
Commitment to a program of self-renewal is mandatory as today's teachers try to cope with today's changing needs.

SELF-RENEWAL: A MODEL

HELEN A. HART*

The large-city curriculum of 1950 does not serve the needs of the children in 1970, and new methods and approaches must be sought. As the city and its population undergo change, the challenge of self-renewal for the school staff continues.¹

CAUGHT in the winds of change, today's teachers not infrequently perceive the classroom as a storm center of the forces of conflict which swirl about it. They are charged to hold themselves accountable for the improvement of teaching and learning while confronted with the consequences of a change-oriented society characterized by both knowledge explosion and obsolescence.

With such great expectations placed on the teaching role, the professional growth of today's teachers emerges as an urgent need. Clearly school systems are mandated to design new and more effective programs of in-service education. These programs must not only bridge the transition from preservice experiences, but also plan for the continuing education of teachers throughout their careers.

Implications for meeting the gap between curriculum and a pluralistic society

are of very great magnitude. It is indeed difficult to conceptualize a professional growth program which will satisfy society's demands upon education. Teachers who are challenged to "save" education will need a commitment to self-development that extends far beyond any ordinary possession of classroom competencies. Such a commitment connotes that personal self development will produce major modifications in teaching behavior and ultimately in pupil behavior and achievement.

Among teacher educators, this emphasis on pupil change has been identified as the highest criterion level against which teaching behavior might be appraised.² If we look to

² The identification of levels of teaching performance criteria extends from those that focus directly on the impact of preservice teacher education programs on teaching behavior, to those concerned at higher levels with changes in pupil behavior. The latter can be affected either within a relatively short period (level two), or are apparent through the long range effects of teacher behavior on changes in pupil achievement and well being (level one). Benjamin Rosner, chairman. *The Power of Competency-Based Teacher Education*. Report of the Committee on National Priorities in Teacher Education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1972. pp. 3-7.

¹ Norman Drachler. "The Large City School System: It Costs More To Do the Same." *Equality for Cities in School Finance Reform*. Washington, D.C.: The Potomac Institute, Inc., 1973. p. 21.

* Helen A. Hart, Director, Department of Teacher Education, Detroit Public Schools, Michigan

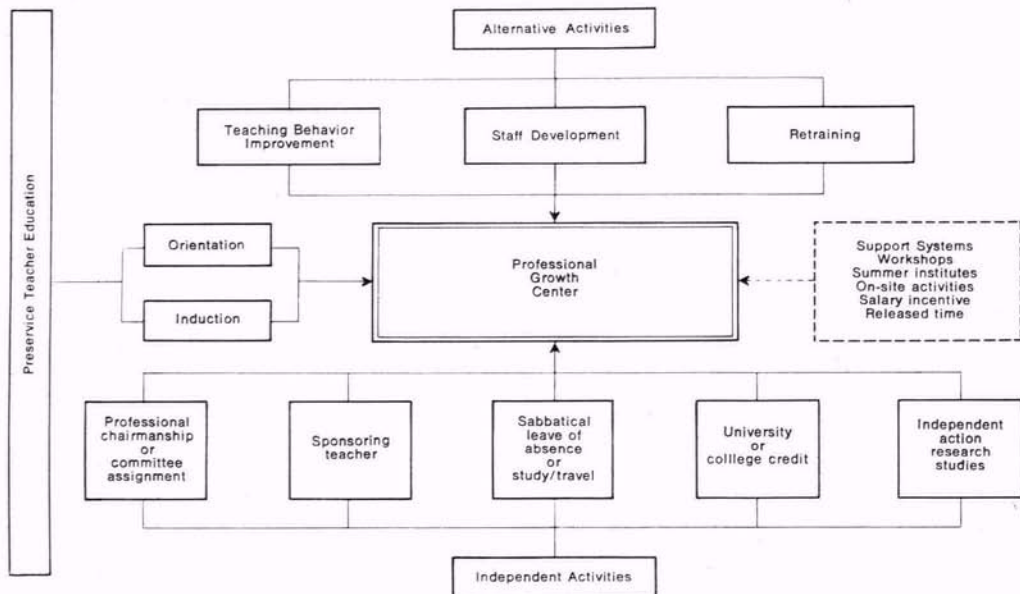


Figure 1. A Modern In-Service Education Model

such a criterion level in the development of a "now" in-service education program, then we must recognize that changes in teaching behavior will need to be continuing and flexible. For this reason, a modern in-service program provides for teachers over the entire span of their professional careers. It recognizes, supports, and aids teachers in their personal development of those teaching skills and competencies that they value and seek to improve. Moreover, the assessment of needs and establishment of goals and objectives are basic to any planning and priority setting that teachers undertake in self-renewal programs. At each step the needs and stated goals of the teachers are recognized, and provision is made for individualized in-service programs that allow them to progress at their own rates.

Bases for a Modern Program

Several in-service systems are needed to provide for the continuing education of teachers from the early days of orientation

and induction to maturity. A variety of workshops and study groups with both formal and independent study related to the several roles of teachers is required. Adequate time for professional growth during summer months, sabbaticals, and other released time activities are arranged. Further, teachers are encouraged to recognize that growth can occur while in the classroom, by acquiring skill through practice.

Any in-service program aimed at the continuing education of teaching staff can be predicated on some commonly accepted bases. These are identified as four inherent assumptions which provide a foundation for an in-service model.

- In-service training of teachers and related staff will benefit the child.
- The school system has the responsibility for providing teachers with both the resources and the tools to perform competently.
- An identification of needs generally

common among teachers is based on both experience and research.

- Professional growth accrues from a variety of experiences.

Based on these assumptions, the improvement of teaching behavior and attitude constitutes the first basic component of a modern in-service training program. *Teaching behavior improvement* activities are designed to help staff members do a better job through improvement of their skills or through development of understandings and concepts in planning and decision making for curriculum improvement. They emerge as paramount to ensure that teachers reexamine on a continuing basis their educational purposes and teaching processes. Through analysis and alteration of teaching behavior, teachers can create improvement in student learning, student self-concepts, student creativity, and interpersonal relationships.

A second dimension of the model provides for the preparation of personnel for new roles of responsibility through *staff development activities*. Such projects provide opportunities for upward bound teachers to move on the career ladder to administrative or supervisory positions.

Finally, the design provides for the *re-training* of those teachers who choose to redirect their activities into new channels of endeavor. Such retraining activities provide for movement into new areas of teaching or into fields calling for additional preparation and study.

Central to the whole design is the development of a *professional growth center* manned by a staff of in-service specialists (Figure 1). The center provides such services as training in specific teaching skills, video and audio taping, microteaching, interaction analysis, classroom visitation, use of student feedback, and strategies for helping teachers understand students from varying racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic backgrounds. Further, the center offers opportunities not only to teachers, but also to paraprofessionals and administrators.

To be most effective the professional growth center does not limit its opportunities

to teachers alone. Where differentiated staffing exists with teachers and school service assistants acting in a complementary setting, paraprofessionals are involved in acquiring new skills that will advance the learning opportunities in the classroom. Similarly, leadership personnel as represented by curricular leaders, staff coordinators, assistant principals, and principals are afforded the opportunity to participate in professional growth activities designed to either retrain or develop their special competencies and skills.

The center operates in several ways. One area offers individually tailored programs based on a diagnosis and assessment of teaching behavior. This function is accompanied by follow-up prescriptive activities implemented at the center and on site in the classroom. It also provides programs designed to train teacher educators and offers special workshops for groups of teachers with a common interest. In addition to providing a delivery system for individual attention, and involving school staffs in attacking an identified problem, the center serves as a resource for the display and limited utilization of the newest instructional materials, equipment, and learning tools.

Threading through these activities designed to help school staff members is the belief that incentive is implicit in involvement. Recognition of growth through the earning of in-service credits applicable to movement on a salary scale is a prime motivation. Professional commitment notwithstanding, salary incentive coupled with released time activities conducted during the school day at the professional growth center or on site in the school are recognized as essential to a successful in-service program.

The modern in-service design is based on the principle that schools cannot change unless educators change. In-service education is the key to whether or not schools can meet the demands upon education. A revitalization of our schools requires a commitment to self-renewal through continuing individual growth and participation in those activities that prepare today's teachers to cope with the changing needs of today's society. □

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