

NATIONAL DISSEMINATION

The Institute has always regarded national “dissemination” of its approach to be part of its mission: hence its conferences, books, videos, and the periodical *On Common Ground*. The Institute continued and expanded this effort during 1997 by responding to inquiries, publishing its periodical, completing a second videotape program, and engaging in a major effort, sponsored by the DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund, to explore the desirability and feasibility of establishing adaptations of the Institute through university-school collaboration at three other sites across the nation.

Publication of *On Common Ground*

To assist with the periodical sponsored by the Teachers Institute, *On Common Ground*, the Editorial Board met for two days in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on August 17-18, 1997. The Board’s role is in keeping with the original conception of the periodical: that *On Common Ground* not be merely descriptive or promotional of particular collaborative programs but that it provide a forum for thoughtful, provocative, and analytical writing about this educational field. The Board has been of invaluable assistance not only in conceiving of the nature of the publication, but also in formulating topics and approaching individuals to write articles for each number the Institute publishes. On this occasion the Board once again addressed the contents, illustration, appearance, and circulation of the periodical, focusing especially on the next issue, Number 8. The Board discussed articles submitted and possible images for Number 8, and considered the topics that might be emphasized in Numbers 9 and 10. James Vivian made clear to the Board that continuance of *On Common Ground* beyond Number 8 would depend upon funding that had not yet been obtained. The Board was also apprised of the current planning for a possible national demonstration project, and it welcomed the possibility that *On Common Ground* might be a vehicle for disseminating the on going results of such a project.

Distinguished contributors helped to assess what school-university partnerships have accomplished in the last fifteen years and what challenges now face such partnerships.

With support in part from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Institute prepared one number of the periodical during 1997, which was published as Number 8 (Winter 1998). The theme for this Number was “Building Partnerships for Our Children.” An array of distinguished contributors including among others Gerald N. Tirozzi, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education in the U. S. Department of Education; John Brademas, Chairman of the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities; Gene I. Maeroff, who directs the Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media at Teachers College, Columbia University; J. Myron Atkin, Professor of Education at Stanford University; Russell Edgerton, formerly president of the American Association for Higher Education; and David L. Warren, President of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities — helped to assess what school-university partnerships have accomplished in the last fifteen years and what challenges now face such partnerships.

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Several contributors recognized the importance of the Institute to this national effort. Gerald N. Tirozzi said: “The Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute has been a beacon of hope for what is possible when a significant partner and an enlightened school district commit to working closely and cooperatively together to enhance teaching and to improve the teaching-learning process.”

John Brademas said: “. . . in part inspired by the success over nearly two decades of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, the President’s Committee calls for partnerships to ‘improve instruction in the arts and the humanities by encouraging colleges, universities, and cultural organizations to cooperate with local school systems’ One sure way of achieving [the objective of the Committee] is to encourage communities throughout the United States to establish the kind of partnerships pioneered by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute.”

The Editorial for Number 8, “Taking Stock and Looking Ahead,” surveyed the four years of publication of this periodical, noting the high points in each Number, and making clear the scope and sequence that had been planned and supervised by the Editorial Board. The Editorial also set forth a summary of the Institute’s year of planning for a National Demonstration Project that might be supported by the DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund.

National Demonstration Project

1997 has been a year of intensive planning toward a national demonstration of the Institute’s collaborative approach to schooling in areas where a significant proportion of children come from low-income backgrounds. With support from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund, the Institute has been exploring the feasibility and desirability of establishing such partnerships at a number



Michael Marsland

National Demonstration Project Planning Session held on May 19, 1997. (Clockwise from left: Peter Herndon, Patricia Lydon, Joyce Bryant, Reverend Frederick J. Streets, Cynthia E. Russett, Charles S. Serns, Jules D. Prown, Sabatino Sofia, Jay L. Robinson, and Manuel N. Gómez.

“The Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute has been a beacon of hope for what is possible.”

—Gerald N. Tirozzi



Michael Mansland

National Demonstration Project Planning Session held on May 19, 1997. (Left to right: Manuel N. Gómez and Thomas R. Whitaker.)

The Institute has been exploring the feasibility and desirability of establishing such partnerships at a number of sites.

of sites. To assist in this effort it created a Planning Team comprised of James R. Vivian, Director of the Institute; Carla Asher, Program Officer, DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund; faculty members from Yale University who have led Institute seminars; teachers and an administrator from the New Haven School system who have been Institute Fellows; and teachers, faculty members, and administrators drawn from the Albuquerque, New Mexico, school system, the University of California at Irvine, and the University of Michigan. [See Appendix for a complete listing of the Planning Team.] The Institute surveyed 33 sites that had over the years shown interest in its approach, seeking to determine whether they might wish to adapt that approach to their own situations, and spelling out the criteria that would have to be met by any such adaptations. On the basis of responses to the survey, and previous and further contacts, members of the Planning Team visited during the summer the following five sites: University of Houston/Houston Public Schools; University of California at Irvine/Santa Ana Public Schools; University of New Mexico/Albuquerque Public Schools; Washington University/St. Louis Public Schools; and Johns Hopkins University/Baltimore Public Schools. A majority of the Planning Team participated in one or more of those visits.

Those visits and other correspondence with additional sites led the Planning Team to conclude that indeed the time is right, at a number of urban school districts serving students from low-income communities, for the establishment of several "demonstration projects" committed to the principles of collaboration that the Institute has developed over the past two decades.

The Institute therefore proposed in October, 1997, to the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund a four-year project that would constitute a major step

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toward the nationwide establishment of adaptations of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute. The proposal envisages an invitation to 14 sites that are suited to the development of such adaptations, suggesting that they submit their own proposals for five-and-a-half month Planning Grants for 1998. There would be a voluntary information session in New Haven for the invited sites. Each proposal would consist of the programmatic and financial expectations to be contained in a later application for three-year support, with appropriate and increasing cost-sharing, to establish a particular version of the Institute. On the basis of these proposals, a National Panel would recommend to James R. Vivian, Director of the Institute, five or six sites that seem most deserving of subsequent three-year support for this purpose. These Planning Grants, like the later Implementation Grants, would be actually re-grants by the Institute out of a total grant received from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund.

During the balance of 1998, the Institute would then work closely with the five or six sites awarded Planning Grants. (Indeed, the Institute is also seeking additional funding that might make possible a larger number of such grants, and a larger number of demonstration sites.) There would be some site visits by members of the New Haven Implementation Team, a group drawn from the larger Planning Team [for complete listing see Appendix]. There would be a July Intensive Session that would include "national seminars" and other meetings to make evident in detail and "from the inside" the working of the Institute's policies and procedures. Holders of Planning Grants could then apply for three Implementation Grants for the period from 1998 through 2001.

Those awarded Implementation Grants (by the same procedure as before) would then work closely with the Institute as they established their own collaboratives, and their own annual set of seminars, adjusting the Institute approach to the resources and the needs of their specific locations. There would be, for example, continuing directors' meetings, a national steering committee of teachers, a complementary committee of university faculty, another July Intensive Session in 1999 (with "national seminars" now shaped through conversation with the three sites), and three conferences in October of 1999, 2000, and 2001 to share the ongoing challenges and results.

Because the ground would be carefully prepared for a self-sustaining organization at each of the demonstration sites, the expectation would be that they would sustain the program activities after the grant period is completed. Such a national demonstration project would not only benefit the teachers and students in those communities; it would also establish a potentially expandable network of teachers institutes that share a common purpose, a network that should have a significant impact upon education reform throughout this nation.

The entire process would be documented by persons working closely with the Institute, by persons at the demonstration sites, and by an evaluation to be commissioned by the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund.

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