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ABSTRACT

The American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) Alliance for Tomorrow's Teachers is a collaborative effort among the University of North Florida, Florida Community College at Jacksonville, the Clay and Duval County (Florida) school systems, and the Clay and Duval County teachers' unions. The goals of the program are to: (1) restructure the teacher preparation program; (2) restructure the Alliance demonstration schools where new organizational structures and ways of teaching and learning are modeled; (3) reduce the attrition rate in the first five years of practice of teachers who participate in the project; and (4) institutionalize, in the university and the school districts, those program components that prove to be effective. Project activities were organized around four components of the clinical teacher preparation continuum: early field experiences, preinternship field experiences, internship field experiences, and beginning teaching experiences. Collaboration was implemented through inter-institutional planning/study teams. Changes in thinking eventually produced two related paradigm shifts--structural and instructional. There were four categories of instructional shifts: teaching and learning, ways of organizing teaching and learning, school and community interactions, and outcomes of schooling. Four outcomes and implications have emerged from the project: planning/study teams, redesign of teacher roles, redesign of urban teacher preparation, and preliminary thoughts on a taxonomy for urban education. (IAH)

A Clinical Continuum: Integrating Preservice and Inservice Educational Delivery Systems

by
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Introduction

Over the past decade there has been sustained interest in improving the quality of K-12 education and teacher preparation in the United States. As the United States has become more closely linked with its world neighbors, it is apparent that the system which has served U.S. public education so well in the past now inhibits our ability to respond quickly to rapidly changing and more complex environments. The success of this newly emerging "global village" concept is dependent upon a vastly improved and differently trained work force. How we go about developing our human resources to meet this challenge becomes the question. Education is clearly both a part of the problem and critical to the solution.

Concern about the quality of schools, the quality and numbers of teachers available to staff schools, and the results of American educational processes has resulted in over 25 seminal reports and hundreds of studies of current educational programs. These reports and studies have eloquently described the problems and the challenges confronting American schools.

Educational reform efforts in the United States have moved from using highly mechanistic and centralized controls and standards to a recognition of the complexity of the task and the need to make significant changes in the system. The project described in this paper reflects this paradigm shift.

This paper is organized into two parts. Part I will describe the project and its goals. Examples of three conceptual tools used as decision-criteria in the planning, design, and implementation of project activities will be discussed. Part II will describe three project outcomes and implications which illustrate elements of successful educational reform.

I. Jacksonville Florida AT&T Alliance for Tomorrow's Teachers

The Jacksonville Florida AT&T Alliance for Tomorrow's Teachers project is a collaborative effort among the Clay and Duval County school systems, the Duval Teachers United, the Clay County Education Association, the Florida Community College at Jacksonville, and the University of North Florida College of Education and Human Services. Funded through a grant from the AT&T American Transtech and AT&T Universal Card Services, this three-year grant supports collaborative efforts among universities, local school systems, and teachers' organizations to improve the preparation of urban teachers, increase student achievement, and decrease attrition rates of teachers in urban schools. Jacksonville, Florida and four other cities in the United States were selected as pilots for this project. Other sites included Detroit, Michigan; Houston, Texas; New York City and San Francisco, California.

Goals:

The four goals of the College of Education and Human Services AT&T Alliance for Tomorrow's Teachers project include: (1) restructuring the teacher preparation program; (2) restructuring the Alliance demonstration schools where new organizational structures and ways of teaching and learning are modeled; (3) reducing the attrition rate in the first five years of practice of new teachers who are project participants; (4) institutionalizing, in the university and school districts, those components which prove to be effective.

Planning, Design, and Implementation:

The planning, design, and implementation processes were predicated upon three conceptual tools as decision criteria: (1) transforming independent goals into mutually beneficial actions; (2) participating in cultures that are distinctly different; (3) changing norms of interaction using mutually agreed upon paradigm shifts.

Transforming Independent Goals into Mutually Beneficial Actions.

Planning:

Transforming independent goals into mutually beneficial actions was seen as the most critical conceptual tool for the planning process.

The AT&T Alliance for Tomorrow's Teachers project partners were each experiencing presses for change. Participating school

districts wished to improve the induction process, restructure the learning environment in urban schools, and provide both professional development and recognition for teachers involved in the reform process. The teacher organizations were interested in strengthening the qualifications of those who enter the profession and lessening the difficulties experienced by beginning and experienced teachers in urban classrooms. The college of education sought to restructure its teacher preparation program, especially the clinical component, and to strengthen the link between theory and practice. The community college wanted to facilitate the matriculation of its students to the university and to more closely articulate the educational experiences for pre-education students. These independent but interrelated needs were met through collaborative activities organized into a clinical continuum that programmatically linked the partner institution. An inter-institutional planning team participated in several work sessions to develop the proposal. Creativity was encouraged by posing "what if" scenarios. Because of ongoing collaborative activities, team members felt comfortable in sharing radical and unconventional ideas without fear of reprisal. This environment of trust and openness stimulated further discussion and identification of new ways in which goals could be accomplished using internally re-allocated resources of the collaborative partners and grant funds. In this way, planning for institutionalization was an integral part of the planning process.

Gradually, the project components took shape; and, as they did, purposes and goals of individual partners were addressed in new and unique ways. This process resulted in a complex design where selected activities were designed to meet several interdependent goals. Team members often proposed new roles and structures through which knowledge and decision-making authority could be shared.

Finally, an expanded concept paper was written. It was reviewed by college faculty members, as well as by constituents in the school districts and community college. The paper was revised based upon input from the partner institutions. Individual meetings were scheduled with members of the central administration of all AT&T Alliance partners to modify component activities, solidify

support, to specify commitments for proposed activities and for planning the institutionalization of project components upon termination of the grant.

As the design took shape, the AT&T Alliance members developed four agreed upon understandings: (1) each component would be designed to address one or more of the partners' identified presses for change; (2) component activities would be sequential and developmental with culminating activities from one component serving as beginning points for subsequent components; (3) professional development and training activities would be directly linked to identified student learning needs; (4) parity among partners would be evidenced by the assigned tasks, the allocation of resources, and derived benefits.

Design:

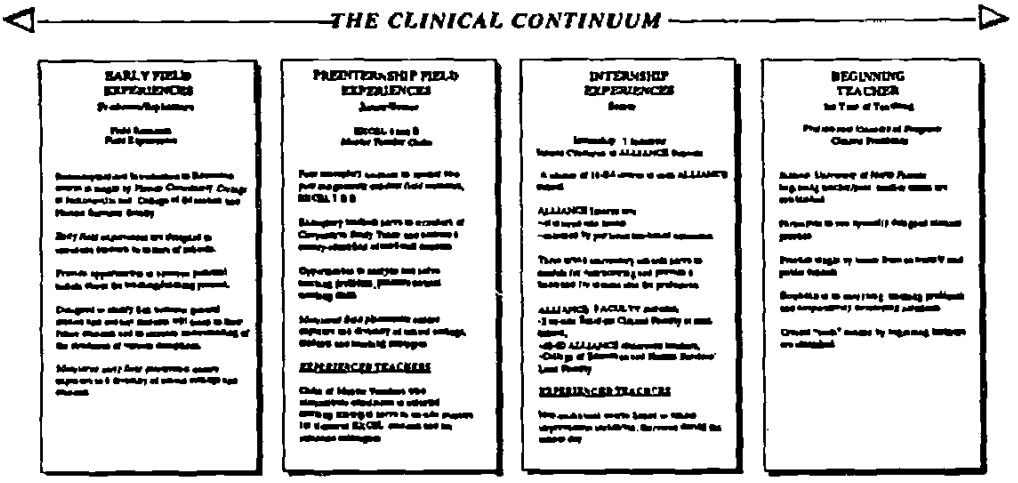
Participating in cultures that are distinctly different was seen as the most critical conceptual tool for the design process. Because of the interdependent nature of project goals and the dissonance of the institutional cultures of the partner institutions, project activities were intentionally designed so that members from each institutional culture assumed important tasks in each other's culture as a means for achieving overall project goals.

Project activities were designed with the following parameters : (1) certain functions were currently perceived as not being effectively carried out by one or both partner institutions; (2) each "culture" possessed strengths which could positively be brought to bear to improve the way in which the targeted function was carried out; (3) by infusing persons from differing cultures into the context, the opportunity to use "different perceptual lenses" would be enhanced. Thus, the opportunity for paradigm shifts to occur among and within the partner institutional cultures was enhanced. It was from this perspective that the clinical continuum components were conceived and developed.

Project designers viewed teacher preparation as a continuum. Project activities were organized around five points on the clinical continuum. Four components within this continuum were identified as organizing constructs for project activities: (1) Early Field Experiences; (2) Preinternship Field Experiences; (3) Internship Field Experiences; (4) Beginning Teacher Experiences.

Simultaneously project activities were developed for experiences, inservice teachers and meshed with activities in the Preinternship, Internship and First Year Experiences components. Thus, the project was able to integrate preservice, induction, and inservice elements of the profession by creating a set of interactive experiences among the three sets of stakeholders.

The following chart depicts the AT&T Alliance for Tomorrow's Teachers Clinical Continuum along with its essential elements.



Implementation:

Changing norms of interaction using mutually agreed upon paradigm shifts was seen as the most critical conceptual tool for the implementation process. Louis and Simsek (1991) defined a paradigm "as an elaborate (often implicit) theory or frame of reference that guides and organizes human action...based on objective information, groups collectively develop paradigms that become the structure within which virtually all action takes place," (p.2). A paradigm provides a means for making sense of events and provides a basis for making decisions. If significant shifts in educational practices are to be accomplished, then the lenses through which events are interpreted must be changed so that alternative actions become possible. Louis and Simsek (1991) contend that paradigm shifts are dependent on decentralization, leadership which actively reframes conventional assumptions and entertains alternative assumptions, a degree of complexity and pressures in the environment, and an increased presence of new

knowledge with a predisposition to take in and use new ideas to create alternative plans of action. These elements were purposefully infused in the design of the AT&T Alliance for Tomorrow's Teachers project.

A conscious attempt to change conventional paradigms used in teacher preparation and urban elementary educational practices was made. The shifts in thinking which emerged from this process were first expressed as a common set of belief statements. These belief statements formed the foundation on which project goals, design, and activities were conceived. Examples of these belief statements include: (a) restructuring the existing system makes sense only if we can, through this process, improve the probability for personal success and achievement for all students; and (b) investment in human resources is essential to the success of transforming schools and teacher preparation programs if we are to move from a factory model which relies on standardization of needs to one which encourages the application of knowledge to solve complex problems in collaborative groups using information from a variety of sources.

As project activities were implemented, many opportunities for discussion and reflection were built into the program design. Inter-institutional planning/study teams were formed for each project component. As the planning year and implementation year activities progressed, gradual shifts in thinking began to occur. Two sets of related paradigm shifts emerged. These two sets of paradigm shifts were categorized into instructional shifts and structural shifts. Instructional shifts were grouped into four categories: (a) teaching and learning; (b) ways of organizing teaching and learning; (c) school and community interactions; and (d) outcomes of schooling. Examples of these shifting paradigms include the following:

Teaching and Learning: *from*...child at fault *to*...addressing design faults within the educational system; *from*...learning as taking in knowledge *to*...learning as enhancement of capacity—being able to do something you have never done before, *Ways of Organizing Teaching and Learning*: *from*...one-way hierarchical communication *to*...ongoing interactive communication; *from*...teaching offered

to...learning achieved, *School and Community Interactions*: *from*...isolated schools with resistant boundaries *to*...learning communities with permeable boundaries, *Outcomes of Schooling: from*..rewarding maintenance *to*...rewarding innovation; *from*...sporadic and uneven student achievement *to*...high and consistent student achievement.

Structural shifts focus around changes in thinking about the ways in which schooling is structured and the ways in which decisions about actions are made. These include: *from*...unilateral decision-making *to*...collaborative decision-making; *from*...relying on conventional assumptions *to*...reframing and entertaining new alternatives; *from*...simplistic solutions *to*...complex and multidimensional solutions; *from*...confidence and reliance on limited and presumed knowledge *to*...exploration and integration of new ideas to create innovative and alternative knowledge and to share that knowledge with colleagues and the profession.

As implementation of the project progressed, it became clear that the use of new and more powerful conceptual tools is needed if substantive change is to occur. New "perceptual lenses" are needed which encourage examination of time-honored beliefs about schools and schooling, and provide the tools for creating new ways of teaching and learning throughout the educational system. The educational enterprise, as one of the many knowledge industries within our current economic system, must itself become a learning organization (Senge 1990).

II. Project Outcomes and Implications

Four project outcomes and implications will be discussed: (1) Planning/Study Teams; (2) Redesign of Teacher Roles; (3) Redesign of Urban Teacher Preparation; (4) Initial Thoughts for a Taxonomy for Urban Education.

Planning/Study Teams:

In a conscious effort to span institutional boundaries, move from hierarchical organizational interactions to team-based organizational interactions, assure that critical information and knowledge transcends echelon levels, and to achieve interrelated goals, an extensive collaborative planning model was implemented. This model involved establishing a number of

Planning/Study Teams which evolved into Action/Study Teams during the implementation phase of the project. These planning/ study teams differed from traditional small groups such as committees in the following ways: parity among all members of the team; duration of the team; continuity of membership from year to year; intensity of activities and sphere of responsibility assigned to the teams; changing leadership roles within the teams; conscious efforts to value differing perspectives; responsibility for specific products which represented shared contributions of all team members. The inter-institutional planning/study teams functioned using three agreed upon principles. Unity of Purpose: Teams were charged with developing and articulating a common vision for their continuum component. Operationalized features of this vision were seen in the daily activities associated with the component and were used as evaluation benchmarks to ascertain whether or not a given activity significantly contributed to achievement of the vision. Decision-Making: Members of each planning/study team assumed responsibility for making important decisions about how to fulfill the agreed upon vision. These decisions were grounded in inquiry and the use of research and "best practice". Teams assumed responsibility for evaluating and determining if the correct decision was made, looking to see where problems arose and then taking corrective actions. Each planning/study team was given authority and responsibility for its own operating budget. Commitment to Change and Risk-Taking: The inter-institutional nature of the planning/study teams and the kinds of responsibilities assigned to them were designed to provide psychological support and technical assistance to team members, involve learning and applying new skills by team members and those with whom the team worked and interacted. Thus, planning/study teams became change agents encouraging their organizations to change. Change takes place over time and involves anxiety and uncertainty. Thus, planning/study team members had to be willing to risk changing their actions and becoming change agents within their organizations.

As a result of this work, several institutional changes have occurred as follows: (1) the planning/study team process has replaced committees as a way of "doing business" in the college of

education; (2) the planning/study team process has become common practice within the partner school district; (3) the planning/ study team process has become the expected interactive modality for other collaborative projects among the various partners; (4) the planning/study team model was used to develop a national vision for a education policy statement representing the collaborative thinking of a group of educators. (Evans & Fountain 1992).

Redesign of Teacher Roles:

As project activities unfolded three issues related to the roles of educators became apparent: (1) the need for "cross-skilling" i.e.: learning critical attributes of related roles and responsibilities; (2) the need for capacity building of partner institutions; (3) the need to refine and expand the collaborative problem-solving skills of teachers and university faculty.

The response to the challenge of redesigning of teacher roles was addressed with the creation of several jointly funded positions using internally reallocated university and school district dollars. These positions included preinternship clinical educators (EXCEL); internship clinical educators (Resident Clinical Faculty) and school based university faculty (Lead Faculty).

Preinternship Teaching Clinical Educators (EXCEL):

EXCEL Educators are exemplary classroom teachers who have alternative assignments with the university and the school districts for two years. A portion of their time is spent on the university campus conducting preinternship field-based seminars for students in the teacher preparation program. A portion of their time is spent in collaborative teams addressing district concerns.

Internship Clinical Educators (Resident Clinical Faculty):

The Resident Clinical Faculty are exemplary classroom teachers with alternative assignments for two years. They are school-based at one of the AT &T Alliance urban elementary schools. Half of their time is spent in supervising eighteen student teachers assigned to each Alliance school. The remainder of their time is spent in assisting their colleagues in implementing agreed upon school improvement plans.

School Based University Faculty (Lead Faculty):

Lead Faculty are university faculty who spend at least two days each week at one of the AT &T Alliance schools implementing a

collaboratively-planned non-traditional course focusing on school improvement plans and targeting strategies for enhancing student achievement.

Redesign of Urban Teacher Preparation:

Consistent with the purposes of the grant, redesign efforts were limited to the clinical field internship portions clinical component of the teacher preparation program in the College of Education and Human Services at the University of North Florida.

Examples of institutionalized redesign are as follows: (1) roles of school-based and university- based clinical faculty were enhanced, legitimized, and altered; (2) placement pattern of internship was changed from individual to cluster placements; (3) content and expectations of the student teaching experience was redesigned by identifying six targeted instructional strategies and five professional norms; (4) alternative assessment of competencies was implemented.

Preliminary Thoughts for a Taxonomy for Urban Education:

One of the outcomes of the AT&T Alliance for Tomorrow's Teachers project includes preliminary "thoughts" for a taxonomy for urban education. It is expected that this taxonomy will provide the constructs and rubrics around which urban teacher preparation and practice can and should be altered. An important tenet of this taxonomy is that urban educators will be prepared on the one hand to deal effectively with existing realities of schools and to be equipped with the conceptual and technical tools needed to change and improve schooling from current practice to desired practice.

The authors' preliminary thoughts for an urban education taxonomy assume that both surface and systemic structures of teacher preparation programs will need to be reconfigured if graduates are to demonstrate the personal and professional skills and knowledge bases necessary to implement desired practice in urban schools. In addition, changes must span the boundaries of colleges of education to include colleges of liberal arts, business and indeed the whole academic "village". Preparation of preservice educators must be intertwined with the ongoing professional development of experienced teachers so that current practice is changed simultaneously with the preparation of novices to the profession.

A taxonomy for urban education is conceived to have four broad components: academic, professional, technical, and transformational: (1) the academic component includes liberal arts content domains; cognitive, developmental, and social learning theory; curriculum organization and design; cultural diversity and its impact on teaching and learning; the development of the concept of self; group process skills including power social, political and economic organization; and a personal articulated educational philosophy; (2) the professional component includes pedagogical knowledge and principles, decision-making skills and professional judgments; instructional design, planning, delivery, adaptation and evaluation; authentic as well as alternative measures for assessing student progress; (3) the technical component includes application and reflection of professional skills and practice; classroom management and daily orchestration of activities; and identifying, establishing and orchestrating norms of interactions of students among themselves and with adults which will result in dynamic and fluid learning communities; (4) the transformational component includes understanding and managing the process of change; using the process of change and transformation as a tool to move from current to desired practice.

Summary:

This paper has reported the results of a funded project which has provided the opportunity to identify elements which appear to be essential ingredients to the success of restructuring public schools and teacher preparation programs. If either endeavor is to be successful, the move must be made from isolated schools with resistant boundaries to learning communities with permeable boundaries. We must collaboratively pool our knowledge, experiences and energy to address interrelated complex educational challenges.

The University of North Florida, College of Education and Human Services' AT&T Alliance for Tomorrow's Teacher project has demonstrated that the simultaneous restructuring and reculturing of public schools and colleges of education is possible by creating communities of learners within learning organizations for the purpose of improving the education of all children.

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