a new vision of schooling at the grass roots. But this won't happen

without genuine school-university collaboration. At the second annual meeting in January 1988, Holmes Group leaders called for a major commitment to creating schools in which university people and experienced teachers together pursue research and development and new teacher preparation. A number of universities are forming partnerships with school systems to create "professional development schools," schools that function like teaching hospitals.

Item. Professional development schools are at the heart of an alternative teacher education program in



A, B, C, E, H. The University of Tennessee at Martin—Photographs by Robin Hood, courtesy the Office of the Chancellor

Glenview, a socially and racially diverse suburb north of Chicago. The project is a joint creation of the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Glenview Public Schools. Three of the district's seven public schools will become professional development centers; the rest of the schools are satellite centers where preservice students may be assigned to teams of teachers with particular instructional specialties.

A team may be composed of two classroom teachers (one who teaches part-time at the school and part-time at the university), a professor from the university, a first-year and a second-year teacher aide (University of Illinois at Chicago undergraduates), an intern (a fifth-year student in the program), and two residents (sixth- and seventh-year UIC students). Each team will be responsible for 75 to 100 students at a given grade level. Prospective teachers will gain liberal, professional, and practical preparation—integrated and supervised over several years. While doing so, they will earn salaries and tuition waivers.

By creating teacher aide, intern, and residency positions, the district can increase the number of adults working with children by about one-third. The

program will give experienced teachers new chances for professional growth. And by improving preservice education and induction, the district will be able to draw on a well-prepared pool of teacher applicants to fill the large numbers of classroom vacancies projected for the next 10 years. UIC has begun to develop a similar project with the Chicago public schools.

Item. The Holmes Group has organized the U.S. into five regions. In each, the Holmes Group is embarking on a series of meetings and projects aimed at creating substantive changes through a network of university and school reformers speaking from a shared perspective.

Item. A Holmes Curriculum Committee is now developing a framework to encourage thoughtful reflection about the education teachers need. Composed of education school and liberal arts faculty, as well as elementary and secondary school teachers, the committee will not produce a Holmes curriculum—there is no single path to heaven—but will broadly outline the principles underlying any respectable program for prospective teachers. In the winter and spring of 1989 the committee will develop recommendations for liberal studies, and in fall 1989 it will take up the elements of a good clinical introduction. In early 1990 the committee will draft and disseminate its first major report.

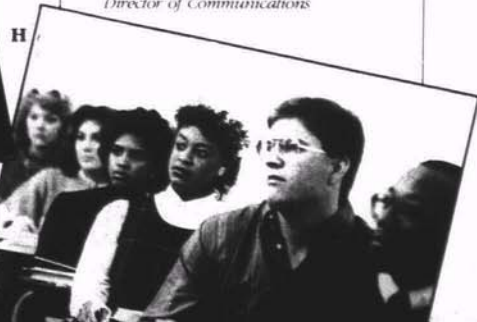
Item. Under a New York State teacher opportunity corps grant, 29 black and Hispanic teachers have been recruited to study at Teachers College, Columbia University, as part of a wider

Holmes effort to recruit minority teachers. Most are paraprofessionals and noncertificated teachers with bachelor's degrees who are working in the New York City schools while they study for certification and master's degrees. Mostly women, they range in age from late 20s to early 50s.

Item. The next Holmes Group annual conference, scheduled for early 1989 in Atlanta, will focus on what is "liberal" in the disciplines, an exploration of liberal learning and its implications for both content and pedagogy from kindergarten through college. This national gathering will collect some of the key Holmes constituencies: arts and sciences faculties, education professors, and school faculties.

Item. A catalogue of progress reports of the efforts of the 96 Holmes universities across the country will be published in the fall of 1988.

Item. Activities of the Holmes Group are chronicled in *The Holmes Group Forum*. The Holmes Group's first manifesto, *Tomorrow's Teachers*, sets forth a vision of good teaching and a strategy to make teaching a real profession. With a grant from the Ford Foundation, the Holmes Group is now working on its second report, *Tomorrow's Schools*, which will be published in September 1989. The Holmes Group is staging a nationwide series of conversations on how elementary and secondary schools need to be restructured to create the learning settings for a true profession of teaching. Such dialogues are taking place at regional and local levels. Specifically, the "Tomorrow's Schools" project is convening six national seminars, made up of university people and teachers, princi-



D, G. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville—
Photographs by Tom Owens, courtesy the
Office of University Communications

F. Maryville College, Maryville, Tennessee—
Photograph by Bud Hunter, courtesy the
Director of Communications

pals, and superintendents from all over the country, which are now framing the recommendations from which the new Holmes report will be written.¹

A New Ecology of Education

The efforts just outlined testify to certain underlying beliefs. The focus of reform must be on *the quality of learning*. Both teachers and students must prepare for a lifetime of active learning. Teacher education is the responsibility of the whole university, not just of the schools of education. Creating a true profession of teaching is not something that universities can do alone: it will require coalitions and alliances with people in the schools. Thus, creating bridges across customary boundaries is part and parcel of the Holmes effort. Underneath that effort is a vision of active learning that is at odds with the passive sitting and listening that reigns in too many schools and colleges.

The Holmes Group began as an effort to renovate teacher preparation—still its main purpose—but early on it concluded that the different pieces of a vast reform puzzle had to connect to form a coherent and long-term strategy for changing education in general.

Thus: it's impossible to move away from the passive education most undergraduates suffer and to educate stronger teachers without university reform.

Thus: it's hard to create decent preparation programs for teachers without having them spend substantial time in schools that demonstrate exemplary practice—places where ongoing inquiry and instruction and staff development have been institutionalized into a new way of professional life. This, of course, requires a fundamental change in our vision of schools, new commitments by universities and school systems, and a new ecology of education.

Thus: for schools and universities to develop such partnerships, we will have to rethink certification and the whole question of standards.

Thus: creating higher standards for a

The Holmes Group Member Institutions

University of Alabama	University of Missouri—Kansas City
University of Alaska	University of Missouri—St. Louis
Arizona State University	University of Nebraska
University of Arkansas	University of Nevada
Auburn University	University of New Hampshire
Bank Street College of Education	New Mexico State University
Baylor University	University of New Mexico
Boston College	New York University
University of California—Berkeley	State University of New York—Albany
University of California—Davis	State University of New York—Buffalo
Catholic University of America	University of North Dakota
University of Chicago	Ohio State University
University of Cincinnati	University of Ohio
Clark University	Oklahoma State University
Colorado State University	University of Oklahoma
University of Colorado	Oregon State University
University of Connecticut	University of Oregon
University of Delaware	University of Pennsylvania
Duke University	University of Pittsburgh
Emory University	Purdue University
Fordham University	University of Rhode Island
Georgia State University	University of Rochester
Harvard University	Rutgers University
University of Hawaii	University of South Carolina
University of Houston	University of South Dakota
Howard University	University of South Florida
University of Idaho	University of Southern California
University of Illinois—Chicago	Stanford University
University of Illinois—Urbana/Champaign	Syracuse University
Iowa State University	Teachers College, Columbia University
University of Iowa	Temple University
Johns Hopkins University	University of Tennessee
Kansas State University	Texas A & M University
University of Kansas	Texas Technological University
Kent State University	University of Texas—Austin
University of Kentucky	Trinity University
Lehigh University	Tulane University
Louisiana State University	University of Utah
University of Louisville	University of Vermont
University of Maine	Virginia Commonwealth University
University of Maryland	Virginia Polytechnic and State University
University of Massachusetts—Amherst	University of Virginia
Michigan State University	University of Washington
University of Michigan	Wayne State University
University of Minnesota	West Virginia University
Mississippi State University	University of Wisconsin—Madison
University of Mississippi	University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee
University of Missouri—Columbia	University of Wyoming

new teacher profession will eliminate and turn away prospective minority teachers, unless recruitment and the development of minority teachers become a top national priority.

A National Switchboard

The puzzle metaphor reminds us of the general lack of intellectual coherence in current reform efforts. The Holmes Group seeks to offer this confused national reform movement a sense of purpose and overarching aim. We need to think about an interrelated ecology of education that extends from preschool to the rest of life. The health of one part of this ecological web depends on the strength of the other parts. And how we conceive of the web itself may be the most important issue of all.

One of the most significant things that we have been about is creating an intelligent national conversation on the subject of education. We have been tending to the web and trying to think about it. Our main common effort, really, has been to alter the terms of discourse so people in different institutions, facing different problems, can come to see common problems and interests.

In worlds divided by turf, specialization, and rival interests, candid talk takes time and energy and courage. Because we are in for the long haul, we want to think through what we are doing—collectively. The aim of the talk is action, not just talk, but the quality of our thinking and our collective discourse must be our first concern. A more coherent and common understanding is needed, for example, of how the success or failure of a child's learning in the 5th grade has something to do with college teaching. The Holmes Group operates at times like a large national switchboard, linking together disparate institutions and constituencies that often don't have much to do with one another: schools, the arts and sciences faculties of the universities, the colleges of education, the researchers, the policy elites, the general public.

Those outside the world of teacher education have little understanding of

how demoralized its inhabitants are. In each generation of teacher educators, there are a few giants, but by and large the educators of the nation's teachers have learned to talk to their betters clutching their caps in their hands. There is a tradition of timidity in the role, a weary sense of the bland leading the bland. Candor about real problems—the impossibility of doing the job well with the niggardly resources available, for example—has been rare. At their gatherings, teacher educators have generally told success stories. They have been too frightened to tell the truth or too spirited to think real change is possible.

So one far-reaching change Holmes is creating is a different kind of conversation: self-criticism, frank analysis of the barriers to real change, telling the unpleasant truth, a capacity to differ in public over such issues as graduate-professional preparation for teachers. All this signals a new spirit of hope and new expectations about teacher education. People in Holmes are candid with each other because they expect to make a difference; they believe that a strong and diverse coalition can develop for education the political, economic, and intellectual support that so far has never materialized.

Big Demands on Tomorrow's Teachers

Much criticism has been aimed at the Holmes' suggestion that the undergraduate degree in education be replaced with a major in the arts and sciences. Holmes' suggestion is indeed demanding—we make no apologies for making big demands on tomorrow's teachers. In many places Holmes is clearly headed toward making the master's degree the initial teaching certification. However, within the Holmes institutions, there are many kinds of degree structures and a wealth of programs suited to diverse institutional needs.

Our commitment is to examine existing programs critically and to experiment to improve them. In and of itself, for example, simply adding on a fifth year to a prospective teacher's program looks like another quick fix.

Instead of merely looking at the calendar and the clock, we might more appropriately ask: What kind of experiences does this program offer? What is its blend of academic and clinical work? Does it build on a strong liberal arts education? What models of teaching and learning does it offer prospective teachers—for a lifetime of professional development? We invite our critics to join us in a conversation about the substance of these matters.

The Backbone of True Reform

Holmes has its original base in large research universities with a tradition of teacher training, although it has expanded to include a variety of institutions, including some small liberal arts colleges. This initial base has advantages and disadvantages. The key advantage is the possibility of reuniting research and practice as twin parts of an ongoing educational enterprise. The chief disadvantage of Holmes' base may be the present remoteness of Holmes' founding institutions from the lives of teachers in schools.

We are aware of the chasm between much educational research and life in classrooms. We know that the relationship of some mainstream educational research to teaching is not healthy. We envision a day when many classroom teachers will engage in research too, when the existing status lines between university people and school faculty will get erased, and when that philistine university scientism that excludes teachers' personal sense of craft is itself a museum piece. We are also working toward the day when the enterprise of teaching will be a product of sustained thought and inquiry and less a matter of naivete and chance. We do want a new ecology in which teaching and research become facets of the same enterprise of inquiry.

Nowhere has our own education proceeded so fast as in our sense that the reform of teacher education depends on changes in ordinary schools: the best teacher education program in the world will not make much difference if its graduates find themselves in schools where they are not treated as professionals. For the Holmes vision

Thoughts on the Teaching Profession from 1927

Henry W. Holmes, for whom the Holmes Group is named, was an advocate of educational reform during the 1920s and 1930s. Like him, the organizers of the Holmes Group believe that raising the status of teaching requires more knowledge about teaching as work and about schools as work settings, so they enrolled charter institutions with the capacity for a substantial investment in research and development about teaching and learning, as well as a commitment to teacher education.

The following timely quotations are excerpted from an address Dean Holmes made to students in the Harvard Graduate School of Education at the beginning of the 1927 academic year.

This year we put into effect a new plan of work and advanced requirements for our degrees. You as students and those who are here gathered with you as friends of the School are in some sense co-adventurers in an undertaking of no minor character, an undertaking novel in American education. . . . We are all committed together to the attempt to put professional training for teachers and school officers on a new and higher level. . . .

. . . America has yet to be persuaded that the training of teachers is a highly significant part of the making of the nation. In requiring two years of graduate study for the degree of Master of Education we are testing the seriousness of our national faith in the schools. . . .

. . . As we see it, a teacher should first of all be a scholar, not, of course, a perfect scholar but in sufficient measure a master of a subject. . . . This requirement of scholarship has not been met in America, and American schools of education have contributed in some ways toward our national failure to put sufficient value on the thorough study of subjects as a part of the training of teachers. Pedagogy has been valued too much among us, scholarship too little. . . .

. . . Our second requirement is that students shall achieve with us a broad understanding of education taken as a whole. Our plan contemplates the making of educators rather than the training of craftsmen in teaching or administration. . . . Every teacher and every school officer ought to be capable of taking part in the cooperative formulation of educational policies. . . .

. . . The philosophy of our new requirements may be stated thus: the making of our nation calls for a new and higher standard in the training of teachers. That is the first line of attack upon the superficiality of American attitudes toward education. . . . And no factor will be more important in bringing a more serious attitude toward education than the raising of teaching to a new level of competence. . . . The simple truth is that a more serious conception of the place of the teacher in the life of the nation is both necessary and timely. . . .

. . . It would be a mistake to conduct a program of this sort without seeing to it that the spirit of research pervades the whole . . . and that our staff and student body contribute continually to the increase of knowledge in education. . . .

. . . That nation in which teachers work for the most part on small, mechanical tasks, under close supervision, out of textbooks, according to syllabi, is "submitting its future to the guidance of second-rate minds". . . .

The part of the teacher in the making of the nation is not unlimited, but it is real; and it is more important than we have dreamed of in our philosophy. . . .

Source: Henry W. Holmes. (November 3, 1927). "The Training of Teachers and the Making of the Nation." *The Harvard Alumni Bulletin*: 161-168.

to work, ordinary schools will have to become places that nurture the growth and development of teachers over the span of their careers. This is why Holmes cannot hope to succeed without strong allies among classroom teachers and principals, who are, after all, the *real* profession of education. We are happy to join with the new efforts of the NEA and the AFT to restructure schools. Working teachers have to be the backbone of true reform; much will depend on whether

we can forge the right sort of broad-based coalition.

Three Concerns

As the Holmes Group enters its third year, we are taking stock of what has been accomplished and making plans for the future. At present, three dilemmas confront us.

The first is the radically declining percentages of minority teachers—at a time when our schools must become multicultural and multiracial communities as never before. As a small first

step, the Holmes Group is developing a national scholarship program for minority teachers. There must be many more steps if we are to create a profession that serves American democracy.

Our second concern is the difficulty of the tasks themselves. The complexity of our agenda, the scale of time involved, the national character of the issues, the multiplicity of problems, and the crisscross of constituencies—all make it hard to guarantee success. We might fail. We might not endure long enough. Part of our task is to popularize the difficult idea that good teaching is in fact a very complex thing, while not letting ourselves get overwhelmed by complexity. Through the maze of institutions and ideas and politics, we need to cling to an image of adventurous teaching.

Third, our emphasis on the support and autonomy teachers need to become truly professional runs against the grain of a good deal of what passes for educational reform in the U.S. today. The ruthless simplifiers are out in force, trying to make simple quantitative judgments about very complex matters, their efforts to prescribe what teachers do are deeply insulting and ultimately self-defeating. We will oppose any reforms that seek to bureaucratize teaching and dictate classroom practice to teachers from the central offices and the statehouses. Instead, we hope to popularize some sense of the true complexity of all good teaching. Increasingly, against the trivializers and the simplifiers, the Holmes Group will speak for a complex, expansive, and visionary idea of teaching at all levels. □

1. To subscribe to *The Holmes Group Forum* or to obtain information about other publications, please write: Holmes Group, Michigan State University, College of Education, Room 501, Erickson Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

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