

Introduction

In February 1983 the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute cosponsored with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council of Chief State School Officers a national conference at Yale University on the role higher education can and must play in strengthening teaching in American schools. The present volume was prepared for distribution initially to the Chief State School Officers, college and university presidents and chancellors, and government and foundation officials who were invited to attend the conference.

As part of our audience, we also had in mind colleagues in other school systems and at other colleges and universities who may wish to learn more about our Teachers Institute so that they might consider establishing similar joint programs to enhance secondary education in their own communities. We are therefore delighted that the College Board, which since 1900 has fostered the academic connections between schools and colleges, is making this volume so widely available in the present edition. Because the Board's own membership includes both schools and colleges across the country—and because of its dedication to both excellence in and access to education at all levels—we believe the College Board is an especially appropriate organization to republish and distribute this report on our collaborative program in New Haven.

University-school cooperation has recently received considerable attention as an important means of addressing the problems of our secondary schools and, particularly, what some have termed a “crisis” in teaching in our schools. In December 1982 Fred M. Hechinger reported in the *New York Times* on “the reversal of a 20-year breach between higher education and the schools.” The reasons for the present concern about teaching in our schools are increasingly familiar: issues of prestige, power, pay, and preparation for teachers. Based upon my experience with the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, I believe the means for addressing some, though not all, of these problems are in our hands and within our power. School-college collaboration, though certainly not a panacea for all that afflicts our schools, can improve our schools.

New Haven teachers and University faculty members have gained a great deal from working together as colleagues in our Institute. That is why Yale sponsored the 1983 conference which was entitled “Excellence

in *Teaching: A Common Goal*." By coming to New Haven from thirty-eight states, American Samoa, the Northern Mariannas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the participants made this a national meeting of leaders in elementary and secondary and higher education which was almost without precedent.

The conference provided a convincing affirmation of the joint mission of higher education and our schools, and a reminder of the fundamental connection between education at all levels and the national interest. Four examples of school-college collaboration, including our Teachers Institute, were presented as case studies, and the Carnegie Foundation prepared for release at the conference a Special Report, *School and College: Partnerships in Education*, that surveys these and other projects across the country. The point was not that we wish to franchise any one of these projects; rather, as New York Commissioner of Education Gordon Ambach said, that "these kinds of effective practices must be made much more widespread and systematic in their application."

The themes in the discussion at the national conference have become more widely accepted; they provide a context for describing the approach of our Teachers Institute. The conference assumed that the quality of the educational process depends, more than anything else, on teaching. We shared a concern for attracting, preparing, and retaining the very best of our young people in this profession, on the one hand, and on the other a concern for the morale, rewards, and further preparation for teachers now in the system.

There was no dissenting voice on the question of pay, on the point that individuals in the teaching profession ought to be paid on a level that recognizes their importance to our society. But the conference concentrated on what the school and institution representatives who were there could themselves do.

All realized that later in this decade we face potential shortages of qualified teachers, and not only in the sciences and mathematics. But the immediate task, most agreed, is to strengthen the teaching of individuals already in the profession. Assisting our present teachers is at least as pressing as recruiting for the future. Here the case studies demonstrated that important gains can be made through partnerships, if one clearly defines and sticks with manageable goals. As Yale President A. Bartlett Giamatti observed, "one cannot become overwhelmed or paralyzed by the fact that one is not solving all the problems of American education or American culture, all of which are there, but which the educational process will solve in the longer term, if it is healthy every step along the way."

The nature of the partnership we seek bears directly on the question of the power of teachers. As President Norman C. Francis of Xavier University said, the partnership must not be a "big brother-little brother

relationship.” It must be a genuine, coequal relationship. University faculty and school teachers must work together as colleagues.

Florida Chancellor Barbara Newell described the main work of the partnership: “We must make sure that all within the educational system share” in the rapidly changing fields of human knowledge, so that “the partnership must be far broader than Schools of Education. It must cover the entire university community.”

At the conference, then, leaders in education from across the country affirmed that the problems and the missions of our schools and colleges are fundamentally intertwined, and that, acting out of that conviction, there are important and practical things that together we in education can do to make this country stronger and better. Our Teachers Institute is founded upon that belief. It is founded upon a recognition of mutual interest between city and college, between school and college, that must become more frequent if as a nation we are to improve the education of our young people.

The interplay of our schools and colleges has, of course, been a recurring theme in the history of American education. During the rise of universal secondary education and the growth of higher education in America, colleges have had a vested interest in the prior education of their students. Higher education has served to shape secondary school curricula through admissions requirements, and college faculty have written curricula and textbooks for use directly in schools. Schools have sought to know the content of college courses so that they might prepare their students for college studies. Some colleges have muted the distinction between secondary and higher education by the early enrollment of high school students in college offerings, sometimes for credit, either on campus or in schools. Probably most important, higher education has provided the initial preparation, and often continuing education, for the individuals who teach in our schools.

Over the past century some of the most influential analysts of our schools have emphasized the continuing engagement of teachers with the subjects they teach. In a series of widely-read essays published in 1892, Joseph M. Rice argued that “teachers must constantly endeavor to grow both in professional and in general intellectual strength.” Having observed schools in thirty-six cities, Rice concluded, “by far the most progress has been made in those cities where the teachers themselves are the most earnest students. . . . [I]t is, after all, the teacher that makes the school.” That same year, under President Charles W. Eliot, Harvard University instituted free courses for Cambridge teachers in the sciences. The following year writing for the Committee of Ten, Eliot asserted that the changes the Committee recommended depended on teachers more highly trained during their initial preparation and while in service. The Carnegie Report of 1920 on *The Professional Preparation of Teachers* spoke of the

importance of “regular periods of uninterrupted study” for teachers because “the present vitality of the school is directly involved.” In 1945 the authors of the Harvard Report, *General Education in a Free Society*, stated that “there is no educational reform so important as the improvement of teaching,” and that the greatest of the schools’ needs was “a more rounded, longer, more continuing education of teachers.” In 1963 James B. Conant’s *The Education of American Teachers* recommended especially continuing study and in-service education for teachers. Most recently, in the Carnegie Report on *High School* Ernest L. Boyer called for greater emphasis on subject matter in the initial preparation of the teacher, and for “a planned continuing education program. . . [as] part of every teacher’s professional life.” As Boyer later wrote in commenting on the numerous education studies and reports issued in 1983, “We are beginning to see that whatever is wrong with America’s schools cannot be fixed without the help of those teachers already in the classrooms. Most of them will be there for years to come, and teachers must be viewed as part of the solution, not as part of the problem.”

National demographic trends, even though they obscure significant state and regional differences, demonstrate the particular importance of Boyer’s observation for the 1980s. The decline in enrollment in public secondary schools, which began in the 1970s, will continue into the early 1990s. While the reduced demand for teachers resulting from falling enrollment was initially offset by an improved ratio of teachers to students, during the 1980s this ratio will improve at a much slower rate. The proportion of teachers who leave the profession each year, which dropped to 6 percent in 1973, will continue at this lower level. The total number of secondary school teachers will therefore continue to decline through the 1980s; the average annual demand for these teachers will be 30 percent less than in the 1970s. New college graduates, who represented 9 percent of all school teachers in 1971, constituted only 2 percent of teachers in 1982.* In short, the secondary education of a generation of the nation’s young people will be mainly in the hands of individuals presently teaching. To improve secondary education in the 1980s we must therefore strengthen the teaching of those individuals already in, and now entering, the profession. Since its inception, that has been the purpose of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute.

*For a discussion of state and regional differences, see C. Emily Feistritzer, *The Condition of Teaching, A State by State Analysis* (Princeton, New Jersey: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1983). For further information on national trends, see especially *Status of the American Public School Teacher 1980–81* (National Education Association Research, 1982); and the following publications of the National Center for Education Statistics: *Projections of Education Statistics to 1990–91*; *The Condition of Education, 1983 Edition*; *The Condition of Education, 1984*.

Evaluations of the Institute, some of which are included in the Appendix, document that such collaborative programs can assist our schools in specific ways. A study of the program in 1982 showed that the Institute has significantly increased teachers' knowledge of their disciplines, raised their morale, heightened their expectations of their students' ability to learn, and that it has, in turn, improved student learning. Consistent with a central aim of the program, the materials teachers develop serve all students, not only those most successful in school. In light of the well-publicized frustrations of the teaching profession, it is especially heartening that so many teachers wish to participate on a recurring basis in so demanding a program, and that about half of the participating teachers report that the Institute contributed to their decision to continue teaching in our community's public schools.

Theodore R. Sizer performed the most recent evaluation of our program; he wrote in his report:

I share the view of my predecessor "visitors" that yours is a remarkable program, for its clear and useful focus, for its simplicity and—above all else—for the atmosphere of constructive collegiality between Yale and New Haven teachers that has been created. . . . The arguments for the current scale are powerful. All too few school "reform" efforts get the scale right; almost universally they are too ambitious. The Institute's work now reaches virtually every New Haven public middle or high school student. Over a third of the city's teachers have been directly involved, and more wish to join. A significant number will continue to stay involved, enjoying "intellectual renewal" as well as "curriculum development," as the National Commission on the Humanities expressed it. Such renewal does not come quickly. It benefits from sustained contact, from supportive conditions, from simmering. The Institute provides such conditions for a large enough number of New Haven's teachers to make a significant, if subtle, difference over time. By remaining small, focused and uncomplicated, the Institute will serve its purpose admirably.

Yet, however pleased we are with this kind of commentary, we also acknowledge the skepticism we have sometimes faced while developing the Institute. Some critics have asserted that most teachers already know their subjects sufficiently well; that, in any event, the way a field is studied and taught in a university has little bearing on earlier levels; that to improve our schools we must first improve the conditions for teaching; and that, until this occurs, no amount of curriculum and staff development will make any difference. Besides, as we are sometimes asked by visitors from other schools and colleges, why would university faculty members who are leading scholars in their fields even be interested in working with secondary school teachers; given the distance between university and school classes, what could they possibly offer?

The chapters that follow address these questions, among others. Yale faculty members who have led Institute seminars talk about how they

have approached the experience and have themselves gained from it. School teachers tell how they have drawn on these seminars to develop materials and strategies for their own classes. The purpose of this volume is to make concrete the genuinely collaborative experience of university and school teachers in our Institute. It is not exhaustive: Only six of the thirty-three Yale faculty members who have led Institute seminars wrote essays for this volume. Of the more than 380 curriculum units teachers prepared between 1978 and 1984, only four have been adapted for inclusion here. These chapters illustrate, but not in any comprehensive way, the range of subjects for seminars and teachers' work.

The first essay addresses the concept and, briefly, the history of the Teachers Institute. I think it important to speak of the principles on which the program is founded, not of all the administrative detail we in New Haven have found advantageous. What we offer is not a blueprint to be followed in detail in building a similar program elsewhere; rather, we advance the underlying philosophy and resulting variety of our own experience.

Finally, to take a larger view of teaching in America, our experience reveals the sharp contrasts between teaching in school and teaching in college. There are vast differences in the prestige attributed to teachers at each level; the power of teachers as compared to administration within each setting; the school and college teacher's relation to his or her field, whether the teacher is considered also a contributor to the knowledge of a subject; how well it is thought a subject must be known to be taught competently at each level; and the breadth of subject matter perceived as masterable by teachers and manageable by students in school and college. By assigning greater prestige and power to school teaching and by engaging teachers in study and writing about their disciplines, the Teachers Institute implicitly questions whether teaching in school and teaching in college should be regarded as so very different. As Michael Cooke suggests in his essay in this volume, in the Teachers Institute we view the different educational levels and institutions in this country not as discrete and separable compartments, but as parts of a whole educational process, for teacher and student alike. Continuing study and writing about a subject benefit school teachers no less than their university colleagues. In both cases, their students are the ultimate beneficiaries. From the Institute we have learned that there not only should, but also can, be more common ground for teaching in America: Teachers in secondary and higher education hold in common the centrality of their subjects in the education of our young people.

J.R.V.

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