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ABSTRACT

In a memorandum to the Chief of Planning and Program Development, Teacher Corps, the Program Development Specialist for the Pontiac Urban Corps in Oakland examines the role of the program development specialist. Although the program was successful in that 31 beginning teachers were placed and modules were developed in three discipline areas, the fact that the program development specialist served less than half-time limited the achievements of the program. Within the time limitations, the major facets of the program specialist's role included serving as (a) module coordinator for reading and language arts, (b) demonstrator of desired teaching behaviors, and (c) manager of a feedback system designed to provide significant team members with information for use in strengthening the program. The drawbacks to the program caused by underfunding of the program specialist's position were that (a) close affiliation with the staff was precluded; (b) development of an overall management system was severely hampered; and (c) field testing and evaluation of modules developed during the course of the project were inadequate. (HMD)

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June 11, 1971

MEMORANDUM

TO: Margaret A. Chambers, Chief, Planning and Program Development
Branch, Teacher Corps

FROM: George E. Coon, Project Evaluator, Pontiac Urban Corps, Oakland
University

SUBJECT: Interim Report: Program Development Specialist's Role

The year spent as program development specialist with the Oakland University Pontiac Urban Corps Program has been fascinating and frustrating; fruitful and foreboding. The fascinating and fruitful aspects are inherent in a program such as Oakland's Urban Corps which was entirely field-centered. Under this approach teacher education has been removed from the sanctuary of the college classroom and placed where it really belongs - in the public school classrooms with the children for whom the program was designed.

Fascinating, too, are the young people recruited for Urban Corps. These young men and women appear genuinely concerned with helping youngsters here and now. They rightly demand a combination of theory and practice in programs which will result in their success in their classrooms. Their demands work in a fascinating way upon the college professors as well. Modules designed as the ultimate in teacher education become modified because of student criticism. Professors who had some years hence given up teaching children in public school classrooms began teaching children to demonstrate specifically sought after competencies. Discussion around the campus halls began to reflect such terminology as "modules," "competencies," and "field-centered instruction."

The program was described as being fruitful because as a direct result of the program there will be thirty-one beginning teachers whose year of intensive education will have given them a solid foundation on which to base their careers of teaching educationally disadvantaged children in urban areas.

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Fruitful, too, were the modules developed in three discipline areas. These learning devices, reflecting several elementary models in design, have been utilized, revised or restructured, and are in the process of further study to fit into an over-all design of program management. The competency-based modular design is one of several designs being considered for the total undergraduate program in teacher education at Oakland University. Should such a breakthrough materialize, fruition beyond the widest hopes of National Teacher Corps would be realized.

The frustration referred to in the opening statement and the foreboding thoughts stem from the same source; namely, the role of program management specialist is underfunded. To accomplish the tasks designated for one in this role calls for a full-time commitment to the program. Anything less demeans the program or the person serving the program. Speaking personally, I cannot envision anyone serving in this capacity in a fully functioning competency based program on a part-time basis. Working less than half-time this year has contributed greatly to the frustrations I encountered in the program. Such divided efforts resulted in a less-than-satisfactory job (from our own personal feelings about the task) of implementing a genuine management system. This, in spite of the efforts of Professor Lougheed, Project Director, who took time from her directorship to aid with the management functions. I consider the NCERD - Teacher Corps - Oakland project to be a great success. I believe this success would have been even more significant if more time could have been devoted to the program. My role of program management specialist as I perceived it during the past year, involved the following facets:

1. Contributions to the program included (a) serving as module coordinator for the reading-language arts phase of the program. As coordinator of this module, I worked with other members of the reading staff at Oakland University in designing the scope and sequence of the module; writing the module, and evaluating the behavioral changes brought about. As many behaviors depended upon classroom performance, a large segment of time was spent in observing in classroom settings. (b) Closely allied to the function of evaluating the implementation of the knowledge or skills of modular instruction was the demonstration of sought after behaviors in classrooms where interns were not internalizing the concepts of the modules. In such classrooms I taught demonstration lessons emphasizing the sought-after behaviors. This was not a major function of the role; but did encompass many hours; as did the diagnosing of a child's instructional level, his frustration and independent levels in reading. One module was designed to develop skill in diagnosis. Evaluation of this skill called for the University instructors to assess growth (1) in a simulated setting and (2) in an on-site setting at a subsequent time. Both assessments were deemed vital. Both demanded time, especially the latter. (c) A third function I served was to manage the feed-back system designed to provide Dr. Lougheed, as director, the various module coordinators and significant team members with data to strengthen any aspect of the program. As

previously cited, the program was designed as a truly field-centered program. Professor Lougheed arranged for those instructors involved in modular instruction to spend part of their time in classrooms, other Oakland University personnel also spent time in the public school classrooms as advisors. In each case the University personnel filled in observation sheets (see Appendix) which were forwarded to me as management specialist. I acted as clearing-house for these reports -- forwarding the information to the appropriate source.

Time and energy limitations did not permit what I consider to be a significant feature of the role of the project management specialist - that of providing assistance to those instructors developing modules in the various disciplines. In-service assistance sounds trite at the University level, yet is a term which is descriptive of what I mean. If the management specialist can be a part of the module development within each discipline, he can provide common means of assessment, a common framework for modular development, and most importantly he can design a management system which incorporates all facets of the program.

2. Appendix B contains sample modules in the fields of mathematics, reading and language arts, and children's literature. These modules reflect no common framework. The mathematics modules are based upon Comfield's conceptual model; the children's literature modules were designed by their author; the design followed by the reading-language arts staff reflect the Michigan State University Model.
The 1971-72 Oakland Urban Corps program reflects the growth of the University staff in modular development and reinforces the earlier statement of the need for a full-time management specialist. The modules for the ensuing year will be built around a common model, the Houston Model. Revisions of existing modules are being made around this base. Modules are being developed in behavioral management.
3. Problems faced during the year include those already mentioned. Perhaps the greatest problem encountered centered around my role perception of a program management specialist and the amount of time I could realistically give to the program given my other duties. Because of the time-assignment discrepancy, several perceived roles had to be eliminated. I had to forego the close affiliation with the staff during the development of modules. A second concession to time was the development of an overall management system. Although a system of sorts was developed, it was of a more crisis-oriented type than a true management type. A third problem centered around adequate funds for true field-testing and evaluating modules. Modules were designed only in Urban Corps. No control groups existed for comparison purposes. No time was available for the myriad of research possibilities which existed in the program beyond those written in as a part of the modules. More time, effort and financial resources must be directed toward research and program development.

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4. In addition to the competencies implied in the paragraphs above, I see as prerequisites for a program development specialist: a familiarity with the Teacher Education models; knowledge of the common strands within models, the unique features of individual models, and the feasibility of implementation of the various aspects of the modules. Secondly, the program management specialist should be familiar with urban education in all of its ramifications. He especially has to be aware of program designed for the educational disadvantaged - their shortcomings and their virtues. A third prerequisite for the program management specialist is that he be a research design and evaluation person. This quality is critical; the other qualities are secondary to it.

In response to the inquiry about approximate percentages of time spent with groups, the following appears descriptive:

1. Directors	13%
2. University Instructors	10%
3. School Personnel	20%
4. Management People	5%
5. Corpsmen	50%
6. Community People	2%

It should be pointed out that my involvement with the Urban Corps was with only one aspect of the program, namely, that portion dealing with the NCERD grant. The role of program management specialist are my views perceived from that perspective.

GC/cmj

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APPENDIX A
Observation Sheet - Pontiac Urban Corps
On-Site Instructional Visits

Team:

School:

Date:

Activity:

Goal:

Methodology:

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Evaluation:

Observations:

Feedback

Team:

Master Teachers - Team Leaders:

Interns:

Other professionals:

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