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ABSTRACT

The Manchester Interview is a fictitious report of a conversation between three educators in 1980. The report reviews the present course and future alternatives of a competency-based teacher education and certification. The use of three fictional characters enables the report to cover three views and many facets of what might happen to a structure of teacher education. Areas of specific concern include a) a fundamental description of competency-based teacher education, b) the purpose and description of a teaching center, c) the advantages of colleges within the state eliminating teacher training functions, d) requirements for a staff of a competency-based program, e) the new role of the state in the training program, f) an overview of the mechanics of the program and a module, g) a review of the expectations and results of the program including successes as well as problems faced, and h) the role of the student including a look at financial implications. Although this report described a realistic competency-based program, no state has as yet committed its resources to the implementation of this type of center. Appendixes are included. (MJM)

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MANCHESTER INTERVIEW:

COMPETENCY-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION/CERTIFICATION

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Preface

The AACTE Committee on Performance-Based Teacher Education is pleased to publish this paper as one of a series designed to throw light on issues, problems, and prospects regarding performance-based teacher education identified in its recent publication on the state of the art.¹

Whereas the latter is a declaration for which the Committee accepts full responsibility, publication of this paper (and the others in the PBTE Series) does not imply Committee endorsement of the views expressed. The Committee believes, however, that the experience and expertise of these individual authors, as reflected in their writing, are such that their ideas are fruitful additions to the continuing dialogue concerning performance-based teacher education.

The Committee views the term "competency-based," as used in this paper, as synonymous with "performance-based," as noted in its state of the art paper.

AACTE acknowledges with appreciation the role of the Bureau of Educational Personnel Development of the U. S. Office of Education in the PBTE Project. Its financial support as well as its professional stimulation are major contributions to the Committee's work. The Association acknowledges also the contribution of members of the Committee who served as readers of this paper and of members of the Project staff who assisted in its publication. Special recognition is due David R. Krathwohl, member of the Committee, for his contribution to the development of the PBTE Series of papers.

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¹Elam, Stanley, "Performance-Based Teacher Education: What Is the State of the Art?," The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, December, 1971.

MANCHESTER INTERVIEW is a candid conversation with educators on the United States' latest attempt to improve teacher education. This interview is reprinted from the September 1980 edition of the *Manchester Magazine* published in Manchester, England. The names of the participants in the interview are fictitious as is the magazine in which this interview supposedly appeared. The State where the Greenblock Center exists is nameless. Although the developments described in this article could occur in several states, no one state has committed its resources yet to this type of center.

Introduction

Since the Revolutionary War, England and the United States have been borrowing ideas from each other, hopefully for their mutual benefit. Readers will remember that open education, begun in England, swept the United States during the early 1970's and emerged as a concept bearing little relationship to what had been done in English schools. And teaching centers which began almost informally in England ten years ago, are more unlike than like the teaching center discussed in this interview.

Competency-based teacher education now appears to be firmly established in the United States. In order to give our readers an in-depth understanding of this movement we asked William Bonds, noted English author, to interview George Collins, the Director of the Greenblock Teaching Center. Also included in the interview is Miss Lois Harrison, a graduate of the Teaching Center.

The Greenblock Teaching Center was chosen because of the integration that has taken place there between certification and teacher education. Usually thought of as two separate elements in a highly related field, this State has evolved a totally new approach to the certification of teachers.

George Collins, 45, is graying slightly, six feet tall and thin enough to still play a rigorous game of basketball with his five children at least once a week. A former elementary teacher, elementary principal, and a curriculum specialist for a large school district, at age 32 he completed his Ed. D. in education and began his collegiate career where he supervised student teachers, served three years as Director of Student Teaching and taught a number of education courses. Seven years ago he was appointed the first director of the Greenblock Teaching Center.

Lois Harrison, an attractive brunette, 26, is in her second year of teaching. She completed a four-year undergraduate liberal arts degree program before enrolling at the Teaching Center. She was a student there for two years before receiving her diploma and beginning her teaching career. A third grade teacher, Miss Harrison is committed to the competency-based movement but not so committed that she cannot see that there are some difficulties still to be resolved.

Manchester Magazine has been most fortunate that William Bonds was willing to undertake this interview. Educated in the United States, Bonds is now a well-known author of articles and

books in England. His background was particularly appropriate for this assignment since he graduated from an American college in the mid-1950's, completing a teacher training program and receiving a certificate. He never has taught, however, as he left the United States and came to England shortly after graduation.

The sun blistered at ninety-seven degrees when the three participants in this interview sat down to talk. Cold beer and iced tea enabled the conversation to flow smoothly and consistently.

MANCHESTER: Would you define briefly competency-based teacher education?

COLLINS: Educators have argued over that for ten years and educators are not known for their brevity. At the risk of offending many of my colleagues, I will attempt an answer. Competency-based teacher education is an approach to preparing teachers that places great stress on the demonstration of explicit performance criteria as evidence of what the perspective teacher knows and is able to do.

MANCHESTER: That doesn't sound *too* confusing; let's take explicit performance criteria for a minute. Could you give me an example of that?

COLLINS: I understand you went through a teacher training program in the 50's?

MANCHESTER: Right!

COLLINS: Did you take an Ed. Psych. course?

MANCHESTER: Yes.

COLLINS: What specifically was it that you were expected to know or to be able to do as a result of having taken that course?

MANCHESTER: I don't really know; the professor spent a great deal of time discussing his adventures with the little league, (his son played second base). The only other thing I remember from that course is that we had to visit a public school classroom five times and write a report on one child that we observed.

COLLINS: A competency-based program still includes educational psychology, but the explicit performance criteria would be stated in a greatly different fashion. The course, or more appropriately the field of study, would be broken down into a number of segments of knowledge about child psychology. For example, the teacher should know what range of behaviors at any given age level are considered abnormal and why. That's a skill that can be analyzed on the basis of cognitive performance, in other words how well you're able to answer questions concerning this on a test. It also can be demonstrated in a performance sense by having the teacher view a simulation of behavior of a wide range of children and asking the teacher to identify those behaviors that are normal and those that are not. That is explicit. If you complete, not a "course" in Ed. Psych., but a sequence of modules, (individualized learning units, related to the psychology of children) then those are the things that you have been able to demonstrate. Does that help to explain the difference?

MANCHESTER: Yes, that helps. I have heard, however, that there are other aspects of competency-based teacher education that you haven't mentioned. Why is that?

COLLINS: Mainly because there are still differences of opinion concerning what are the essentials of competency-based teacher education, although everyone I know agrees that explicit performance criteria are at the heart of the competency movement.

There are a long list of related movements: individualization, or personalization, a more precise term, for instance, exists apart from the competency movement but it's found in every competency program that I have ever heard of; also, the field-centered idea which we really evolved here at the center is so basic to competency training that it is impossible for me to see how one can work without the other. Other facets include the concept of feedback to the participants, an emphasis on exit criteria not entrance criteria, lack of concern about time (the programs are achievement based not time based), use of modules rather than courses and making public the competencies a student must demonstrate. And probably underlying all of these is the necessity for the conceptualization of the role of the teacher so that the program can be integrated within that framework.

MANCHESTER: Miss Harrison, would you add anything to these comments?

HARRISON: No, except that I know I never worked so hard in my whole life as I did while I was a student at the teaching center.

MANCHESTER: Let's take a second question. What is a teaching center?

COLLINS: Well, you should know first of all that I am an idealist and a disgruntled educator. By the time I was thirty-five I realized that I had committed my life and career to a field that was in drastic danger of destroying itself. The public by the early 1970's was demanding accountability. Fiscal support for education had become an overwhelming burden to taxpayers. The inability of colleges preparing teachers to adjust to the needs of the schools was only too evident. The inability of the schools to accept a responsibility for the preparation of teachers was equally evident. And underlying all of these problems was the inability of the schools to state clearly what their objectives and priorities were so that anyone in the world could figure out whether or not the schools were fulfilling the role that society had planned for them. I truthfully spent more than one night considering becoming an insurance salesman or a painter in Tahiti or even a reporter in Manchester as an alternative to struggling with a monster that seemed to have a life of its own that totally defied rationalization.

MANCHESTER: But obviously you didn't quit.

COLLINS: No, and probably the competency movement was what made me change my mind. I first became involved in it as a college professor in Utah when I saw how, in a short period of time, the collegiate programs could radically be improved and that there was a chance to truly make a difference in the preparation of teachers and in the education of children. Probably my work in the competency field led to my being appointed director of this teaching center.

MANCHESTER: O.K., but what is a teaching center?

COLLINS: Well, first of all forget everything you know about education in the United States because we just didn't have teaching centers when you were here. Teaching centers exist in a specific geographic area; this state which isn't too large has seven. Specifically, a typical teaching center like ours encompasses a relatively large school district or several smaller districts. In this center all teachers are part of the clinical approach to the preparation of teachers. In other teaching centers only some teachers in certain buildings with specific responsibilities are part of the teaching center. Typically in those cases the center has specialized in one or more areas of educational training, for instance, administrators, or staff

support personnel.

One of the seven centers does only research based on the needs of the other six centers. A research committee with representatives from each center coordinates educational research in the state. Our center, however, is for the preparation of teachers from early childhood through the twelfth grade in all academic areas. The center is staffed by a director and a number of classroom teachers and former collegiate (education) personnel. All faculty are called education instructors since all persons in the district support the program to prepare teachers for the schools of the state while at the same time providing quality education for the children of the district.

MANCHESTER: Sounds like you're just duplicating work in the departments of education.

COLLINS: I forgot to mention there are no longer any teacher training functions in the colleges of this state.

MANCHESTER: That must've been a political nightmare.

COLLINS: Surprisingly enough it wasn't. There were obviously some professors screaming that we were restricting the right of academic freedom and that the state could not do this. In actuality the state couldn't mandate that private colleges and universities eliminate teacher education courses or programs. However, all but two have done so already and those two are phasing them out after this year.

MANCHESTER: Why did they accept this so readily?

COLLINS: Mainly, finances. The state legislature finally got around to analyzing carefully how many new teachers are needed each year to serve the schools in the state and found that the public colleges and universities were preparing four times as many teachers as could conceivably be needed under the most optimistic of estimates in any given year. The question became not *should* you cut, but where and how. Legislators were then open to the teaching center concept. Actually teaching centers, originally funded by the United States Office of Education, had been in operation for two years before the state legislature decided to eliminate education in the state undergraduate colleges and universities. At that time they felt the teaching center was a viable concept, could do a better job, was far more economical and produced teachers who were far superior to those who were being prepared in the collegiate institutions.

As a result, it became a legislative fiat. And while some people, mostly the professors of education, yelled and screamed, not too many people listened.

MANCHESTER: You said before that you have on your staff a number of former collegiate education professors.

COLLINS: That's right and they're doing a good job but the significant difference is that no professor can be hired for this faculty who is not able to demonstrate the explicit performance criteria we have established for educational instructors, that he or she is able to produce the desired learning in students and in the prospective teachers. This is a totally new approach to selection of faculty and has interestingly enough increased the range of people who are on our faculties.

MANCHESTER: What percentage of professors who applied were able to demonstrate successfully the performance criteria?

COLLINS: About twenty percent and about twenty percent more were able to after some remedial work.

MANCHESTER: Then you're saying approximately sixty percent of the former teacher education professors in this state are no longer teaching?

COLLINS: Probably more true than not. Some have obtained teaching positions in colleges and in community colleges outside of the field of education but in a closely allied field, for instance, psychology. But for the most part they have moved to other states where such a total commitment to the teaching center concept does not exist.

Also some have gone to the four university centers preparing Ed.D.'s and Ph.D.'s in education which still exist. The development of better instruments to describe classroom performance has been one of their major contributions. We work closely with them and they are supportive of our activities. You might plan a separate interview with a university representative; its changing roles and responsibilities would easily fill a book.

MANCHESTER: I may do that later but don't you feel that this approach then threatens drastically those persons who have committed their lives and careers to the education of children?

COLLINS: I suppose the threat is there but the criticism always seems to have existed that education courses were poorly taught,

repetitious, and that professors were much more interested in sharing stories than in promoting learning. The former professors who were able to demonstrate their abilities have been able to find positions. If what we've done is only hire our best instructors for prospective teachers, I don't feel we should apologize.

MANCHESTER: Miss Harrison, you have had a lot of teachers in various places, would you support Dr. Collins?

HARRISON: Yes, bad teachers exist everywhere, even at my undergraduate liberal arts college. They had little concern for the pupils and great concern for the content area; learning was not anywhere near as important as guessing what the professor wanted. Actually the competency approach used in the teaching center is so totally different that it's impossible to compare. All I can say is that the teaching center was dedicated to helping me succeed as a teacher and helping me to learn and perform those things that a teacher needs to do. No one was concerned with telling me how poorly I was doing or how little I knew. I never played a game of guessing what the professor wanted.

MANCHESTER: Well, maybe I could better understand what you're saying if you would describe how the program at the teaching center works.

COLLINS: I think you have to look at something else first and then the total program will make more sense; that's the state's role.

MANCHESTER: Oh, yes, I know how restrictive the state was in its certification regulations in the past; I was curious about how you were able to accommodate its concerns in your new structure.

COLLINS: Actually the state's attitude toward certification has changed drastically even in the last five years. For instance, the state no longer issues certificates.

MANCHESTER: You mean teachers don't meet minimum state qualifications?

COLLINS: No, that isn't quite what I mean. A teacher who completes her program at the teaching center receives a diploma with a transcript that includes not grades or courses but a description of the competencies that that person has demonstrated related to the various roles that a teacher might be expected to fulfill in the schools in this state. That is the document

reviewed by a prospective employer; that is the document teachers add to throughout their professional careers as they increase their abilities and develop new competencies. That is the document that has made possible true differentiation of staff. But the state does do something that is totally different than anything it did in your day; it runs the Assessment-Diagnostic Centers (the ADC's).

MANCHESTER: Lois, did you go through the ADC?

HARRISON: Yes and it's quite an experience. First, anyone who wants to become a teacher in the state must apply to the state. When the application is processed, the person is assigned dates to attend the Assessment-Diagnostic Center. This examination takes approximately three weeks and is administered by the state once every four months in different regions so that in any given year there is always, at least, one administration in the general area in which a person lives. The ADC is really an attempt to measure adequately a person's knowledge, abilities, and present competencies. Included are a physical examination and a battery of mental and emotional tests and interviews. In addition everyone is required to complete a number of simulation experiences and several micro-teaching exercises with small groups of children.

MANCHESTER: Well, what is the state trying to do with this approach?

COLLINS: I think I'd better handle that since I was on the committee that helped establish the ADC's. The state takes the position that it should assure the public that incompetent people (physically, emotionally, or intellectually) do not become teachers. In that sense the ADC acts as a screening device. Actually few people are eliminated since the role of the ADC is not to eliminate but primarily to describe so that the teaching center will be able to adequately prepare teachers.

MANCHESTER: I am a little concerned about the people who are screened out. Couldn't the state simply screen out teachers who didn't conform to its value systems?

COLLINS: That's an interesting point and one that has been of concern to us. We have a value commitment to diversity within our country, within our educational system and within our teaching ranks. We also have a value commitment to screening using objective rather than subjective evidence. I indicated the percentage of people screened out is small, and it is.

The persons who are physically unable to teach are few because people with handicaps are remarkably able to do many things that we would not usually expect them to accomplish. However, the ADC does accurately describe their limitations and often prescribes appropriate teaching roles for them. The person who is emotionally unstable or intellectually incapable is judged differently. Each candidate is interviewed carefully, and records of previous work are examined. Psychological tests are given. Here again we are not attempting to eliminate in this initial stage every questionable person but only those who are obviously incapable of working successfully with children. Intellectually we're concerned that the person has a general education background equivalent to that of a liberal arts graduate. In addition we are concerned that the candidate has the ability to grow intellectually, to learn from his or her mistakes and to organize activities. Failing the last three categories would not, however, screen out a candidate. Those concerns would be handled at the teaching center. I think it's safe to say that the state does not establish value systems through the ADC; whether the state could or not, I don't know. The state in its wisdom and in its folly is many things. I suppose the state should be monitored as well as be a monitor.

MANCHESTER: Then the state's concern in the ADC is that incompetent people don't become teachers, is that right?

COLLINS: The state is concerned not only that incompetents don't become teachers but also that persons who do become teachers are competent. They have placed the primary responsibility for this in the teaching centers and monitor the operation of the teaching centers through evaluation visits made up of outside consultants, at least, every three years. These visits are not the typical type of accreditation visit that you may have been familiar with in the 50's and 60's in the United States. The primary purpose of these visits is to provide feedback to the teaching center so that it can effectively adjust its program and policies to changing needs of the schools and of the teachers. The major requirement following a visit is that the feedback be utilized in making decisions in the future. That is why the visits are done as often as every three years and that is why the state maintains this responsibility.

MANCHESTER: How widely accepted in the United States is this use of an ADC and a teaching center?

COLLINS: We're the only state up to now that has gone this route. Perhaps a little background will be helpful. When the

competency movement began in the United States, State Education Departments moved in two rather different directions. A number of them encouraged the development of competency programs within colleges and simply made the college programs part of the approved program approach to teacher education. Under the approved program approach colleges filed with the state agency the sequence of specific courses offered and the total program was approved rather than individualized courses or experiences within the program. Some few states tried to establish specific performance criteria that teachers would have to demonstrate in order to be certified. This involved tremendous problems of obtaining consensus on what were minimum performance criteria and even greater problems in establishing how those performance criteria could be measured in an objective way by a State Education Department. Needless to say, the latter effort finally aborted, and no state has been able to implement fully a state review of performance criteria leading to certification. But there were strengths in both of these movements; what we have done here is an attempt to utilize the best aspects of both. For instance, the ADC in many ways is modeled on the efforts of those states that attempted to come up with appropriate performance criteria for teachers. But by using the ADC as a screening, placement, and diagnostic device rather than as a certifying agent we have been able to obtain acceptance both from the public and the profession, and we have been able to monitor and direct in a much more logical fashion the talents of teachers as they are needed in the schools. The teaching center is really an extension of the approved program approach. The state approves center programs. We removed the centers from the college setting because of the overwhelming belief that a teacher must demonstrate his competencies in a classroom with children and that unless a new structure was evolved no school district would give a college student sufficient autonomy and ongoing opportunities to demonstrate those competencies. For the most part, if you visit the United States you'll see competency education in approved programs in colleges and universities. Almost all of these have established some form of teaching center, a relatively informal student teaching arrangement with one or more school districts. In those situations the student teachers are accountable to the college or university and the pupils and teachers in the schools are accountable to the school district. When those two groups have differences over competing priorities then neither program operates as well as it should. We've tried to merge the two and up to now, we have had no insurmountable problems.

MANCHESTER: O.K. Miss Harrison, you go through the ADC and then you appear at the teaching center? I guess I am still confused, I don't understand how that works.

HARRISON: Well, when I finished the ADC, I received a complete account of what I did on all of the tests that were given. In addition, I received a description of all the competencies that I was able to demonstrate and the degree to which I was able to demonstrate them.

After receiving this I applied to the teaching center nearest my home, which happened to be the one that Dr. Collins runs.

MANCHESTER: How does this center run? Can you go there anytime, or does it work on semester basis or what?

COLLINS: All centers operate four eleven week quarters a year with two week intersessions. This allows a student to begin a program every thirteen weeks. Since the emphasis is on demonstrating competencies rather than time spent, it was decided to have a structure that was as short as possible so that students could enter as often as possible in any given year. Students can leave any time they have demonstrated the required competencies.

HARRISON: I was able to begin in what would be the fall quarter, and immediately found that this was not an undergraduate college. The first three weeks that I was in the center I did nothing except work with advisors who went over my ADC results in minute detail to help me decide what I wished to specialize in. And there was tremendous emphasis on the options available. First, all entering students are given a list of the expected needs of the public schools in all teaching fields for the next four years. As a result many people are choosing to become specialists in areas such as educational technology or the needs of exceptional children rather than limiting themselves to one traditional assignment. Once an initial decision was made, I was assigned to visit schools to observe classes for several days in a variety of locations so that I would have a much better idea of what that teacher would be expected to do, and how I might be expected to perform, when I became a teacher.

MANCHESTER: Did you find this helped?

HARRISON: It worked well for me. I had originally wanted to be an English teacher; I was in love with Milton from my undergraduate days, but I changed my mind. I found, one, there were far more people qualified to teach English than there were openings; two, very little of my time as a teacher of secondary English would be spent teaching Milton; three, I really was turned on much more by younger children than by adolescents. So I decided to become an elementary teacher specializing in the kindergarten through the third grade phase of instructional work.

Surprisingly enough some people leave the teaching center right at this point.

COLLINS: I would stress that, because the advisement is carefully done, we don't really care if a student spends a month or a whole quarter deciding what he wants to become. Many people realize that the teaching roles they envision filling don't exist. Actually twenty-five percent of the people who come here expecting to become teachers never make a career choice; they opt out of the program. And we consider this one of the center's most valid aspects, since it eliminates overproduction and bad professional choices; severely reduces may be more accurate than eliminates. Note that there is no stigma of failure; a student doesn't have his graduation from college threatened because he changes his career choice, and he has lost nothing except time and tuition for that quarter, a very small investment compared to a life time of doing something you shouldn't be doing.

MANCHESTER: Lois, after you decided, what happened?

HARRISON: I found out about teaching roles. No longer is the teacher simply a teacher of kindergarten through third grade. Teaching activities are broken down into the roles that a teacher is expected to fill in the school system and from those definitions a list of specific competencies are evolved. The role definitions do vary from school to school in our state as do the demands upon teachers vary from school to school.

COLLINS: Excuse me, but establishing those role definitions was step one in establishing a good teaching center. Working through an ad hoc committee of teachers, administrators, college education faculty, board members, and interested lay citizens, we canvassed the entire state, establishing first school objectives, then teacher competencies and finally the role expectations for every school district in the state. From this list we found those role expectations that were common to all schools. We also found a way to describe differing roles and responsibilities and finally to draw proper distinctions between professional and nonprofessional responsibilities. As a result eighty percent of our state schools now use differentiated staffing patterns.

For instance, teaching roles include the role of the playground supervisor, the role of the lunch money collector, the role of the professional who works with paraprofessionals, the role of the teacher as a professional educator, the role of the teacher as an instructional manager with specializations, etc. Any student who receives a diploma from the teaching center has met the basic role expectations (two-thirds of the required program)

that exist in this state; the person, therefore, is qualified anywhere in the state. On the other hand, each student who completes a diploma program has also taken one-third of his work demonstrating competencies that are unique to some districts and not universal throughout the state. This allows a student to specialize in urban education if that is his or her desire or it allows a student to develop a specialization within a specialization; for instance, a phonics expert within the area of the role definition of instructional manager, reading. The range of options is tremendous.

MANCHESTER: O.K. Miss Harrison, now you're going to be trained to fulfill the roles expected of teachers who work with children between the ages of five and eight, is that a better way to say it?

HARRISON: Fine, that's what I was doing. I had to meet all of the competencies that were in common and I had to specialize.

MANCHESTER: Give an example of how you fulfilled a specific role?

HARRISON: Each of the roles is broken down into a major module with a number of individual elements making up the total module. I was given the opportunity to choose the order in which I wished to pursue these and I was given the freedom to devise alternative ways to meet the competencies that were expected of me. Actually I took two years to finish the program and that is typical of the people here. However, there have been people who have demonstrated their competencies in as little as one quarter, but I assure you that they are the exception.

MANCHESTER: Why does it take two years? That seems a long time compared to my teacher education program which was one semester?

HARRISON: That was possible if all you had to do was take courses, but if you have to demonstrate that you actually know something and are able to do something in a classroom with children, and if you are also required to demonstrate that as a result of your teaching learning has taken place, behavior has changed, knowledge has been transmitted, it's going to take much longer. I might note that one student took four years to go through the program and the overall dropout rate varies between forty and fifty percent of those who enter the program.

MANCHESTER: Please describe a module.

HARRISON: There was one in reading that had to do with developing in first graders the ability to pronounce properly the long

and short vowel sounds. First of all, I had to demonstrate that I knew them so that I had to pass a test at 100 percent mastery indicating that I could identify the sounds correctly. Actually, I was able to do this at ninety percent mastery, so that in a day I was able to review the one or two areas I was unsure of and pass that part. Secondly, I had to develop a technique for diagnosing what the children knew, what they were already able to do in terms of this specific criteria. Could they pronounce words correctly --the ultimate goal of this lesson-- and did they know and understand the short and long vowel sounds well enough to pronounce words correctly.

MANCHESTER: I am getting confused about means and ends here.

HARRISON: That's one of the things I liked about the program, and I understand what you mean. The purpose of the lesson was to see that children could pronounce words containing long and short vowel sounds correctly. My problem was how to help them to do this if they had difficulty. So, the appropriate pre-test dealt not with whether or not they knew long a and short a sounds, for example, but whether or not they could pronounce a group of words correctly. Some of the words they should have been familiar with and some of them were of a slightly more advanced level than they would be expected to know. On the basis of this we found that ten percent of the children could pronounce all of the words without any difficulty and thirty percent of the children had difficulty with most of the words. We then re-tested the ten percent who had all words correct by giving them words that were at a reading level three years in advance of their age. These were six and seven year olds, by the way. All of those children then had some difficulty pronouncing some of these words. We then administered a diagnostic test to the group to see if they were able to discriminate the difference in the sounds of the vowels using long and short marks. We found that only two children in the class were able to do this. Those two children were then given an opportunity to work with other children in the class who needed help. A competency-based or a specific performance criteria module was then prepared by me with the assistance of the teacher and my advisor for the rest of the children.

MANCHESTER: O.K., then what you really had to do was diagnose the learning difficulties of the children and literally prescribe and create the materials and activities that would enable these children to learn those vowel sounds.

HARRISON: Correct.

COLLINS: Let me note that those two features are fundamental to every role definition that relates to teachers and children in this teaching center. All teachers who complete training at the center are diagnosticians of learning difficulties requiring a comprehensive background in psychology and measurement (the theoretical foundation of the center), and also must demonstrate the ability to utilize and if necessary create appropriate curriculum materials to individualize instruction. No one completes this program who isn't able to do this across the range of his teaching specialty. That is the core of the teaching center.

MANCHESTER: That's interesting because other people might have different priorities.

COLLINS: I agree and I wouldn't say that ours are necessarily all inclusive, but they are ours, they are explicit, and they are open and every student who comes here knows what is required of him.

MANCHESTER: Do you ignore the affective domain.

COLLINS: Certainly not. Objectives throughout our program relate to the cognitive and the affective. And probably the most emphasis in the last three years has been on the affective because of the difficulty of dealing with it. We believe that in diagnosing difficulties and in utilizing and creating materials specific attention must be paid to affective conditions.

HARRISON: Going back to my work on vowels. I successfully completed that module not when I created the material nor when I taught the material, but only when the children were able to demonstrate that they could pronounce the words correctly based on an understanding of the vowel sounds.

MANCHESTER: Well, who decides that they have pronounced them correctly. If it's simply you or the teacher, your ear may be off and you may really be making subjective judgments.

COLLINS: I am glad that you asked that question. The difficulty of maintaining objective standards for judging the performance criteria has been one of our chief tasks. Far too many materials that were created initially in this field were beautiful until you reached the end and found that the objective criteria was how the teacher rated the pupil subjectively, in some cases on a scale of one to five or often simply that the teacher was satisfied.

In answer to your specific question the children must speak

the words into a tape recorder. That tape recorder is played for four of the education instructors in the center, without reference to where the tapes were done or who did them or any other kind of knowledge. If those four instructors agree that the children pronounced the words with ninety percent accuracy, the prospective teacher is given credit for effecting the appropriate change and behavior in the children. We recognize that that's still somewhat subjective but that's far more objective than anything we've been able to devise in the past.

MANCHESTER: Isn't that very expensive? The use of recorders, the time of the professors and so on?

COLLINS: It's certainly not cheap. And we are concerned about the cost effectiveness; however, our primary concern is the quality of our operation. But we agree with you that it does cost more than we would like, and we have revised our program wherever we have been able to accomplish our goals with equal quality in a less expensive way.

HARRISON: Well, that was one module. That is a microcosm, really, of the continual types of modules that we had to work with. That particular one took me three weeks working full time in a classroom with the teacher after my initial week with the module. You begin working as a paraprofessional within a classroom demonstrating specific performance skills, and as you progress through the competencies, you take on more and more responsibility for the classroom so that ultimately you are responsible for a total classroom for the diagnostic techniques for all of the students, for creating individualized materials, for establishing objective ways to measure whether or not learning has taken place, and ultimately, you are responsible for working with new paraprofessionals, prospective teachers, who come into the classroom. Does that help?

MANCHESTER: Yes. Do all of the students enter the program the way you did as graduates of liberal arts colleges?

HARRISON: No. If a person can demonstrate the knowledge criteria, what is commonly called the general education background, during the ADC examination, he can move to the teaching center without any degree program. Actually, during the ADC, a cognitive examination is given which has been normed against the general college population. Students who meet those norms have demonstrated satisfactorily to the state their backgrounds in general education. This concept was developed years ago in New York State with its external degree program. We do not, in this state, award external degrees, but we do utilize a similar type of examination to

verify the general education component needed by prospective teachers.

MANCHESTER: Well, what if a student has attended college and isn't able to meet the norms on this examination?

COLLINS: Then the state's attitude is that they have not demonstrated the general education necessary to become a teacher in the state.

MANCHESTER: Then you mean some non-college people might qualify and college people might not?

COLLINS: It's happened, but only rarely. I think in seven years we've had five people who have not had a college education who have been able to demonstrate their mastery and we have had only two people who graduated from college who were not able to meet the criteria; in both of those cases there was ample evidence during the ADC that they lacked the intellectual capability of completing the program so that they were screened out on both criteria rather than simply the one.

MANCHESTER: Out of a total of how many in seven years?

COLLINS: Oh, we've examined roughly 35,000 people since we began, so statistically that's insignificant.

MANCHESTER: One area that neither of you has touched on that I know will be of great concern in England and probably here is financing the teaching center.

COLLINS: The financial implications are interesting and hopefully work to everyone's advantage, but I have to admit that we've played with these over the last few years, and there have been problems. For instance, we began with a school district with 5,000 pupils which had operated on roughly an average of \$1,000 state and local support per pupil for a total of \$5,000,000 a year in an operating budget. The pupil-teacher ratio was one to twenty-five, so we had approximately 200 teachers in the district. Because of the teaching center, which provides 500 students a quarter, who all work as paraprofessionals and really as professionals before they are finished, we have been able to lower the number of full-time education instructors within this teaching center to 100. Since sixty percent (\$3,000,000) of the annual budget was for instructional costs, by halving the number of instructional personnel, we now have \$1,500,000 available to operate the Teaching Center at no additional cost to the

district. This is actually a savings since the teacher education programs at all of the state colleges and universities are no longer supported by state funds. Cost estimates are hard to find but a 1970 analysis at a large university showed a full-time equivalent cost of \$862.44 per student. On the basis of this figure (probably doubled by now) this center alone saves the state \$431,220 a year. In addition, all prospective teachers are charged a tuition fee of \$250 a quarter or \$1,000 a year if they attend all four quarters. Approximately 500 prospective teachers a quarter attend making a total of \$500,000 a year from that source. This money is split between the state and the local district resulting in savings for both. The state has saved money, the school district has saved money and the prospective teachers are not paying an exorbitant tuition for the work they are receiving which is highly individualized and which allows them to complete the program at their own rate of speed rather than in a pre-determined period of time.

MANCHESTER: I'm a little confused.

COLLINS: Let me give you a handout we've prepared which may help. (Handout included as Appendix A)

MANCHESTER: That helps. Tell me though, didn't some of those 100 teachers who were no longer needed strongly object to being fired?

COLLINS: No, because we did it gradually. We had federal support originally, and with an annual teacher turnover rate of 15% to 20%, we simply filled vacancies with teaching center students. No one was fired.

MANCHESTER: Well, I can see the economics would be favorable but didn't some parents object to experimenting with their children in their school district?

COLLINS: Oh, of course, and when this agreement was finally worked out one of the major demands of the school district was that a referendum be held every two years in which, on the basis of a one-year notice, the center could be phased out of operation in the district. What you would have then from the time of a successful vote would be a commitment for two years plus a year's grace time to phase out the program. However, we have been accountable. We do use performance criteria both on the pupils and on the prospective teachers, and we have been able to show the parents that this school district is doing what they want it to do and that it is successful and that the children do learn.

The support at the polls has gone from sixty-five percent in the first election to eighty-seven percent in the most recent election, so I am no longer concerned about that; the people in this community feel it works for their benefit.

Parents are also pleased that their children get a great deal of individual attention. The ratio of adults to children (5,000 children to 600 adults) is about 8 to 1, and that's practically unheard of in most school districts. We have the latest technological support for teachers and pupils and these are utilized both in the training and in the classroom. That aspect of our experiment has been very successful. Originally, the United States Office of Education, funded the center at 100 percent for the first three years, then phased out its funds over the next three years so that now we are running totally without any outside funds and are doing very well.

MANCHESTER: O.K., but who controls this center? I know you are the director and you're undoubtedly the accountable person, but who controls it?

COLLINS: It has a board of directors of nine people. They are all elected, two from the educational staff of the teaching center, four community representatives elected at large from the school district, two teacher education students elected by the students in the program, and a state senator who lives in or near the center. The Board meets monthly and is the policy board. It passes on all official policies pertaining both to the center and to the pupils in the district.

MANCHESTER: Did you consider having representation from the professional teachers in this board?

COLLINS: We have professional representation; we have two persons elected from the educational staff. The teaching center has, I think, finally broken down the dichotomy that has occurred in the professional ranks that says, (in many people's minds), that the classroom teacher is a professional and anyone who isn't a classroom teacher, is somehow or other not a professional. This goes back to the militancies of the late 60's and early 70's; but you see, all of our staff are education instructors and they all are responsible for both the learning of pupils in the school district, and for the prospective teachers. No one works totally in isolation from the other and all are members of professional organizations in the state and most of them are members of national professional associations.

MANCHESTER: Does this policy board actually function as a working body?

COLLINS: It uses subcommittees. There is a subcommittee on state coordination which has a representative from the state education department. That same representative works with all seven teaching centers in the state so that the activities of one never develop in total isolation from the activities of the other; also, he facilitates communication between the centers. The most interesting of the subcommittees is the assessment board. The assessment board includes teachers and administrators from throughout the state. The fifteen-member board is elected by the statewide education bargaining agency. Until a few years ago, teacher unions and professional associations were rivals, but since their recent merger all educational personnel within the state are represented by one bargaining agency. Teachers, administrators, and teaching center staff are among the fifteen members. This board reviews the exit criteria established by the teaching center. It not only must approve them before they are used by the teaching center, but also it is actively involved in developing them. This board is in a sense the professional board of licensing for this state although we don't license teachers as we did in the past.

MANCHESTER: I still don't know how you know whether or not this program is really working.

COLLINS: I am glad you asked that because I'd almost forgotten to note one of the most important features of our operation, and that is followup that we do. Every teacher who receives a diploma is visited four times a year for a period of at least four days on each visit during the first three years of his teaching career. These visits tell us how well this teacher functions in an actual school situation based on the training given him at the teaching center. In addition we wish to find out if there are job expectations, or role expectations as we would call them, that are being created in the schools that we had not anticipated. One of the greatest tragedies of teacher education in the past has been the gap that has existed between what the schools were doing and what the collegiate preparation groups were offering. This observation of the teacher on the job, provides the center with feedback that leads directly to changes in the required competencies and the role definitions. This is one of the most essential elements of the teaching center. If you remember, I said feedback was one of the things that most people in the competency movement supported.

MANCHESTER: But isn't this very expensive use of staff time?

COLLINS: Yes, but we feel it is essential. Also this is an area where the profession at large has been of great help to us. Since the assessment board passes on the exit criteria, establishes objectives, etc., public school teachers and administrators have taken an active role in giving feedback to the center.

MANCHESTER: I remember when I graduated I got a provisional certificate; you don't have certificates and yet I know the provisional led to a permanent which meant that I had to do something else, to be a better teacher. Are the teachers who complete program totally through with their education?

HARRISON: I only wish that were true.

COLLINS: No, that's not the way it goes. Lois, why don't you describe the way it works?

HARRISON: You remember that Dr. Collins said that the centers operate four quarters a year.

MANCHESTER: Right.

HARRISON: That fourth quarter is a summer quarter and while that quarter is open to prospective teachers on an equal basis with the other three quarters that time is also specifically designed to support the in-service needs of teachers who are already teaching or who have in recent years graduated from the teaching centers. Every school district is encouraged to send up to one-tenth of its staff to one of the teaching centers in the state every summer at no tuition cost for the upgrading of the professional abilities of their teachers. Space limitations decide how many can be sent and in-service teachers get preference in the summer session. Most of the teachers in the state were not prepared in the manner that we are now training teachers. Many of them spend the summer working through modules, developing diagnostic skills, redefining role expectations, and developing the ability to create modular instructional materials for their own pupils. This has been a tremendously exciting aspect of our work. It has enabled school districts to respond quickly to the changing needs of the times and of the pupils and has eliminated, in a sense, the need for another certificate because both the teaching professionals and the school districts throughout the state have recognized that this is a need, and both are anxious to improve the quality of teaching and the quality of learning on the part of the pupils.

MANCHESTER: All of this has been very glowing. There must be some unsolved problems, Miss Harrison?

HARRISON: Well, there is always the affective area.

MANCHESTER: Would you mind elaborating?

HARRISON: Everyone agrees that the affective attitudes that people have, how children feel about other children and about the world they live in, is of great importance, but that is also a very difficult thing to teach. We believe, for instance, that all children should accept differences in others without prejudice or bias, and we believe that prospective teachers should do the same. However, if you have an explicit performance criteria that a teacher will call on minority children at least four times in every class period and will always praise them at the conclusion of their comments, the prospective teacher will do it. But the prospective teacher who may be bigoted to begin with, may be equally as bigoted when he completed the program, and the ability to demonstrate that performance when it is explicit in a training program does not guarantee that the teacher will exhibit that performance when in a classroom. On the other hand, if the teacher is able to perform in such a way that he or she appears not to be bigoted, that might ultimately be as much as one could expect.

COLLINS: There are great problems in working in the affective area. Schools have not solved them. We give students affective experiences working with minority children, visiting welfare offices, doing home visits, case studies of poverty children, etc. We can't guarantee that these achieve what we hope, but we're positive that what we hope to achieve is worth achieving, and that these, at least, appear to be an appropriate way to proceed. I'd say we've only made a small beginning but this area is so important that even a small beginning is a great benefit.

MANCHESTER: Well, just to conclude, Dr. Collins, are there things that you think are problems?

COLLINS: Oh, we have many. Most of all people who look at the competency movement and even at the teaching centers at this advanced stage think that we have all the answers, and we don't. We have been able to make explicit a great many things and we are pretty sure that those things are now being included appropriately in the preparation of teachers; we are able to guarantee that ninety-five percent of the elementary children will read at or above their age level, for example. But we still recognize that there are many things, possibly many important things that can never be quite made explicit. The love of a

poem, the desire to read, the enjoyment of nature, the pleasure of conversation, a concern for others, are fundamental to our civilization, and should be fundamental to our school system. We haven't been able to guarantee that children, when they become adults, will treasure those things, but we are trying.

APPENDIX A

Teaching Center: Budget Comparison

Before

Expenditures	
Instructional staff (60% of budget)	\$3,000,000
Remainder (administration, operations and maintenance of plant, debt service and employee retirement benefits)	<u>2,000,000</u>
TOTAL	\$5,000,000
Source of funds	
State support (\$500 per pupil)	2,500,000
Local tax support (\$500 per pupil)	<u>2,500,000</u>
TOTAL	\$5,000,000

After

Expenditures	
Instructional staff	\$1,500,000
Teaching Center (administration, staff, facilities)	1,500,000
Remainder (administration, operations and maintenance of plant, debt service and employee retirement benefits)	<u>2,000,000</u>
TOTAL	\$5,000,000
Source of funds	
State support	2,250,000
Local tax support	2,250,000
Teaching center tuition	<u>500,000</u>
TOTAL	\$5,000,000

Comparable budget totals have been used to simplify an understanding of the two systems; actually inflation has each year caused center costs to rise. The percentages of support have, however, remained constant. The tuition waiver available for inservice teachers in the summer session also has resulted in a reduction of \$100,000 in tuition income; increased tax support has made up this difference.

The Texas Teacher Center Project

The AACTE Committee on Performance-Based Teacher Education serves as the national component of the Texas Teacher Center Project. This Project was initiated in July, 1970, through a grant to the Texas Education Agency from the Bureau of Educational Personnel Development, USOE. The Project was initially funded under the Trainers of Teacher Trainers (TTT) Program and the national component was sub-contracted by the Texas Education Agency to AACTE.

One of the original thrusts of the Texas Teacher Center Project was to conceptualize and field test performance-based teacher education programs in pilot situations and contribute to a state-wide effort to move teacher certification to a performance base. By the inclusion of the national component in the Project, the Texas Project made it possible for all efforts in the nation related to performance-based teacher education to gain national visibility. More important, it gave to the nation a central forum where continuous study and further clarification of the performance-based movement might take place.

While the Texas Teacher Center Project is of particular interest to AACTE's Performance-Based Teacher Education Committee, the services of the Committee are available, within its resources, to all states, colleges and universities, and groups concerned with the improvement of preparation programs for school personnel.

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