

THE GOODLAD OCCASIONAL

Volume One, Issue Two

March 31, 2006

The central themes of this issue are school-university partnerships and renewal. In Issue One, I focused primarily on my definitions of “education,” “renewal,” and “simultaneous.” It is important to remember that I defined “education” as a very personal process of becoming. It is a moral endeavor that has no inherent properties. Consequently, education is not inherently good or inherently bad. Nearly always, we think of education as a good thing. But education that is a process of becoming evil is not a good thing. The becoming process will be good or evil in large measure because of the circumstances in which it takes place. Unless virtuous principles enter into the learning environment, it is unlikely that good will develop in the character of the individual.

I define “renewal” as a process of keeping or making things new or fresh. It is not a synonym for either “reform” or “change.” In simultaneous renewal, two or more individuals or institutions are engaged in renewal at the same time. Hence, a major purpose of the Teachers for a New Era initiative is to have components of the University of Washington and nearby schools engage both in their own renewal and in the renewal of the education of educators.

The idea of school-university partnerships is not new. But robust examples going back further than the 1980s are hard to find. In the 1980s,

highly research-oriented universities came together in the Holmes Group and committed themselves to the idea of working closely with schools referred to as professional development schools for the purpose primarily of helping them to improve their delivery of academic programs. There was nothing in the literature or rhetoric to suggest the need for these universities to engage in self-renewal or for the schools to engage with them in simultaneous renewal. The universities would use their resources to help the schools improve academic achievement – a concept stimulated considerably by the report *A Nation at Risk*, released in 1983. A little earlier, two colleagues and I at UCLA (where I was dean of the Graduate School of Education) engaged in conversations with superintendents of schools that led to the creation of the Southern California School-University Partnership. The underlying concept was one of positive symbiosis – both the university and the school districts had interests that could be enriched by association with the other. There also were a number of common interests, one of which had to do with research. University faculty needed easy access to schools for their research purposes, and the schools needed to connect themselves more with ongoing research in the field of education. The metaphor of a bridge connecting the university and the schools frequently arose in conversations. In effect, this was an interest to be enhanced by simultaneous renewal.

This concept of school-university partnerships was catching on at the time I returned to the Northwest and became associated with the University of Washington. I thought that this interest was of sufficient strength to warrant further cultivation and so invited several deans, superintendents, and others to join in a meeting in Chicago during the summer of 1985. Thanks in large part to three educational leaders in Bellevue, Lake Washington, and Everett and a welcoming response from several leaders at the University of Washington, the Puget Sound Educational Consortium came into being. A little later, this consortium became part of a network of ten school-university partnerships that came together out of the gathering that had taken place in Chicago. What is now the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER) consists of 24 such partnerships and includes the partnership in which we are currently engaged here in Washington. The Puget Sound Educational Consortium died quietly some years ago; the regrets and good memories still linger. A careful analysis of its structure, activities, and demise might now be useful.

The school-university partnerships of the NNER are held together by a common purpose: improving the education of educators. We will not have better schools without preparing better teachers, and we will not have better teachers without better schools in which to prepare them. Three separate groups have long been engaged simultaneously in the education of educators but have rarely joined in the simultaneous renewal of the enterprise. Professors in the *arts and sciences* provide the general and specialized subject preparation of these prospective teachers. In heavily research-

oriented universities, such as the University of Washington, the *school of education* adds its contribution to the preparation of teachers at a later time, since undergraduate preparation in many of them was abolished years ago. After a series of courses, such as in the foundations of education, learning, and methods of teachers, future teachers are assigned to individual classrooms for their student teaching in *neighboring schools*. These three subcultures of the enterprise seldom come together to develop a carefully integrated program, let alone engage in sustaining its renewal. Strangely, it has taken a good deal of research to conclude that this situation is absolutely unsatisfactory and must be changed as quickly as possible.

Recognition of the need for change did not begin with commitment to the Teachers for a New Era initiative. But the initiative did reinforce the necessity of tripartite planning and conduct of all teacher education programs: departments of the arts and sciences, divisions of the college of education, and the collaborating schools. Future teachers must be assured of a continuum of preparation that begins with selection, orientation, general education, field experiences, apprenticeships in teaching, induction into all of the responsibilities of teaching in a democratic society, mentoring, peer support, etc.

Some years ago, I became aware that wide variations existed under the rubric of professional development schools. I prefer the term "partner schools" and define them as schools engaged in partnership with a university in assuming responsibility for the education of educators for our schools. It is a responsibility not entered into lightly.

Taking on a cohort of prospective teachers as temporary members of the faculty of a school fundamentally changes the culture of a school. Further, I differentiate the term “partner school” from the term “partnership school.” For example, in the Colorado Partnership for Educational Renewal (CoPER), a member of the NNER, all schools and school districts embraced by this very large partnership are partnership schools. They are part of the partnership with a given university simply because the district of which they are a part is a member of CoPER. They get involved with activities of the partnership but are not necessarily partner schools. They might provide field experiences for future teachers, become involved in special projects such as the improvement of the mathematics program in collaboration with the department of mathematics of a university, and on and on. But becoming a partner school is a long-term

commitment. There is much to learn and necessarily a deep commitment in this learning that over time produces the kind of school we would like to have *all* our children attend. In effect, it is a risk-laden responsibility – to the students, to one’s colleagues, to parents, to the school district, to the state. In a later epistle, I will get more deeply into this derivation of partner schools as compared to and contrasted with partnership schools and the processes of renewal in which a partner school must engage. But next, I will address the university side of partnership responsibility.

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