

CBE On Teaching

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NEW TEACHERS, BETTER TEACHERS

A Report on Two Initiatives in New Jersey

by
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Introduction

In January 1987 the Council for Basic Education (CBE) received a grant from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation to support a one-year-long critical appraisal of two of New Jersey's recent initiatives to improve the teaching profession, the Provisional Teacher Program and the Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management. *New Teachers, Better Teachers* is the report of what we learned, our judgments, and our recommendations.

We undertook this task because New Jersey has responded promptly and comprehensively to the nation's concern about the condition of teaching in public schools. Commissioner of Education Saul Cooperman's 4 R's for teachers—Recruitment, Renewal, Reward, and Recognition—have been in the news nationally as well as within the state. At a distance they appeared to be an aggressive response to the call for reform of the teaching profession, one characterized by positive incentives and not confounded by reliance on new regulations.

These same initiatives also raised questions about the efficacy of top-down state mandates. It is important to recognize that the Provisional Teacher Program and the Academy exist within the larger context of Commissioner Cooperman's 4 R's. Other recent initiatives in New Jersey within that larger effort to strengthen teaching include incentives to attract talented young and minority individuals into the profession, monetary and public rewards in recognition of excellent teachers, and major changes in traditional teacher preparation.

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beneficial by teachers and the public, and to judge the extent to which they can serve as useful models for other states and districts to emulate.

New Teachers, Better Teachers should complement a longer-term, more formal evaluation now being conducted by Teachers College of Columbia University. The CBE report provides an early estimate of the strengths and weaknesses of the Provisional Teacher Program and the Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management, based mainly on our own observations and conversations, with participants, observers, and critics throughout New Jersey.

ii.

Why should the Council for Basic Education perform this task? Our interest in the New Jersey initiatives grew out of CBE's own National Strategy for the Recruitment, Renewal, and Retention of Excellent Teachers (The New 3 R's). This strategy reflects one of the Council's enduring goals through its programs and publications: to strengthen teaching and teachers in the nation's classrooms

Many groups around the country have in recent years offered reports and recommendations on how the teaching profession should be restructured, such as *A Nation at Risk*, by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation Prepared. Teachers for the 21st Century*, by the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, and *Tomorrow's Teachers* by the Holmes Group of college deans. Each organization has favored a different approach. Given the diversity of our schools and our citizenry, diverse paths to shared goals are certainly both possible and desirable.

Unfortunately, the proliferation of reform initiatives readily leads to confusion in the minds of the public and policymakers, who genuinely want to improve the lot of teachers and the quality of teaching in our schools, but who may lack the background and perspective needed to choose among the bewildering options. That is where CBE can help.

The Council's long-established roles in the reform movement include critic, synthesizer, and guide. Few if any other groups possess CBE's recognized independence, a national perspective, and the authority that derives from practical experience with professional development programs as well as 30 years of watchdog publications. It is from this special vantage point that we have written *New Teachers, Better Teachers*.

iii.

Our method of research was straightforward and, within the limits of time for such a report, efficient without attempting to be exhaustive. Our intention was to provide a thoughtful and informed impression of the two programs, the theories and philosophies that undergird them, and the way they work in practice, *not* of individual administrators, teacher-participants, or schools. At the same time, however, we sought a broad response from parties directly and indirectly involved with schools and teachers in New Jersey.

To that end, after examining the literature on the programs produced by the New Jersey State Department of Education, as well as critical reviews and reports prepared by other groups in the state, we conducted an initial series of interviews. These included staff at the state departments of education and higher education, representatives of the New Jersey Education Association, the New Jersey School Boards Association, and the Public Education Institute. And at later stages of the study we continued to speak with a variety of observers who were not directly involved with the two programs, including media, university professors, and other interested individuals.

Once this initial survey was completed, we began to look closely at the Provisional Teacher Program and the Academy. This involved for the Provisional Teacher Program visits to regional training sites and interviews by phone and in person with teachers who had been hired with provisional certification, the principals who had hired them, and members of the supervisory teams responsible for overseeing their first year in the classroom. Given the variety of New Jersey's schools and students—and the different needs of both—we were especially concerned to consider urban as well as suburban, elementary as well as secondary, and areas of relative wealth and poverty.

In studying the Academy, we paid several visits to the facility in Edison, New Jersey, interviewed the director and staff at length, sat in on several training sessions, and interviewed by phone a number of participants from around the state.

We wish to say that in all our meetings with the staffs of the Division of Teacher Preparation and Certification and the Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management, as well as with teachers, administrators, professors, observers, and media throughout the state, individuals were helpful, forthcoming, and gracious. They made our task easier as well as pleasant, and we offer our sincere thanks.

iv.

As should become clear in the next two sections, we believe that both the Provisional Teacher Program and the Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management represent dramatic departures from the history of how teachers have been recruited, hired, and trained. They deserve careful attention by people across the country who are concerned with practical means for improving education. The Provisional Teacher Program has succeeded—and gives every promise of continuing to succeed—at attracting large numbers of qualified individuals into the teaching profession who otherwise would not enter. The Academy has developed a coherent and wide-reaching program of professional development to strengthen teachers and teaching throughout the state. And both demonstrate that New Jersey is committed to this same goal of strengthening teaching, of helping it develop in the direction of a true profession, in more than symbolic ways.

At the same time, what should also be clear is that both programs can be improved. To meet its full potential, each must continue to be revised and to develop in important areas, as the following chapters explain

We believe that these programs can indeed serve as useful models for other states and cities that seek to improve teaching. But we urge that our reservations and recommendations will guide these other jurisdictions as they institute such programs, as well the New Jersey State Department of Education as it builds on what has been achieved so far. To be content with what exists is to stop short of what is possible.

The Provisional Teacher Program

Of the several initiatives developed by the New Jersey State Department of Education in recent years to strengthen the teaching profession, none has captured as much national attention, nor been so controversial, as the Provisional Teacher Program. Informally—and leading to some confusion—it has also been known as the “alternate route to certification.”

According to education officials in Trenton, this program was designed as an alternative to *two* separate ways that teachers have traditionally been certified and hired. The first of these is the so-called “emergency certificate.” From 1942 until 1985 in New Jersey, districts were allowed, under “extenuating circumstances,” to hire as full-time teachers individuals who had not studied education in college and even those who lacked any specific academic or professional background in the subjects they were expected to teach. In other words, such emergency certificates “had no requirements whatsoever.”¹

Originally intended to be used only to hire individuals to teach subjects in which shortages of teachers existed, the emergency certificates were widely misused. From the 1940s through the 1960s, in fact, more teachers entered New Jersey classrooms via the emergency certificate than via standard certificates. No controls existed to ensure their qualifications, no induction or supervisory programs existed to help them make the difficult transition into the classrooms. Not surprisingly, such teachers may remain little more than a chapter ahead of their students, particularly in their early years of teaching. In such a situation the depth and breadth of knowledge of a subject and its context, so crucial to any meaningful understanding or teaching, are absent. By any standard that is a pedagogical travesty.

This practice has not been limited to New Jersey. Indeed, the Council for Basic Education in its 1985 report *Making Do in the Classroom. A Report on the Misassignment of Teachers*² revealed that most states hire unqualified teachers through some form of emergency certification.

Since the introduction of the Provisional Teacher Program in 1985 in New Jersey, however, the emergency certification of teachers has been discontinued in all academic subjects, except for special education and certain programs in bilingual education. These are teaching specialties in which demand far outstrips supply. Provided they are willing to undertake the considerable commitments of time and money for supervision and training, districts now have the option of hiring "provisionally certified" individuals, not only in areas of shortage but wherever they appear as more attractive candidates than fully certified teachers.

In educational terms, this aspect of the Provisional Program may well have the most practical and immediate benefits. The demise of emergency certificates—as they had come to be used—can only be to the good. And, whether coincidentally or not, the Provisional Program has attracted a high proportion of candidates in those areas such as mathematics and science where shortages have been most acute. Of all provisional teachers hired by September 1987, 34% were in science and mathematics.

The second aspect of the Provisional Program provides an "alternate route" to that of traditional teacher training in education colleges and departments. The explicit and laudable goal is to attract into the classroom talented people who have chosen not to enroll in education programs as undergraduates or to undergo lengthy graduate coursework, and who, therefore, would not qualify for the traditional teaching certificate. Through the alternate route these people can begin teaching almost at once, while taking 200 hours of professional training during their first year and receiving, ideally, intensive guidance and support from a team of teachers and administrators in their schools.

New Jersey deserves praise for initiating what surely appeared to be a risky experiment and for being willing to modify the program on the basis of experience.

Of the assumptions that undergird the Provisional Program, first and most striking are the notions that substantial knowledge of an academic subject is the most crucial qualification for an effective teacher, and that professional skills essential to success in teaching students and managing classrooms can be imparted in fairly short order. Implicitly, therefore, the Provisional Program represents a criticism of any traditional education department curricula, standards, and duration that sacrificed subject knowledge for teaching methods.

Whether or not such criticism is justified, the response of the Provisional Program apparently runs counter to that of several of the more important national reports on educational reform, notably *Tomorrow's Teachers* by the Holmes Group, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* by the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, and *Who Will Teach Our Children?* by the California Commission on the Teacher Profession. With



surprising unanimity, these groups have called for more, not less, extensive training and clinical or practice teaching for prospective teachers, at the same time that they also insist on new emphasis on academic achievement and higher standards.

New Jersey's Governor Kean was a member of the Carnegie Forum, and argues that there is no necessary conflict between calls for more extensive training, on the one hand, and the alternate route for teachers, on the other, as long as the Provisional Teacher Program is seen as only a first step in long-term training of new teachers. Of course, the Provisional Program in and of itself cannot ensure anything beyond a teacher's first year and the awarding of full certification.

We note this apparent disparity not to devalue the alternate route but to suggest that the nation's debate on the initial training of teachers is far from settled. Although many new teachers may begin their careers through New Jersey-style provisional certification, traditional institutions will undoubtedly continue to play an important role. Indeed, the quality of their programs may well be strengthened by the challenge to orthodoxy of the Provisional Program in New Jersey as well as by the series of national reports and state-based reform actions. All three represent critical dissatisfaction with the status quo.

More important, however—and this cannot be stressed too strongly—neither the Provisional Program nor traditional teacher training in colleges should be seen as *sufficient* in the professional development of teachers, but only as a beginning. The Provisional Program may well serve as a model for how *all* first-year teachers should eventually be inducted, evaluated, and supported, regardless of the route they have chosen to enter the classroom. But it is one thing to put a teacher adequately (that is, minimally) prepared in front of a class, the long term goal should be for that person to be a professional, which means continued learning and development, both in subject knowledge and pedagogy.

The Report of the Panel on the Preparation of Beginning Teachers

A theoretical framework for the training of provisional teachers was established by a commission of distinguished educators brought together by the New Jersey Department of Education and chaired by Ernest L. Boyer. Their brief, 14 page report was issued in the spring of 1984. We find it a rather insubstantial document for its stated purpose of defining, "1) what is essential for beginning teachers professionally to know?, and 2) what teaching skills and abilities are most effective?"³

The report divides "essential knowledge" for beginning teachers into three traditional categories: the curriculum (including what is taught and how it is assessed), the student, and the classroom/school setting. These three areas of

Schools" and "Effective Teaching" literature, but lacking much substance. We suspect that new teachers benefit little from hearing a platitude that effective teachers "see to it that all students are involved." Again, what specific skills are involved with this admonition. "In the end, the beginning teacher must be able to stimulate creative thought, help the student evaluate what he or she has learned, and prepare the student to use knowledge wisely"? (9-10)

There is nothing egregiously wrong with the "Report on the Preparation of Beginning Teachers." Neither is there substance enough to serve as foundation for a major restructuring of how new teachers are themselves prepared and inducted. We do not believe, in fact, that this document accurately or adequately depicts what is truly "essential" for a provisional teacher in a first year of teaching.

Entering the Program

Candidates for the Provisional Teacher Program may seek admission on their own initiative, many are recruited by the Office of Teacher Recruitment and Placement, which is largely supported by private funding and which centers its efforts on 55 selective colleges and universities mainly in the eastern half of the country. Candidates must possess a degree (or extensive professional experience) in the academic subjects to be taught, and must pass a state certification test of subject knowledge.

One of the explicit goals of the program is to attract highly qualified—that is, academically qualified—individuals into teaching, and that purpose has in fact been accomplished to a notable degree. As one measure of this, the average performance on the National Teacher Exams (required of all entering teachers), is significantly higher for provisionally certified candidates than for those who have received standard certification, and higher still for provisional candidates recruited from the selective colleges. As of April 1987, the percentage of candidates from the Provisional Program who passed the NTE was also higher, at 92.9%, than those who came through traditional programs of teacher preparation, of whom 86.2% passed.

At the same time that, remarkably, there has been no apparent decline in quality, the number of provisional teachers has risen dramatically in each of the first three years. 121 provisional teachers were hired for September 1985, 215 were hired for September 1987. A total of 711 have been hired as of November 1987.

As a state report put it. "At the onset of the program in September 1985, the program had attracted 11 percent of new teachers entering the public schools that year. One year later, in September 1986, the proportion had increased to 14 percent. By the beginning of the program's third year, fully 13.2 percent of new teachers employed annually in New Jersey were provisional teachers."⁴

An additional, and considerable, benefit of the program to date has been the level of minority representation, at 20% as of September 1987. This level is significantly higher than among the general teaching population and addresses one of the most pressing needs for New Jersey schools.

Since the inception of the Provisional Program, the state has awarded 48 fellowships of \$5000 each to outstanding candidates to pay the cost of the recipient's initial training in the program and the balance to support his or her continuing education. These fellowships have been funded by the Geraldine R Dodge Foundation, and are awarded without special application.

These Dodge Fellows are extraordinarily impressive, not only in terms of academic performance, but in their wide range of experience, skills, and achievement.

Additionally, 31% of the Dodge Fellows in 1986 were from minority backgrounds.

Much of the literature put out by the Department of Education, as well as the awarding of Dodge Fellowships, has paid insufficient attention, we believe, to a significant portion of provisional teachers: those who have been out of college for a year or more and have had careers outside of teaching. This currently includes approximately one-third of all provisional teachers. (Another one-third have come immediately or recently from college, the last third have a background in other areas of education that have not required teaching certificates.) Of the teachers we interviewed in person and by telephone, many of these older individuals were among the most interesting and most impressive. They had led careers as diverse as social work, chemical engineering, and owning a small business. And for equally varied reasons, they have now committed themselves to be teachers. Most explicitly state that they wish "to give something back" to the schools.

While the candidates coming more or less directly from college are exceptionally bright and may well bring greater maturity to their decision to be teachers than those who choose before reaching age 20, the older provisional teachers possess that broader perspective to an even greater degree. They know who they are and have a strong sense of the professional goals they have already achieved, they are deliberate in their choice to enter teaching, they understand why they are teaching and what their goals are as teachers, their commitment is self-conscious and measured.

In other words, the backgrounds as well as the needs of provisional candidates are dramatically varied. We heard a number of them call for more flexibility in the program, especially in the programs of the regional training centers. ***We recommend that the Department of Education as well as the regional centers recognize the different needs of older candidates through a greater variety and flexibility of program and requirements.***

It should be clear that we believe that in terms of the quality of candidates brought into teaching through the Provisional Teacher Program, the initiative

has been highly successful in its first two years. The rising number of candidates, without any apparent diminution of quality, is also heartening. Questions arise, however, when it comes to the quality of training they receive and to the burden that training places on first-year teachers.

Formal Training and the Regional Centers

Under the best of circumstances the first year of teaching is a trial by fire. All of the usual burdens of initiation, of creating new preparations for each class, of struggling with unfamiliar demands and tough assignments are multiplied for provisional teachers. Although the state regulations call for them to be under the tutelage of an experienced teacher for the first month, and to use that time as a period of observation and monitored practice teaching, many schools simply do not have the resources to provide that full-time support. They must either free a certified teacher from current duties or hire a temporary teacher. Both require significant resources.

The challenges for these first-year provisional teachers are made all the harder by the regulations calling for 80 hours of formal instruction at the regional centers during the first six weeks of employment. More than any other aspect of the program, this requirement drew criticism from the provisional teachers whom we interviewed, and from school administrators who agreed with their complaints.

Between the first and second year of the program, the state department recognized the severity of the problem. Initially, provisional teachers were required to attend training classes for four hours a day *after school* for their first twenty workdays. "The schedule proved physically too demanding and educationally unsound"—this from the state department itself. During the second year this requirement was amended to spread the initial 80 hours of instruction over 30 workdays with some classes on weekends as well. This has apparently eased the strain considerably.

On the other hand, in both the first and second years of the program, a number of provisional teachers were hired early enough by districts or schools that they could fulfill either or both of the requirements for 80 hours of instruction and supervised practice teaching during the summer or semester preceding full-time employment. Without question this is a more effective means to help provisional teachers neither flounder with the unforeseen and unprepared for, nor be crushed by the responsibilities of fulfilling both the duties of the classroom and the requirements leading to full certification.

We recommend that the state department of education persuade districts, by offering concrete incentives, to hire provisional teachers early enough that advance training is possible.

An additional 120 hours of professional training are required of provisional teachers during the course of their first year. *This is far too great a burden.* We saw no evidence that teachers benefited sufficiently from the training to warrant the considerable expense not only of money but of time and energy. While we believe wholeheartedly in the lifelong training and learning of all teaching professionals, the requirement for 200 hours of training in the first year for provisional teachers is excessive.

No such requirement was part of the original proposals to establish a provisional program, but came about as one of a series of political compromises. ***Now that the program is well established, its benefits and burdens both clear, the amount of required training completed during the first year (before certification) should be reduced significantly.***

Although districts are allowed to develop local programs of instruction for provisional teachers (programs that must be approved by the state), most choose instead to send these teachers to regional centers coordinated by the state department. During the second year of the Provisional Program, thirteen centers were operating, each affiliated with a collegiate school or department of education, which coordinates the instruction provided by college faculty and personnel hired from local districts.

The classes offered at the regional centers closely resemble courses at traditional colleges of education and are, in fact, administered by those colleges and taught largely by college faculty. Given that one implication of the Provisional Program, we believe, is a criticism of traditional models and quality of instruction at traditional colleges and departments of education, it is strange and ironic that they are entrusted with these duties.

The state department provides an extensive and highly detailed curriculum guide to be used in structuring the regional centers program. Based on the conceptual outline of the Boyer Commission Report, the curriculum guide seeks to ensure that provisional teachers receive a coherent program of training in those areas deemed "essential." We have already expressed our reservations about the commission report. That it has been translated into the curriculum offered at the regional centers is even more troubling.

It is clear from speaking with participants as well as faculty and administrators of the regional centers, that the quality of instruction varies widely within individual programs and among the regional centers across the state. In part this stems from classes being held at night and on weekends, perhaps few senior faculty are willing to commit themselves to that schedule. Thus, provisional teachers sometimes think they are being taught by instructors on the lowest "rung" of a college or department. And school district personnel who are hired to teach in the regional centers are often not themselves practicing teachers, but administrators long removed from the classroom. A number of the provisional teachers with whom we spoke complained that these college instructors and administrators had little knowledge of the day to day

demands of a classroom, and little to offer in the way of practical lessons or advice. One provisional candidate who attended a regional center in 1986, voicing sentiments we heard elsewhere, characterized the training as "the blind leading the blind."

Our distinct impression is that participants in the programs of the regional centers experience these courses as having all the faults that regularly certified teachers commonly ascribe to their education courses taken in undergraduates years. Thus the alternate route novices, like their regular route counterparts, complain that their professional training seems irrelevant, overly long, poorly presented, and boring.

Nevertheless, some participants told us that they did find at least one course or instructor to be of high caliber, where the subject and/or the model of instruction proved helpful. This was especially true when the instructor was a veteran teacher in a school system, the reaction of provisional teachers has been most positive to these veterans. The practical experience of these instructors is felt to be immediate and helpful, and they themselves are often models of excellent teaching, we were told.

We recommend that the regional centers continue to hire more experienced and practicing teachers from the schools in order to become more truly coalitions between the school districts and institutions of higher learning. Ultimate goals, which would greatly enhance both the quality of instruction and the professionalism of teachers, include instructors who possess dual appointments in the schools and colleges, and intensive clinical training experiences for the participants.

Thus, schools would themselves become centers for training and learning for the provisional teachers and, eventually, for all beginning teachers and inservice training. Given that some of the regional centers meet in local schools, the creation of such "clinics" is very possible.

The role of the education colleges in the running of the regional centers is more problematic. After all, if the alternate route represents, in part, an alternative to their own programs and their own vested interests, it can hardly be surprising that they might view the regional centers and their responsibility to them with a certain ambivalence.

And too, some administrators of the colleges that run regional centers expressed misgivings about having responsibility for provisional teacher-training but having no authority to issue evaluations and grades. In the first year of the program no formal evaluation at all of the student/provisionals was allowed, beyond simply acknowledging their attendance in class. After some complaints, the state changed the procedures so that in the second year formal reports on each candidate were prepared by the center faculty and presented to the provisional teacher's principal, the only person responsible for evaluation in the

current system.

One dean of a department of education found this insufficient. He believed that the lack of more extensive evaluation—especially as to the extent in which instruction at the regional center was being actively translated into behavior either in practice teaching sessions or in the provisional teacher's own classroom—undermined both the commitment of the colleges to these programs and their feeling of responsibility for and to the provisional teachers. In other words, the colleges may be living up to the letter of their contracts, but at least some believe the contracts to be deeply flawed.

While we agree that the colleges responsible for the regional centers should play some role in evaluating the performance of provisional candidates, especially for academic performance at those centers, the state was wise to break up what was a monopoly on evaluation for certification—a prerogative held for too long solely by the schools of education themselves. Proximity in evaluation for certification has great virtue, and having that evaluation based in the school makes good sense. We hope that in the future that responsibility will be shared by principals and veteran or "lead" teacher..

We recommend that the state, the colleges of education, and the local districts work together to create a training program that is shorter in duration, taught by highly qualified veteran teachers, more closely related to the immediate needs of new teachers, better coordinated between school support teams and regional centers, and more dedicated to providing new teachers with coaching, counsel, and constructive performance evaluation::.

Mentor Teachers and School Support Teams

In order to qualify to hire provisional teachers, districts must sign contracts with the state department of education committing them to support and supervise the candidates, and schools must agree to this same support. *We believe that the success of the Provisional Teacher Program, beyond simply supplying a new source of teachers, largely depends on how faithfully and rigorously the schools live up to this commitment.*

As described above, all provisional teachers are supposed to be assigned to a veteran teacher for the first twenty days of the semester, at first simply to observe and gradually to assume responsibilities for teaching. This chance to observe and then practice teaching under the direction of an experienced mentor should be one of the most beneficial aspects of the program for individuals who have not taught before. But, as we have noted, it is often one of the hardest requirements for schools with limited resources to provide

Beyond those initial twenty days, the provisional teacher has full responsibilities for a classroom. Continuing support is provided by an experienced teacher, or mentor, who meets regularly with the candidate to discuss problems and strategies, and observes the candidate's classes as well. Many provisional teachers testify to this opportunity as the strongest, most helpful aspect of the program. The concern and advice of a mentor can make the demands of the first year more manageable and less daunting. Even more important, since the mentor is to be in the same academic field as the candidate, much of the discipline-specific professional training not taught at the regional centers can be accomplished in this relationship.

The relationship between the mentor teacher and the provisional candidate is unquestionably beneficial. Although the practical challenges of providing adequate resources are great, we recommend that a mentor program be developed as a model for training all first-year teachers. This would mark a significant stride in the professionalization of teaching.

During the balance of the first year in the provisional program, a four-person support team, including the mentor-teacher and the school principal, is to supervise, support, and evaluate the candidate. Regular classroom observations are to take place, followed by conferences for the purpose of instruction and assistance, rather than for formal assessment. After ten weeks, twenty weeks, and thirty weeks on the job, the candidate is to be formally evaluated by members of the support team, leading to the principal's decision whether to recommend the provisional candidate for regular certification. Many schools fully live up to this responsibility, at its best, the system serves both to support the first-year teacher and to generate a real sense of involvement in the program for other teachers and administrators. To that end it is of great benefit and, again, can serve as a model for training other teachers.

Yet it is also at this point that the system is most vulnerable. We learned from several teachers who had been part of the provisional program in its first two years that some schools, principals, and support teams were failing to live up to the contract. Some candidates had no substantial contact with their support teams at all, other than through the mentor-teacher. For some candidates, the three formal evaluations were combined with regular evaluations required by the state for all first-year teachers—a practice expressly violating the rules of the provisional program.

One candidate, who was hired at a large urban high school, noted that the failure of the support team was not entirely the principal's fault—that clearly the demands on the principal's time were all but overwhelming. Nevertheless, this teacher, while expressing strong overall support for the provisional program, was embittered and disillusioned by the indifference of his support team. This was one of several cases in which a strong mentor-teacher single-handedly

rescued the candidate from a sense of total isolation and floundering. Not all provisional teachers have been so lucky.

We recommend that the state monitor the school support teams more closely, and that districts be required to provide resources for schools hiring provisional candidates so that those schools can, in turn, provide adequate support for the provisional teachers.

Results to Date

Although there have been disappointments in the Provisional Program—candidates unable or unwilling to manage the considerable burdens of simultaneous teaching and training, or individuals who have proved to be unsuitable or ineffective in the classroom—most of the administrators and teachers with whom we spoke considered their own experiences to have been a success.

Of the 121 provisional teachers employed by September 1985, 105 completed the program successfully by August 1986. Of the remaining 16, three received "insufficient" ratings which permit them to continue their training for a maximum of one additional year, and 13 teachers either dropped out or were removed from the program. The percentage of provisional teachers who left their jobs during 1985-86 (10.6%) was less than that of certified first-year teachers in the state (16.6%).

Of the 13 provisional teachers who did not remain in the program, seven left of their own accord for personal reasons (e.g. pregnancy) or for other employment. Four were terminated by the local district and two were removed from the program by the state department for weak attendance in the instructional component. (State Report 1986, p. 13)

One worry that has been voiced to us by educators and policymakers outside of the program was that people with little potential to teach might be placed with full responsibilities into classrooms more easily than if they had gone through the traditional route of collegiate training, with its continual process of "weeding out." So far, however, as the figures above suggest as well as our conversations with administrators, there is no significant evidence that this has been a problem. Further, the Provisional Program, with its various structures of monitoring and evaluation, is clearly more responsive in this matter than the earlier and common emergency certification.

Far from all of New Jersey's school districts (there are 611) have been participating in the Provisional Program. As of November 1987, 152 individual school districts had hired provisional candidates. Others have declined for a number of different reasons, among them that the commitment of additional

resources is too burdensome; that adequate numbers of regularly certified teachers have been available, that provisional teachers are not, so these districts believe, adequately prepared to assume the responsibilities of teaching.

A solid majority of the principals and administrators with whom we spoke believe that, all other things being equal, they would rather hire a certified teacher than a provisional candidate and escape the expense of extensive supervisory time and financial costs. This was true even among many administrators *pleased* with the provisional candidates that they have hired so far. They would, however, be willing to hire other such candidates, if equally attractive, certified teachers were unavailable.

One complaint we have heard from schools that have hired provisional candidates, especially larger urban schools, is that they have been taken advantage of by some few of these teachers. These individuals, unable to get jobs as provisional candidates in schools or districts to their liking, spend a single year in the urban school, accept all the supervision and commitment of resources, and then, once they receive the standard certificate, leave for other schools.

We hesitate to recommend that all provisional teachers be required to remain for any specific length of time in the schools which, in essence, have sponsored them for certification—there are often good and compelling reasons that this is not possible. But the state should do as much as reasonable to discourage the practice of provisional teachers leaving for a new school as soon as their certificate is received at the expense of another school.

We have already described the caliber of individual entering the teaching profession in New Jersey through the Provisional Program or "alternate route." By that standard alone, as well as by the significant and growing numbers, the program has thus far been a notable success. It is a truly heartening sign for education in the state and, should other states follow New Jersey's lead, for education and the teaching profession in America.

Notes

¹"The New Jersey Provisional Teacher Program. A Second Year Report," by the New Jersey State Department of Education, (Trenton, NJ, 1986).

²*Making Do in the Classroom A Report on the Misassignment of Teachers*, by the Council for Basic Education (Washington, DC, 1985).

³"Report of a Panel on the Preparation of Beginning Teachers,"

Dr. Ernest L. Boyer, Chairperson, published by the New Jersey State Department of Education (Trenton, 1984).

⁴"The Provisional Teacher Program Third Year Report," by the New Jersey State Department of Education, (Trenton, NJ 1987).

The Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management

The Academy, located in Edison, New Jersey, was founded in 1984 to achieve both symbolic and practical goals in strengthening the inservice professional development of teachers and school administrators. Most of this chapter will be devoted, naturally enough, to a discussion and analysis of programs. But the symbolic significance of the Academy is of no little importance, and we will begin there in order to set a context for the rest.

Teaching as a profession is one of the fashionable catch-phrases of the day—a general, vague, and amorphous ideal that changes with the slightest pressure or upon different occasions and audiences. Nevertheless, there have been many attempts in recent years to define what would be necessary for teaching to become a true profession rather than a low status occupation. Several definitions have compared teaching to other professional models, especially the law and medicine. But these comparisons are always problematic when pushed to specificity.

Two elements seem essential to any concept of a profession: that there exists a body of knowledge peculiar to the profession itself rather than to common sense or general education, and that members of the profession share responsibility for training, evaluating, and inducting new members, for establishing standards of excellence and conduct, and for ensuring that those standards are upheld.

The symbolic significance of the Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management, therefore, rests on its efforts to serve both those elements of professionalism by 1) striving to increase teachers' knowledge, not of their

subjects, but of methods of teaching, and 2) to develop inservice programs in which teachers instruct their peers. The process is strengthened still further by involving school principals and administrators so that they come to see themselves as directly involved with the central mission of schools—instruction—and as working on a team with teachers rather than as labor-management adversaries.

Thus, to the extent that the Academy represents a commitment by the state to the ongoing professional development of teachers, its significance is considerable and is in accord with other of their efforts such as those to increase standards and requirements in colleges and departments of education throughout the state.

The Program

The centerpiece of the Academy's programs is a course called "Instructional Theory into Practice." The Commissioner of Education, Saul Cooperman, and the Director of the Academy, Sybil Nadel, chose to use ITIP as their first course when the Academy opened because, based on their experience with a five-year program in the Madison, New Jersey public schools, they "knew of its strength and its possibilities for focusing a district on the maintenance of quality instruction," according to Dr. Nadel.

The ITIP program is designed to establish "a common body of knowledge as a framework for practicing effective teaching skills."¹ It is set up as a five-day workshop for teams from individual schools, each team consisting of four teachers and their principal. Typically, seven teams take part in each workshop.

The underlying principle of ITIP (and of the Academy) is that, educational research and theory, having established a considerable reservoir of research-based knowledge about effective teaching, can and should be translated into actual practice in classrooms. The members of school teams tend to be teachers with experience who may have been recognized already as leaders and strong practitioners. The goal of the ITIP program is not so much to impart highly theoretical new material, skills, or knowledge, but to help these teachers be more conscious of the skills they already possess. They will then return to their schools and serve as models (and some, having undergone further training with the Academy, eventually as trainers) for their colleagues.

A four-part framework has been developed that structures both the lessons at the Academy and, it is intended, the process of teaching once the participants have returned to the classroom. According to Dr. Nadel, the "program is powerful because of the four-part framework which gives teachers a way to view the instructional act and to make decisions about what they will incorporate in their teaching." This framework is laid out as follows:

- 1) Monitor the learners and adjust the teaching;

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- 2) Use the principles of learning;
 - 3) Select the objective at the correct level of difficulty;
 - 4) Teach to the objective.

The ITIP program at the Academy uses this same framework to structure its own training sessions. What follows is an example of the steps a single class at the Academy might follow. A session on how teachers can use the process of monitoring lessons and adjusting teaching would start with four general steps of action:

- 1) Elicit overt behavior from learners.
- 2) Check for understanding;
- 3) Interpret behavior;
- 4) Act on interpretation.

The first two involve monitoring, the second two represent adjustment. Checking for understanding, of course, means using any of a great variety of means to gauge whether students are following a lesson. Even the "simple" act of questioning can take many guises.

Within the last of the above general steps, "act on interpretation," there is yet another degree of specificity of choices for the teacher:

- a) Proceed;
- b) Practice (perform another similar problem or action).
- c) Re-teach;
- d) Quit at this point (always an option).

The point of this extended example is to convey how ITIP is structured in general and how one particular session may develop. And it should also suggest the very real benefits of this program, helping teachers understand more explicitly many of the subtle means and ends, the skills and habits of their craft and so be better able to control their performance in the classroom. Again, it is important to remember that most of these strategies and skills are already used by teachers. Poorer or less experienced teachers use fewer of them and less consciously, better teachers use more and do so purposefully. The ITIP program is designed to confirm skills already used intuitively.

¹"The Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management," New Jersey State Department of Education.

The sorts of research and theory that underlie the ITIP program (and, we might add here, many of the components for inservice training and teacher evaluation across the country) are derived from behavioral models of teaching, such as those propounded by Madeline Hunter, the Effective Teaching literature, and many other sources. They are "behavioral" in that they are based on direct and minute observations of teachers identified (according to a variety of criteria) as effective, what these teachers "do" becomes formalized into models. Thence to the ITIP program. We shall have more to say on this topic later.

It would be presumptuous for the Academy to claim to be involved in ongoing professional development if all depended on rare visits to Edison by small groups of teachers. Another key element of the program, therefore, is the training of trainers—individual teachers who return to Edison for another course called ITIP-Revisited and then for a two-part course called "Staff Development Leader." Part One of this latter course is a four-day workshop designed to deepen knowledge about ITIP and about preparing and administering ITIP workshops in the local school or district. Part Two is a tutorial conducted in the local school by staff from the Academy.

A productive long-term role for the Academy, therefore, is as a catalyst or promoter of local activities. Ideally, these will be of two kinds. First, the Academy will support ongoing professional development on the ITIP model conducted by leaders in individual schools. Second, local schools and districts may develop their own cooperative regional centers based on the model of the Academy, where teachers and administrators can go "off campus" to participate in more intensive sessions than are typically possible in their own schools, where the demands of daily life usually preclude time for uninterrupted reflection and guided practice. If these intentions bear fruit—and a number of schools have already named "staff development leaders" who are planning such programs—the Academy will have gone a long way in justifying its own existence and in making the notion of inservice training or professional development more integral to the life of a school and not merely a superfluous, insubstantial add-on.

The Academy has developed and runs a number of other programs, particularly for supervision and management. Some of these include: Instructional Theory into Practice for Supervisors, Developing A District Supervisory Model, Instructional Supervision, Leadership Skills for Today's Schools, Creative Problem Solving, A Team Approach, The Effective Principal, Creating and Achieving a Vision, and several others. We will not have much to say about these courses because they do not *directly* deal with strengthening teaching, though, of course, teaching as a profession will be meaningless without significant changes not only in the types of supervision and management that are performed in the schools, but in who carries them out and under what circumstances, and in developing forceful incentives for both teachers and administrators to take the risks of real change.

These courses also build on the logic of involving principals in the initial ITIP training. From the start the Academy staff has recognized the importance of involving principals in the program—to develop a sense of "ownership" by the principal in professional development not only at the Academy but in the school as well. This goal has been explicitly made not only in the design of the ITIP and supervision courses, but as a continuing part of the self-evaluation process.

Responses and Evaluations

To date, approximately 4000 teachers and administrators have participated in Academy programs. Their responses to our inquiries and to the evaluations sought by the Academy itself have been overwhelmingly positive. Teachers, principals, and central office administrators have all voiced strong support for both the theory behind the Academy and the practical value of its programs. We also heard strong endorsements and support from the New Jersey Education Association and the New Jersey School Boards Association. Indeed, the Academy has earned itself a powerful constituency within the general New Jersey educational community.

In the evaluations completed by participants, the Academy staff is highly praised for its professionalism, preparedness, and its instructors' ability to "practice what they preach" in terms of the ITIP model of effective teaching methods.

We encountered only one kind of reservation. Some administrators hope that a method of teacher evaluation will be developed that will demonstrate how the lessons of ITIP translate into increased student achievement in the classroom. We mention this only to suggest the dangers of promoting expensive professional development programs without clearly defining their limits. No such evaluation of student "outcomes" will soon, if ever, be possible, and should not in any case be sought.

Conclusion

Within the limits established for it, the Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management has accomplished its goals, both symbolic and practical, to a remarkable extent. The program is extremely well organized and well run, perhaps because it is young and relatively small, the Academy does not suffer from a suffocating blanket of bureaucracy.

Yet we do have a few reservations. We admit the importance of allowing such a project its "given." This, as we have made clear, the Academy more than lives up to. Nevertheless, our questions and qualifications remain.

First, we find it unfortunate that, like many other worthwhile programs within the New Jersey State Department of Education and the New Jersey State Department of Higher Education, the Academy finds itself in something of a vacuum. Its usefulness would be heightened considerably by being more closely linked to companion or complementary programs. For example, since the Academy explicitly treats the more "generic" aspects of teaching, that is, the elements and methods of teaching that are supposedly valid for any subject or age-level, some coordination with programs designed for professional development within disciplines or focused on subject matter would be natural and beneficial.

We believe, for example, that the Academy could play a most useful role in coordinating or defining or supplementing training for the Provisional Teacher Program. It might also become influential in reforming undergraduate and graduate education programs around the state. These are not specific recommendations, they are intended to suggest that the effects of a worthwhile program can be increased by careful integration into a larger context of education and professional development.

Second, we find it disturbing that, given the significant difficulties in education in the state's urban areas, the Academy has no mandate to address the particular problems of urban schools. This, of course, is another of the "givens"—the Academy is designed to work with schools that have a stable body of teachers and administrators and to train veteran teachers who are already recognized as competent, not to provide remedial services.

Despite this and beyond its stated mandate, the Academy staff and its director have created special urban initiatives. They have developed ongoing programs with Neptune, Camden, East Orange, Newark, Jersey City, and New Brunswick. As an example of these initiatives, they visited Camden for a five-day project within the district. They have also worked with all the school principals in Newark and with many of that city's teachers. The staff deserves high praise for launching such initiatives at a time when the Academy itself is young and still developing. ***We recommend that such urban initiatives become part of the explicit charge of the Academy.***

Third, and perhaps to the Council for Basic Education most important, the behavioral model of teaching embraced by the Academy in programs such as ITIP must be seen as partial and limited, rather than as a complete picture of teaching. Professor Lee S. Shulman of Stanford University is currently director of the Teacher Assessment Project, a research program supported by the Carnegie Corporation to develop new approaches to the assessment of teachers. In a recent issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, he makes a cogent and powerful statement that clearly articulates the reservations we have about the Effective Teaching literature and other behavioral models

Most current evaluations of teachers grow out of a heavily behavioral and generic view of teaching. This view draws heavily on the effective-teaching literature, which has tended to be interpreted by policy makers and practitioners as asserting that teaching skills are generic across ages and school subjects. Moreover, this literature has defined teaching skill almost exclusively in terms of observable classroom behavior . . .

Our research team strongly disputes the sufficiency of this position. We argue that teaching typically occurs with reference to specific bodies of content or specific skills and that modes of teaching are distinctly different for different subject areas. The particular kinds of learners and the

character of the setting also influence the kind of instruction that takes place. Finally, we believe that teaching involves reasoning as well as acting, it is an intellectual and imaginative process, not merely a behavioral one.²

We believe that the model of teaching exhibited in Instructional Theory Into Practice reflects a rather rigid vision of "egg-carton" schools where teachers stand before classes of equally numbered students, regardless of subject, age, or goal. It does not possess the flexibility to deal with true seminar instruction, for example, wherein the teacher is both a leader and a participant, without a clear lesson-plan or specific objectives beyond a challenging and meaningful grappling with ideas, with the development of critical thinking. A teacher in such a seminar seeks to engage students' minds, seeking to draw forth understanding rather than to impart it. This, we argue, is a critical distinction. It is the path towards what some are calling "higher and deeper literacies" in students, and what we are content to call thoughtfulness, what must be the paramount goal of American public schooling.

What we saw at the Academy, in other words, was intensive and effective professional development aimed at the improvement of didactic instruction and coaching in the basic skills of learning. Teachers so trained are imparters of information and coaches of skill. They are performers and their students an audience who responds—often energetically—to the performance. There is no question that these are crucial elements of what a teacher does—they have great significance. But, finally, this is an incomplete vision of what teachers can and should be concerned with in the development of children.

We wish to note, however, that the Academy's director disagrees with our judgment. According to Sybil Nadel, the ITIP program and other more recent courses such as "Learning Styles/Teaching Approaches" (which have been added to the syllabus since our research ended) are not limited or restrictive, but expand "the ways teachers construct and present the curriculum The teacher's ability to experiment and to try different groupings and procedures is only limited by his or her own creativity."

As a final note, nevertheless, ***we recommend that the Academy recognize other modes, models, and ends of teaching, and develop programs to achieve and strengthen them.*** By doing so, the Academy will make a bold stride beyond its already significant ones, towards advancing teaching as a profession and towards making reform and improvement of New Jersey's schools a long-term possibility.

Notes

²Lee S. Shulman, "Assessment for Teaching: An Initiative for The Profession," *Phi Delta Kappan* September 1987, p.41.