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ABSTRACT

This short pamphlet discusses the use of teacher centers to provide inservice education as a mechanism of change in American education. It begins by examining what teachers expect from inservice education and from teacher centers. It then looks at the teacher center movement in the United States and explores its historical roots. The different types of teacher centers are described and examples are given of each type. These include consortium centers, partnership centers, autonomous centers, and special focus centers. The financing and governing of teacher centers--two problems faced in establishing and supporting teacher centers--are also discussed. A problems analysis of teacher centered inservice instruction is presented along with a representative list of teacher centers. (DT)

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Series Editor, Donald W. Robinson

TEACHER CENTERS AND INSERVICE EDUCATION

By Harry H. Bell, Jr. and John W. Peightel

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THE SECRET OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

What's the secret of implementing changes in American education? Is it having state departments of education or state legislatures mandate that schools conform to certain standards? Should the federal government recommend or require a course of action? Are those who train teachers in the colleges the source of greatest impact? Are administrators and supervisors who create budgets, make assignments, and hire teachers responsible for successful innovation? Are critics of education the only ones objective enough to see what really needs to be done?

The answer to all these questions is *no*, though each group definitely has an effect on American education. The missing link that creates effective change in the classroom is the teacher. State departments of education, teachers colleges, supervisors, and administrators may legislate, appropriate, and initiate new programs—but the person responsible for learning, the teacher, is the only one who can make effective or important changes.

Educational reform can come only through teachers; they are unlikely to alter their ways just because some imperious, theoretical, unpragmatic reformer in the guise of legislator, administrator, professor, or critic tells them to change. Teachers take reform seriously when they are responsible for defining educational problems and for outlining their own needs, and when they can receive help where they need it.

Awareness of this means that educators are talking and writing about inservice education as a major way to improve schools. Decreasing school enrollments in many parts of the country have reduced the need for new teachers, so the majority of teachers

remain in the same position year after year, which means school systems cannot depend on new teachers to stimulate faculty growth and renewal. These factors and others are causing educators to reexamine the need for better ongoing inservice programs for teachers.

Recently, as a result of state laws permitting or requiring formal negotiations, teachers have been seeking improved inservice programs as part of their master contracts. For example, in Scarsdale, New York, teachers successfully negotiated for school district funds to operate their own inservice institute.

Although the teacher, the school administrator, and the teacher educator all have unique objectives for supporting inservice education, they generally agree that improved inservice programs are essential if teachers are to cope with rapidly changing school populations and environments.

Traditionally, professional schools for teachers have been concerned primarily with preservice education. Teachers colleges have viewed the preparation of undergraduates as a major responsibility, but once students receive a degree and a teaching certificate, any commitment to them usually ends with little or no follow-up. Of course, teachers have always had the opportunity to attend graduate schools of education, but they often criticize the relevancy of the courses. Many teachers give graduate education programs high grades for theory but low marks for practical application.

Recent events suggest that teacher educators are now taking a second look at their responsibility to teacher inservice programs. For example, Samuel Wiggins, past president of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, says that in the future teachers colleges must devote more time and talent to developing new strategies for graduate and inservice professional education.

Vito Perrone, dean of the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of North Dakota, believes that teacher educators have a professional responsibility to teachers after they graduate. The center at the University of North Dakota, described in Charles Silberman's *Crisis in the Classroom* as one of the best examples of a teacher education program in the United States, provides a wide variety of preservice and inservice learning activities for developing teaching expertise.

At Ball State University, James Mitchell, dean of Teachers College, has designed a model to aid Indiana school systems plan inservice programs cooperatively. So educators are taking a new look at their role in inservice education.

From the teacher's perspective, inservice programs are too often imposed on them. Seldom are teachers invited to participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of administratively conceived programs. In addition, most inservice programs lack continuity. Typically, they are sporadic, shotgun affairs offering little relevance to teachers' immediate classroom needs.

Even though school administrators have been concerned with professional growth of teachers, inservice programs have fallen far short of teacher expectations. To further complicate the role of administrators, a recent trend toward professional negotiations is creating an adversary relationship with teachers. Another problem administrators face is the increased demand that schools be accountable for student growth. All these factors suggest that administrators must develop vastly improved communication with faculty and create a more positive school climate in which teachers and administrators can work cooperatively in planning, implementing, and evaluating continuous inservice programs.

WHAT DO TEACHERS WANT FROM INSERVICE EDUCATION?

The last thing teachers want or expect from inservice education is a waste of time. They do not believe that sitting through a lecture from a professor about the sociological impact of reading or how Dewey was a gift from heaven is going to improve their teaching—unless they get a chance to sneak a catnap. Teachers want to explore new methods and develop skills, to try out new materials, and, in a nonthreatening way, meet their individual needs. These activities can all be developed much more successfully over a period of time than in a one-day workshop, which is one reason the teacher center developed.

Five major areas of inservice concern teachers. They include numerous alternative learning environments to assist teachers individually in continuous professional growth and development.

Developing Alternative Learning Environments

“Local schools have been, and will continue to be, the choice of the great majority of Cincinnati families,” says Don Waldrip, superintendent of the Cincinnati public schools. Nevertheless, the Cincinnati system has established fourteen alternative programs and magnet schools for children whose interests, needs, and talents can be dealt with more effectively and economically in alternative settings.

Many contemporary school systems are adding a variety of alternative educational programs. Some systems offer both open-concept and traditional schools, allowing children and parents to

select the type they prefer. Multi-age, nongraded classes are an alternative in many elementary schools. In secondary schools, citywide learning programs utilizing the community's resources are becoming popular choices in many systems.

Teachers involved in new alternative learning programs, which require them to utilize different behavior and classroom organization, generally need inservice education immediately. Therefore, teachers want—and have the right to expect—continuing inservice programs that will help them be successful in new and often threatening situations. One reason educational fads come and go so quickly in the United States is that after an innovation is introduced into the classroom, little thought and effort go into inservice training.

An example of extended training is provided by Research for Better Schools, a regional education laboratory, which gives major focus to individualizing instruction. One specific project is the field development and testing of Individually Prescribed Instruction. This group assumed major responsibility for installing Individually Prescribed Instruction in school settings, and it soon became apparent that inservice teacher training was necessary to make the program a success.

One major difficulty faced by schools beginning innovative programs is providing adequate support to help teachers overcome initial problems encountered in new and unfamiliar surroundings. To alleviate this problem, teachers in the Cincinnati schools were involved in planning and implementing a needs assessment program. Once needs were identified, an intense inservice program was launched. Cincinnati teachers enthusiastically supported this approach.

Meeting Teachers' Individual Needs

Teachers want inservice education programs that are tailored to their individual needs. Group approaches treating all teachers alike are less likely to accomplish their objectives than programs offering individualized training for different teachers. "Years and years of research on teaching effectiveness," says James Mitchell, "suggest the futility of attempting to secure a singular criterion or limited set of criteria to define teaching effectiveness." Mitchell,

who says that research provides ample evidence that an endless array of abilities and characteristics underlie effective teaching, has designed an individualized model for inservice education.

Because of the absence of a single standard, any attempt to improve teaching must acknowledge its idiosyncrasies and provide training conditions that are individualized as much as possible. The purpose of individualized inservice, then, is to define and implement training conditions for teachers that will more effectively meet individual needs than has been true previously.

What makes this approach to inservice education so acceptable to teachers is an increased opportunity to help define individual needs to be met to improve their teaching effectiveness. In addition, teachers affected can select and plan activities, programs, and projects to meet those needs.

"School-based inservice programs that emphasize self-instruction by teachers have a strong record of effectiveness," says one review of research. Another reports that inservice education programs using individualization are more likely to accomplish their objectives than programs that have common activities for all participants. Any rethinking of inservice education must recognize that teachers prefer field-based approaches and individualized help to more traditional activities preplanned for large groups.

Creating Informal, Nonthreatening Inservice Environments

"The reason I like to come to the center," one New York City teacher says of the Workshop Center for Open Education, "is because I enjoy the informal, relaxed attitudes of the director and staff members as well as the wide range of teacher-oriented activities and available resources. I feel quite at home at the center, and the staff members have always been positive and helpful in meeting my needs. I certainly plan to continue coming to the center as a major part of my professional growth and development."

The workshop center, established in 1972 by the Board of Education and City College, is a free facility funded by Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and by grants from the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation. Its major aim is to support professional growth of

school personnel who are moving toward more open learning environments for children. In the center various activities are available to New York City teachers after school and in evenings. Teachers can make instructional materials from abundant supplies. Many teachers work with advanced students on particular projects. In contrast to traditional agencies of teacher education, which stress acquisition of credits, the workshop center is concerned with process and growth. It seeks to create a setting and to offer activities encouraging experienced and committed teachers to interact with younger teachers readying themselves for a new frontier of open, informal education.

Change does not take place in one or two workshop sessions; it takes a prolonged period of time to evolve. The need for change is based on the premise that each child learns through active and repeated encounters with firsthand, concrete experiences, through interaction with other people, and by reflecting on these experiences. Lillian Weber, professor of elementary education at City College and director of the center, believes the teacher's confidence in an ability to change the classroom climate will eventually come through this continuous process of inservice development, evaluation, and refinement of teaching techniques.

Disenchanted with traditional inservice programs, teachers want continuous programs set in an informal, nonthreatening environment. They believe inservice programs should be an integrated part of the teacher's job description and that time within the school day should be allocated for professional growth and development.

Particularly in urban centers of the United States, teachers are concerned with immediate assistance to meet increasingly difficult problems and to improve their classroom effectiveness. All too often they find that theoretical knowledge spawned in one-day conferences dies without additional nurturing to implement new ideas. Most educators would agree that little change can occur unless teachers understand why change is necessary. For example, teachers are sometimes requested to initiate state and federal programs in areas such as mathematics and science without understanding exactly what they are doing and why they are doing it.

It is important for teachers to see demonstrations of teaching techniques, skills, and concepts in a classroom setting. Teachers want to see theory and practice successfully integrated in the

classroom before implementing change. New knowledge and techniques must be understood by teachers and made applicable to their own classrooms.



Marian Brooks, staff member, leads a workshop for teachers on music and movement for young children at the Workshop Center for Open Education located at the City College of New York.

—Photo by Stanley Chu, Workshop Center Staff

Improving Basic Teaching Skills

"I just can't seem to get a good class discussion started," a high school teacher tells a colleague. "To tell the truth, I really don't know how to ask my students questions that stimulate them to think and interact with one another." What teachers have criticized most about colleges and universities is the emphasis placed on content rather than methodology of instruction. Indeed, many

teachers are extremely self-critical of their own basic instructional skills.

The ability to stimulate classroom discussions is just one basic skill all teachers need. A prerequisite to this skill is the ability to ask intelligent questions. The best teachers formulate probing questions that cause a student to search for an answer.

Another basic skill that teachers continually need to work to improve is diagnosis of a student's individual learning problems and prescriptions of action for the student. Teachers need to be skilled in positive reinforcement techniques. They should be able to organize students into groups—sometimes large, sometimes small—and they should possess the necessary skills to help groups function effectively. Many teachers want to better understand how to write good behavioral objectives for a particular discipline.

The use of master "peer" teachers to explain and demonstrate basic teaching skills is an effective technique used by many teacher centers. For example, after school or Saturday workshops on methods and skills of diagnostic testing, especially in reading, writing, and arithmetic, are very popular. While outside curriculum specialists are sometimes used, in many instances local school-teachers assume this leadership role.

Mainstreaming, the progressive inclusion of special education students in regular classrooms, is being encouraged in public schools throughout the United States. An implication of this practice for teachers is obvious: They will need inservice programs to help them cope with the special needs of these children. For example, teachers with special education students, who need more help and encouragement than other students, will need better classroom organization skills. So the teachers' basic skills will need to be sharper than ever before.

Teachers need and want inservice opportunities to help them improve teaching skills. Students deserve to be taught by teachers who know how to use the basic skills of teaching.

Exploring New Methods, Media, and Materials

The Teacher Curriculum Work Center in Chicago is committed to using concrete manipulative materials in the classroom and strongly encourages teachers to make their own materials. Many materials and supplies are available at the center for their use.

Most are free, though some may be purchased at a small price.

Like most centers, the Chicago center is an informal, supportive learning environment in which teachers make choices, pursue interests, and explore new ideas, techniques, and materials according to their own individual styles, priorities, and needs. The center always has supportive staff members present to help teachers find and use available resources.

Many teachers have expressed interest in developing their own materials, but few have opportunities to do so. What is needed is a place they can experiment with new methods and media and work on individual projects for an extended period of time. Teachers also have an increasing interest in developing teacher-made materials for their classrooms and in examining new commercial materials. Many centers were used by teachers six days a week, including during evening hours.

The Workshop Center for Open Education provides areas where teachers can work on individual projects, simply using the place and materials. Others may consult with staff to gain confirmation of what they have done or seek suggestions for future work. At the center teachers and some junior high students learn to use woodworking materials and a darkroom, helping teachers explore various media.

TEACHER CENTER MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Among recent innovations in education, the teacher center appears to be one of the most promising inservice alternatives. Capturing the imagination of educators here and abroad, the teacher center has brought together interested professionals whose persuasions may differ but whose commitment to fostering continuous professional growth and renewal among teachers is unanimous. Yarger's descriptive study on teacher centers completed in 1974 indicates that more than 600 teacher centers existed in the United States then. Many more have been established since.

A teacher center provides programs for educational personnel, including preservice and inservice teachers, supervisors, administrators, university faculty, paraprofessionals, students, parents, and others interested in the center's activities. It also allows participants to share human and materials resources, to receive individualized and group assistance in a nonthreatening environment, and to make professional improvement at the participant's own rate and on the participant's own terms.

England, Japan, France, and the United States were among the first countries to develop teacher centers to meet inservice and preservice needs of teachers. England, with more than 600 centers in operation, has perhaps influenced most directly the development of centers in the United States. American teachers visiting British schools in recent years were impressed with the friendly, informal, and purposeful atmosphere of centers and came home determined to start centers responsive to immediate needs of teachers both in the field and in training.

The movement has attracted an amazing number of diverse educational advocates, contributing to its rapid growth and wide range of support. The 1972 Task Force of the U.S. Office of Education identified the teacher center concept as one of the five most promising in teacher education. Similar endorsement has come from the National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, and the United Federation of Teachers. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education has been exploring new and more effective systems of cooperative staff development—one important component of teacher centers. Legislation about establishing centers has already been passed by approximately one-third of the states.

In addition to British influence, the teacher center movement in the United States has received impetus from problems that have plagued educators for decades. For example, how can meaningful inservice programs be developed to meet "immediate needs" as identified by teachers? How can schools and universities cooperate to design field-based experiences for undergraduates that successfully integrate theory and practice? How can teachers keep updated and renewed? How can teachers obtain resources for producing and preparing materials for their own classrooms? How can improved communications be developed among teachers, administrators, parents, and students? How can curriculum and staff development be effectively integrated? More and more educators are speculating that a solution for many of these problems may lie in well-organized teacher centers.

A great variety of centers exist with differing objectives and organizational patterns. To clarify and simplify the maze of terminology used for teacher centers, a taxonomy of four prototypes of teacher centers appears on this chart:

TAXONOMY OF TEACHER CENTER TYPES

Type of Center	General Definition
Consortium	Three or more cooperating institutions or organizations
Partnership	Two cooperating institutions or organizations

Autonomous	A single controlling unit or organization
Special Focus	A center with one primary focus

Consortium Teacher Center

Consortium centers, which include three or more institutions that join resources to accomplish desired goals, are one of the most rapidly developing types in the United States. These include inter-state, statewide, regional, and local consortia.

An excellent example of an interstate consortium teacher center is the Multi-State Teacher Education Project (M-STEP), which includes Florida, Maryland, Michigan, South Carolina, Utah, Washington, and West Virginia. The purpose of the consortium is to find ways to improve teacher education, particularly through laboratory experiences. Thus far, M-STEP has been concerned primarily with preservice experiences. For example, if colleges or universities involved in the interstate consortium have undergraduates who want to student teach in Appalachian classrooms, arrangements for the experience can be made through one of the eight regional centers located throughout West Virginia. Conversely, students in West Virginia teacher education programs have few opportunities to student teach in large inner-city schools, so M-STEP provides a chance for them to teach in one of the states having large metropolitan areas. Although M-STEP is presently in a developmental stage, possibilities for cooperative education programs appear to be excellent.

From this interstate consortium, West Virginia has developed a regional network of eight centers including public school, college, and state department personnel, as well as students, parents, and representatives of professional organizations. One of these regional centers is the Kanawha Valley Multi-Institutional Teacher Education Center (MITEC). In this pilot project an intensive in-service program was designed and implemented to meet the needs of supervising teachers and student teachers.

A commitment by West Virginia school systems and colleges to consortium centers for preparing prospective teachers gave impetus to MITEC, which became a state and national leader in

the teacher center movement. In 1972, this center was selected as one of four United States programs presented at the International Council of Education for Teachers in London. In 1972, the West Virginia legislature appropriated money to support a statewide network of education centers. Each of the twenty-one West Virginia teacher preparation institutions is now a member of one or more of the eight teacher education centers. Although the state department legislated funds for centers, it has assumed a supportive rather than a prescriptive role. Cooperation and shared sovereignty among the state department, school systems, and colleges account for this successful consortium center.

An example of a statewide consortium teacher center is the Rhode Island Teacher Center, which began in 1972. The center has four major components: alternate-learning; performance-based teacher education; information center; and needs assessment. In 1972 the alternate-learning component provided inservice training in local schools for more than 2,200 teachers and administrators. The other components provide consultant services for performance-based teacher education programs, assistance to local schools organizing and initiating teacher needs assessments, and search, retrieval, and dissemination services.

Another example of a unique consortium center is the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of North Dakota. It integrates efforts of both the former College of Education and the New School of Behavioral Studies in Education.

The Center for Teaching and Learning offers degree programs, both undergraduate and graduate, for elementary and secondary teachers with various specializations possible. The center is a cooperative effort of the University of North Dakota, the North Dakota State Department of Public Instruction, and public schools throughout the state. Many programs that originally existed in the New School and College of Education, such as Teacher Corps, Career Opportunities Program, Trainers of Teacher Trainers, and Project Follow Through, continued in this new center organization at the University of North Dakota. The center attempts to integrate preservice training with inservice programs for improved communication between higher education and public schools. Public school teachers express positive support and acceptance for the informal, open style of the university faculty who visit the schools.

The center provides firsthand contacts with children in a variety of settings designed to help student teachers fuse academic background, knowledge of child and adolescent growth and development, and learning theory. Through these field-based experiences, students can place in perspective assumptions about children, the nature of learning, the process of education, and the role of the teacher.

The center seeks to integrate university academic disciplines and the community. Programs, standards, and practices are the responsibility of several broadly based committees with representation from students, university departments, the state department of public instruction, elementary and secondary school teachers, and administrators.



Staff member Dolores Sampson leads a creative arts inservice session at one of the Follow Through Sites associated with the Center for Teaching and Learning of the University of North Dakota.

Partnership Teacher Center

The partnership teacher center is a cooperative effort between two institutions. Out of such a partnership might come a consor-

tium if another institution were involved. An excellent example of a partnership center is the West Genesee Central Schools/Syracuse University Teaching Center in Camillus, New York. It was generated by Syracuse University in response to demands for improved inservice and preservice teacher education.

This center operates in two elementary schools and one junior high school. Human and material resources from both institutions are readily available for the center. Purposes of the center are to improve preservice and inservice programs and to develop innovative teacher education programs. Integrating theory and practice to improve preservice programs is achieved by interrelating on- and off-campus experiences, using input from both public school and university faculties. Improvement of inservice programs reflects the view that teacher education is a continuum, suggesting that university responsibility is not finished when preservice, undergraduate programs are completed.

Members of the teachers council of one center initially had to make many adaptations and adjustments, but they agreed that integrating campus and field experiences with preservice and inservice programs was improved. Once the process of communication and interaction began and a degree of honesty and trust developed among the personnel involved, problems were more readily identified, and proposed methods for improvement were more easily implemented. This objective, professional exchange of opinions, is extremely fruitful for growth and renewal among teachers.

Another example of a partnership teacher center is the Durham Teacher-Parent Center in Philadelphia. This center, a voluntary inservice education part of the Learning Centers Project of the Philadelphia School District, has a staff of classroom teachers and curriculum specialists. The center offers all-day workshops and voluntary after-school and Saturday morning activities. The center's resources include a carpentry shop, a mathematics laboratory, a space planning consultation service, a language arts and creative writing center, and a collection of early childhood materials. A recycling program supplies assorted industrial scrap and cast-off items to convert into teaching aids. The program also includes a fifteen-session course through which teachers may earn inservice credits toward permanent certification. On-site assis-

tance also exists for parents and teachers as they set up resource rooms and alter existing classrooms.

The Minneapolis/University of Minnesota Teacher Center, like the Syracuse program, is the result of cooperation between the university and the Minneapolis Public Schools. This center is the inservice base for several alternative public schools as part of a National Institute of Education Experimental Schools Project as well as a leadership development and renewal stimulus for the whole school district. It is also an instrument for university-public school collaboration, because student teachers are placed in the public schools. Public school teachers and university faculty together design preservice and graduate education courses.

The center's resources are controlled by its constituents to a large degree. A major goal is to improve communication between public schools and university research and training capabilities. Problem areas dealt with in the center include organization renewal for decentralization and desegregation, open education, multicultural curriculum paraprofessional training, community relations, and parent volunteer programs.

Autonomous Teacher Center

The autonomous teacher center, one in which teachers make major decisions about its function and management, is similar to British teacher centers. British centers are housed in local buildings with self-improvement programs organized and run by teachers to upgrade educational performance. Their primary function is to review existing curricula and teaching practices and to encourage teachers to effect changes.

The rationale for British teacher centers may be summarized in three propositions: first, fundamental educational reform will come only through teachers, who are those charged with basic educational responsibility; second, teachers are unlikely to change their ways of doing things just because they are told to do so; third, teachers will take reform seriously only when they are responsible for defining their own educational problems, delineating their own needs, and receiving help on their own terms.

One British center, the Manchester Teachers Centre in Manchester, was formed because the Manchester Education Commit-

tee was anxious to provide a place where teachers could meet to socialize and to discuss matters of professional interest. It has an informal, relaxed atmosphere and a genuine feeling of sharing and assistance. Abundant materials and resources are available, housed in three floors of the center, which is a beautiful, old, remodeled home. On each floor many teachers were working in groups on special projects, and others were involved in social activities, some in the dining room, and some in the licensed bar.

The center accommodates curriculum development for the city of Manchester as well as providing opportunities for teachers to discuss and develop new teaching methods. The center is also used for local inservice training and other general committee meetings.

In the United States several teacher centers have been developed with objectives similar to those of British centers. One example is the New Haven Teacher Center in New Haven, Connecticut. This center is a cooperative effort between New Haven teachers and parents who want more individualized instruction and open education programs in the schools. The New Haven Teacher Center, not affiliated with the school board, is independent and autonomous. Workshops and seminars are scheduled for both teachers and parents to consider a variety of relevant problems and questions. The center has a full-time coordinator, a half-time crafts person, and a half-time secretary.

Another example of a local autonomous center is the Chicago Teacher Curriculum Work Center, a place for ongoing education of practicing teachers. It has an informal climate in which teachers can pause, have a cup of coffee, and exchange ideas. Special resources are available to help teachers develop new materials and techniques for their classrooms. "We are materials oriented," explained one staff member. "Teachers can come here to get ideas, or, if they already have an idea, they can make the things they want from materials we keep in stock."

Most of the teachers who use the center are elementary or middle school teachers from the Chicago metropolitan area. The center has a regular schedule of workshops and seminars and publishes a newsletter every two months. Its staff members are consultants for local schools.

The Greenwich Teachers' Center in Greenwich, Connecticut,

is an autonomous agent for educational change. However, it links public school districts, colleges, and other educational agencies when collaboration would help teachers. Many workshops are scheduled during the year as teachers identify needs. Evaluation of the workshops by participants has been positive. One participant said, "I enjoyed sharing experiences with other teachers and find that actually doing and making projects together helps me with ideas. I also like the 'low-key' atmosphere."

Special Focus Teacher Center

Centers focusing on one particular educational concept are called special focus teacher centers. Examples of special focus include individualized instruction, early childhood education, reading, competency-based education, dropout prevention, and open education. Many special focus teacher centers, where educators attempt to find suitable ways of putting theory into practice, are emerging throughout the country. The center, of course, is ideal for this purpose.

The Workshop Center for Open Education in New York City is an outstanding example of a special focus teacher center. The main purpose of the center is to provide programs and support for teachers who want to open up their classrooms but who need help to achieve this goal. The center, which occupies a large area in the basement of one of CCNY's older buildings, is open daily from 4 to 8 p.m. and on Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon. A monthly calendar indicating dates and times for workshops and other activities is mailed to all interested schools in New York City. Teachers are encouraged to use the center whenever it is open. A variety of materials—books, A-V equipment, commercial and teacher-made games and activities—are available for teachers to use individually or in groups.

The Southern Illinois Teachers' Center Project, a special focus center, is designed to help teachers develop their understanding and knowledge of mathematics. In twelve-week cycles elementary and junior high school teachers from public, parochial, and independent schools meet one afternoon a week in small groups to do mathematical investigations or to invent mathematics activities for students. Several times a year the center offers short

courses by visiting mathematicians, developmental psychologists, and educators.

Participation is free, and no registration is required. Teachers participate on their own time and are faithful in attending all twelve-week sessions in a particular program. In 1972 the center received a grant from the National Science Foundation to help fund their workshops. The center encourages teachers to act from a viewpoint based on research and on observations of children's thinking. A newsletter is issued, and various research and informal position papers are disseminated.

The Mountain View Center for Environmental Education at the University of Colorado is a special focus center where local teachers attend after school and in evenings, usually a course of eight or ten sessions. When invited, advisors from the center go to public schools to continue working with teachers in their classrooms. Together teachers and center staff members identify, gather, develop, and adapt material from the environment for classroom use. Thus teachers are engaged in the actual process of exploring how children learn. The center's major emphasis is on environmental education, believing that all education should be involved directly with the environment and the real work of people and nature.

Another institutional purpose is to develop an American prototype of what is potentially a major new component of school systems. All staff members of the center perform a combination of roles. In addition to working in schools with teachers and principals, the staff presents several workshops in the center throughout the year. In workshops the staff strives to help teachers learn in some depth and at their own levels about some aspect of the world. By this approach they hope that the teachers' enthusiasm and increased knowledge may provide a basis for reconsidering the whole school curriculum.

FINANCING AND GOVERNING TEACHER CENTERS

Two perplexing problems faced in establishing and supporting teacher centers are financing and governing them. Who finances teacher centers? How should they be governed? What governing relationships exist between teachers and school administrators? These are some of the questions that must be confronted by educators interested in teacher centers.

Financing Teacher Centers

Teacher centers are financed in a variety of ways. For example, in 1971 the West Virginia legislature appropriated funds that made possible the teacher education center in West Virginia. "One of the primary reasons for the success of regional Teacher Education Centers in West Virginia," according to Kathryn Maddox, director of the Kanawha Valley Multi-Institutional Teacher Education Center (MITEC), "is the legislative support at the state level."

For the 1975-76 school year the West Virginia legislature budgeted \$125,000 to support eight regional teacher education centers. Of this amount, MITEC received \$27,000. In addition, the Kanawha and Putnam County school systems, serving as equal partners with the colleges, contributed \$17,000 to the center budget. Each of the six cooperating colleges paid a base fee of \$500 and \$25 for each student teacher placed in schools by MITEC, which amounted to approximately \$15,000. MITEC is based upon the principle of parity and shared sovereignty. Therefore, both

the schools and colleges attempt to contribute financial and human resources equally.

In Minneapolis, a partnership teacher center is receiving financial backing from the Minneapolis Public Schools and the University of Minnesota. For the 1973-74 school year the University of Minnesota provided \$121,500 in program services and the Minneapolis Public Schools contributed \$58,000 to the MPS/UM Teacher Center. In addition, the center received a separate grant from the National Institute of Education to develop leadership and design a teacher center for a cluster of elementary and junior high schools in east Minneapolis and another grant from Teacher Corps for collaboration of university and public school personnel in staff renewal for a group of north area schools.

Teachers in Minneapolis and those involved in educational research at the university may request funds through the MPS/UM Teacher Center Board that manages funds. The eight-person Teacher Center Board has representatives from the Minneapolis Public Schools, the University of Minnesota, alternative school faculty, and the community.

In contrast, financing of the Scarsdale Teacher Institute is negotiated with the board of education and is part of the contract arrangement of teachers with the school district. During the 1973-74 and 1974-75 school years the board of education allocated \$15,000 a year for salaries, travel expenses, supplies, and materials. The board also approved a part-time leave for a teacher presently on the staff, to be designated by the teachers association, to be coordinator of the Scarsdale Teacher Institute. Under this plan the teacher carries only a half teaching load but receives full pay and benefits from the school district.

One of the most critical variables for starting a teacher center is to have a committed, competent, and paid director. Centers that attempt to function on a part-time, after school basis or through a teacher volunteer program during regular school hours frequently have difficulty.

District funds are used to operate the San Francisco Teacher Learning Center. An example of the strong support for the center occurred in October, 1974, when it was faced with a funding crisis and the threat of reassignment of center staff to classroom or other positions. Center participants, community groups, some school administrators, and representatives of the California

Teacher Association and the American Federation of Teachers fought for its survival. To overcome the funding crisis, individual schools pledged to spend federal Title I and III monies and ESEA funds for activities sponsored by the Teacher Learning Center. Because of this support the Board of Education decided to continue the center and retain staff in their assignments.

Several teacher centers have received financial support from private foundations. For example, the Workshop Center for Open Education in New York City is funded by grants from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and federal Title III funds from the U.S. Office of Education. The Teacher Curriculum Work Center in Chicago was originally funded by the Wieboldt Foundation in June, 1972, and has subsequently received grants from the New World Foundation and Lilly Endowment, Inc. In Colorado, the Mountain View Center for Environmental Education is jointly funded by the University of Colorado and the Ford Foundation.

At least one center, the Creative Teaching Workshop in New York City, depends on modest donations and fees for its support. Thus, with funding for teacher centers coming from the federal government, colleges and universities, school systems, donations, state legislatures, and private foundations, and ranging from minimal to substantial, no standard, predictable source of income exists.

Governing Teacher Centers

Teacher center governance varies from informal agreements to legally binding contracts between two or more partners. Perhaps the most common arrangement, however, is a formal, written agreement.

Although many teacher centers are organized around some type of advisory or policy-making council, many centers have also attempted to handle situations without any formal structure. Autonomous teacher centers, for example, often have loosely knit governing structures—if they have a board or council at all. Partnership and consortium centers, on the other hand, are more apt to have policy-making councils. The reason for this, apparently, is that partnerships and consortiums are generally larger than autonomous teacher centers and usually have greater finan-

cial support. Special focus teacher centers, it should be noted, do not appear to fall under any particular pattern of governance.

One center, the Scarsdale Teacher Institute in Scarsdale, New York, was started several years ago to offer planned and continuous education to the professional staff of the Scarsdale schools. The program was launched by local teachers because they believed that the best teacher was the alert, open-minded person who continued to learn and to translate new insights into appropriate experiences for students.

The governance of the teacher institute involves three committees. The first, the teacher institute committee, was composed of eleven district school teachers for the 1975-76 school year. This committee has major responsibility for directing and developing the institute program. A second committee, called the accreditation committee, reviews all institute inservice course proposals to be presented to the superintendent and ultimately to the board of education for salary credit. A third committee is the educational advisory committee, which is composed of twelve interested community persons. Supporting these three committees is another group, called the Friends of the Scarsdale Teacher Institute, with approximately 100 members.

A consortium center, the Kanawha Valley (MITEC) Center in West Virginia has a board of directors, made up of representatives from each participating institution, that sets policy for the center. The membership consists of one representative from each full MITEC member institution of higher education, representatives from the county systems participating in the center, one representative of the elementary and one of the secondary principal's association, two classroom teacher representatives from each participating college having one group vote, one representative from the West Virginia State Department of Education, and one representative from the staff of the West Virginia Education Association.

Each regional teacher education center in West Virginia has an independent governing body that establishes policy and makes major decisions on the operation of the center's total program. The structure of the governing group insures that each individual institution represented has equal consortium status in the decision-making process. The governing body designates an individual to be director of the center. The program objectives are accom-

lished largely through utilizing staff members, participating agencies, and the center director. The director and staff members facilitate, coordinate, and expedite programs at the center. To summarize, the characteristics of these MITEC centers include:

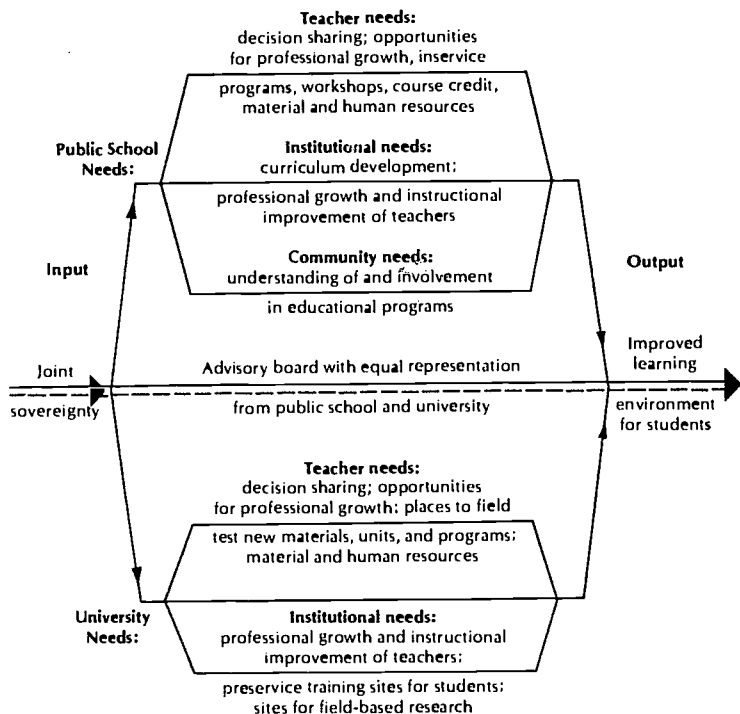
1. Each center is a voluntary consortium of local education agencies, institutions of higher education, the West Virginia Department of Education, and other agencies, forming a partnership in selected aspects of preservice and continuing education.
2. Each center is within a specified region of the state but does not necessarily cover the entire region. (One educational region does not contain a single institution approved to prepare teachers and thus has no center.)
3. Decision making is shared, and centers develop constitutions and by-laws to insure a balanced participation of consortium members in policy decision making.
4. Resources of consortium members are shared, including facilities, materials, and personnel.
5. Centers, which are field-based, are intermediary agents between local education agencies, institutions of higher education, and the West Virginia Department of Education.
6. The principle of parity is honored in governing and operating centers and in assuming financial responsibility as equitably as possible in proportion to the potential benefits to each of the member participants.

Another example is the West Genesee/Syracuse University Teacher Center, which is a partnership center with substantial financial support from both parties. It has a joint council that develops the center's operational policy. Other centers, such as the Teachers' Active Learning Center in San Francisco, are governed by the teachers and parents. The makeup of autonomous and special focus teacher center councils is apt to include administrators as well as teachers. Partnership and consortium councils, on the other hand, are more likely to have some type of joint governing council.

A university-public school partnership teacher center model recommending an advisory board with equal representation from the public school and the university was constructed by the

authors. This conceptual model, which identifies several teacher and institutional needs that such a center can provide, offers public schools and higher education a chance to work cooperatively to provide more suitable opportunities for continuous inservice development for teachers.

MODEL OF A PARTNERSHIP TEACHER CENTER



From a special research project by the Ball State University chapter of Phi Delta Kappa, titled *Developing A Teaching Center Model For Open Education*, Spring, 1975.

PROBLEMS AND PROMISE OF TEACHER CENTERED INSERVICE EDUCATION

One of the major problems in improving teacher centered inservice education is the lack of trust in different sectors of the educational community. Public school teachers and administrators frequently look upon themselves as adversaries. In turn, both groups are suspicious of higher education, and higher education often looks upon its protégés as unruly stepchildren. To top it off, the general public no longer holds schools and colleges in high esteem. This has further exacerbated the situation. Christine San José, coordinator of the West Genesee/Syracuse University Teacher Center, said the problem of breaking down the suspicion, fear, and mistrust of the different sectors of the educational process was the most difficult hurdle in getting their teacher center under way. To restore a sense of self-esteem and competence in a climate of cooperation and collaboration, channels of communication had to be reopened. This was often a painful process, but through constructive planning, leadership, and open debate they survived the initial trauma and now have cooperation and trust.

Another major problem educators face is improving communication with their contemporaries. Educational personnel at all levels live too much in isolation: professors in their ivory towers, administrators behind their desks, and teachers behind closed classroom doors. Lillian Weber, director of New York's Workshop Center for Open Education, requires her center staff to meet at least a half day each week to think, evaluate, plan, communicate, and just dream about how the center might develop new

approaches to assist teachers in their professional growth and development. During this time the center is closed. Weber said that if it were not for this mandatory half day off each week for the staff to think and interact, she doubts that they could have survived some major crises. She believes that people need a chance to stop to objectively and positively evaluate what is going on.

Decision making and governance of a center is another dilemma. According to the Schmieder and Yarger report on teacher centers, many centers have their own governing boards, a majority of which are advisory and a substantial minority of which are policy making. Comprising mainly teachers and administrators, boards sometimes include students and community representatives. Many people believe that partnership and consortium teacher centers provide an excellent vehicle for collaborative effort. E. B. Smith writes in *Rethinking Inservice Education*:

"The inservice education of public professional personnel must be determined and delivered through an open collaborative effort among those representing the public, the university of scholars, school administrations, and teacher organizations at different levels of decision making, with different kinds of responsibilities based on constituency and expertise, and in different modes of operation depending upon particular education settings."

Another problem in setting up a teacher center is the selection of competent center leadership. Center directors and teachers in both the United States and England stress the importance of finding a competent and committed person to direct the program. To develop a sense of trust and competence in a climate of cooperation requires open communication among the persons involved. Kathryn Maddox, director of the Kanawha Valley Multi-Institutional Teacher Education Center in West Virginia, said she believed that selection of an appropriate director for the center was a critical factor in the center's success or failure.

A partial checklist of the characteristics of the ideal center director includes: The director must be an excellent teacher, articulate, confident, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, committed, an expediter, and able to cope.

That wide support exists for the teacher center movement is evidenced by the several hundred centers now in operation throughout the United States. What makes the concept of teacher

centering so attractive to educators at all levels? Primarily, the promise of teacher centering lies in its potential for dealing effectively with the myriad problems that have plagued teacher educators for many years. For example, how can teachers keep professionally updated and renewed? How can public schools and teachers colleges collaborate for the improvement of inservice education? How can communication lines be improved between administrators, teachers, parents, and students? Many educators believe that solutions to problems such as these lie within the organizational structure of teacher centers.

Teacher center advocates agree that centers can provide valuable help and assistance to teachers changing from more conventional teaching programs to alternative learning environments. The alternative school movement, rapidly gaining momentum throughout the United States, represents one significant trend in public education. In 1971, the Minneapolis public school system began a five-year federally funded project designed to test the idea that comprehensive change in an educational system can provide better education for children. Recognizing that children learn at different rates, the project offers choices of alternative schools to parents, students, and teachers.

In an effort to offer Minneapolis teachers a unified approach to staff development, a teacher center was organized in 1972. The following year the center expanded to become the Minneapolis Public Schools/University of Minnesota Teacher Center, providing a collaborative effort for training and renewal of teachers, aides, teacher interns, students, and administrators as well as for parents and community volunteers. It has received enthusiastic support from educators involved in the center's programs and activities.

The promise of a continuous, nonthreatening inservice support system that includes teachers in the planning is a compelling reason for the growth of teacher centers throughout the United States. Devaney and Thorn say in *Exploring Teachers' Centers*, "Support is not just handy, useful, available things; it is approachable, practical, credible-to-teachers people; and an atmosphere of informality, acceptance, and immediate helpfulness." What this means for teachers is that for the first time inservice education can be individualized; teachers can decide for themselves what basic skills or areas of professional development they want to

improve upon, and equally important, they can decide the time frame for accomplishing goals they establish.

To encourage individual teaching growth and encourage research interests, the Kanawha Valley Multi-Institutional Teacher Education Center offers teachers minigrants of \$100, which can be used to conduct research in any number of exciting projects, programs, or innovations.

Finally, the promise of greater cooperative efforts on the part of educators representing all sectors of public education is an exciting possibility vis-a-vis the teacher center. The potential for teacher growth and renewal—which in turn will lead to a higher quality of education for all youth—will be greater when public schools, colleges, and state agencies combine their talents and expertise. According to Smith in *Rethinking Inservice Education*, "Although the teacher center concept is not the only possible collaborative model for inservice programs and activities, it is the model most discussed and probably most likely to realize a free collaborative effort in those aspects of inservice education that are field-based and on the job."

REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF TEACHER CENTERS

The Center for Teaching and Learning
Address: The University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND 58201

Director: Dean Vito Perrone

The Center for Teaching and Learning is committed to the development of a strong education program that provides a variety of preservice and inservice learning environments and educational opportunities.

Dallas Educational Renewal Center
Address: 3120 N. Haskell Avenue
Dallas, TX 75204

Director: Ann Kieschnick

The center works with several thousand teachers in the Dallas Independent School District. The program is performance based

and achieves a blending of educational theory and classroom-based learning techniques. Six colleges and universities work with the center in preservice and inservice programs.

**Kanawha Valley Multi-Institutional Teacher Education Center
(MITEC)**

Address: 200 Elizabeth Street
Charleston, WV 25311

Director: Kathryn Maddox

The state of West Virginia is committed to cooperative efforts of school systems and colleges, through teacher education centers, to improve the training of prospective teachers and to improve the quality and competence of teachers through inservice programs. MITEC, one of eight regional teacher education centers in the state, includes seven colleges and universities; two school systems; four associate colleges in other states; the State Department of Education; West Virginia Education Association; and the community.

**Minneapolis Public Schools/University of Minnesota
Teacher Center (MPS/UM TC)**

Address: 155 Peik Hall, University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Director: Frederick V. Hayen

This center is funded by Minneapolis Public Schools, the University of Minnesota, and the National Institute of Education. In addition to preservice and inservice roles, the center provides a laboratory setting that brings college of education staff and public school staff together in a natural way.

The Teacher Center

Address: 425 College Street
New Haven, CT 06511

Director: Corine Levin

The Teacher Center serves teachers from all over Connecticut and also is a field center for Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont. During the school year and the summer, the center offers workshops on many subjects, including open education and the integrated day. It is free to all educators.

The Teachers' Center at Greenwich

Address: 1177 King Street
Greenwich, CT 06830

Director: Celia Houghton

The purpose of this center is to provide local opportunities for public and private school teachers to further their professional development and provide strong support for teachers.

Teacher Learning Center

Address: 1400 16th Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Director: Betty McNamara

The center provides inservice help to teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, school volunteers, student tutors, community groups, parents, college students, and professional groups. Seminars, workshops, and experiences for children are periodically scheduled in the center.

West Genesee/Syracuse University Teaching Center

Address: Stonehedge Elementary School
Sanderson Drive
Camillus, NY 13031

Director: Christine San José

This center was generated by Syracuse University and the West Genesee Central School System in response to increasing needs for improved preservice and inservice teacher education programs.

Workshop Center for Open Education

Address: 6 Shephard Hall
City College
140th Street and Convent Avenue
New York, NY 10031

Director: Lillian Weber

In this center, teachers from the New York City area take part in workshops scheduled in a variety of subject areas. Many materials and resources are available for teachers to use on their own time and at their own pace. A major aim of the center is to support the professional growth of school people who are making changes in the learning environment of students.

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The Foundation exists through the generosity of George Reavis and others who have contributed. To accomplish the goals envisaged by the founder the Foundation needs to enlarge its endowment by several million dollars. Contributions to the endowment should be addressed to The Educational Foundation, Phi Delta Kappa, 8th and Union, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.

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