

On Common Ground

Strengthening Teaching through School-University Partnership

YALE-NEW HAVEN TEACHERS INSTITUTE

A SPECIAL ISSUE

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CARMEN LOMAS GARZA, CAKEWALK, 1987

Does America Know How to Teach?

By Rod Paige
Secretary of Education

Does America know how to teach? Examine the educational institutions in any major city in America and you will make a startling discovery: world-class colleges and universities sharing neighborhoods with many of our most dangerous and under-performing public schools. A visitor who saw both circumstances might have trouble answering the question.

This arrangement is not just a surprise — it also presents a great opportunity for both sides. A university is a concentration of human capital-knowledge, skills, and goodwill — that can have exponential benefits if shared with the schoolhouse down the street. Bringing its massive human and research resources to bear on the problems of a school does not dilute the quality of the university, but it could tremendously help the children in the school — and the neigh-

borhood. In an era when almost a third of college freshmen arrive on campus needing remedial courses, helping elementary and secondary schools will help colleges as well.

I learned this lesson vividly in Houston, where I was dean of the college of education at Texas Southern University. At one point, my program produced a quarter of the new teachers in the Houston Independent School District.

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On Common Ground: A Special Issue on Urban Partnerships

By Thomas R. Whitaker

In Number 8 of *On Common Ground*, we had focused on the past and the future of school-university partnerships. We had asked what they have accomplished in the fifteen years since Gene I. Maeroff's report of 1983, *School and College: Partnerships in Education*, and what challenges now face them. In this Number 9, a special issue on "Urban Partnerships," we continue that inquiry. We are highlighting here the process and the accomplishments of the National Demonstration Project of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute. We are also looking forward to the next phase of this national initiative. And we are emphasizing the need for a coast-to-coast network of Teachers Institutes.

During the past four years, with major support from the DeWitt-Wallace Reader's Digest Fund and additional support from the McCune Charitable Foundation, the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute has established and helped to sustain new Teachers Institutes at four urban sites: Pittsburgh, Houston, Albuquerque, and Santa Ana. Each of these new Teachers Institutes has been constituted by a partnership between one or more institutions of higher education and a school district.

The Pittsburgh Teachers Institute was established through a three-way partnership of Chatham College, Carnegie Mellon University, and the Pittsburgh Public Schools. The Houston Teachers Institute was established through a partnership between the University of Houston and the Houston Independent School District; the Albuquerque Teachers Institute through a partnership between the University of New Mexico and the Albuquerque Public Schools; and the UCI-Santa Ana Teachers Institute through a partnership between the University of California, Irvine, and the Santa Ana Unified School District. Each of these Teachers Institutes is now completing its third year of operation, having developed significant groups of teacher-participants and of seminar leaders from the university or college faculty, many of

whom are active in steering its course. And each has been offering yearly seminars in which teachers study topics that respond to their expressed needs and write curriculum units designed for use in their own classrooms.

As this phase of the national initiative comes to a close, the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute looks forward to a second phase that may establish as many as 45 new Teachers Institutes. We envision this phase as beginning with two years of self-assessment and preparation by the five existing Teachers Institutes. During those two years the new Teachers Institutes would ascertain the most appropriate ways of attaining systemic impact within their own districts, regions, or states, and the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute would be gearing up for its role as a primary agent in the plans for expansion.

We envision then a twelve-year period during which, with the help of those existing Teachers Institutes that wish to collaborate, we would establish additional Teachers Institutes through processes like those used in the National Demonstration Project. Those processes would again include Planning and Implementation Grants, July "Intensives" in New Haven with National Seminars in which teachers from various sites would participate, and National Conferences and other means of communication among the Teachers Institutes. We hope that the new Teachers Institutes will include participation by traditionally Black institutions of higher education. And we hope that they can be located in sites across the nation that will maximize their potential impact upon state and national educational policy. Funding is now being sought for this second phase of the national initiative.

The Essays: Some Connections

Rod Paige, the United States Secretary of Education, leads off by asking: "Does American know how to teach?" He is struck by the fact that in our major cities "world-class colleges and universities" are



JACOB LAWRENCE, *THE STUDIO*, 1977

"sharing neighborhoods with many of our most dangerous and under-performing schools." He therefore challenges more colleges and universities to establish partnerships with school districts. "They can help teachers develop curricula," he says, "offer school access to their facilities, and help mismanaged schools improve their management." He tells us that every "great university should be linked to its surrounding schools by a thriving and many-tiered partnership."

Secretary Paige speaks from his experience as Dean of the College of Education at Texas Southern University and as the Superintendent of Schools in the Houston Independent School District during the time when a new Teachers Institute was being established in that city. He praises the National Demonstration Project for "supplying models for what universities should do." These models "are not just inspiring," he says, "they are creating an environment in which partnerships will be the norm, not the exception. . . . Observers should not ask why a few universities have partnerships, but why the rest do not."

How then may such partnerships be established? What is the process? What are
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Credits: Front Cover: Carmen Lomas Garza. *Cakewalk*. Acrylic painting. 36" x 48". © 1987 Carmen Lomas Garza. Photography by M. Lee Fatheree. Collection of Paula Maciel-Benecke and Norbert Benecke, Aptos, California. carmenlomasgarza.com. **Page 2:** Jacob Lawrence. *The Studio*. 1977. Gouache on paper. 30" x 22". Jacob & Gwendolyn Lawrence Foundation, New York, New York. **Page 5:** Faith Ringgold. *Sonny's Quilt*. Faith Ringgold © 1986. Acrylic on canvas quilted with fabric borders. 84½" x 60". Private collection. **Page 11:** John Kane. *Panther Hollow, Pittsburgh*. 1933-34. Oil on canvas. 27¾" x 34". Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Purchased with monies contributed by Mr. and Mrs. James F. Hillman. **Page 13:** Wayne Thiebaud. *Urban Freeways*. 1979. Oil on canvas. 44⅜" x 36⅞". Private collection. © Wayne Thiebaud/Licensed by VAGA, New York, New York. **Pages 16-17:** Romare Bearden. *The Block*. 1971. Collage of cut and pasted paper and synthetic polymer paint on masonite. Six panels, 48" x 216" overall. © Romare Bearden Foundation/Licensed by VAGA, New York, New York. **Page 20:** Frederic Edwin Church, American, 1826-1900. *Twilight In The Wilderness*. 1860. Oil on canvas. 101.6 x 162.6 cm. © The Cleveland Museum of Art, 2001, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Marlatt Fund, 1965.233, Cleveland, Ohio. **Page 23:** Winslow Homer. *The See-Saw*. 1873. Watercolor on paper. 7¼" x 13½". Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery, Canajoharie, New York. **Page 25:** Charles Sheeler. *Conversation: Sky and Earth*. 1940. Oil on canvas. 28" x 23". Curtis Galleries, Minneapolis, Minnesota. **Page 28:** Giacomo Balla. *Street Light*. 1909. Oil on canvas. 68¾" x 45¼". The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Hillman Periodicals Fund. Photograph © 2001 The Museum of Modern Art, New York. **Back Cover:** Joseph Stella. *Battle of Lights, Coney Island, Mardi Gras*. 1913-14. Oil on canvas. 77" x 84¾". Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut. Gift of the Collection Societe Anonyme.

Paige: Does America Know How to Teach?

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I never thought I would follow my graduates to HISD, but with little notice I found myself a superintendent managing the teachers I had trained. I learned a great deal about teaching from the district job — including much that I wish I had known when I was still training teachers. It was both moving and edifying to see the theories we had taught at TSU play out in practice. As I learned, it is important for whole universities, not just schools of education, to build bridges with the schools in their neighborhoods. The new research generated or reviewed by universities can be very useful to the teachers, who in turn produce the next generation of college freshmen.

Colleges and universities can share a host of assets with local schools. One of the critical challenges that schools face is the knowledge of their teachers about the latest findings in science, social sciences, and technology. Yet every university has both undergraduate and graduate students as well as professors who can share their knowledge with our current teachers. In fact, the undergraduates and graduate students can often create greater rapport with middle and high school students than teachers because of the closeness of ages and cultures. Bringing current science and its applications into the laboratories of our schools will motivate more young people to pursue careers in those areas.

To broaden content knowledge for teachers in all subject areas, local universities can offer seminars for teachers to help teachers develop the depth and breadth of their knowledge in those subjects they currently teach. Creating real communities of scholarship across the K-16 continuum can not only improve the quality of teaching in

our K-12 institutions, but it can also motivate teachers to remain in the teaching profession. Often it is the isolation of public school classrooms that drives good people out of the field.

Universities also can help improve teacher quality by encouraging majors in content areas to consider either certification or alternative certification programs. Colleges of education can share the results of their research with district planners, and also deploy their research facilities to help schools evaluate teaching methods. They can help teachers develop curricula, offer schools access to their facilities, and help mismanaged schools improve their management.

I applaud the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute for supplying models for what universities should do. Its projects are not just inspiring, they are creating an environment in which partnerships will be the norm, not the exception.

I recommend many of these projects from personal experience. While I was superintendent, the district worked on two curriculum projects with the advice and assistance of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute. Our first project, called “Common Ground,” brought English teachers together with professors to read and analyze the classics paired with works by more recent writers. The teachers then repeated the analysis with their high school students. Our other program, the Houston Teachers Institute, is closely modeled after the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute itself. There the teachers participate in seminars on topics they have requested,

which are led by outstanding professors from the University of Houston. The teachers received stipends for creating curriculum units of their teaching on the seminar topics. Both of these experiences have been intellectually stimulating for the teachers and their students.

As we developed new programs for the district, we also reached out to professors from across the country and commissioned papers to review the innovations put in place and measure the new programs’ success. At a seminar last October the researchers gathered to present their papers to the district and the community. The dialogue with researchers and the scholars who reacted to their papers gave the community an excellent perspective on what had been accomplished, but, also, an opportunity to consider next steps and possible extensions of the programs in place. Any community could take this idea and engage its local universities and other universities across the country in a similar program review.

While teachers in every subject can benefit from a partnership with higher education, the two areas of greatest need are math and science. Therefore, I would like to urge universities to take this challenge as a priority for their work with local schools. Our students lag behind the international average in these important subjects, and their teachers often are not well qualified to teach in these fields. President Bush recognizes the value of partnerships in these areas, which need better research on how children learn, more qualified teachers, and mid-career refreshers for teachers who were fully qualified when they began. Colleges and universities can help schools by training math and science teachers and by helping those teachers stay up to date in teaching methods and developments in their fields.

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Rod Paige, formerly the Superintendent of the Houston Independent School District, is the United States Secretary of Education.

Whitaker: Taking Stock and Looking Ahead

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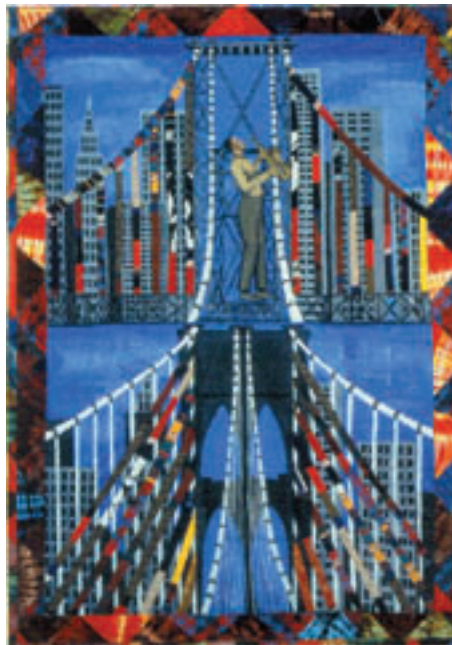
the challenges? What are some of the solutions found and the advantages discovered? We explore these issues with the help of administrators from a private college, a Teachers Institute, a major foundation, and a state university. We begin with Esther L. Barazzone, the President of Chatham College, and Helen Faison, who has served as Chair of Chatham's Department of Education and Interim Superintendent of the Pittsburgh Public Schools and now directs the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute. They speak of the complexities of a three-way partnership that also includes Carnegie Mellon University.

President Barazzone outlines from the perspective of the institutions of higher education the process of collaboration and its historical bases. She explains in some detail the concerns over priorities and funding, and the ways in which those concerns have been met. Faison emphasizes the state and local control of the public schools and the national recognition that we must work toward higher achievement levels in those schools. She tells how the Pittsburgh Board of Education has grappled with this problem, how the state has given new impetus to professional development and the Teachers Institute has become an approved provider, and how the new superintendent is forwarding the district's agenda.

We continue with an essay by Owen Lopez, Executive Director of the McCune Charitable Foundation. Lopez describes at some length the difficulties under which public education must labor in New Mexico. Even though almost 50% of the state budget is allocated to public education, he says, "because of the low wage scale it is difficult, if not impossible, to attract qualified teachers from outside New Mexico." But he adds that "Low salary levels are probably not the greatest obstacles to attracting qualified teachers; bureaucratic red tape and lack of institutional support are the primary culprits." The McCune Charitable Foundation has therefore decided that it must "be supportive of teachers in ways other than financial."

Lopez then describes the steps through which the Foundation came to support the National Demonstration Project. "It is our belief," he says, that exposure of the APS teachers to advanced state-of-the-art concepts in each of their curriculum areas will provide the kind of nurturing support that we have been so often told is lacking." And it is "our hope that renewed, energized teachers will reenter the classrooms to provide those rare opportunities where students can experience truly inspirational teachers."

At the end of his essay, Lopez also comments on the meeting in the fall of 2000



FAITH RINGGOLD, *SONNY'S QUILT*, 1986.

during which the National Advisory Committee and university and school administrators involved in the National Demonstration project discussed with President Richard Levin of Yale both the National Demonstration Project and the proposal for a second phase in the national initiative. In this group, he says, "The overwhelming positive response and obvious need for the continuation and expansion of the partnerships was evident."

We then turn to essays by Michael Fischer, formerly Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of New Mexico and now the Vice President of Aca-

demic Affairs at Trinity University in San Antonio, and William C. Gordon, President of the University of New Mexico. Fischer describes the challenging tasks of bringing the College of Arts and Sciences more fully into the field of professional development and making connections with the teachers and the Albuquerque Public Schools. Collaboration with the College of Education on these tasks also helped to make ongoing funding for the Albuquerque Teachers Institute a top university legislative priority.

President Gordon expresses his surprise at "how enthusiastically our faculty have embraced this concept, and how creative our K-12 teachers have been in taking advantage of the opportunities these faculty have provided." He describes more fully the multi-disciplinary approach of the seminars, which "are models for how the most basic disciplinary principles can be brought to life by embedding them in an interesting and relevant context." He speaks, we should note, as a university president who has himself examined the syllabi of seminars and has read curriculum units that the teachers have prepared. These he calls "the most striking outcome of our program." They are "plans that are intended to raise questions, that are designed to stimulate the natural curiosity that students have, and they are plans that make the process of learning more an adventure than a task." It is already clear, he says, "that this program generates in our faculty and our teachers a true excitement about teaching and learning."

What are the challenges to be faced by faculty members who lead seminars in a Teachers Institute? How do they convey aspects of their disciplines to the quite varied groups of teachers who are Fellows in the seminars? How do they maintain a genuinely collegial atmosphere? And what do they learn? We explore these questions with the help of faculty members who have led seminars in the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute, the Albuquerque Teachers Institute, and the Irvine-Santa Ana Teachers Institute.

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Whitaker: Taking Stock and Looking Ahead

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We begin with an essay by Rogers M. Smith, a political scientist who led several seminars on issues of race, immigration, civil rights, and civic education before moving from Yale University to the University of Pennsylvania. He offers the history of his own discovery of the meaning of a Teachers Institute — indeed, his own path toward becoming a “professional educator” — and comments on the challenges and rewards of participating in that effort. He concludes by stating a larger purpose to which every faculty member might well subscribe: “What we must have is a truly interconnected, collegial, and professional system of education, in which teachers from kindergarten through graduate seminars know their subjects well, know how to teach them well, and work together to learn more and do better in both regards. Because I offer Institute seminars, I can now see myself as someone actively engaged in the vital task of trying to bring that system into existence.”

Three other faculty members then describe their first opportunities to lead Institute seminars. Elisabeth Roark of Chatham College tells how an Institute seminar, drawing upon her training as an art historian and as an educator, gave her a chance to bring together the two halves of her professional life. In “American History through Art,” she sought to promote visual literacy, encourage the recognition “that every work of art is a construct behind which exist various agendas,” and explore the city of Pittsburgh “as an urban classroom of sorts, using public works of art accessible to the Fellows and their students.” She describes significant moments in the seminar, shows the Fellows’ responses to this work, and sketches the variety of their curriculum units.

Kate Krause of the University of New Mexico was faced with the challenge of introducing to teachers of various subjects the “formal decision-making tools of economics and game theory.” Her seminar in “Human Decision-Making: Rational and Irrational” offered an opportunity for Fel-

lows to adapt models of decision-making to drama, language arts, creative writing, home economics, and special education. “Each teacher-participant,” she says, “developed a curriculum unit that addressed specific state and district level curriculum standards in innovative ways.” But the benefits transcended the acquisition of “discipline-specific” information. “We met regularly in a cooperative, intensively academic atmosphere to learn more about the human condition. We learned new ways of thinking about ourselves and our own disciplines. We helped each other develop creative ways to teach practical decision-making skills to those who need them most.”

John H. Smith of the University of California, Irvine, describes how he became drawn into participation in the UCI-Santa Ana Teachers Institute by way of a meeting at Irvine and the First Annual Conference at Yale in 1999. In his seminar on “Teaching Religion Critically,” the Fellows addressed “issues involving teaching about religion in public education” and then read from European thinkers “who have re-conceptualized, often critically, the way we approach religion.” The focus, Smith says, was not on how to teach this material in elementary or high school but on “*our own* intellectual engagement with the ideas.” The curriculum units then related them to a variety of classroom topics, from world civilization to religious tolerance, from Shakespeare to consumerism.

Unlike most professional development programs in which colleges and universities participate, a Teachers Institute depends upon the teachers’ own expression of needs and their acceptance of responsibility for many aspects of the program offered. We conclude, therefore, with essays that focus on various aspects of teacher leadership and teacher participation.

An Institute needs school representatives who work with the director and other teachers to establish the slate of seminars and conduct the applications process. It needs coordinators who can encourage collegiality within a seminar by relieving the

seminar leader of some quasi-disciplinary and advisory functions. It may well need a steering committee of teachers to help the director in shaping the Institute’s developing policies. It is important, therefore, to understand how a director can encourage teachers to accept such leadership roles. The first essay in this group, by Paul D. Cooke, Director of the Houston Teachers Institute, lays out the process through which he has been generating teacher leadership in that new Institute. We append to that essay some remarks offered by Arthur K. Smith, President of the University of Houston, as he welcomed Houston public schoolteachers to the Houston Teachers Institute at its Third Annual Convocation on January 16, 2001.

The second and third essays in this group, by Daniel Addis, a high school teacher of English in Houston, and Mel Sanchez, a high school teacher of Spanish in Santa Ana, address the benefits of participation in Teachers Institute seminars. Addis speaks of how the Institute challenges the teachers, spurs them on to intellectual self-improvement, and encourages them to create enriching educational experiences for their students. Sanchez offers his own perspective on that process as he has experienced it in two UCI-Santa Ana seminars, placing it also in the context of other experiences of professional development.

The fourth essay, by Jean Sutherland, a New Haven elementary school teacher, returns us to the issues of teacher leadership that Paul Cooke had set forth from a director’s point of view. Sutherland lays out the process of teacher leadership that she worked with in her many years with the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute.

Our centerfold for this issue contains a sampling of the conversations at the Second Annual Conference in October 2000 — an event characterized by what a participant in the First Annual Conference had called “a genuine interest in dialogue that cuts across all potential lines of division (geographical, institutional, professional, disciplinary.)” In “Voices from the

National Community,” we listen to a director, several Fellows and faculty members, and a former foundation administrator as they speak of some of the issues that concerned those who were summing up the progress of the National Demonstration Project and looking ahead.

The Images: Some Perspectives

With Rod Paige’s essay, we have placed on the front cover Carmen Lomas Garza’s *Cakewalk*, an acrylic painting of 1987 included in her bilingual children’s book, *Family Pictures/Cuadros de familia*. This book contains stories of her childhood in a traditional Hispanic community in south Texas. “Cakewalk,” in her account, “was a game to raise money to send Mexican Americans to the university.” But of course that playful and musical lottery had an earlier origin in African American communities, where it also expressed the desire for a better future. In both theme and design, *Cakewalk* evokes for us the community vitality in the five Teachers Institutes across the nation and, as we hope, in those yet to be established.

Evoking for us the larger process by which those Teachers Institutes have been and will be established, is the painting we have placed with the first page of this editorial: Jacob Lawrence’s *The Studio*. In commenting upon his own artistic process, Lawrence here combines a window-image of a cityscape (which is also a painting of the city) and the portrayal of a careful workman who is reconstituting the city in which he lives. The workman is both painter and carpenter, with brushes in his right hand, compasses in his left, and a wood-plane on the railing. As a “builder,” he embodies an important theme for this painter. (The cover for Number 8 of *On Common Ground* reproduces Lawrence’s *Builders — Red and Green Ball*.) In fact, the back window of Lawrence’s studio looked out on the blank wall of the neighboring house. He decided to fill in the view with a New York cityscape. For us too, living within the cities of this nation, the

urgent task is to transform our “blank walls” into humane cityscapes.

With Esther Barazzone’s and Helen Faison’s essays on the three-way collaboration that has created the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute, we have placed a view of Pittsburgh itself by another painter and carpenter who “re-visioned” the city in which he lived: the immigrant day-laborer and self-taught artist, John Kane. This view of Pittsburgh is effectively about both learning and means of communication. Overlooking Panther Hollow, the viewer’s eye, like the firm truss bridge and the swiftly moving freight train, spans the distance from the Cathedral of Learning at the city’s heart to its outer reaches.

With Michael Fischer’s and William C. Gordon’s essays on the establishment of the Albuquerque Teachers Institute we have placed Wayne Thiebaud’s *Urban Freeways*, which evokes for us something of the challenge provided by making connections in a complex urban community. Thiebaud was born in Mesa, Arizona, but has spent much of his life in California. His later paintings often explore the shapes of urban landscapes.

With the essays on Teachers Institute seminars led by Elisabeth Roark and Kate Krause, we have selected images that relate to the seminar themes. One of the topics in Roark’s seminar on “American History through Art” was “landscape painting and national identity.” Frederic Edwin Church’s *Twilight in the Wilderness* was one of the paintings they examined. This painting of 1860, with its enigmatic balancing of light and dark, its tangle of blood-red clouds and its blasted trees, has a foreboding intensity. It seems a vision on the eve of disaster — as indeed it was.

Kate Krause’s seminar in “Human Decision-Making” was concerned with balancing gains and losses, theoretic rationality and observed irrationality, the moves and counter-moves of game theory. We have selected here an image of both simple and complex balancing, Winslow Homer’s *The See-Saw*. This watercolor and gouache is a realistic depiction of rural children playing

a game that is based upon principles involving levers, weights, and a fulcrum. But its design is also a lively and subtle balancing of analogous shapes — skewed horizontals, tipsy verticals, triangles upon triangles.

With Paul Cooke’s essay on “Generating Teacher Leadership,” we have placed Charles Sheeler’s brilliant depiction of generated energy, “*Conversation: Sky and Earth*.” Behind the lines of transmission, we can glimpse the architecture of the dam that makes possible the generating. The essays by teacher-participants invite, we think, a celebration of the coming of light to the city. With Daniel Addis’s essay on “Teachers Enlightening and Renewing Themselves,” we have therefore placed Giacomo Balla’s *Street Light*, an Italian Futurist image of radiating luminosity.

Finally, we have included in this issue some images that point to the growing national community that is now being shaped and, we hope, will continue to be shaped in the future through Teachers Institutes. With the centerfold selection, “Voices from the National Community,” we have placed a portion of *The Block*, Romare Bearden’s vision of urban community life. And on the second page of this editorial we have placed *Sonny’s Quilt*, by the noted African-American artist Faith Ringgold, which provides a lyrical vision of a brightly illuminated George Washington Bridge surmounted by a Chagall-like saxophonist. It is important, as Secretary Paige has said, “for whole universities . . . to build bridges with the schools in their neighborhoods.”

On the back cover, Joseph Stella, whose *Brooklyn Bridge* we had earlier printed, now leaves us with *Battle of Lights, Coney Island, Mardi Gras*, an electric nocturne based on visits to Luna Park, where a quarter of a million electric lights cast their glow over the crowds. Ringgold and Stella celebrate in lively shapes and brilliant lights a future of possibility, which we may hold in the mind’s eye as we work with what is often a darker actuality in our urban schools.

A Three-Way Partnership

By Esther L. Barazzone

The Pittsburgh metropolitan region has a long history of public-private collaborations and partnerships, perhaps most notably the joint efforts of business and government that dramatically transformed the city from one of smoky steel mills into one of the country's "Most Livable" cities. In the education sector, Pittsburgh's partnerships encompass an extraordinary and longstanding agreement among the nine colleges and universities in Allegheny County providing for student cross registration (Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education, known as PCHE); a math-science collaborative between The Carnegie Science Center and the region's teachers dedicated to instructional improvement; and a diverse array of specialized projects between state schools and individual colleges and universities.

When the opportunity arose to apply to consider creating a new, national demonstration site in Pittsburgh to build on the success and example of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, the decision was reached to develop the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute (PTI), a unique addition to Pittsburgh's partnerships. No previous collaboration had linked diverse cooperating institutions of higher education together with an urban public school district and its many schools to support primary and secondary education.

The Pittsburgh Teachers Institute consists of Chatham College — a 1000-student, private liberal arts institution with an historic women's college and coeducational graduate programs; Carnegie Mellon University — a world-renowned, major research institution; and the Pittsburgh Public School District — the largest school district in the

region, serving the urban municipalities of the City of Pittsburgh with 97 public schools, 2800 educators, and 40,000 students, nearly 65% of whom are economically disadvantaged.

The new partnership had strong institutional bases on which to build. Chatham College and Carnegie Mellon University have a long history of interinstitutional cooperative projects. For example, Chatham has provided teacher certification for Carnegie Mellon students since 1950. While each had a wealth of individual linkages to the community, however, including to the Pittsburgh Public School district, the two had never joined forces on any project for the community. The third partner, the

No previous collaboration had linked diverse cooperating institutions of higher education together with an urban public school district and its many schools to support primary and secondary education.

Pittsburgh Public School district has a history of receptivity to innovation and teacher development initiatives.

More intangible forces pointed positively toward this project as well. Faculty members from both Carnegie Mellon and Chatham responded very positively to the idea of the Institute from the beginning. Faculty in both institutions are residents of the city of Pittsburgh, and, thus, would have, through this project, a means to impact directly their own and their neighbors' children's education. It also helped that the original Yale-New Haven project would proceed by extensive sharing of its experience and insights with the new generation of partners. Finally, as all success-

ful projects must, the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute had an outstanding leader ready to begin its work. A deeply respected and well-known educator in the City, Dr. Helen Faison, Chair of Chatham's Department of Education, had recently come to Chatham after a distinguished career with the Pittsburgh Public School district, which included ten years of service as Deputy Superintendent, and was delighted at the prospect of the creation of the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute.

In 1999, the PTI was awarded a \$390,000 three-year implementation grant from the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute Demonstration Project. Our partnership's euphoria on being selected as a demonstra-

tion site was tempered by some initial concern that the additional, matching fundraising now necessary for the Institute might conflict with the fundraising efforts of the cooperating organizations. Chatham College was just beginning a major campaign for pressing capital and endowment needs that might be seen to preclude directing fundraising opportunities for projects that primarily served the community, regardless of

their importance. Similar concerns existed also for the other partners. The Pittsburgh Public Schools, for example, regularly received funding from local foundations for projects that could be perceived as more directly in the district's plans than the faculty development provided by PTI, which is not even directed by the district, but by the teachers themselves. Carnegie Mellon was already deeply into a campaign with other declared objectives.

Concerns over conflict with other priorities were quickly mitigated for all. For Chatham, growth in the prominence of the College's education programs is a main institutional strategic objective, and, thus, the full consonance of the Pittsburgh

Esther L. Barazzone is the President of Chatham College.

Teachers institute with the mission and directions of the institution was emphasized. The experience of building working relationships with the District and strengthening existing ones with Carnegie Mellon were also seen as building blocks for the future of another, also important, kind. It was decided that the increased visibility for Chatham that PTI would bring warranted placing it among the College's fundraising activities, even though virtually none of the funds would go directly to the College, supporting instead PTI and its participants. Chatham decided not to count the funds raised toward the fundraising goals of its campaign, but indeed to consider this a case of true "friendraising." The College believes that PTI was valuable enough in itself to warrant our participation, but also that over the long term, there would be indirect fundraising benefits. Increased, positive visibility would enhance the institution's opportunities to raise funds, as donors recognized that the success of Chatham's Education Department would be essential to the continued life and success of the Institute.

For fundraising purposes, PTI was positioned as a separate entity from any of its three constituent elements. By agreement among the Presidents of Carnegie Mellon and Chatham and the Superintendent of the Pittsburgh Public Schools, Chatham became the administrative home and fiscal agent for the Institute, and the College's foundation fundraiser assumed the primary responsibility for coordinating the pursuit of the required match. Every effort was made to explain and to represent the PTI collaborative as a consortium, just as if it were separately incorporated. When visits were made to foundations, it was the director of PTI and a representative of the school district who attended, and not officials of Carnegie Mellon or Chatham College. Because Chatham College did not

include results of any fundraising for PTI in its campaign totals, its separateness was underscored. The structure and concept of PTI — with the integral role K-12 teachers play in its planning and operations — also helped separate it conceptually from the district and the institutions of higher education. The distinction was valid, and most foundations accepted PTI as a consortium, different than its institutional parts that were committed to serve teachers. No donor who had supported the College replaced that gift with support for PTI.

The Pittsburgh region's foundations (an extraordinary and collaborative community of funders) were interested in and supportive of PTI from its inception out of their own deep commitment to our com-

Every effort was made to explain and to represent the PTI collaborative as a consortium, just as if it were separately incorporated.

munity and the education of its students. They made it possible for us to meet the required match for the first two years very quickly. As the issue of establishing long-term funding for the PTI emerged, one leading foundation official has offered to convene a meeting of regional education funders.

As hoped, the involvement of Chatham in PTI has meant that some funders who might not otherwise have known about or supported Chatham, now have a new perspective on the College, its mission both to prepare teachers and to contribute actively to improving K-12 education in our region. That we are participating in a national demonstration project further enhanced the awareness of the significance of this potent and innovative, albeit small, college to our region. At least one local donor whose

guidelines had made it difficult earlier to give to the College now was encouraged by a national foundation to consider supporting Chatham because of its role in PTI. Other national donors now show greater awareness of the College than before because of the association through PTI with the distinguished Yale-New Haven project. This should all help the College and its education department in the future as we build better working relationships in our community and get greater recognition for our work.

Challenges for the Consortium for the future still exist: will we be able to expand the collaborative to all the PCHE institutions and their neighborhood schools; will our local foundations weary of supporting this extraordinary partnership, even in its current configuration on an ongoing basis? This remains to be seen. But based on the success so far, we have seen that PTI need not be in conflict with the fundraising of any individual institution, and that foundations and corporations will step forward to reward and support partnerships truly directed toward education and the public welfare.

The Pittsburgh Teachers Institute, directed by Dr. Helen Faison, offered its first seminars in March 1999. In the two seminar periods since then, it has offered 10 seminars for 75 K-12 teacher Fellows, from the 20 schools the Pittsburgh Public School District selected to participate in PTI's initial implementation period. One of the PTI teaching Fellows, an elementary school teacher, was selected as a semi-finalist for the national President's Teaching Award, for the curriculum unit she developed through PTI. Over time, it is hoped that PTI's reach will extend to all schools within the District. For more information on the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute, visit <http://www.chatham.edu/pti/>.

Urban Partnerships — The Scene is Changing

By Helen Faison

The framers of the Constitution were determined not to establish a strong federal government for the new nation. Their goal was to keep government as close to the people as possible. Hence, great emphasis was placed on the importance of local control, and nowhere has this emphasis been more pervasive and deep-seated than in the field of basic education.

During the decades of the 1970s and 1980s the American public became concerned that children in other nations were out-performing American children in the schools. One response was to engage the business community in partnerships with the schools. As a result, schools sought partnerships with a number of major corporations such as the telephone company, and in the case of Pittsburgh, with a large and very diverse health care community. A prestigious organization whose members included the presidents and chief operating officers of the major corporations in the city provided the funding for a new position, a coordinator of partnerships. The slogan became “a partnership for every school.”

The Board of Education welcomed the partnership efforts but expected the partners to be held at a distance. For Board members, local control, a basic tenet of public education in their view, meant control by parents and the elected members of the Board. Even the colleges and universities which prepared the teachers for the schools were viewed with suspicion.

Basic education has now become a national issue. Schools are expected to prepare their students for adulthood in communities far beyond those in which they are born and raised. The competition for jobs is no longer local; it is national and international.

States and local school districts charged with responsibility for educating children

but facing the growing costs of doing so began to look to the federal government for assistance. The national government’s response was reflected in the governors’ conference convened in 1989. At the conference and during the meetings that followed, the governors participated in the development of what became the national goals of education. Since the conference, there has been a growing recognition that in a global economy, basic education which had been a state and local function can no longer be just the concern of the geographic area in which a child lives.

The emerging educational needs of the entire nation and the costs imposed upon states and local districts by court decisions and federal legislation such as those that grew out of the Brown decision and the legislation related to special education placed new demands upon these governing bodies that could not be met with existing resources. To avail themselves of the resources which the federal government offered to support these new demands, the states and through them the local districts have been coerced into subscribing to the national goals of education. These goals necessitated the establishment of achievement standards, now the driving force in educational reform.

The Pittsburgh Board of Education, which guards carefully its legal responsibility and authority, recognizes that the schools acting in isolation cannot provide for their students the kinds of educational experiences that a rapidly changing technological world demands. In its Strategic Implementation Plan for Restructuring the School District in 1995 and again in the 1998 revision of the plan, the Board declared its mission to be to “have all students attain a performance level that will enable them to be independent and self-sufficient and contribute responsibly to our society and ever changing world.” To achieve the mission, the Board declared its intention to focus on five areas: high standards for all students, effective and safe

schools, dynamic parent/guardian community partnerships, highly qualified staff and effective volunteer partnerships, and school-based decision-making: aligning resources with student needs.

In 1998, the Board of Education and the then Superintendent of Schools accepted without hesitation the opportunity to join two community institutions, Carnegie Mellon University and Chatham College, in applying for and implementing a grant to operate a demonstration site in the Yale-New Haven project. They envisioned a teachers institute as a means of strengthening existing partnerships and an effective way of addressing the need to improve the subject content knowledge base of the experienced teachers in the district. Although it faced the possibility of future budget deficits, the School Board willingly committed the resources of its development staff to the task of raising the funds needed to match the demonstration grant provided such efforts did not adversely affect the district’s ability to raise external funds to support its other initiatives. Once the proposal for the demonstration project grant was approved principals and central office staff were encouraged to cooperate with the director in the identification of schools and teachers to participate in the project. The president and other officers of the teachers’ union quickly lent their support to the effort.

Key to school district support of the partnership that sponsors the institute was its insistence that products produced by the teachers who participate in the project address the 62 academic achievement standards for students that had been promulgated by the State Department of Education and approved by the Board of Education.

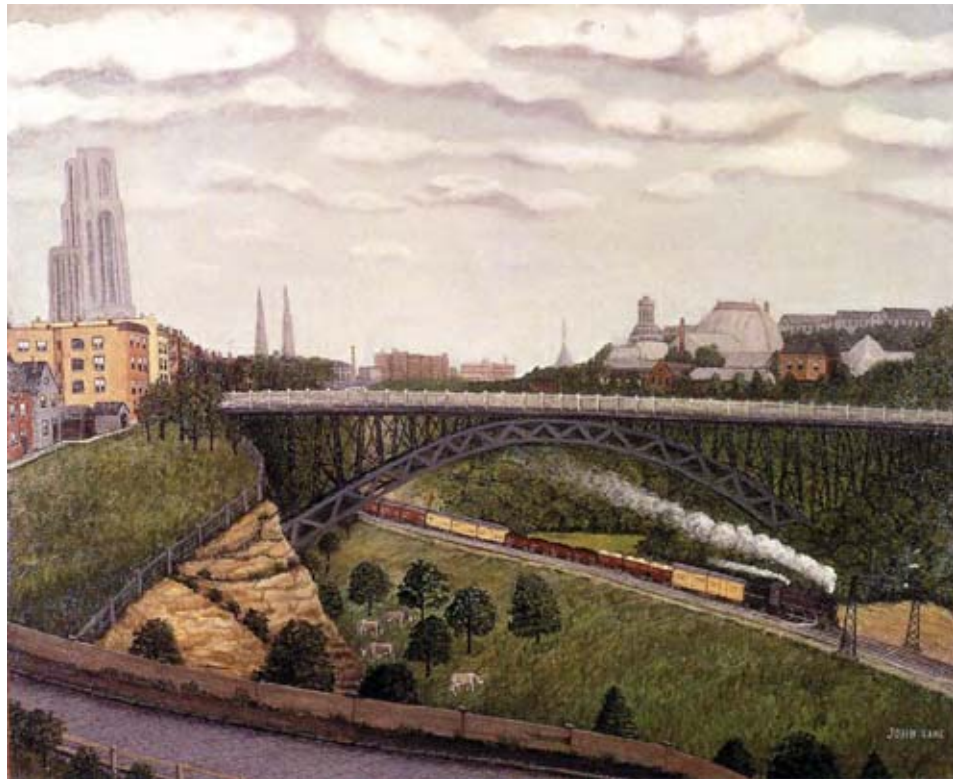
Immediately following the approval of the proposal and the initial meetings of the Steering Committee, the director met with the district’s Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment whose staff directs the development and implementation of curriculum for the district. The purpose of the

Helen Faison has been the Interim Superintendent of Pittsburgh Public Schools and is the Director of the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute.

meeting was to determine what recognition the district would give to teachers' participation in the institute. It was agreed that teachers would be granted increment credit provided that the seminars responded to the needs which the teachers themselves identified in relation to the students and the subjects which they taught and the curriculum units which they developed addressed content standards for which they were responsible.

In furtherance of its satisfaction that the curriculum units developed by teachers who participated in seminars during 1999 and 2000, the first two years of the demonstration project, were directed toward student achievement of content standards for the course in which they were to be taught, the Board of Education listed The Pittsburgh Teachers Institute as an approved provider of professional development for the teachers in the district in the plan which it submitted to the State Department in compliance with Act 48. The act is new state legislation that requires all teachers and other school district employees whose positions require State Department of Education certificates to engage in continuing professional development to keep their certification active. At the conclusion of the second year of The Pittsburgh Teachers Institute, more than 70 curriculum units which address the academic standards of the school district have been submitted for approval. The teachers who prepared them have qualified for increment credit and the units are now available for use throughout the district. It is expected that the number of participants in the institute will increase substantially as Act 48 is implemented.

When it conducted its search for a new Superintendent of Schools in the year 2000, the Board of Education knew that it faced a large budget deficit for the following year. It was a deficit of such size that it could not be addressed by closing a few administrative positions at the central office or drawing on reserves or one-time savings as in past years. However, despite



JOHN KANE, PANTHER HOLLOW, PITTSBURGH (CATHEDRAL OF LEARNING), 1934

the concern over the prediction of the deficit, the Board of Education appointed a new superintendent who made it clear in advance that to improve the quality of teaching in the district and thereby improve the academic achievement of students the district would need to adopt and implement an agenda to address this goal.

The Pittsburgh Public Schools: Agenda for Action, prepared by the new superintendent and subsequently adopted by the Board of Education includes the following components: Accountability, the 5 R's (reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic, reasoning, and relationships), Professional Development, Technology Integration and Governance.

In expanding on the essential role of professional development in the improvement of the schools, the new superintendent explained that "to provide students with a first-class education, the district needs a team of highly professional employees in all schools and offices." He continued to explain that, "therefore, a comprehensive

professional development plan must be designed that will provide employees with opportunities for continuous learning and improvement."

Upon learning of the school district's collaboration with Carnegie Mellon University and Chatham College, in the joint sponsorship of The Pittsburgh Teachers Institute, the superintendent identified the institute as an example of the kinds of partnerships that the district will continue to forge with the educational and other resources that abound in the city.

The new Chief Academic Officer who has since assumed the title of deputy superintendent, concurs with the superintendent's assessment of the promise that the institute holds for the improvement of instruction in the district. Her support is significant, because the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Unit which provides central support and general supervision of curriculum and instruction reports to her office.

What Does One Do When Change Seems Impossible?

By Owen M. Lopez

Although it can be said that every state is unique, it seems that New Mexico can be described as particularly unique. It is the fifth largest state in landmass, but yet has only 1.7 million inhabitants. It is one of the most culturally diverse states with approximately an equal number of Anglo and Hispano citizens, and with one of the largest Native American populations in America. New Mexico's most distressingly unique feature is that it is one of the poorest, if not the poorest, of the fifty states measured by per capita income, hosting the largest percentage of children living in poverty without access to health care. Conversely, New Mexico receives the largest per capita subsidy from federal dollars to support its national laboratories and other defense and research installations. It is the only western state whose Latino population is diminishing as a percentage of the whole due to the lack of employment opportunities.

As an economically impoverished state, it is predictable that New Mexico's average teacher's salary is very low — \$32,713. Therefore, many of the more qualified students in education flee the state for better paying jobs elsewhere. Moreover, because of the low wage scale it is difficult, if not impossible, to attract qualified teachers from outside of New Mexico. Therefore, as night follows day, the average performance of New Mexico's students on standardized tests ranks among the lowest in the country and the high school dropout rate exceeds one out of three. Yet New Mexico allocates almost 50% of its state budget to public education, placing it among the top states in percentage allocation of resources for education.

The McCune Charitable Foundation, with assets of over \$130M, has been in existence almost ten years. Although not

large by national comparisons, the Foundation is the largest in New Mexico among the foundations that restrict their grantmaking to New Mexico. Its mission is to improve the spiritual and physical well-being of New Mexicans in the areas of arts, education, environment, health, youth and social services with a significant portion of the Foundation's grants allocated to support education.

We at the Foundation have gleaned over the years, from conversations with representatives of non-profit organizations involved in education in New Mexico, the following insights:

1. Public education is the most significant political patronage system that exists in a state where decent jobs are scarce, and this is particularly true in rural sectors;

2. There is virtually no possibility that more money can be allocated towards the state's educational budget if we are to maintain other necessary under-funded government programs; and

3. Low salary levels probably are not the greatest obstacles to attracting and retaining qualified teachers; bureaucratic red tape and lack of institutional support are the primary culprits.

We at McCune have concluded that if we hope to be effective, we must find ways to be supportive of teachers in ways other than financial. We have reached this conclusion by combining anecdotal truths such as "any student is fortunate to have experienced more than one or two truly gifted teachers in a lifetime," with what we have learned from observation over the last several years.

As would be expected, since the education system in New Mexico is so financially strapped, opportunities for professional development are extremely limited, and those few that do exist are amateurish at best. Therefore, when Jim Vivian, Director of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, approached the Foundation in 1998 with the possibility of intro-

ducing the National Demonstration Project model in New Mexico, our interest was sparked. The Institute felt strongly that a coast-to-coast scope of sites would prove advantageous by bringing diversity to the Project; however, the DeWitt-Wallace Reader's Digest proposed funding for the Project to replicate nationally the Yale-New Haven model would only fully cover three sites. The Institute wanted to be able to incorporate all of the four applicant sites: Pittsburgh, Houston, Albuquerque, and Santa Ana into the Project. With the understanding that the program would provide guidance and interaction by and with faculty at Yale, with both the faculty at the University of New Mexico (UNM) and the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) teachers who volunteered for the program, the Foundation agreed to support the effort.

The main benefits of the program are twofold: first, the inspiration that public school teachers receive while engaging in interdisciplinary seminar discussions with fellow teachers and like minded university faculty. The seminar's purpose is to explore and develop their knowledge and understanding of their disciplines and to create curricula that can be taken to the classroom to revitalize student learning. However, the value of having an annual workshop in New Haven each summer for both the university and public school teachers to interact with the Yale faculty and colleagues from other sites is inestimable.

It is our belief that exposure of the APS teachers to advanced state-of-the art concepts in each of their curriculum areas will provide the kind of nurturing support that we have been so often told is lacking. It is also our hope that renewed, energized teachers will reenter the classrooms to provide those rare opportunities where students can experience truly inspirational teachers. This APS-UNM Institute appears to be a valuable, meaningful approach to

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Owen M. Lopez is the Executive Director of the McCune Charitable Foundation.

Making Connections in a Complex Community

By Michael Fischer

K-12 education has long been a major concern, especially in New Mexico. The state projects a serious shortage of elementary and secondary school teachers as enrollment grows and current teachers leave the profession. Although many retire, others resign, often after completing only their first or second year of teaching. New Mexico faces the additional problem of a large percentage of secondary school classes already being taught by teachers lacking a major in the subjects that they are teaching. In 1998, the New Mexico Roundtable on the Future of Higher Education, a coalition of educators, business leaders, and government officials, consequently called for “New Mexico’s colleges and universities to devote more of their institutional resources in working with our public schools to improve the quality of education throughout the state.”

Several of the leaders issuing this call felt that teacher preparation was being marginalized, particularly at the University of New Mexico, the state’s flagship university, a Carnegie Research I university of 24,000 students. According to this view, teacher preparation was a high priority at the University of New Mexico only in the College of Education, supposedly the college with the least prestige at a large research university. Allocating more institutional resources to improving K-12 education accordingly meant redirecting more funding to the College of Education, even at the expense of other programs. The problem of teacher education was that urgent.

As Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, I had mixed feelings about this plea.

Michael Fischer was the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of New Mexico when the Albuquerque Teachers Institute was established. He is currently the Vice President of Academic Affairs at Trinity University in San Antonio.



WAYNE THIEBAUD, *URBAN FREEWAYS*, 1979

On the one hand, no dean — myself included — welcomes the prospect of losing funding to another college. On the other hand, as a parent of two high school children as well as a faculty member and administrator, I shared the Roundtable’s concern about the quality of K-12 education in our state. For me, too, teacher preparation was the key. Although student success depends on many factors, a crucial one is certainly excellent, engaged teaching.

I wanted to make strengthening teacher preparation and the professional develop-

ment of teachers one of the highest priorities in the College of Arts and Sciences. I began by surveying what we were already doing in this area. I was pleasantly surprised. Our participation in the public schools started with individual faculty members working with K-12 students and sharing their expertise: setting up mathematics contests, staging chemistry shows, judging science fairs and discussing their scholarly interests with students of all ages. Our special college facilities — our
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museums, observatory, and laboratories — regularly hosted visits from school children and other community groups. Several of our funded research projects, such as the NASA-sponsored Space Science Education for New Mexico MESA Students project, reached students from middle schools and high schools across the state, often drawing on Hispanic and Native American students underrepresented in the sciences. Finally, I was reminded that numerous Arts and Sciences courses are required of education majors.

These contributions to K-12 education — and many others I could cite — were invisible to the larger public: hence the misperception that our college was indifferent to public education or, as the stereotype had it, interested only in esoteric research and graduate students. Although valuable, the efforts I have described depended on the good will and personal interests of individual faculty members. When the opportunity arose to apply for funding to establish the Albuquerque Teachers Institute, it thus could not have come at a better time. Such an institute not only built on what was already in place, it offered a way of making our participation in K-12 education even more direct and substantive — an institutional commitment on our part that would reinforce the personal initiatives of some of our faculty.

The Albuquerque Teachers Institute features seminars taught by Arts and Sciences faculty on topics chosen by Albuquerque public school teachers. The first series of seminars, held in fall 1999, dealt with such topics as the environmental consequences of urbanization and the political culture of New Mexico. The teachers targeted by the institute work in six of the Albuquerque high schools with the highest dropout rates, along with their feeder middle schools. As well as providing professional development for teachers, the seminars focus on creating new curricular strategies for teachers to take back to their classrooms. The seminars enhance the performance of teachers early in their careers, assist teach-

ers in dealing with educational change, and reinvigorate experienced teachers.

Creating the institute required collaborating not only with local school teachers and principals but with the Albuquerque Public Schools system. It was initially difficult for us to find a point of entry into the school system, partly because a new superintendent was reorganizing the administration but also because our contacts with the schools had been ad hoc and informal — a high school teacher, for example, getting in touch with a faculty member who happened also to be a parent or neighbor. Administrators at our University of New Mexico College of Education, with their longstanding ties to the school district, introduced us to the right people and explained how public schools work. From the outset, we had included representatives of the College of Education in our discussions of the proposed institute not just to be courteous but to benefit from their much more extensive experience with K-12 education. We made it clear that we were not trying to displace or outdo our colleagues in the College of Education but to complement their work.

Our collaboration with the College of Education paid off not only in facilitating our access to the public school system but in helping to make ongoing funding for the Albuquerque Teachers Institute a top university legislative priority. Our College of Education was interested in training pre-service teachers to incorporate technology in their classrooms. At the Albuquerque Teachers Institute and in the College of Arts and Sciences, we were interested in the professional development of current teachers. Putting together our interests resulted in a joint proposal that became the university's highest priority for the upcoming New Mexico legislative session.

Although support from within the university has not yet secured funding from the state, it is an excellent start. I measure the considerable success of the Albuquerque Teachers Institute in the partnerships it has made possible, the teachers, classrooms, and students it is beginning to transform,

and the Arts and Sciences faculty it has attracted — some of the very best faculty members at the university. In addition to providing a public service, these professors are getting something in return. They regularly report learning from the teachers in their seminars. The participants' enthusiasm for the institute comes through in evaluations like these: "Connecting with other teachers who are excited about what they do and truly love kids and teaching is a shot in the arm." "Participating in the seminar helped me feel connected to my profession and my commitment to my students while it also helped me grow personally." One sign of the institute's success is that assessments like these come equally from College of Arts and Sciences professors as well as from their colleagues in the schools.

Lopez: What Does One Do When Change Seems Impossible?

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the cause of education in New Mexico when other necessary fundamental reforms appear so far out of reach.

Finally, I should mention that I had occasion in the fall of 2001 to attend the Institute's National Advisory Committee meeting with President Levin and the administrative officers from the partnerships. The meeting was to allow university administrators, District Superintendents, funders, and national organizations involved in the initial four sites to report on their progress. The overwhelming positive response and obvious need for the continuation and expansion of the partnerships was evident. In my eight years as Executive Director of the Foundation, I have come to realize more and more that change can only be effective if it is done systematically. In this case, the change must happen nationally within the education system: from the top down, from the bottom up. But it must be given a chance to happen.

Enthusiasm and Creativity in Institute Seminars

By William C. Gordon

At the University of New Mexico, we believe that our Colleges of Education and Arts and Sciences should work in concert both to prepare new teachers and to provide professional development opportunities for the existing teachers in our state. We feel that such a collaboration is necessary to ensure that all of our K-12 teachers are at the cutting-edge of their disciplines in terms of both pedagogical approaches and strategies and their knowledge of important content areas.

Although several universities have attempted to more fully engage Arts and Sciences faculty in the preparation and development of teachers, one of the most successful programs of this kind has been the Yale-New Haven project. In this program Yale faculty are directly involved in promoting the professional development of teachers in the New Haven community, by developing and providing courses that are specifically designed to expand the understanding teachers have of key content areas. Knowing the success of this project and searching for mechanisms to involve our own Arts and Science faculty in teacher development efforts, a few years ago we took advantage of the opportunity to replicate this program in our own community.

It is hardly surprising that we made this decision. What has been surprising to me, however, is how enthusiastically our faculty have embraced this concept, and how creative our K-12 teachers have been in taking advantage of the opportunities these faculty have provided. Today I am convinced that the enthusiasm and creativity we have seen thus far has much to do with the kinds of course experiences we have offered to teachers in our community.

Since its creation, the Albuquerque Teachers Institute has never attempted to provide teachers with standard profes-

sional development courses that focus solely on content updates within specific disciplines. Thus, among our course offerings one is unlikely to find seminars with titles such as “Recent Advances in Chemistry” or “Modern Approaches to Literary Analysis.” Instead, our faculty have been encouraged to create “theme-based” seminars that bring together content and perspectives from a variety of disciplines all connected by a common topic. For example, one of the first seminars we offered to teachers was entitled “Archeoastronomy.” This course focused on the role of astronomy and astronomical phenomena in the lives of ancient peoples. However, within the context of that single course theme it was possible to explore scientific and mathematical principles, historical and cultural developments, and even literary devices and accounts.

The most striking outcome of our program, thus far, has been the curriculum unit plans our teachers have produced.

By taking this multi-disciplinary approach in our seminars, we were able to achieve several results that have been critical to the success of our program. First of all, we have been able to attract exceptional faculty to the program, because of the opportunity it gives them to create a truly unique seminar experience. The fact that these courses depart so clearly from the more traditional “content-update” paradigm also creates greater interest among those teachers who are seeking professional development opportunities.

Secondly, given the nature of these seminars, teachers from a variety of disciplines and grade levels can and do enroll in the same seminar. This brings to each seminar a diversity of perspectives, interests and approaches that clearly enriches and enlivens the learning environment, and increases the likelihood that our teachers

will learn something new from each other.

Finally, the seminars, themselves, are models for how the most basic disciplinary principles can be brought to life by embedding them in an interesting and relevant context. These seminars also illustrate in convincing fashion how the true understanding of almost any problem depends on viewing that problem from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

Of course, it is one thing to create a seminar experience that is stimulating and thought-provoking for the participants, but it is quite another to create an experience that truly impacts the way a teacher will teach. In this case, however, the most striking outcome of our program, thus far, has been the curriculum unit plans our teachers have produced — plans that they intend to use in their own classrooms. Invariably these lesson plans focus on the themes rep-

resented by the seminars themselves, but they are creatively tailored to each teacher’s grade level and discipline. The plans cover basic principles by linking them in a variety of fascinating ways to the course themes, and many successfully illustrate

how various disciplines can converge to allow for a richer understanding of a topic area. Clearly, these are not plans designed to promote rote learning. They are plans that are intended to raise questions, that are designed to stimulate the natural curiosity that students have, and they are plans that make the process of learning more an adventure than a task.

Today, we still have a great deal of work to do in order to assess the impact of this program on student learning in the classroom. That, of course, is the only true test of how successful our approach has been. What we do know already, however, is that this program generates in our faculty and our teachers a true excitement about teaching and learning. And, if this excitement carries over into our K-12 classrooms, we believe that we will have achieved a goal that is well worth our time and effort.

William C. Gordon is the President of the University of New Mexico.

Voices from the National Community

Editor's Note:

The Second Annual Conference of the National Demonstration Project: was held in New Haven on October 13-14, 2000. Each of the four new Teachers Institutes had been encouraged to send to this Conference three current or future seminar leaders, seven current Fellows, and its Director.

The program included several sessions on the process of establishing and sustaining Teachers Institutes, the mounting and leading of seminars, and the writing of curriculum units. We include here excerpts from a few of the contributions.

A DIRECTOR: A business executive said to me, "What do you have to demonstrate that your program works?" And I said that it was self-evident that when teachers sit down, read, and study with a professor, and get enthusiastic about the subject, they are going to be more effective, and that enthusiasm will overflow. The Institute helps teachers, and if it helps teachers, then it is going to overflow and help students.

A FACULTY MEMBER: Universities

have become somewhat narrow places in that we serve our own professions more than we serve the greater community. I think the Teachers Institute is a program that could satisfy a lot of faculty who want to break out into a community service for a larger community. The public schools have a lot of people who are hungry for some subject matter, who were forced to take a lot of education courses for professional certification but who did not necessarily have the opportunity to study our traditional subject matter. I want my children's teachers, whether it's fourth grade or college, to know as much as they can know about what they're teaching. I don't find that desire met by a lot of American public education. It is met by this program.

A FELLOW: When we began this Institute, we wrote into our description for the curriculum units that they must be aligned with district standards. This past year, we added a requirement that there be an appendix that contains all the standards met by the curriculum unit, and how they were met. This has been a tremendous asset in producing pieces that any teacher can use to come up with interesting mate-

rial that helps meet the standard. And we can certainly get hard data on assessment. The unit contains a rubric, with rigorous standards they have to meet, and these are scored from 1 to 4. Also they have to score well on their new state exams; we could keep track of that and pattern some of the assignments after they're going to get on their state exams. Also, any students working with one of these units may want to expand it, to do further research, and this could help than with the graduation project, which is a new thing in our district.

A SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR: The Institute has helped our Fellows grow. We have many Fellows who are now administrators in the public school system, and these are our human resources. The Institute has helped them with their own leadership experiences. They've been helped to bring the experience of the Institute into their classrooms, and to be the leaders in carrying out those units, and sharing them with their colleagues. As Roland Barth said, if students are to grow and to learn, everyone in the building must be growing and learning, and the Institute has helped our Fellows do that.



A FELLOW: I think that the Institute is primarily about professional development. When we start getting entangled in quantitative assessment of students, and control groups, and so on, in the end those tests will take over the program, and in that way you will lose the support of the universities, because certainly most are not going to want to get involved in something where the prime objective is always meeting some particular state testing standard.

ANOTHER FELLOW: But is quantitative assessment the only form of assessing students? There are other ways to showcase what our students are doing, besides quantitative assessment.

ANOTHER FELLOW: One form of assessment that we have is a portfolio system that the English teachers are in charge of monitoring, but the entries into the new portfolios can come from any subject area in which the students are involved.

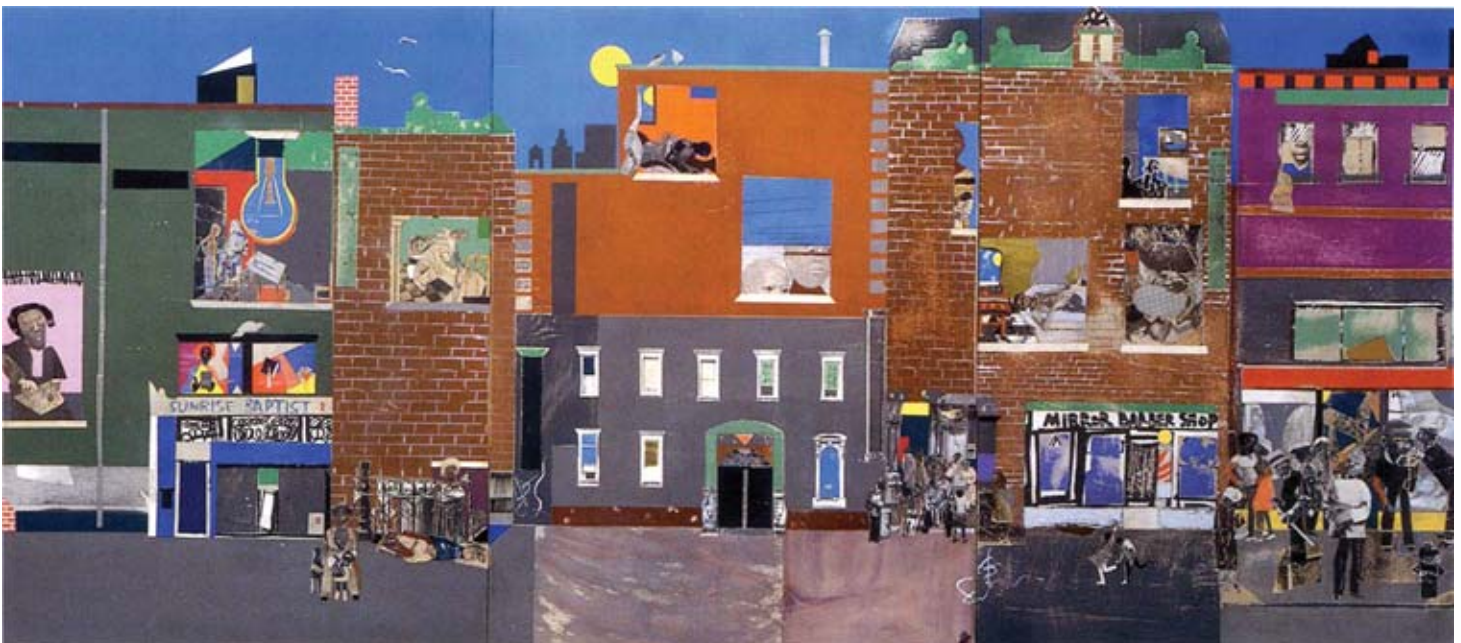
A FACULTY MEMBER: Even though it's true that our focus is on professional teacher development, we do accumulate evidence of student work in curriculum

written in Institute seminars. Teachers I've worked with have sent me things they've done; and though it is not systematic, quantitative evidence, if you're seeing lots and lots of good work coming out of students who are facing plenty of obstacles in learning, then accumulation of those examples leads you to think something good has happened.

ANOTHER FACULTY MEMBER: For all approaches, reliable empirical assessment of any educational reform is hard to come by. A lot of the quantitative studies that purport to show their impact are quite vulnerable because you just can't control all the variables. So we shouldn't be too discouraged by the fact that there isn't any strong quantitative evidence. On the other hand, we should compile as much as we can of the kind of evidence we have been mentioning: about how teachers associated with the Institute are getting recognition for the performance of their students and for their contributions; about how they are going into leadership roles; about how they are designing units that are meeting state standards and include methods of assessment to show that students are meeting

state standards. If you have a substantial body of evidence over time that shows that teachers who are high performing are working with students that are doing much better in meeting state standards — in place after place, over time — that is an important correlation. We don't really know everything that leads to success, but if something is consistently associated with success, you'd better bet on it. So I hope, despite the problems of empirical assessment, we will accumulate as much of that evidence as we can.

A FORMER FOUNDATION ADMINISTRATOR: I just want to stress that I've been on both ends of this. I've been with a foundation for a number of years and now I am doing work for an Institute, and have written some proposals and reports. I agree that we should count everything we can count. So keep very good records over the years, but then also make sure you systematically collect all these anecdotes — because if you can demonstrate that systematically you get reports of this kind, and you keep them together and report what you can from them, I think that can be persuasive.



ROMARE HOWARD BEARDEN, *THE BLOCK*, 1971

On Leading a Teachers Institute Seminar, or, How I Became a Professional Educator

By Rogers M. Smith

Not long after I joined the faculty of Yale in 1980, I began hearing about something called the “Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute,” in which New Haven public school teachers took seminars led by Yale professors. The program was billed as a way that Yale could help improve teaching in the public schools.

It sounded like bunk to me. Not that I was indifferent to public schools: my elementary, secondary, and undergraduate education had all come in mid-western public institutions to which I was deeply attached. But having recently completed five years of graduate school at Harvard, I knew that virtually all Ph.D.s, including me, had begun college-level teaching with no explicit preparation for it whatsoever; so we didn’t know much about teaching. I also knew that whether or not we learned anything about teaching was entirely up to us. The reward systems at research universities paid little attention to that. And I knew that many of my Yale colleagues had far less knowledge about any public schools than I did — much less public schools like New Haven’s, with substantial numbers of students from economically disadvantaged, racial minority backgrounds. Those schools were *terra incognita* to me as well.

Over time, however, I learned that the Teachers Institute approach was not to have Yale professors tell New Haven teachers how to teach. It was to ask teachers what substantive topics they wanted to learn about; find professors willing and able to offer such seminars; and then to have the professors help the teachers learn about content, while the teachers drew on their own experiences to discuss and

decide how best to teach that kind of content to their students. Also over time, I became more and more concerned about the future of public schools in America. And I eventually got tenure, giving me fewer worries about my university’s reward system!

So some years ago, I asked about offering a Teachers Institute seminar, indicating the sorts of things I could do. It turned out that these included topics that New Haven teachers had suggested in the past. Then I proposed some possible seminars on those topics; teachers chose one; and I offered my first New Haven Teachers Institute seminar. Since then I have led four others — and I hope to have opportunities to offer similar seminars many more times.

Why? There are, admittedly, easier ways to get summer money. A typical New Haven seminar draws teachers from all age levels, K through 12; a wide variety of subjects, English, history, math, drama, special education, and more; a number of different schools, and often very different educational, regional, political, religious, and racial and ethnic backgrounds. The last is particularly significant for me, because I teach on issues of civil rights and civil liberties. My seminars have been on topics like “Race and the Criminal Justice System,” “Racism and Nativism in American Political Culture,” “Immigration and American Life,” amongst others. These are sensitive topics, and the teachers also bring to them very different levels of experience and, yes, commitment and ability. (How could it be otherwise, in a program genuinely open to all?)

Leading these seminars is therefore challenging, and I have not always succeeded in doing it well. The first challenge is to create an atmosphere of trust: trust that the teachers, their experiences and viewpoints, will be treated respectfully by the professor, and trust that the readings and discussions in the seminar really will be worth their while. The key in both regards is something that’s hard for professors to do:

you must listen carefully. Listen carefully to teachers’ anecdotes even when they veer off point; listen both to help people feel welcomed and to get a better sense of what their concerns are. Listen especially for comments that can really be built upon to bring the discussion back on topic (if you fake it, most will know), and ones you can use to bring in other teachers. Listen carefully to their ideas for their units, however undeveloped, to their accounts of their students, to their reactions to your presentations and readings. Then reflect on what in the material you wish to cover speaks most clearly and effectively to their ideas, concerns, and experiences, and highlight that. If you don’t have enough planned that really does so, scrap parts and add things that will work better.

After a comfortable atmosphere in which people feel free to talk has been established, the next challenge is to sustain a sense of high standards for the work you’re all doing together. Most of the teachers are responsible people who really want to accomplish something in the seminar, but they’re also human beings with many conflicting job and family demands. The seminar can become something they led slide a bit. Having the teacher who serves as Seminar Coordinator speak privately to any flagging participants can help a great deal. But the basic answer is for the faculty member to show dedication and respect for the work and for everyone involved in it: by always being at the seminar on time and prepared; by making multiple individual appointments to discuss unit drafts and keeping them; by providing lots of timely feedback — on teachers’ unit proposals, on their partial first drafts, on their second drafts. For teachers who are uncomfortable writing much, the seminar leader must make suggestions about topics to discuss in the unit’s initial narrative section. For teachers who instead prefer to write what is really a term paper, seminar leaders must spur ideas for the lesson plans that should give pedagogical life to the narrative’s

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themes. Sometimes the seminar leader must discourage teachers from pursuing their specific unit ideas; but in so doing, the task must always be to identify what the teacher really wants achieve, and ways of doing so that are more appropriate to the seminar's theme. The message that the seminar leader takes the teacher's viewpoint seriously must remain clear. Many of the teachers had professors in their undergraduate days whose conduct could credibly be interpreted quite cynically. They want to believe that doing well at their Institute work really matters, and that their best efforts will merit respect; but they also want to know that the seminar leader believes that the work matters and believes that the teachers' efforts deserve respect.

The final challenge, after changing the things that you can change, is to accept the things that you cannot. Some discussions will be intensely engaged and inspiring; some units will be amazingly creative and exciting; but some sessions and units will be rather grim. It is hard for any teacher in the New Haven schools not to feel overburdened and dispirited at times, and unfortunately some teachers are struggling to get by with limited preparation and skills. They will not all perform wonderfully all the time. We cannot expect for each and every teacher to finish the seminar with a curriculum unit that, if taught by that teacher, is sure to be terrific for any and all students. We can hope for each and every teacher to be more knowledgeable, more prepared, and more motivated than that teacher would have been without the seminar experience.

And beyond the benefits to the teachers and their students, I have discovered that striving to meet these challenges consistently produces great rewards for me, even when I/we fall short. I have found that, if I

structure the discussion properly, the teachers will eventually present quite sophisticated views on complex issues. Although expressed in different (more accessible!) terms, their views often map the spectrum of the best academic discourse on those topics. And learning how to help the teachers get to that point helps me to work better with my undergraduates and graduate students. I have also found that, structured and led properly, discussions can bring out the great range of conflicting views that can be found in any collection of teachers, whether they are all black, all white, or very diverse. But if the seminar leader

What we must have is a truly interconnected, collegial, and professional system of education, in which teachers from kindergarten through graduate seminars know their subjects well, know how to teach them well, and work together to learn more and do better in both regards.

presents issues crudely or artificially or moderates discussion in a one-sided way, open, honest, thoughtful communication across such lines can be very hard to achieve. These are lessons of value to me as a teacher, as a scholar, and perhaps most of all as a human being. Finally, I have learned much about the challenges public school teachers face today; the many outstanding things they accomplish despite all obstacles; and the many things they should be able to accomplish that remain remote, for reasons teachers alone cannot change. Those are lessons that have deeply shaped my sense of both my professional and my civic responsibilities.

Admittedly, because I teach and write about issues of race, immigration, civil rights, and civic education in America, I have had benefits many professors cannot expect. The knowledge I gain through discussions with New Haven teachers provides direct insights into subjects that I explore in my other work. But the most important benefit I have gained from offering seminars is one that every faculty member can have. Instead of regarding myself as someone who is, whether I like it or not, essentially a research scholar, for whom teaching is a secondary activity, and who is far removed from the elementary and secondary schools that train my students, I can now see myself differently. I am now a research scholar AND a teacher; and a teacher who works not only in an isolated ivory tower, but also in ongoing partnership with other teachers, at all grade levels and in all subject areas. Through that partnership we all help each other to do a better job in our respective roles; and we get a glimpse of what it would be like to have what this nation should have and must have.

What we must have is a truly interconnected, collegial, and professional system of education, in which teachers from kindergarten through graduate seminars know their subjects well, know how to teach them well, and work together to learn more and do better in both regards. Because I offer Institute seminars, I can now see myself as someone actively engaged in the vital task of trying to bring that system into existence. And as such, I now see my profession as something that includes being a political scientist, but that is also larger and ultimately more important. Like the conscientious teachers with whom I am fortunate enough to work, I now at least strive to be a professional educator.

A Seminar in “American History Through Art”

While we teach, we learn — Seneca

By Elisabeth Roark

I have always regarded my career path as somewhat schizophrenic. I first worked as a museum educator at the Carnegie Museum of Art while pursuing coursework for a masters and Ph.D. in art history at the University of Pittsburgh. After completing the Ph.D. in 1991, my professional life was evenly split between tenure track positions at two colleges (during which I continually dragged my students to the museum) and a curatorship at the Carnegie in the education department (during which I taught as adjunct faculty at local universities). I viewed myself as an odd hybrid, immersed in the erudite world of academe, yet drawn to the museum environment, where I could share my enthusiasm for art with visitors of all ages and all backgrounds, and teach in front of real works of art instead of in a darkened classroom with slides.

I offer this brief vita as a way of explaining my instant attraction to the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute. When Chatham College, where I currently hold an appointment as an assistant professor of art, Carnegie Mellon University and the Pittsburgh Public Schools first received an implementation grant to develop a teachers institute based on the Yale-New Haven model, I leapt at the opportunity to combine the two halves of my professional life. I realized that through a PTI seminar I could have an impact on a range of learners. I worked, therefore, to design a course that would utilize my training as an art historian and an educator.

The result was “American History through Art,” a seminar that examined the ways in which artists represented — and misrepresented — “America” before 1900. At the foundation of the course was the belief that analyzing works of art can help us understand our history, and studying

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history can provide us with a deeper understanding of the works of art. I organized the seminar chronologically and thematically, focusing on “hot-button” issues in the field that the seminar Fellows selected from a list of possible topics at the beginning of the course. Topics included perceptions of the family in Colonial portraiture, landscape painting and national identity (as embodied in paintings like Frederic Church’s *Twilight in the Wilderness*, 1860, illustrated here), gender roles in genre painting, and images of African Americans in post Civil War sculpture — all controversial issues that would, I thought, generate lively discussion.



FREDERIC EDWIN CHURCH, *TWILIGHT IN THE WILDERNESS*, 1860

In designing the seminar, I had three overarching objectives in mind. First, I wished to promote visual literacy. We are taught how to read in grade school, but not how to look, a skill essential for survival in our increasingly visual culture. Second, I wanted the Fellows to recognize that every work of art is a construct behind which exist various agendas — those of a work’s creator, its patron, and its audience. Related to this, works of art are not simply “responses to” or “illus-

trations of” their historical context, but actively shape meanings, values, and attitudes. And third, I wished to explore the city of Pittsburgh as an urban classroom of sorts, using public works of art accessible to the Fellows and their students to supplement the reproductions we studied in class. Below I highlight three of the more memorable experiences I had leading the seminar that related, in unanticipated ways, to my objectives.

About half way into the course, after reading several articles which typically dedicated dozens of pages to analyzing single works of art from a range of perspectives, I sensed something brewing in

Frank Barbera, a shop and graphic design teacher at Oliver High School, one of our toughest city schools. Frank sighed. “Come on, Doc, how can anyone get so *much* out of one painting? Isn’t this taking things too far?” Some of the other Fellows nodded their heads in agreement. Taken aback, I immediately flashed to my eighth-grade English teacher’s lecture on *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and my skepticism at her analysis of the symbolic meaning of the mad dog. How could she

know what Harper Lee had in mind? Over the next week I realized that I wished to underscore my conviction that paintings are texts as rich as any written document, and my belief that we need to train everyone's eyes to read visual texts, grounded, of course in the study of the culture from which the work can not be separated. Could a seminar like this encourage the Fellows to promote this idea in Pittsburgh's public schools? As the course progressed, I noticed the Fellows growing in confidence when "reading" unfamiliar works of art.

That the work of art does not replicate "reality" but functions as an embodiment of particular agendas and cultural circumstances is a basic assumption of art historians. One of the primary challenges the Fellows face, of course, is to translate adult material interpreted by adults to elementary and secondary school students. After spending two class periods deconstructing Colonial portraiture and images of Native Americans, Julie Gillis, a fourth-grade teacher at Burgwin Elementary, came to our next meeting with news. She had tried analyzing an image in this way with her students. They were studying Pocahontas, and Julie asked them to examine a seventeenth-century portrait of Pochohontas in their textbook. "She has red hair," one of the students commented. "Her skin is very light," recognized another. "Why is she wearing that fancy dress with the high collar?" asked a third. This led to a discussion of the Disney movie Pocahontas, and the distinction between historical fact and subsequent interpretations of history, resulting in the student's recognition that even if a work of art is published in a textbook or displayed in a museum, it does not automatically mean it is "truth." Instead, we must consider *whose* history we are reading or seeing. Who created the image or wrote the history, and why? In seminar we examined a painting by John Mix Stanley, a mid nineteenth-century painter of western scenes, titled *Osage Scalp Dance*,

which shows a white woman and child terrorized by a circling crowd of menacing Indians. Why was this image painted? Who was it painted for? And what does it reveal about perceptions of Native Americans at a time also marked by the Trail of Tears and Manifest Destiny? When the Fellows seemed at a loss to answer such questions I asked what their students might say about the image. How would they respond to it, how would you guide them in experiencing it? This led to productive discussions linking pedagogy and content. Joanna Hattrup, an art teacher at Burgwin Elementary, built an exceptional unit titled "The Art of the American West and the Culture of the Cowboy" around such questions and the mythic messages of images of the American West.

The seminar's use of the city of Pittsburgh as an urban classroom was an initial exploratory effort, a test case for a future seminar I hope to design based completely on public art. Chatham is uniquely situated as a small woman's college in a thriving urban center with rich cultural opportunities. My objective in designing the field trips for American History through Art was to emphasize experiential learning and the value of studying real works of art as opposed to reproductions. Seminar field trips included a visit to the Chatham College Art Gallery to view an exhibition of eighteenth and nineteenth-century prints of the city of Pittsburgh, which complemented Frank Barbera's unit on the history and techniques of graphic design in the United States. He was a considerable resource during the visit, talking almost as much as I, the exhibition's curator, did. We also visited the Carnegie Museum of Art to study a fine collection of American paintings and sculptures, focusing on images of African Americans by David Gilmour Blythe and by the anonymous creator of a painting of a slave market dated c. 1860. This experience was most relevant to our unit on images of "the other" in American art, and engendered animated discussions and an opportunity for the Fellows to exer-

cise their developing skills of visual literacy. The third field trip was the most unusual. We spent the afternoon at Allegheny Cemetery, a prototypical example of a cemetery created during the mid-nineteenth century "rural" cemetery movement. Here, several teachers who work near the cemetery realized its potential for lessons on the history of American sculpture and architecture, explorations of the changing attitudes towards death and heaven, and the cemetery as a microcosm of society at large.

The final curriculum units reflected the course content and course objectives in a number of significant ways. Several of the Fellows designed units based on art about or by African Americans, including Judy Lutz, who developed a timeline of images that address key moments in African American history for her kindergarten class at McKelvey Elementary, a predominantly African American school in Pittsburgh's Hill District. Two Fellows took the broad theme of the course, how artists represent "America," and developed units based on the concept of the American Dream, combining works of art and literature to explore this topic. Tish Rygalski, an English teacher at Fort Pitt Elementary, and Michael Wantorek, Fort Pitt's art teacher, worked together to define a unit that would span the second and third grades. Organized around themes in painting including portraiture and self-portraiture, cityscapes, and scenes of everyday life explored through written and studio art projects, the unit culminates in a year-end exhibition of the students' work, as reflected in the unit's title: "Collecting Our Pasts: Making Museums in Our Lives." And for me personally, it was through teaching "American History Through Art" that I reconciled my professional dichotomy, redefining my career path as not at all contradictory but complementary, for at the foundation of museum work, academic art history, and the seminar is the belief that art is an exceptional tool for teaching and learning, and a vehicle for social change.

A Seminar in “Decision-Making”

By Kate Krause

I led one of the six seminars offered by the Albuquerque Teachers Institute (ATI) during the summer of 2000. ATI sponsors seminars at the University of New Mexico for middle- and high-school teachers in the Albuquerque Public School District. Teachers expand their knowledge in a specific discipline area and interact with each other and with UNM faculty. UNM faculty members engage in an ongoing intellectual inquiry with professional educators from diverse academic and personal backgrounds.

The seminars meet for approximately ten hours each week for four weeks during June. Seminar participants then spend the month of July writing a curriculum unit, a detailed description of how substantive material from the seminar will be incorporated into a specific course. Because these units are disseminated over ATI’s Web site (<http://www.unm.edu/~abqteach>) and in printed form, teachers who do not participate in the seminars can use the units also.

My seminar, *Human Decision-Making: Rational and Irrational*, was designed to introduce teachers to the formal decision-making tools of economics and game theory. I hoped that the seminar would be intellectually stimulating yet accessible to those with little or no technical background in economics. In addition, I wanted the seminar content to contribute materially to the courses that the participants would be teaching. Of the ten teachers enrolled in my seminar, one taught some economics. Nine did not. Among those who did not were one drama teacher, two language arts teachers, two teachers of gifted students and several who taught students with learning and behavioral problems. Most of the participants taught several different courses, often in inter-disciplinary learning environments. What could an economist offer this diverse group?

Our common ground was our curiosity. We all wanted to learn more about what

drives people to do the things they do. I was interested in gaining insight into adolescent decision-making because many of the decisions adolescents make, particularly those regarding family planning and academics, profoundly affect adult economic outcomes. The teachers’ goals were more diverse. Some were interested in acquiring specific tools that they could use to teach better decision-making. Some were interested in choice as a character-revelation device.

Formal economic models of decision-making often begin with the assumption that people tend to make choices that leave them as well off as possible. We define rational choices as those for which the associated benefits most exceed the associated costs. While people do shop around for bargains and attempt to allocate time and energy efficiently, they also make choices that seem directly opposed to their best interests. They over-indulge, take unreasonable risks and procrastinate. This particular dichotomy — theoretic rationality and observed irrationality — is a familiar and sometimes frustrating one. The seminar participants were a rich source of anecdotal evidence that adolescents often make decisions that are not rational. The potential benefit of better decision-making skills at this critical time in students’ lives was obvious.

Teachers of students with learning and behavioral disabilities quickly recognized that they could exploit several elements of economic models. First, economists believe that each alternative must be explicitly identified in order to determine the true cost of any course of action. A student with an hour to spend might choose from among watching TV, studying, or practicing a sport or musical instrument. By choosing one activity, the student sacrifices the choices not selected. This forgone activity represents an implicit cost. Apparently many of these students believe that they “have no choice” in circumstances in which they actually do have alternatives, or they fail to recognize that some options are mutually exclusive. One teacher designed an exercise around

listing all of the alternatives that a student could have chosen in various scenarios. The task seems simple, yet for students who have trouble recognizing the implications of their own decision-making, it is empowering.

A second element that these teachers exploited was the assumption of self-interest. Students who are not easily persuaded by moral arguments can be persuaded by appeals to their own self-interest. The teachers felt that their students would be capable of modeling alternative choices using “decision trees.” These are diagrammatic representations of choices made and consequences that follow. Each choice is a branch on the tree, terminating in a list of consequences that follow if that branch is selected. Often these consequences lead to a new set of choices and new consequences. We solve these models by selecting the final outcome that best meets our objectives, and then tracing backwards along the branches that lead to that outcome. Students use the diagram to identify each decision that would have to be made at each step along the way to arrive at the preferred outcome.

This tool is an important component in several curriculum units. These units use examples from literature, television, and movies to illustrate how decisions made early in the story ultimately determine the characters’ outcomes. Students gain practice sketching decision trees for the characters, showing the decision paths the characters took as well as showing alternative paths that would have led to different outcomes. Students then progress to diagramming decisions in their own lives.

Transparent decision-making strategies addressed many of the needs of teachers of students with disabilities. The teachers of gifted students also saw these strategies as useful. Their students can face an overwhelming number of options. Clarifying these options, and specifying the consequences of each, is a valuable tool for them, too.

To use these decision algorithms, the decision-maker must clearly identify his or her objectives. While many people associ-

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ate economics with financial or business decisions, behavior is often motivated by non-pecuniary goals. A person may want respect, fame, or a reputation for honesty or generosity. In addition, there is a tendency to act in ways that are consistent with one's own self-image. For example, the cognitive dissonance that would arise if a kind person were to act selfishly imposes a psychic cost. In the actor's implicit cost-benefit analysis, this may tip his or her decision toward a seemingly selfless act. In considering observed behavior we carefully distinguished between *self-interest* and pure *selfishness*. We demonstrated cooperative games that could be used in a classroom to show that a reputation for trustworthiness can serve a student's self-interest, while one for duplicity will undermine it.

We can draw inferences about a person by observing his or her choices, and can predict what that person will do in similar situations in the future. Choices "signal" underlying values and preferences. Seminar participants quickly recognized the explicit and implicit signaling that occurs in adolescent social groups. In addition, those who taught drama and writing saw that their students could use this concept to add depth and realism to fictional and dramatic characters.

The drama teacher chose Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll House* to impress on her students the importance of motivating a character's actions. In this play each main character evolves through a series of decisions that he or she makes. While the characters' situations change considerably over the course of the play, the changes are credible because the choices that led to those changes seem consistent with the characters' underlying personalities. Exercises in her unit include acting out the play given different initial decisions and diagramming alternative plot lines.

A creative writing teacher despaired that her students wrote action sequences enthusiastically, but did not develop clear, credible characters. Well-drawn fictional characters reveal much about themselves through the decisions that they make. In



WINSLOW HOMER, *THE SEE-SAW*, 1873

subsequent scenes, these characters must act in ways that are internally consistent. The decision-making models gave this teacher explicit tools that she could use to help her students develop characters with whole personalities. Her unit includes a simulation that asks students to identify specific character types from subtle clues and to describe the kinds of choices each might make.

A home economics teacher designed a unit specifically for students who need help making appropriate life-style decisions. Many of the students in her class are teenaged parents facing crucial relationship, financial, and health choices. Her unit identifies several common miscalculations that can lead to sub-optimal decisions. Her students tend to make "time inconsistent" decisions, placing too much weight on the present and discounting costs and benefits that will accrue in the future. Procrastination is the archetypal time inconsistency problem. Students sometimes make poor decisions when they do not use information objectively. Her unit points out the consequences of poor decision-making, and helps her at-risk students develop better decision-making strategies.

Despite the participants' diversity, common issues emerged. Among these were the importance of incentives in motivating choice and the empowerment students can

gain by learning specific decision-making tools, particularly those that appeal to their own self-interest. We became more careful observers of subtle nuances of human behavior as we became more aware of character-revealing cues. We debated the merits of limiting decision-making freedom and the extent to which people should be rescued from unfortunate outcomes of their decisions.

Seminars like this one are costly. The benefits are harder to quantify. The teachers ingested a large volume of information about economics, and within weeks were comfortably using jargon and applying economic models to their own, and their students', decision-making processes. Each teacher-participant developed a curriculum unit that addressed specific state and district level curriculum standards in innovative ways. However the benefits of participating transcended this discipline-specific information acquisition. Participants used new information to forge links among known concepts and across disciplines. We met regularly in a cooperative, intensively academic atmosphere to learn more about the human condition. We learned new ways of thinking about ourselves and our own disciplines. We helped each other develop creative ways to teach practical decision-making skills to those who need them most. For me at least, the benefits far outweighed the costs.

A Seminar in “Teaching Religion Critically”

By John H. Smith

Were I of a conspiratorial bent, I might start believing that my involvement with the UCI-Santa Ana Teachers Institute was masterminded by invisible forces, leading me, a hapless Harrison Ford, down a path that ends with total immersion in the program. But I suppose I have to recognize that there was no plot, just a stimulating program that knew how to capture my interests.

My first real contact with the UCI-Santa Ana Teachers Institute was a meeting called by the faculty director on campus back in Fall, 1999. The goal was to introduce the program to a range of professors. It was supposed to be merely “informative.” (Here’s where conspiracy theories seem to work.) But at the end of the meeting, we went around the room stating briefly what we *would* offer as a seminar *were* we to offer one. In spite of the insistence on the subjunctive mood (I explained that I did not have time for such a seminar, but went on to describe one I *might* teach *should* things change), some of us found ourselves hooked, or at least intrigued, by the idea.

I was then fortunate enough to accompany a small delegation of UCI colleagues to the Institute meeting at Yale in October, 1999. Feeling at first like an outsider, I very quickly got pulled further and deeper into the organization. What most impressed me there was first of all the clear vision of the program to create a space and climate on university campuses where teachers could reinvigorate their academic spirits. Moreover, the actual interactions at the New Haven meeting convinced me that the program knew how to realize that vision since the teachers offered outstanding presentations and ran the show. Unlike so many academic conferences I have attended, this one was marked by a distinctive collegiality and emphasis on dialogue.

Given these experiences, there was little doubt in my mind that the earlier use of the

subjunctive would give way to a definite indicative mood when I was approached to submit potential seminar topics later that Fall. The teachers I had met in New Haven were so dedicated and eager that I wanted to work with them in a class.

Beginning in March, 2000, then, I offered a seminar entitled “Teaching Religion Critically.” Our goal was to address issues involving teaching about religion in public education and then to read a variety of texts from modern European thinkers who have reconceptualized, often in a critically, the way we approach religion. Those participating taught in schools at all levels, ranging from kindergarten to high school. We were all motivated by the notion that we do our students a disservice by not teaching ideas from religious traditions, although *how* we do that appropriately is extremely difficult to carry out.

The seminar itself follows an important trajectory on religious thought, beginning in the sixteenth century and going up through our own time. This trajectory might be considered a “slippery slope” in the following sense: The thinkers (mostly philosophers) we read generally were attempting to offer secure grounds for religious faith, grounds that could be accepted not only “on faith” but also rationally; and yet, precisely these efforts often generated further arguments that ultimately led to the “death of God.” Hence, we see first how Erasmus, as opposed to Luther, begins to look at the Bible with the linguistic and philological tools of Humanism, thereby opening up (as Luther feared!) the floodgates of criticisms of Scripture as a historical document. By the late eighteenth century, writers such as Lessing and Kant accepted such criticisms and turned to *moral* rather than scriptural arguments for the existence of God and the lessons of the Judeo-Christian tradition. But this turn to ethics was one hundred years later in turn undermined by the attacks that Nietzsche and others waged against the dominant system of morality. In short, early efforts by religiously inclined thinkers to grasp

religion rationally helped pave the way toward what has been called “secular humanism.”

The reason we traced this path is so that we can understand better both the origins of our own age and the debates that continue to be waged around issues of religion. Always in the background for us in our discussions was the question of how public education, indeed education in general, lies at the fault line where larger questions collide. After all, if one of the points of education is to teach young people to use their minds critically, and if the tradition we’ve studied indicates what happened to religious thought when studied rationally, then we need to inquire what and how we can teach about religion in schools.

Rarely have I so looked forward to a class every week! In keeping with my understanding of the Institute’s mission, the seminar was not designed to offer concrete “in-service” instruction about how to teach this material in class. Indeed, the readings were much to difficult for most school classrooms. Rather, our weekly focus was on *our own* intellectual engagement with the ideas. We grappled with, and argued about, some of the most important ideas in the modern Western tradition, from free will and grace to “God is dead,” from historical critiques of the Bible to the relationship between religion and morality. The success of the seminar is measured, in my eyes, by the development of one middle school teacher who began by doubting she could complete the course (“It’s been a long time since I’ve read philosophy...”) yet who found herself interesting her colleagues back in school in the subject matter (“We talked in the teachers’ lounge today about my reading of Nietzsche...”).

The curricular units varied considerably in approach and content, depending on the levels for which they were intended. Teachers in the middle schools, for example, tended to go in two directions. Either they worked on building out their “world civilization” units with more work on
(continued on page 29)

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Generating Teacher Leadership

By Paul D. Cooke

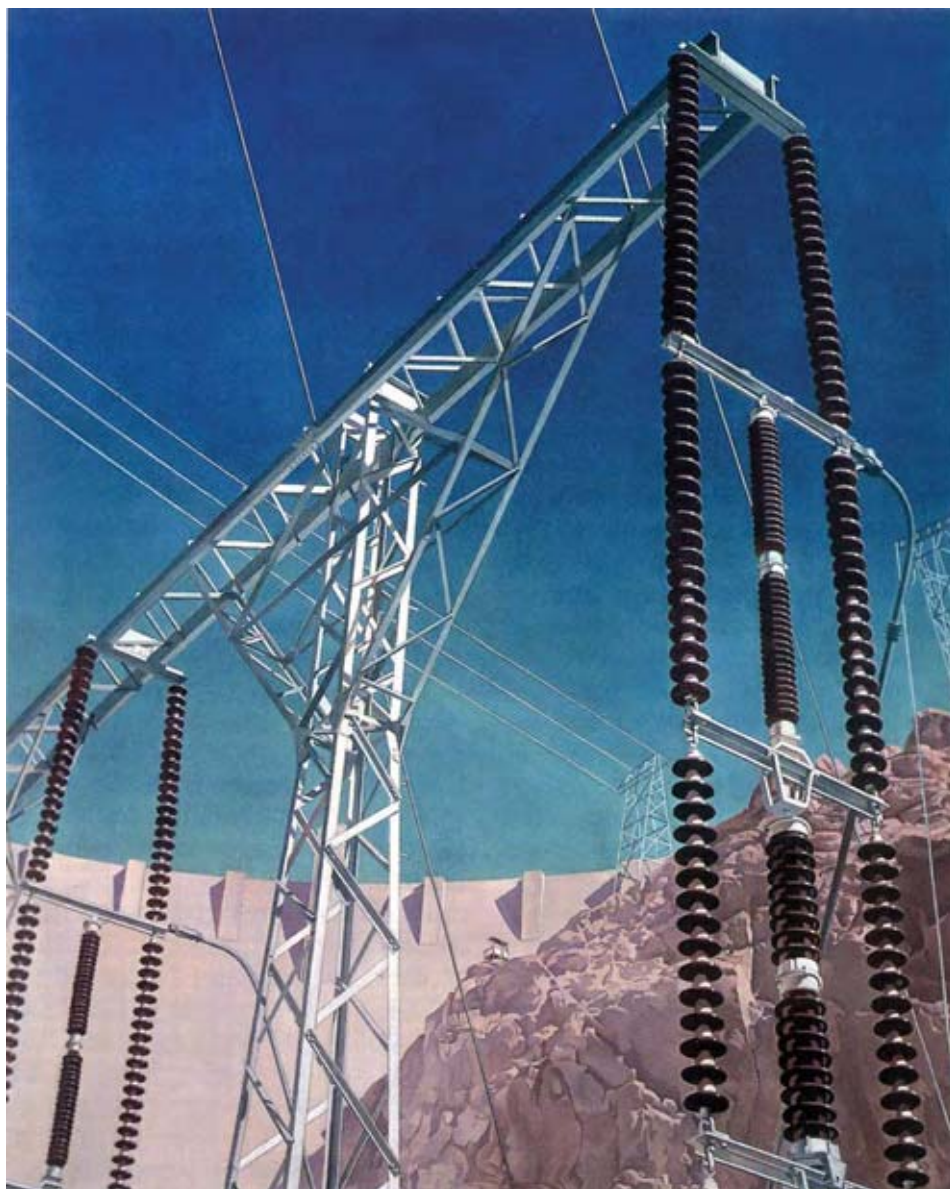
Teacher leadership is a principal tenet of the Houston Teachers Institute. In each of our three years of operation from 17-25 teachers have comprised our leadership team, some of whom have never participated before. Though we begin each year with such a number of teacher leaders, in each of the first two years of the program only about ten teachers formed the core of strong leadership for the Institute.

Established in December 1998 under the guidance of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute and underwritten by the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, the Houston Teachers Institute is a partnership between the Houston Independent School District and the University of Houston. The Institute replicates, as closely as possible, the 20-year-old model developed by Yale University and the New Haven, Connecticut public schools. In that model, fifteen-week academic seminars are offered by university professors to public school teachers each fall. Through this annual set of seminars the Institute builds relationships between University faculty and school teachers in order to strengthen teachers and teaching in the city's public schools. To carry out its program, the Institute relies heavily on the participation of a small group of teachers, each of whom acts as the official representative of the Institute to his or her school, and the school's representative to the Institute.

Reliance on Teacher Leadership

The Institute's teacher-leaders guide their colleagues into the Institute program and help orient and support them once they become involved as Fellows. Each of them is given a stipend of \$500 for their efforts. From this group as well come the six seminar "Coordinators," teachers chosen by the Director each year to act as a liaison

Paul D. Cooke is the Director of the Houston Teachers Institute.



CHARLES SHEELER, CONVERSATION: SKY AND EARTH, 1940

between the seminar and the Institute office, caring for the business of each of their seminars, and aiding both faculty and Fellows in creating and finishing the curriculum units that are so much a part of the Institute program. Coordinators receive an additional \$500 stipend. The leadership of these teachers is to be a manifestation of teacher "ownership" of the Institute; it is not simply to be a practical exercise in recruitment and administration. It is hoped

that some of this spirit of taking personal responsibility — "ownership" — will be carried by these teachers back to their schools and realized there. Because of the Institute's emphasis on teacher leadership we can rightly see the program as a place where teachers are trained and encouraged to be leaders in their schools.

Each of our Teacher Representatives understands that one of the chief tenets of
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the program calls for teachers to take responsibility for their own professional development, and that this includes taking responsibility for their part in make this program for professional development a success. Over the past two years some of the teachers in this group have been very successful in carrying out these responsibilities, while others have found it difficult — or have not tried very hard — to carry them out.

A Brief Review of the History of Our Leadership Teams in Houston

The first year's leaders came to us in response to a memo sent out from the central school district office in September of 1998 announcing the formation of a new professional development program for teachers based on one developed at Yale over the past two decades. Some teachers may have been asked by their principals to attend, while others came on their independent volition in response to the invitation distributed through the principals of the sixty high and middle schools throughout the District. About 25 teachers representing some 20 schools came to these formative meetings in the fall of 1998. From among this original group, seven teachers are still active and are among our leaders.

During the first autumn when seminar topics were being selected and applicants were being recruited at the involved schools, these teachers were told that the seminar topics would not be chosen by UH faculty, but by them. They were asked to involve their colleagues at each campus, requesting suggested seminar topics. Then these teachers — or Teacher Representatives as they are called — worked together to narrow down one hundred suggestions to about one dozen possibilities. After UH faculty members were found to lead six of the final 12 teacher-generated choices, the teachers again took the lead in soliciting applications from their fellow teachers on their campuses. Through their efforts fifty additional teachers applied to become Institute Fellows for the

coming year's program. When we had received all 75 applications (including 25 from our Teacher Representatives), a group of six teachers — our first Coordinators — became an admissions committee, reading all the forms and apportioning each applicant to a seminar. When the seminars were under way in February, 1999, these six teachers formed our Coordinators Committee, meeting with me weekly during the seminar term to discuss the progress of the program and to remedy problems that arose. And when the Yale model did not quite fit our needs, these teachers often suggested alternative ways of doing things that seemed more suitable for Houston.

When our first year of seminars came to a close in the fall of 1999, as the Institute Director, I sent a memo and application form to every participating teacher — about 63 persons in May of 1999 (some 12 of our original 75 teachers having not finished the program) — inviting applicants to apply for teacher representative positions in all participating schools. The memo did not presume the present set of leaders would want to continue, but it provided for their reapplication for another year if they so chose. Eleven of the original twenty-five reapplied and all were chosen to continue as Teacher Representatives from their schools in the second year of the program. Six new TR's joined us for our second year (2000), so that in our second year we had a TR leadership team of 17 teachers (one per school, with three of our participating schools now without an official Teacher Representative). Of these six new Teacher Representatives, three had been involved in a seminar in 1999, while the other three were brand new recruits to the program.

A similar procedure to the TR application process of fall, 1999, took place in the fall of 2000. Of the 18 teachers who now comprise our 2001 TR leadership team, nine have been on one of our TR leadership teams before, four new TRs have come on board who have been involved as Institute Fellows in the past, and the last four new TR's are new recruits to the Institute, having only joined us this summer.

Why Do We Lose Teacher-Leaders, Why Have We Retained the Ones Who Have Stayed, and How Do We Find New Ones?

Some of our teacher-leaders did not realize, especially the first year, that the program was rigorous and demanding of both time and energy. Early on in 1999 it became evident that several of our TRs were overextended and unprepared to make the necessary commitment to participate in the program, much less serve as a leader. A few did not finish their seminar or their unit. Many HISD teachers are burdened with extracurricular demands on their time at their schools. The effort to travel to UH late in the afternoon once a week was simply more than some of our teacher leaders were ready for after a hard day at work; it simply took them a month of trying to do this before they realized it. Seminars start at 5 PM — prime traffic time.

In addition to the fact that some of our teacher leaders — the Teacher Representatives — were overextended, it is also true that our first year's program was not as organized and hence not as effective as it could have been. Both faculty seminar leaders and our Fellows were equally unsure of how the seminars were to be run. This led to some unevenness in the seminars and some disenchantment among some participants. Some teachers found the range of preparation of their colleagues too wide to tolerate: it was hard to be in a class with some who knew so much more or so much less than they did. It should be noted that other teacher-leaders in the same seminars in which some found much to blame, found things not bad at all, but rather delightful, and returned the next year and are still involved, now for a third year. One would think that the teachers who had the most positive, problem-free seminar experience would be the most enthusiastic ones, and this was often the case. And yet three of our teacher leaders in 2000 came from the two 1999 seminars in which there were the most difficulties. I don't think there is any one reason why these three teachers remained enthusiastic about the Institute in spite of all that, but if I had to provide a theory I would say it is this:

they wanted to be at the University learning new things with a faculty expert they respected, and they were willing to overlook the rough spots to get what they really wanted. But some of the teachers who dropped out because they felt overextended might have been willing to stay the course if, having made the necessary sacrifices in other areas to continue coming, they had found their Institute seminar experience thoroughly satisfying. The fact that for some this was not the case simply made the decision to leave the program less difficult.

However, many of our teacher leaders found what they were looking for in the Institute's seminars during its first year, and thought the experience rewarding enough to impel them to stay on as Teacher Representatives for a second year and participate in another seminar the following year. I think these teachers saw that the program provided a very enjoyable vehicle for engagement with learning and that it enabled them to bypass all the disagreeable complications that go along with registering for classes in the normal way, and studying with those who are neither adults nor professional teachers.

The teachers involved in leadership positions tend to enjoy being consulted and seeing their advice listened to and applied. This, in their experience, was a novel outcome and became, I think, another reason for the program's popularity with those teachers who became our strongest leaders. Genuine involvement through taking on responsibilities and having the Director's ear in a way that appears actually to make a difference helps very much to encourage some of our leaders and prompts them to stick with the program. They like having a stake in making the Institute a success. Our strongest teacher-leaders believe the program is something worthwhile; they see their involvement truly makes a difference.

If Teachers Are to be Leaders, It Is Most Important to Listen to Them

In Houston, our annual search for a set of seminar topics to teach the following fall, spearheaded by the TRs, is one area, for

example, where teachers can feel a sense of ownership over the program, and if this is permitted, it generates a sense of personal responsibility about the program's success. Our annual campaign to recruit applicants is another area in which teachers exercise leadership and offer advice. As we work together to solicit applications, we consult on schedules, the content of publicity material, and on the content of the application form. The teachers arrange for visits by the Director to their schools, so that together they can talk to school faculty. The six teachers who become coordinators each December, a job that then lasts through the fall, are responsible not only to be an admissions committee, but meeting together weekly from January till May, they form a steering committee, too, that keeps track of the progress of the Institute seminars. In these meetings a sense of camaraderie and shared commitment will easily grow if the meetings give the teachers a sense that their participating counts. They get this sense because they are listened to.

In leadership meetings and in spending time with our teacher leaders, I have asked their advice frequently. I have tried, too, to keep them abreast of a wide range of Institute issues, including fundraising, relations with HISD and UH administrations, and recruiting. I try to be frank and to treat the teachers as the important advisers I believe they are. I try to respond to their requests for help as fully and quickly as I can. One should make an effort to demonstrate to teacher leaders that their views count, that when they speak, they are listened to, and that teachers and the director are partners together in making the Institute a success.

The process of asking and using advice and sharing in decisions is built into the blueprint the Houston Teachers Institute received from Yale in 1998. If the blueprint is consulted and followed, teachers who like the program can feel, rather easily, that they are advocating something that is truly theirs when they talk about the program in their schools. I think I can say that when we meet in our TR committee it is not hard for them to feel that we are the heart of the program and that without us it will not prosper.

I would conclude this point by saying that the Director must not be afraid to solicit advice from teachers and to take it whenever possible, or to help the teachers shape policy together. It is important, once a good idea or suggestion is offered to the Institute and taken by the Director, that it not be dropped. By following it up and then announcing its fate, the Director proves he or she values those who gave it. If one is afraid of extremes, or of a little anarchy among teacher leadership, one can take comfort from the probability that there will be those teachers in one's councils who will be as fervent moderators of radical or personal programs as he or she could be. And it is a good idea to consider that a little wild fire is better than no fire at all. The Director must be concerned about giving the teachers the opportunity to get excited about the Teachers Institute and not throw the wet blanket of the desire to control everything on top of such fire.

The Director has to take care that the Institute succeeds in two distinct areas: 1) actively and tirelessly recruiting new teachers who appreciate the value of the Institute, and 2) making sure that the Institute's seminar leaders are thoroughly prepared for the special nature of the program the collaborative aspect of the seminars. Professors are not to be authoritarian providers of information, but colleagues and collaborators with the teachers. When interested teachers experience this collegiality in the seminar room, leaders will emerge to help continue the rewarding experience. Seminar leaders who understand the program's aims are perhaps the Director's strongest asset if one speaks in terms of generating teacher leadership. If the program is substantial — well-run seminars led by thoroughly prepared faculty filled with interested and committed and prepared teachers — teacher leadership will not be hard to find.

The Director facilitates the emergence of leadership that is already there among those who most value the program. He or she must simply find those teachers and give them — and their leadership potential — a chance to emerge.

A Welcome to Houston Teachers

Remarks by Arthur K. Smith, Chancellor of the University of Houston System, and President of the University of Houston:

Today's teachers face challenges unknown to teachers of one, two, or three generations ago. Many students today come from single parent homes where education is not a priority. They come from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds, and it is not unusual for Houston teachers to have extreme degrees of multi-lingualism in their classrooms.

High-tech demands increase faster than the ability to provide the teacher training and resources needed to cope with them. Administrators and parents want to see higher test scores. And, there are the other concerns of teachers that include compensation and working conditions.

So, tell me again why you are teachers?

I know why. It's the same reason you are here today as Fellows of the Houston Teachers Institute. You have a profound desire to teach and a love for the profession. And you want to continue your education and to develop your skills so that you can obtain that educational edge that will help you provide the vital margin of excellence for your students.

The University of Houston is proud to be a partner with the Houston Independent School District in this program, which is just one example of our commitment to education. Our College of Education, under the leadership of new Dean Robert Wimpelberg, is actively involved in seeking ways to reform education and to improve the way our teachers are taught. We here at the University of Houston send our best wishes to Secretary Rod Paige, who was the University's Commencement Speaker and an honorary degree recipient last May. But all the work that's done in Washington and in Austin, and in our universities and public schools, will not matter if our teachers are not prepared for the classroom of the 21st century. You are taking a big step in that direction in the work of this Institute.

Teachers Enlightening and Renewing Themselves

By Daniel Addis

Two years ago, when I initially applied to the Houston Teachers Institute, I expected the program to be like one of the innumerable inconspicuous workshops I have attended for the past twenty years, one that would tell me what I already knew or introduce me to teaching strategies that would be ineffective with my English students. I anticipated writing a unit that would merely fulfill the Institute's requirements so I could receive the honorarium. Although I expected to enjoy some of the discussions, I never once anticipated gaining anything that would develop me as a teacher or enhance learning in my classroom.

At the start of the seminar, I volunteered to be the first presenter because I wanted to conclude that responsibility as soon as possible. I planned a simple presentation that would consume little time and require little effort; however, during the ensuing days, I gradually and inadvertently became involved in trying to create a superior presentation. I reflected more intently, developed my ideas, and did more reading, writing, and studying that I had anticipated. I could not make a lackadaisical presentation; I had to create one that was interesting and enriching for my fellow teachers and professor.

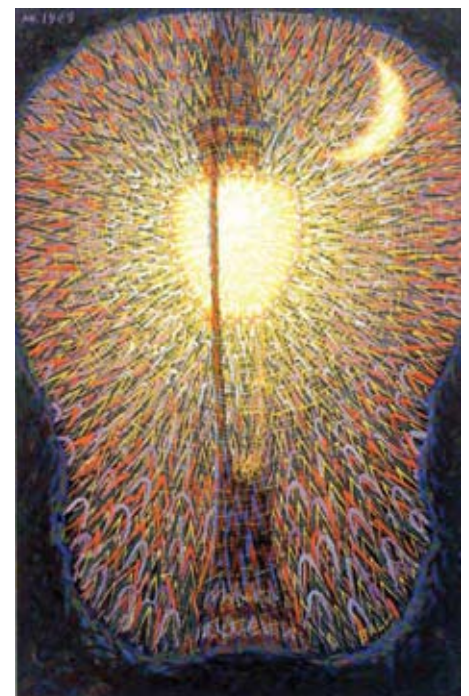
During the course of the seminar, as I worked on my unit, a similar experience occurred. I originally intended to compose a unit that would entail the least amount of work; instead, I became immersed in the project and could not resist doing more research, devising new strategies, and revising what I had written. My desire to do the least amount of work was overcome by a stronger desire to create an outstanding unit for my students.

This type of experience is, I think, the key to the effectiveness and success of the Houston Teachers Institute and the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute. By impelling the teachers to openly discuss

their unit in the seminar, publishing their unit on the Internet and in booklets, and requiring them to teach their unit to their students, the Institute creates a situation whereby teachers feel an inner compulsion to learn, introspect, write well, and produce an enriching unit.

Since we autonomously compose the curriculum unit, our integrity is at stake. We are free to produce a lethargic, substandard unit, but if we do, we will wear the crown of incompetence, laziness, and shallowness, for our name is on the unit. Our fellow teachers will hear us present it. Teachers and administrators at the school may read it from the booklet. Anyone throughout the world for innumerable years may read it from the Internet. On the other hand, if we work diligently and produce an enriching and interesting unit, we will wear the badge of intelligence, dedication, and adept educator. Faced with these two outcomes, most of us painstakingly create an enriching unit for our students and improve ourselves as teachers and human beings.

The threat to our integrity, though, is not



GIACOMO BALLA, *STREET LIGHT*, 1909

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the Institute's most effective weapon. A more potent one is the Institute's challenge to the teachers' character. Nearly all teachers yearn to do their best to educate their students and not let them down. Some of us feel so compelled to thoroughly teach our students, we make sacrifices, expend great amounts of time and effort, endure worry, live modestly, tolerate debasement, and spend our money on educational items. Teachers will come to school early or leave late if a student asks them for help. Educating and uplifting young people is the reason why we became teachers.

The teachers' fidelity to the education of their students impels them to work diligently on their unit. I personally worked strenuously on each of the two units I created. When I had free time at school, instead of sitting in the teachers' lounge, bantering with my colleagues, I went to the library and researched my unit and wrote on the library's computer. During fall break, I spent many hours of several days researching, writing, and revising. After the dismissal of school for the summer, I spent more hours refining it. My experience is not unique; I have heard other seminar Fellows narrate comparable experiences. Recently, at a teacher representative meeting in Houston, a teacher told us that he worked harder on his unit than on any other project he had ever done.

The result of this intense reading, study, reflection, discussion, and writing is the substantial improvement in the performance of the teachers. This conclusion does not need proof: who can claim that contemplatively reading sophisticated literature, discussing intellectual issues, writing elaborately about an enlightening subject, devoting substantial time to improving instruction, conferring with a professor and fellow teachers, publishing one's unit on the Internet, and using the unit in the classroom does not increase teachers' knowledge, sharpen their intelligence, refine their teaching technique, and intensify their commitment to teaching?

I know that I am a substantially better

teacher now than I was two years ago, prior to participating in the Houston Teachers Institute. I have mentally digested Plato, Richard Wright, Rousseau, Kafka, O'Connor, Freud, and others. I have discussed profound issues with teachers, professors, and students. I have deeply thought and struggled to write precisely. As a result, I know more, think more acutely, and write better than I did a few years ago. My confidence is stronger and my outlook is brighter because a school district and a university entrusted me to create a curriculum unit. I have a stronger stake in the profession of education because, through the publishing of my curriculum units, I have added a stone or two to the edifice of education. The relationships I have developed with fellow teachers and professors assure me that my thoughts hold water and my role as educator carries weight. Discussions with fellow teachers have given me new teaching strategies and lesson ideas. More importantly, though, I teach more intensely and my students read and write more intensely because literature and writing have greater meaning to us because, instead of following a textbook and doing "class work," we read literature to learn who we are, how we should live, and how we should structure our society, and we write, not to parrot an essay format, but to express what we have learned about ourselves and life and what we think about important issues of life. My interaction with my students is more authentic because the work we do is real life work instead of superficial class work. I am more strongly committed to teaching than I ever was, and my students are more interested and more strongly engaged than ever before. Consequently, the students I teach today learn more than the students I taught in the past.

The Teachers Institute has been a god-send for us teachers who live in times when teachers are often demeaned, lambasted, and ignored. Day after day, we struggle to overcome this negative barrage to maintain our commitment to teaching young people, a vocation that is our lives. However, the

Teachers Institute's acknowledgment that teachers know a great deal about young people and how to teach them and deeply want to teach young people has strengthened our spirit, the educational experience has improved our intellect, and the opportunity to improve the education of our students has renewed our commitment to teaching and spurred us to create enriching educational experiences for our students.

Smith: Teaching Religion Critically

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world religions or they developed topics on tolerance and intolerance from a religious perspective. (These latter units were particularly interesting and challenging. Many teachers know now better how to approach matters of race, gender, and ethnicity, but religious tolerance is in some ways more difficult to discuss.) The high school teachers were able to work with some of the materials we discussed in class. One teacher will be able to use Nietzsche as a background when she teaches Camus and existentialism; another will use the Erasmus/Luther debates on the free will as background to his classes on Shakespeare; and a third will bring in structural arguments on "consumerism as a religion" when she does critical "readings" of contemporary culture.

On the basis of my experience this year, I have proposed to teach a seminar next year that raises the question of how to introduce fundamental religious scriptures (the Bible, the Koran, the Veda, Buddhist teachings) into the classroom.

In short, I am hooked by the concept of the Institute and especially by my concrete interactions with the teachers. Unlike Harrison Ford, who liberates himself from the frame he found himself in, I am very happy with the way I have been drawn into this program, step by step, sometimes almost against my will. Now, it is definitely my decision to stay with it.

Professional Development that Affects Student Learning

By Mel Sanchez

Education has come to the forefront of politics. Hot topics include vouchers, student and teacher assessment, technology, class size, curriculum, school construction and teacher professional development.

Teacher professional development is an essential element in improving student learning. From the early eighties to the present, it has been an integral part of my teaching career. With local courses and national seminars in my subject area or in new technology, I have been able to improve academic knowledge and skills needed to keep abreast of the changes imperative to excellent teaching.

Yale University and the University of California, Irvine, have developed programs to improve teacher professional development. The DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund has supported a National Demonstration Project that includes selected universities that have demonstrated a commitment to working with a local school district with a large population of disadvantaged students. The UCI-Santa Ana Unified School District connection fit the criteria for such a project. Teachers and professors were given the opportunity to attend an intensive summer model of the Yale-New Haven experience. With this experience behind them, institutes involving teachers and professors were formed in local areas. In this way, the UCI-Santa Ana Teachers Institute had its genesis.

In its seminars teachers participate in some thirty hours of instruction with a professor over a period of 8-12 weeks. During the seminar and in conjunction with the subject matter, teachers design a plan for research leading to a curriculum unit to be presented during the following school year. The units are published and posted on the internet for other teachers nationwide to use adapt to coursework. Teachers receive

an honorarium for their full participation in the program.

As a participant of a Summer Yale Intensive Seminar and co-chair of the UCI-SA Teachers Institute my teaching experience has been enriched, and my colleagues and students have benefited from the curriculum units that are the products of the seminars. It was a most rewarding opportunity to study with Yale Professor Mary Miller, one of the world's leading Mayanists, in the summer of 1999. A teacher of Spanish language, literature, composition and culture for native speakers, I was able to design a curriculum unit around the Aztec culture that included student productions of original poetry and short stories patterned after luminary Hispanic writers. Since Professor Miller's expertise is in art history, the students' productions included original, copied and imitated artwork. Technology was included as internet research and art designs. A Southern California Spanish language television station was so impressed with the research and technology involved in the coursework, it did a news story that was broadcast in the homes of millions of Southern California residents. The poetry can be viewed at the website. With the help of UCI's Humanities Out There (HOT) program, graduate and undergraduate students aided me in teaching students the elements of short stories and in getting students to write their own. It was found that one student has an extraordinary talent for writing, and her creation will be published in the future. All students felt it was a significant academic opportunity for them to study and produce scholastic material that is part of their heritage.

My experiences with two UCI-SA Teachers Institute seminars have been no less rewarding. Studying multicultural texts with Professors Lindon Barrett and John Carlos Rowe has given me an insight into literature that has profoundly affected me, my colleagues and my students. After completing a curriculum unit and armed with a critical view of both internal and

external colonialism, I set about teaching literature in English to an English as a Second Language class for the summer of 2000. One of the pieces of literature we studied was Rudyard Kipling's tale "Riki Tikki Tavi" set in colonial India. I have read this story for years with students and have enjoyed the relating to them the bravery of the little mongoose overcoming the evil cobras. But now I saw it from a different point of view. I noticed that the mongoose had been told by its mother that a proper mongoose wishes to be a house mongoose in a white family's home. Odd? Then later the cobras stated that they wished to take back the garden the white family had taken from them. Was this story really about colonialism? One of the discussions of our seminar with Professor Rowe involved a website by Jim Zwick that highlights United States and British imperialism at the turn of the century. I decided to investigate Kipling's views with this website and sure enough, there was a poem he had written entitled "White Man's Burden" that had caused a stir with lots of newspaper opinion articles. My students were excited about viewing this story from this different point of view. We viewed most of the literature we read that summer as portrayals of both external and internal colonialism, H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine* and short stories by Walter Mosely and the Mexican author Rosario Castellanos. Students were interested to note that internal colonialism applies not only to the United States but to third world countries such as Mexico as well.

Collaborations between universities and local school districts, especially school districts with a large population of at risk students, will benefit the university, the local school district, teachers and probably most importantly, the students. Teacher development is the fundamental basis for the Yale-New Haven Project and the subsequent programs involving colleges and local school district. It is a program to be emulated to address the issue of improving education through teacher development.

Mel Sanchez teaches Spanish at Santa Ana High School.

The Process of Teacher Leadership

By Jean Sutherland

As a teacher and one of the early members of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute National Demonstration Project, I sometimes felt the frustration of trying to convince teachers, faculty, and administrators from other cities that our program here in New Haven truly does involve teachers at all levels of planning, executing, and evaluating, and that it does so in a significant manner. Unfortunately, many do not see teachers in that role. It was with that experience in mind that I have written this summary of a recent year in the New Haven Institute. My goal was to capture both the scope and interrelationship of our activities along with the degree of actual teacher involvement which takes place.

The Process

In order to survey the experiences of the YNHTI during 1999-2000, it is necessary to go back to the previous fall while the 1999 seminars were still in session. At that time, the teacher coordinators of these seminars were meeting with the director to suggest and recruit school representatives and contacts for the next school year. A painstaking job, this process insured that every school, in fact every teacher, in New Haven would have access to the decision-making process which would determine the seminar choices for the year 2000. As the new school representatives, a group of 18 teachers, met twice a month from September '99 to early February 2000, constant two-way communication between representatives and teachers within their school, as well as between Representatives and Contacts in smaller schools, narrowed the proposed topics from a list of at least 35-40 initial suggestions to the final seven seminar topics for 2000. General teacher interest in taking a seminar solidified into firm commitments as the application

period neared in January. Correctly anticipating the number of actual applicants would determine an approximate match with the number of seminar offerings. This is often a difficult task.

At one point, it became necessary to decide if three rather than two science seminars were, in fact, necessary. Extensive communication between representatives and other teachers determined that there would be three.

Together with four humanities offerings, seminars for 2000 totaled seven, for the third year in a row. Based on recommendations from the teacher steering committee, a coordinator was selected for each seminar. Teacher applications then were reviewed by these teacher coordinators who were able, with some compromises, to successfully accommodate all applicants. Among the new Fellows, two, four teacher teams were accepted with four members each from two different schools. Though each member of a team writes an individual unit, a team applies to a seminar both separately and as a group. They coordinate their units so that teachers from different grade levels or disciplines can work together, sharing projects and presenting a joint culminating activity, thus maximizing the effect of each unit, often drawing in non-Institute staff members. This year there were also at least two informal teams whose work should yield the similar results.

Often the work of a seminar team grows from and is encouraged by a school's Center for Curriculum and Professional Development, now located in eleven schools, including three high schools, three middle schools, two K-8 schools and three elementary schools, with another high school ready to come on board. Linked to their school's comprehensive plan, and approved by the school's SPMT and the Institute steering committee, these Centers provide teachers with a workspace, furniture, a Yale computer, all available Institute resources, and often the assistance of mini-grants, along with encouragement to pursue projects which expand Institute

activities beyond the scope of a single unit.

This year, in conjunction with the teacher steering committee, our Centers have, along with a variety of individual school projects, participated in and helped to plan a series of Institute related computer workshops, two Center Forums, our first Institute retreat, and a two-week, very successful Summer Academy involving students from Center schools.

Also, this year a group of three elementary teachers working from their Center completed a curriculum document in which they identified all units suitable, at least in part, for use in an elementary classroom. These units were then classified according to the subjects listed on most elementary report cards. On the high school level, a document linking units with the Connecticut Academic Performance Test is about to be finalized. They join a third document created four years ago in which approximately 400 units related to diversity were linked with New Havens standards on diversity. All of these are of practical use to most teachers as they align their curriculum with the goals of the New Haven system.

Looking Forward

Looking forward, as an Institute, we continued to work on strengthening our ties to the New Haven district, to further our coordination of Institute units with District goals, to increase our emphasis on New Haven's focus on improving student literacy, and, finally, to explore more ways of using Institute materials to aid the development of new teachers.

Through it all, we continue to recognize that the foundation of this year's Institute and all of its related activities remains the seminar experience, an experience whose success, like that of all other phases of our program, is grounded in genuine teacher leadership and participation. We sincerely look forward to learning from and sharing with all of you who represent your individual Institutes.

Jean Sutherland teaches third grade at L.W. Beecher Elementary School in New Haven.

On Common Ground

Strengthening Teaching through School-University Partnership

Fall 2001

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The Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute is an educational partnership between Yale University and the New Haven Public Schools designed to strengthen teaching and learning in local schools and, by example, in schools across the country. Through the Institute, teachers from the University and the Schools work together in a collegial relationship. Founded in 1978, the Institute is the first program of its type to be established permanently as a unit of a university.

Paige: Does America Know How to Teach?

(continued from page 4)

The need is so great, and the opportunity so large, that neither side has any excuse to wait for the other to act first. Take the initiative, start the dialogue, and press the process forward. You have nothing to lose and much to gain.

I applaud the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute for supplying models for what universities should do. Its projects are not just inspiring, they are creating an environment in which partnerships will be the norm, not the exception. Every great university should be linked to its surrounding schools by a thriving and many-tiered partnership. Observers should not ask why a few universities have partnerships, but why the rest do not.

As surely as tests follow homework, Washington and state capitals will always work to reform education. But the work we do is far less important than the real work of improving instruction, increasing student performance, and holding schools accountable for results. These goals must be accomplished student by student, school by school, community by community, and everyone, from parents to teachers to university researchers, has a role to play to ensuring that standards are higher, teachers have more resources, and no child is left behind.



JOSEPH STELLA, *BATTLE OF LIGHTS, CONEY ISLAND, MARDI GRAS, 1913-14*

Read *On Common Ground* at
<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti>

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