

DRAFT (1/5/82)

YALE-NEW HAVEN TEACHERS INSTITUTE

Background:

On December 7 and 8, 1981 I visited the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute. This was, for me, a stimulating and rewarding experience and I wish to thank everyone who contributed so generously of their time and welcomed me so enthusiastically to the educational community in New Haven. I wish especially to thank Jim Vivian, Director of the project, for arranging a most productive visit and for maintaining just the right balance of detachment and support.

The Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute was created in 1978 as a joint project of Yale University and the New Haven public schools. The goal of the program is to use university resources to improve teaching and learning in the New Haven public schools.)

✓ Through the Institute, middle and high school teachers work with Yale faculty to strengthen their academic background and to develop new materials for the classroom. During the past three years approximately one-third of the eligible middle and high school teachers in New Haven have participated as fellows in the Institute. About one half of these <sup>teachers</sup> have participated more than once. In addition, several dozen Yale faculty have been actively involved as consultants or instructors.

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The initial three-year grant from The National Endowment for the Humanities is coming to an end. The Institute confronts hard choices. Strengths and weaknesses of the current program must be candidly assessed and priorities for the future must be shaped. After an intensive

two-day visit I'm pleased to present tentative impressions and suggestions, acknowledging that my own mental snapshots will necessarily overlook essential <sup>issues</sup> ~~subtleties~~ and leave key ~~aspects of the program~~ unaddressed.

#### Strengths of the Program:

I must report--at the very outset--that the impact of the Yale-New Haven Institute far exceeded my expectations. <sup>my own</sup> Past experience (including ~~my~~ <sup>as director</sup> three years of The Santa Barbara Coordinated Education Project) <sup>has</sup> ~~have~~ left me suspicious of such ventures. School-college collaboration frequently is either ceremonial with ~~many~~ "showcase" ~~"goodwill"~~ luncheons or <sup>its bureaucratic</sup> ~~it is preoccupied with the machinery of cooperation character-~~ <sup>and how</sup> ~~ized by many committee and organizational~~ <sup>planning sessions</sup> ~~meetings~~. Rarely does the program get to the heart of the matter--helping teachers and advancing the quality of education.

The Yale-New Haven teachers project is a dramatic exception to this rule. After talking with dozens of teachers and visiting classrooms I conclude that this project has fulfilled its stated goals. In this program teachers are academically strengthened and classroom instruction is improved. Three characteristics have led to this success.

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<sup>first</sup>  
 2. <sup>the project has</sup> Classroom teachers are involved. ~~There are~~  
<sup>participate</sup>  
~~teacher~~-coordinators in each <sup>school</sup> who clearly are  
 committed and who pass on their enthusiasm to  
 their colleagues. I felt this strongly during  
 my visits to Jackie Robinson and (Rita: call & get the name of the 2nd school I visited)  
<sup>school</sup>  
 schools. At each <sup>school</sup> ~~institution~~ I was hosted by  
 the Institute coordinator who struck me as an  
<sup>exceptionally</sup>  
 essentially able person who had the respect of  
 colleagues generated, in part, I suspect, by  
 the University connection.  
 In addition, these <sup>teacher</sup> coordinators meet regularly <sup>as a group,</sup>  
<sup>working on</sup>  
 establishing a kind of "shadow administration"  
 for the project overall. One of the most  
 impressive <sup>features</sup> parts of my visit was the after-school  
<sup>session</sup>  
 session I had with 15 coordinators from the New  
 Haven schools. Arriving after a fatiguing day  
<sup>teacher</sup>  
 they turned, with enthusiasm, to key issues.  
How can we improve our work? How can the  
 Institute best help us meet this goal? Indeed with  
<sup>constantly</sup>  
 the battering ram of bad publicity hammering  
 away at the schools the dedication and optimism of  
<sup>these teachers inspire, don't</sup> while speaking of teachers  
 the group was touching. Finally, it is most  
<sup>Portuguese</sup> ~~Portuguese~~ <sup>It must be I must underline its</sup> significant  
 significant that the content of the summer project  
 is shaped by teachers. It's the teachers who  
 identify the topics to be studied and then the  
<sup>united</sup>  
 University ~~shapes~~ seminars to provide integrative  
 themes. <sup>This significance of teacher leadership</sup>  
<sup>cannot be overestimated.</sup>

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Second

2. Yale University is committed. Typically <sup>Called into</sup> programs of this sort <sup>- when they exist at all -</sup> are managed by Schools of Education. Several bureaucratic <sup>larger</sup> ~~campuses~~ separate the project and the university's top administration. At Yale, no such bureaucracy exists. Yale has no School of Education and in this case, ~~at least~~, that's a plus. Chief university administrators know about the program and ~~they~~ give it full support. This university backing pays off in very tangible ways. Teachers in the program have access to full resources of the university. For the first time classroom <sup>may</sup> teachers feel at home <sup>they</sup> on campus. Time and time again, I heard the teachers speak of the excitement of being part of the Yale community and for using Yale facilities. <sup>having access to the library, the opportunity to attend lectures to be, in short, a part of an academic community.</sup>

3. Top Yale faculty serve as mentors. Frequently <sup>distinguished</sup> school projects are supported by "fringe" faculty or <sup>by college</sup> those working in research who <sup>use</sup> ~~view~~ the schools as a laboratory for their own advancement. It is truly remarkable that world-ranking faculty at Yale are committed to this program. Especially significant is the feeling they convey to teachers that they <sup>truly</sup> care. The faculty are viewed as colleagues and--not surprising--the respect was <sup>a good faculty said that there are 'most truly' teachers.</sup> mutual. In every interview Institute participants spoke glowingly of the academic excellence of the program, and <sup>I heard</sup> ~~they~~ <sup>the great teachers</sup> told stories of help they had

One teacher said with genuine enthusiasm "245 great & interesting interviews with the world's best."

and they were committed to the program because they were <sup>the substance</sup> ~~the substance~~, not methods.

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given time, after ~~receiving~~ <sup>receiving</sup> the call of duty.  
~~received and raved about the substance of~~

the courses. One teacher told of receiving  
a book from <sup>this</sup> Yale <sup>program</sup> faculty member long after  
the Institute was over. Another told of faculty member  
visits <sup>my</sup> to her classroom to help teach a Shakespeare  
unit. I pressed to get some signal that <sup>the</sup> faculty  
"pulled rank." <sup>and looked down on the teachers.</sup> I left convinced that the rela-  
tionship was authentic.

Equally impressive were Yale faculty comments  
<sup>about</sup> ~~suggesting how impressed they were by the~~  
teachers with whom they worked. They gained  
respect for the <sup>quality & dedication of the fellows.</sup> teachers and their work. One  
~~participating~~ faculty put it directly. The  
teachers he said are "rather more heroic than  
ones colleagues."

Fourth

4. The program is well run. Traditionally,  
collaborative programs fall between the slats.  
They are at once "everyone's business" and  
"no one's business." In time they fall apart. Jim  
Vivian has guided the <sup>program</sup> Institute with great skill,  
bridging the gap between the University and the  
community. He has convinced skeptics on both  
sides that the program has integrity and is worth  
their time.

Yale - New Haven  
Institute is  
well  
run.

From  
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from the urgent to the essential. <sup>Endant for the</sup>  
~~The Funding of the Institute.~~ The National Humanities  
~~grant is running out.~~ This money has provided the core  
of funding and if the grant is not renewed or <sup>H</sup> new funds  
secured the Institute cannot continue in its present  
form. ~~While the unity of the New Haven school district have~~  
~~demanded~~ <sup>venture</sup>  
Given the remarkable success of the ~~adventure~~ the  
prospects of continued funding from NIH or from some  
other philanthropic source--look good. This program  
is so vital to New Haven that local private support  
should be aggressively pursued. Business in the com-  
munity should be enthusiastic about a program that  
works.

However, the central issue is whether the sponsoring institutions will also give support. I do not believe that this program should live exclusively on soft money. As the Institute moves beyond the experimental stage both Yale University and the New Haven city schools have an obligation to invest. *I am, Martin*

have an obligation to invest. It seems plausible to suggest that the salary of the director should be <sup>at least</sup> covered by the County and the school district should <sup>in turn</sup> carry a modest portion of the teacher's stipend since the program involves individual teachers and contributes to district-wide curriculum development.

*What should be the Institute Administrative Structure?*  
~~The Administrative Structure of the Institute.~~ A  
 related matter <sup>is tied</sup> relates to structure. Where <sup>should</sup> is the

Institute ~~to~~ be lodged in the administrative structure of the University? It's not surprising that up to now this extramural project has been "free floating." It's true, the director has worked with a university advisory committee <sup>but in</sup> a very real sense <sup>he doesn't report</sup> he has been responsible only to himself. There is an advantage to such independence, but there is weakness, too. The program lacks accountability and is vulnerable.

*It seems clear that if the project is to move beyond the*  
 Again, as phase two begins I recommend a more formal <sup>experimental</sup> structure. <sup>is required</sup> The Institute should be given an administrative home at a high level within the university, while still <sup>protecting its</sup> permitting it the flexibility <sup>required</sup>.

This raises the issues of the ~~faculty~~ status of the director. One could argue that the leader of this project should also have high faculty rank. (It should be high or not at all.) However, such a <sup>rational</sup> plan

is, I suspect, unrealistic. Directing the Institute is a full-time job, and few <sup>if any top professors would be</sup> faculty are willing to <sup>abandon</sup> become their <sup>profession</sup> professors for such work. A well <sup>repected</sup> administrator who believes in the program and is credible seems a <sup>most appropriate</sup> ~~response~~.

I suggest that the Institute not develop a more carefully selected faculty, one that is in contact with - and helps - public schools.

who should

Participants in the Institute? Is it the intention

of the Institute to work with all of the teachers

in New Haven? If so, how is that objective to be

fulfilled? Does the current self-selective method

make good teachers better and bypass those who need

it most?

How does the Institute relate to New Haven Curriculum Reform? The Impact of the Program. I found full support

for the Institute in the central office of the New

Haven schools. However, several key questions remain

unanswered. It's still not clear to me how the

materials developed by each teacher are related to

the overall curriculum of New Haven. How does the

new unit develop by a single teacher making its way

systematically into the total system? There seem

to be some confusion about the work of a single

fellow and the overall seminar themes taught by the

Yale faculty.

#### Conclusion:

One final note. The Institute is an educational venture

and on those terms it must be measured. However, I cannot

avoid an observation or two relating to politics of the

situation. It's no secret that the University and New Haven

are two separate worlds. The distance between these communities

is great indeed. The challenge of the 80s is to find a way

for these worlds to meet and from my observation the Institute

offers dramatic promise. It has put a human face on the

This may appear to be an evaluation system. And yet I am pained to confirm here. In the end, it made sense to share uncertainties about what about the future?

Initially used as a vehicle for reform since by the total effect

for a few discipline areas there seem to be some common action research leading to the Institute and central office curriculum coordination - or as the teacher reported.

the point is that the Institute is a great asset and it should be more



University, opened doors and focused resources where they are needed most. The University has gained <sup>internally</sup> ~~enrollment~~ from the Institute in terms of creditability and respect. *and for both very practical reasons the program should be nurtured and sustained.*  
*not educational or political*

One final note. What should the Institute do about outreach? Can the program be ~~more~~ planted elsewhere? The answer is both "yes" and "no". Surely, ~~the~~ the basic structure can be built in another community. On the other hand, the program works because a distinguished ~~and~~ <sup>highly</sup> league institution is involved.