

Preface



The College Board and its Educational EQuality Project are pleased to make this report from the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute more widely available. *Teaching in America: The Common Ground* presents accounts of secondary school teachers and university faculty working together to prepare a broad variety of curriculum units for use in the New Haven Public Schools. The Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute is a participant in the Educational EQuality Project's Models Program for High School-College Collaboration, and there are several reasons this report deserves attention and thoughtful consideration.

The Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute has a clearly defined and commendable purpose. It works to improve the education of all secondary school students in the New Haven Public Schools by enabling their teachers to continue to enrich their own learning. Like the Educational EQuality Project, the Institute is committed to the joint goals of quality and equality in the education of all students. Achieving these goals is a tough and important problem. Three out of five students in the New Haven Public Schools come from families receiving some form of public assistance. Four out of five are either black or hispanic. Since this demographic pattern will become increasingly characteristic of public school enrollment throughout the United States, the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute has chosen, in a sense, to wrestle with the nation's educational future. And yet, although the reputation and influence of Yale University extend far beyond the precincts of New Haven, the Institute has chosen to limit its work to the public schools of that city. This sharply focused effort increases the likelihood of achieving significant progress toward the goals of educational quality and equality.

The Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute also commands wider consideration because of the means it has identified to accomplish its purpose. The Institute is animated by the co-professionalism of teachers in the New Haven Public Schools and teachers on the faculty of Yale University. To this relationship each group brings its own special knowledge and skills. Thomas R. Whitaker notes later in this volume that "The Institute assumes that by and large the seminar leaders drawn from the University faculty will provide the major competence and initiatives in the area of 'subject-matter,' and that the Fellows drawn from the faculty of the New

Haven middle schools and secondary schools will provide the major competence and initiatives in the area of pedagogy. This understanding is a primary support for the 'collegiality' without which the seminars would rapidly deteriorate into fairly conventional classes." The essays in this volume nearly vibrate as the realities of the urban classroom encounter the truths of the research university. By standing their common ground the two groups of teachers again and again create results richer than what either brings to the encounter. The co-professionalism of this mutually enriching engagement is reflected in the Institute's organizational arrangements. Control is shared. Topics for the seminars are generated by the secondary school teachers. Content of the seminars is drawn largely from the university professors. Administration involves representatives of the secondary school teachers as well as university personnel. The College Board, itself an association of schools and colleges, has a high and knowledgeable regard for such cooperation.

Finally, the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute is remarkable because of its sustained commitment to its work. It is a commonplace that waves of reform wash across American education with predictable regularity and disappointing results. Fundamental social change comes not from momentary enthusiasm but from long-term staying power. The Institute is determined to make such a serious, on-going effort. Between 1978 and 1982 forty percent of New Haven public secondary school teachers in the humanities and sciences participated in the Institute's seminars. Nine out of ten of them are likely to return for another seminar. Two out of three of the other teachers are inclined to participate in the future. Another sign of the Institute's long-term commitment is its effort to raise an endowment so as to become financially self-sustaining. This effort clearly deserves the greatest success.

In addition to the College Board and its Educational Equality Project, several other organizations have recognized the importance of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute. In March 1984 the American Association for Higher Education celebrated the Institute as a national leader in a growing movement of collaboration between universities and public schools. In October of 1984 the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education selected the Institute as a grand award winner in its high school-college partnerships program.

In a more fundamental sense, the following essays are the best evidence of the value and success of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute. The essays concern not simply organizational arrangements but the actual stuff of teaching and learning, subject matter and shaping it for use in the classroom. Just as the bottom line in education reform is what actually happens between teachers and students in the classroom, so the final test of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute must be what happens in its seminars. These essays show New Haven Public School teachers and Yale University professors finding rich and productive common ground, fash-

ining together thoughtful and practical responses to the challenge of building simultaneously quality and equality in the secondary school classroom.

Because of this example of high school and college teachers working together, we want to share more widely the descriptions of their accomplishments contained in *Teaching in America: The Common Ground*. The specific curriculum units described here can lead to further discussion and perhaps adaptation to other circumstances. The organizational principles followed by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute certainly should receive careful consideration elsewhere. They well might inspire similar efforts in other locations. But in showing how academic collaboration actually can work to improve what happens in the secondary school classroom, *Teaching in America* will provide common and fruitful ground that high school and college teachers can begin to till all around the country.

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