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ABSTRACT

The diversity of geographic location and type of student in the Toledo diocesan school system have made it increasingly important for instruction to become individualized. Upon investigation of the system's needs and possibilities for change, a competency-based curriculum model was selected because it offered a structured, systematic, planning, implementation, and revision model. The schools attempted to utilize a number of generalizations potentially applicable to the educational change process in the implementation of their competency-based instructional systems. Curriculum guides developed by the schools were major tools in implementing the philosophy of competency-based education. Curriculum guidelines have been field tested, revised, and disseminated, and inservicing is taking place. The University of Toledo College of Education Competency-based Teacher Education Program has been instrumental in developing educational change in all sectors. Both public and private schools, however, have also contributed in a continuous effort to effect change in the Toledo school system.
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"GEARING UP FOR CURRICULUM CHANGE"

A Chance for Every Child: Assessing Needs Through Specific Goals

AACTE, February 27, 1975

1. Introduction: Sister Mary Lawrence, OSU.

The Toledo Diocesan School system is unique in that the geographic area extends over 8,222 miles and is located in 19 counties of the state. There are ninety-seven (97) elementary schools and 19 high schools located in rural, urban, and suburban areas. The student population includes many ethnic and racial groups, and a wide economic range, from the very affluent to the inner-city poor.

This diversity in geographic location and type of student presents problems which, in recent years, have made it increasingly important that instruction become more individualized. The needs of the students differed greatly. Many were unable to meet the rigid curriculum standards set by the Diocese and state. Often the methods and materials differed greatly and the student was not able to achieve up to the level of his ability.

The staff of the Diocesan School office consulted principals, teachers, and parents in determining what changes were necessary. Each member of the staff serving as consultants for Art, Guidance, Language Arts, Mathematics, Music, Science, and Social Studies, under the direction of a curriculum director, then formulated the plan for the actual production of the guides. The development of these guides, which would state clearly the concepts to be taught, objectives to be reached, resources available, and suggest activities for both student and teacher was a necessity if pupils were to achieve.

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tenable goals in specific learning steps. Emphasis had to be placed on the individual and his abilities rather than on the group.

II. Rationale for the C.B.E. Model: Leo Leonard, The University of Toledo

Prior to 1971, the Toledo Diocesan Schools had not had a major curriculum revision for over 50 years. The result was a fragmentation of curriculum that denied children within the Diocese equality of learning opportunity. Each parish school had its own conception of what ought to be taught. The curriculum that resulted frequently didn't meet the perceived need of the larger community. Minority students complained that they were denied the opportunities for curriculum instruction and resources made available to other children in Diocesan school systems. In summation, then, the needs of the Diocese were the following: (1) to modernize curriculum, including practices, planning, and resources; (2) to provide for "equity" of educational opportunity to all areas and population groups within the district; (3) to develop a central planning evaluation model that could facilitate the above, with the added capability of making necessary curriculum revision based on individual, family, school, and the community needs.

In order to meet the curriculum needs of the district, the Diocese contacted the University of Toledo's College of Education regarding the possibility of a cooperative effort in developing a planned curriculum change. The College, through its Center for Research and Services, assigned staff who, in consultation with Diocesan personnel, selected a curriculum model, set development and revision procedures, and established a time-line for writing, testing, and implementing the results.

The Competency Based Curriculum model was selected to handle this "Setting Up for Curriculum Change" because it offered a structured, systematic,

planning, implementation, and revision model. Further, the use of the CBE model provided for a sequential development process that had the advantages of a step by step program monitoring capability coupled with a variety of resources and assessment procedures. These capabilities made it possible to determine the attainment of group and individual objectives, thus ensuring that students from throughout the Diocese would receive similar instructional opportunities.

The CBE model was divided into two components. The first was a pre-planning model that was a subject matter feedback system which obtained data from individuals, community, teachers, and subject matter experts. This data was channeled to the appropriate subject matter curriculum group, where the data was processed into a logical structure of concepts, goals, objectives, activities, resources and, in some cases, suggested student post assessment procedures. The material was then compiled into subject matter curriculum guides in the CBE format.

The second component of the CBE model was the specific classroom curriculum plan which allowed the teacher to take the objectives, activities, and resources in the guide and adapt them to the specific requirements of the intended instruction. This second step process involved the further refining of the objectives into measurable terms. Thus, the systematic going up for curriculum change allowed the teacher to determine the appropriateness of district wide objectives, activities, and evaluation.

The monitoring system allowed for feedback based on student and teacher perceptions and other evaluative techniques, thereby offering a feasible model for handling system wide change demanded by community, staff, and student needs. By establishing basic objectives required for mastery by all while allowing at

the same time the systematic development of objectives and activities by teacher and student, both student and school needs were met.

III. The Nature of the Curriculum Change Process: Robert Utz

The literature on innovation supports a number of generalizations potentially applicable to the educational change process in any setting.¹ The first is that an available social network promotes both the rate and amount of diffusion. A second is that the individual's degree of involvement in the building of the vehicles and resources for educational change tends to be positively related to the degree of his use of the innovation prescribed. Thirdly, an "open" organizational climate tends to promote a higher degree of voluntarism, which in turn promotes more participation, more initiative, greater productivity, and greater commitment. Fourth, an inservice experience can be functional both as a reward for participation and as a creator of opinion leaders. Fifth, inserviced opinion leaders in the schools can serve as effective change agents in an enduring curriculum innovation process.

The Toledo Diocese Schools attempted to utilize these generalizations in their implementation of their Competency Based Instructional System. The building of curriculum guides involved large numbers of classroom teachers from the beginning, selected to represent the broad spectrum of Diocese schools.

¹See, for example, Ronald G. Havelock, Innovations in Education: Strategies and Tactics (Ann Arbor: CRUSK, The University of Michigan, 1971); Herbert A. Lionberger, "Strategy Implications for Planned Curricular Changes in Education: Inferences from Diffusion Research," in Marcella R. Lawler (Ed.), Strategies for Planned Curricular Innovation (New York: Teachers College Press, 1970); Richard O. Carlson, "The Adoption of Educational Innovations," in Matthew W. Miles and W. W. Charters, Jr. (Editors), Learning in Social Settings (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1970); Robert C. Maxson and Walter E. Sistrunk, A Systems Approach to Educational Administration (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, 1973).

An open organizational climate and a principle of voluntarism resulted in the involvement of the vast majority of the Diocese teachers. This positive experience resulted in both reward for involvement and the creation of leaders to promote the participation of other teachers in the curriculum building process. The use of department chairmen in the schools provided the potential for continuing communication pertaining to curriculum development and revision. Lastly, the solicitation of input from staff, parents and students has promoted a high degree of commitment to the program.

IV. The Curriculum Guides As Change Vehicles: Sister Mary Lawrence

The Curriculum Guides built by the Diocese Schools were the major tool in the implementation of the philosophy of competency-based education in the schools of the Diocese of Toledo, Ohio. The Curriculum guides may be considered vehicles of change since they allow for an innovative approach to the teaching of the various subject areas of the elementary school. Many methods are suggested and a great deal of flexibility is allowed in the use of multi-texts, activities and resources.

Innovation does not mean a decreased emphasis on Mastery. On the contrary, coupled with the principle of continuous progress, Mastery is the key word. Both the cognitive and the affective domains of learning are stressed and knowledge of the basic skills and the development of right attitudes and ideals are provided for in the objectives and activities of each area.

To protect the creativity of the teacher, the objectives and activities given in the Guides are not the only ones that may be used in teaching a given concept. Each teacher is free to add to the list in order to meet the needs of the individual student. Every effort has been made in the past

the Guide to meet the needs of the principals and teachers in the various areas of the diocese and in specific school situations. It is hoped that the Guides will be just that - Guides to lead students to reach the level of his potentialities at his own rate.

V. Design and Implementation of Field Testing, Revision, and Dissemination of the Curriculum Guidelines: Sister Mary Johnone, S. N. D.

In response to a Diocesan School Office invitation in the spring of 1972 requesting personnel to field test the curriculum guidelines, teachers and administrators volunteered to pilot modules of specific curriculum areas. From the volunteers, Diocesan School Office Consultants selected the equivalent of four elementary school faculties for each of the seven subject areas, keeping in mind ethnicity and race, as well as geographic location to provide a suitable cross section.

In September, 1972, two area diocesan meetings were conducted to disseminate a field test copy of the curriculum guidelines to each pilot teacher and a complete set to each building principal in the diocese. A general session introduced all teachers and administrators to the guidelines. Special sessions were conducted for the pilot teachers. Throughout the school year, consultants had meetings for pilot teachers and were constantly on call to serve all teachers.

In August, 1973, a mini-convention was held for all diocesan teachers. Most of the sessions were conducted by the pilot teachers who demonstrated use of the curriculum guidelines.

All curriculum guidelines contained blank pages for evaluative additions and deletions. Most consultants conferred with their councils composed of five or six volunteer teachers and/or administrators to evaluate the guidelines and the input of individual teachers. Through Title I and ESEA funding, the guidance guidelines were piloted in diocesan schools.

and in two local public school districts. This funding provided for statistical and objective evaluation.

During the 1974-75 school year, the guidelines were revised and were disseminated to all diocesan elementary schools. In all schools, there is a coordinator for each subject area. The coordinator works in close relationship with the diocesan consultant in assisting teachers.

In-servicing is being conducted by the consultants by way of school visits, faculty meetings, and area workshops with particular emphasis on vehicles to increase individualized learning. The attitude of the principal and the teachers' openness to change have been two vital factors in determining the degree of innovation in each school.

Interest in the curriculum guidelines is stimulating discussion beyond the Toledo area.

VI. A Comprehensive Competency Based Teacher Education Model and the Toledo Diocese

The previous descriptions of a comprehensive curricular change in the Catholic Diocesan schools of the Toledo area have been, for the College of Education, The University of Toledo, a significant portion of the comprehensive competency based teacher education model for broad educational reform and renewal. The entire model has been well described in the volume, Partners for Educational Reform and Renewal; Competency Based Teacher Education, Individually Guided Education and the Multiunit School, by George E. Dickson and Richard W. Saxe with the assistance of various members of The University of Toledo faculty, published by the McCutchan Publications

Corp., Berkeley, California, 1973.² In that book is the figure which is shown on the following page, provides a schematic view of our community-wide, comprehensive model for educational change. The model indicates a process for the improvement of teacher competency, both preservice and inservice, which involves programs, institutions, personnel, and facilities linked together for the benefit of children.

We have attempted to deal with the problem of educational complexity by considering all factors or components that are involved in the educational process. We do not think that teacher education is something separate from any educational activity in the public or private schools. We realize that a successful CBTE program cannot exist without its relationship to the new and changing educational programs in the schools. And the programs in the schools, in turn, are bound to our evolving college-based program. Consequently, we have assisted and worked with the Diocesan schools in the development of a competency based education curriculum. In the public schools we have worked for another type of curriculum development which utilizes the concepts of individually guided education and multiunit schools.

What we believe about programs also applies to institutions. We cannot operate successfully without reciprocal ties to both the private and public school sectors. We have found that whatever educational change has occurred in one school sector has been of great interest and concern to the other, and the competency based teacher education program located in the College of Education has been instrumental in developing educational change in all sectors.

²George E. Dickson, Richard W. Saxe, et. al., Partners for Educational Reform and Renewal: Competency-Based Teacher Education, Individually Guided Education and the Multi-unit School, (Berkeley California:

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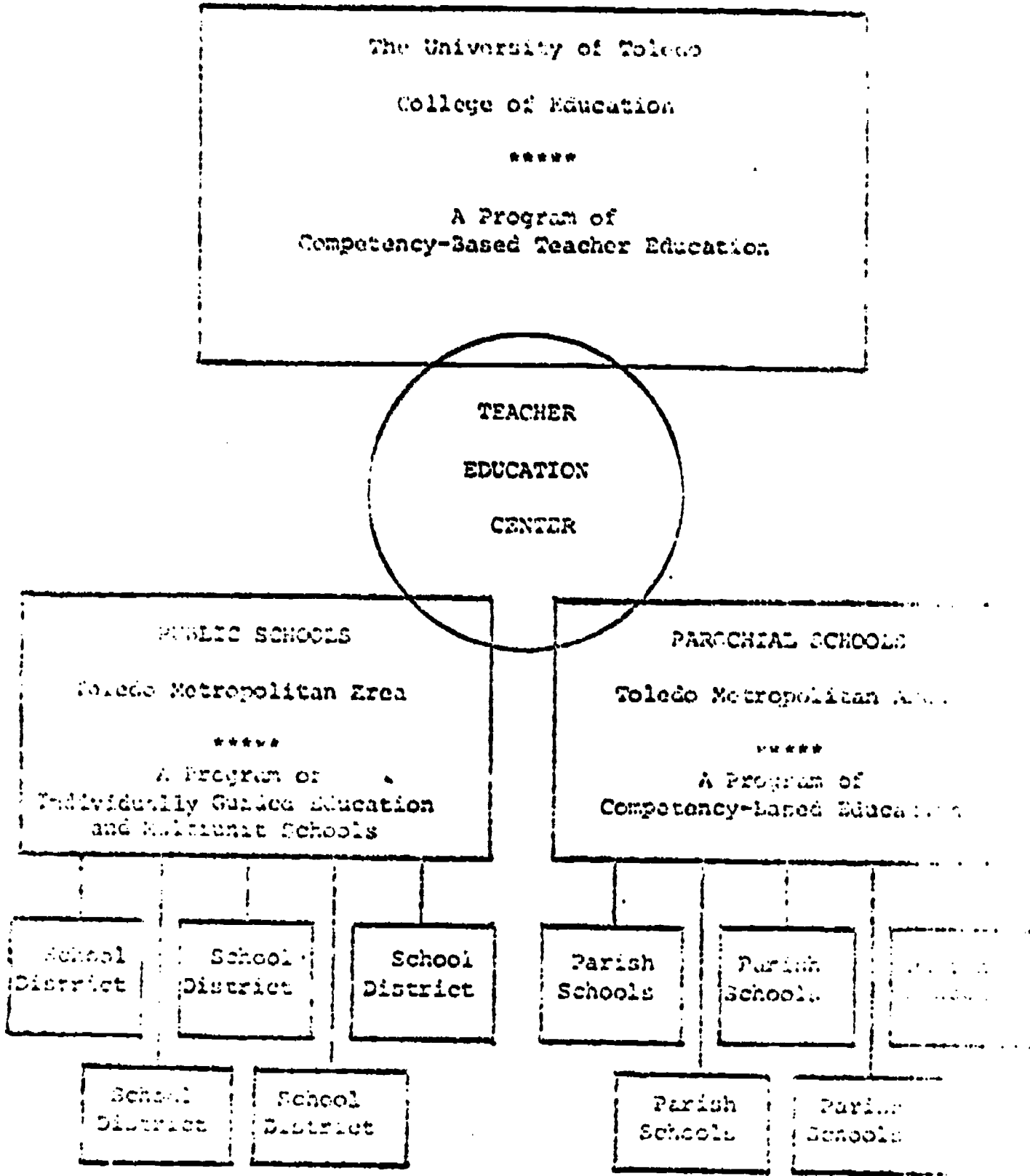


Figure 1

Obviously, if reciprocal organization and development operate with programs and institutions the same must be the case for personnel and facilities within those institutions. Personnel from each institution are linked in many ways to the over-all efforts in program development and implementation. They meet and serve together on committees, in school classrooms, and in a variety of interchange modes and activities. We have attempted to develop a system for teacher education and school sectors must also be interconnected in such change efforts. This sector is not as well developed as those involving program, institutions, and personnel but the development of our Teacher Education Center which is open to all teachers and educational personnel in Northwest Ohio is a needed step toward solving this problem. We, in the College of Education, freely use school classrooms and other facilities for instruction and demonstrations and, in turn, we open our educational facilities to school personnel to fulfill their various instructional and educational needs.

The basic development that has occurred in our comprehensive efforts to promote educational change and renewal has been (1) the creation and operation of competency based teacher education at the University level, (2) the curriculum changes connected with creating competency based education plus accompanying curriculum guides in the private school sector, and (3) the reorganization of elementary schools and curriculum at the level of the individually guided education multiunit schools model with public education. Each institution has worked at educational change

somewhat different way but there continues to exist the continuous effort to "put it all together" for the general benefit of children and youth in Northwest Ohio.

At the college level we have recognized that we cannot dictate the particular change effort that occurs in the private or public school sectors. We can, however, effectively attempt to operate as a catalyst to link together a variety of change efforts for common educational objectives. Time is needed to experience and evaluate the results of these efforts but all evidence to date has been quite positive and most promising. We, in college teacher education, in concert with our colleagues in the private and public schools are dealing with the major issues of education facing all of us. We think these issues are (1) better inservice and preservice education, (2) the definite involvement of teacher education operations in schools, and (3) addressing curriculum methods and subject matter innovations. We have and continue to create positive educational effort and development for all of these educational concerns through a competency based teacher education model. Our success to date is evidence that it can be done and that the dreams of highly effective educational linkages and relationships between various educational institutions is an attainable reality rather than a much discussed, but dimly perceived, educational goal.