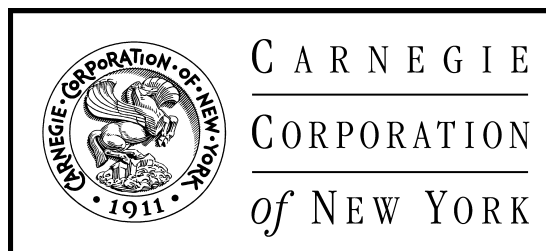


2002 Carnegie Challenge

Teaching as a Clinical Profession: A New Challenge for Education

by Michael deCourcy Hinds



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Assess, diagnose, prescribe and adjust practice to reflect new research, training and experience—that’s what a modern clinical professional does. The job description not only fits physicians who see patients in clinics, it precisely defines the work of teachers who see students in classrooms. To many Americans, the analogy may smack of *Ripley’s Believe It or Not*, for the shocking truth is that teachers need to know and be able to do far more than the nation understands or appreciates. That wide gap in public awareness suggests the scope of the challenge facing public school reformers today: developing the public and political will to make the needed investments in comprehensive teaching reform, which is the keystone in the archway of all other school reforms.

Our society has not appreciated teaching as a highly skilled profession; quite the reverse. Teaching has long been treated as an art, craft or second-rate occupation—the latter view popularized by variations on George Bernard Shaw’s 1903 aphorism “He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches.” Since World War II there has been waxing and waning public concern about improving schools of education, finding and keeping good teachers and providing them with the academic, pedagogical and clinical knowledge they need.¹ Amazingly, for more than 40 years, American schools have had chronic shortages of qualified math and science teachers—in 2000, these specialists were needed by 95 percent of urban districts and no improvement was in sight five years out.² States and districts have typically dealt with these and other openings by

decreasing standards for who can teach rather than increasing incentives for qualified people to teach—in most states, teachers are still paid less than any other occupation requiring a college degree.^{3,4}

The teaching profession’s long and lingering reputation as a low-status job for women continues to sabotage efforts to strengthen the profession, says Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, who was recently appointed dean of the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University. “For too long, teaching was considered women’s work, therefore mindless,” says Lagemann. “The issue of prestige is central to the problem. That’s part of what still keeps the salaries low and the working conditions impossible.”

In the postwar period, when women had few professional career choices other than teaching and when there were plenty of high-pay, low-skill manufacturing jobs, there was no urgent need for teaching reforms. On top of that, a landmark study in 1966, based on the very best information then available, confirmed the prevailing view among educational scholars that good teachers and good schools could not overcome the disadvantages of growing up in poverty.⁵ Until more recent studies questioned the study’s premise that teachers couldn’t make a difference against such odds, teaching reforms stalled.

The 1970s and 1980s brought revolutionary change. Women broke into other professions and were no longer a captive workforce for school dis-

tricts, causing immediate recruiting problems for schools. At the same time, shortages of highly skilled workers became a major problem for expanding businesses. And decent jobs for poorly educated workers began disappearing rapidly. Taken together, these trends became the driving force behind the school reform movement. Unfortunately, most policymakers put the cart before the horse: they launched school reforms without teaching reforms—as if reducing class sizes or raising student standards for all students were self-fulfilling improvements. They were not, and why not became clear as a spate of important studies, mostly in the 1990s, confirmed the common-sense notion that the quality of teaching is the single most important factor influencing student achievement.

Pupils assigned to a good teacher can learn a full grade level more than students assigned to an ineffective teacher, one study found.⁶ Several bad teachers in a row can derail a child's education, and research also indicates that teachers are so influential that variations in teacher quality alone can explain the differences in achievement of children from different socioeconomic backgrounds. (African-American pupils are nearly twice as likely as white pupils to be assigned to the least effective teachers, research indicates.⁷) Investments in teacher education, moreover, are much more effective in raising student achievement than similar investments in other non-instructional school reforms.⁸

Even with this breakthrough research, teaching reforms took off slowly. In a report card on the

schools, published in *Education Week* last year, no state received a letter grade of A for its accomplishments in improving teacher quality. One state, North Carolina, received a B+ and three other states received B's. But 24 states received C's, 18 received D's and 4 received F's.⁹ Although some educators criticized the report card as being simplistic, it makes a valid point: not enough is being done to improve teacher quality.

Vartan Gregorian, president of Carnegie Corporation, has long advocated for strengthening the teaching profession and has made it a top priority of the Corporation. "Within the school reform movement, reform of the teaching profession must occupy the central role," he said recently. "My bookshelves are sagging under studies that say the quality of teaching is the most important variable affecting student achievement. This isn't controversial—a recent survey shows that nine in ten Americans believe that improving teaching is *the* most important strategy for improving schools.¹⁰ And leaders of the nation's major business organizations¹¹ just recently added their voices to a chorus of civic leaders, educators and public officials who have all called for strengthening the teaching profession and making that agenda the centerpiece of the school reform movement. In short, if we really want to improve learning, we have no choice but to improve teaching. As the 19th century French philosopher Victor Cousin put it succinctly, 'As is the teacher, so is the school.'¹²

Americans know that good teachers make good schools but probably few could say what good teaching is or how it has changed. Just 15 or 20 years ago—and even today, in many lagging schools—a quality teacher was one who maintained order in the classroom, covered the required texts and topics and made sure that most students were learning. Being a good teacher today means facing a class of students of unparalleled diversity and being accountable for helping each and every pupil reach unprecedented standards of achievement. For a teacher to succeed, says Arthur Levine, president of Teachers College at Columbia University, he or she must “know about children’s development, different learning styles, pedagogy and the plethora of different ways for reaching children, curriculum, assessment, classroom management, ways to teach students who don’t speak English and children who have disabilities—and, of course, the teacher must know the subject matter well. Apart from that, the job is pretty easy,” he jokes. The difficulty of the job—aggravated by poor working conditions and pay—is clearly indicated by the shortage of urban teachers and high attrition rates among new teachers.

The national challenge now is to develop models for renewing the profession before the momentum for teaching reform dissipates. But what are effective ways to educate, train, support, compensate, evaluate and guide prospective teachers into the profession? What kinds of professional environments are essential for teachers’ success? How can a school support teachers’ idealism, creativity and

thirst for knowledge and new skills? How can the best teaching practices be identified, quantified in student achievement gains and widely shared with colleagues?

One conceptual answer is for society to treat teaching like the modern clinical profession that the nation needs it to be, according to Daniel Fallon, chair of Carnegie Corporation’s Education Division and architect of a major new initiative called *Teachers for a New Era*. “Education,” he writes in an introduction to the initiative’s prospectus, “should be understood as an academically taught clinical practice profession, requiring close cooperation between colleges of education and actual practicing schools.”

Essentially, the initiative calls for treating teachers as modern clinical professionals and focuses on reforming schools of education as a first step. Better teacher preparation and support, according to this strategy, will help beginning teachers do a better job in assessing students’ capabilities, diagnosing their learning styles, prescribing a curriculum and adjusting teaching practices to reflect the latest research, their own experience and that of their colleagues.

The initiative also seeks to transform schools of education into schools of modern clinical practice. For one thing, colleges are asked to provide their graduates with clinical residency programs, which are a bit like the residency programs in medicine. Teaching residencies will provide each beginning

teacher with an array of supports, including college faculty mentors and coaches in both teaching methods and academic content. In addition, the initiative requires the participating schools of education to conduct clinical research on the student achievement gains that result from their graduates' teaching practices. As college faculty circulate through K-12 schools and conduct research on successful teaching practices, they will be able to use that evidence to refine teacher education courses and advance the profession. Amazingly, this combination of research and its application is rarely pursued by schools of education today. But if teaching is to become a modern clinical profession, practitioners must routinely use clinical research to develop and promote teaching methods that are proven effective in raising student achievement.*

If the initiative succeeds, it will represent a major step forward for the nation's schoolchildren. But perhaps more than anything else, the concept underlying the initiative might set the stage for making many other necessary teaching reforms—such as improving teachers' autonomy, working conditions and compensation—that are absolutely critical to transforming the profession into a modern clinical one.

* Visit www.carnegie.org for a full description of *Teachers for a New Era*. The initiative revolves around three design principles:

- Decisions driven by evidence
- Engagement with the Arts and Sciences
- Teaching as an academically taught clinical profession

The initiative, which will include at least eight higher education institutions by 2004, involves a Corporation commitment of more than \$30 million for six schools of education. Joining the Corporation's initiative are the Ford Foundation and The Annenberg Foundation, with each committing \$5 million. The Rockefeller Foundation will cover the cost of a major ongoing external evaluation of the initiative. The number of participating universities could increase to more than eight if other foundations join the initiative.

Not Enough Preparation for Clinicians

The comparison of teaching to the medical profession has its obvious limits—among other things, teachers don't tend the sick—but a quick look at how young adults become doctors and teachers suggests the kind of work needed to make teaching into a modern clinical profession. Consider the career trajectory of a prospective physician: he or she starts out by earning a BS or BA degree with an emphasis on basic sciences—and usually with honors and a high score on the MCAT exam. If he or she is among the one-of-three applicants annually selected by four-year medical schools, the graduate student earns an MD and becomes a doctor—but is not yet an independent physician. MDs must serve a residency of three-to-seven years, depending on the medical specialty, under the supervision of senior physician educators at teaching hospitals. Most physicians continue their studies to become board certified in their specialty, and throughout their careers, they continue their medical education to meet the various requirements of states, boards, professional organizations and hospitals.

Teachers perform a less dramatic, but arguably more important clinical service, as an overwhelming majority of Americans tell pollsters that teachers, more than doctors, nurses, lawyers and some other professionals, provide the most benefit to society.¹³ Or as Lee Iacocca once said, "In a truly rational society, the best of us would be teachers, and the rest would have to settle for something less." Yet, by comparison to other professions, schoolteaching is an occupation with almost open

enrollment and relatively careless preparation, training and support.

In most states, the main requirement for prospective teachers is to graduate from a school of education, even one of the many hundreds that lack national accreditation. Once they graduate, they are usually on their own, isolated in their classrooms. Beginning teachers rarely receive adequate support from coaches or mentors. Also, school seniority systems traditionally assign novice teachers a full load of teaching and extra-curricular duties as well as the most challenging students in the district's most disadvantaged schools.

Making matters worse, many beginning teachers are not well-prepared, and even the best-prepared are not ready to step into the shoes of a veteran teacher on the first day of school. Licensing requirements vary enormously, and while some states have created strong, thoughtful requirements, others require little demonstrated knowledge or skill from those who would teach, according to Linda Darling-Hammond, a professor at Stanford University School of Education and the first executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. In 1997, Wisconsin, at the rigorous end of the teacher-education spectrum, required prospective high school teachers to major in the academic subject they plan to teach as well as take courses in learning theory, child and adolescent development, subject matter teaching methods, curriculum, technology, classroom management and teaching strategies for children with

special needs. They must also complete at least 18 weeks of supervised student teaching. Louisiana, at the other end of the spectrum, did not require courses in curriculum, teaching strategies, classroom management, technology, or the needs of special students. The state also licenses teachers to teach subjects they have not studied in any depth and requires only six weeks of student teaching. Wisconsin and 11 other states do not permit unlicensed teachers in the classroom; Louisiana and most other states routinely issue emergency licenses. In 1994, 31 percent of Louisiana's new teachers were uncertified and these "emergency" hires were not even required to have a college degree.¹⁴

It is not that qualified teachers are so hard to find. The problem is that they have better options than working in school systems that ignore their professional needs. Lisa Zanlandingham was one of the ones that got away. She apparently had everything a school board could wish for in a teacher at the start of her career: She was bright, energetic, idealistic, passionate about education and even willing to accept a salary that required parental help in making ends meet. But she quit after one year of teaching second-graders in Kocurek Elementary School—an Austin, Texas, school serving children mostly from low-income families. She submitted her resignation in spring 2001 and, at a school board meeting, shared feelings of being overwhelmed, exhausted, frustrated, isolated and financially stressed. "Some of my kids have behavioral problems," she said. "I love every one of them, but it's very, very challenging"—especially, she added,

when the school had no person or program to offer rookie teachers help with concerns about discipline, curriculum, parents' meetings and scores of other issues, both daunting and trivial. "I have five friends who all went through the University of Texas with me and got certified to teach, but went into the corporate world. They're all making a lot more money than I do and they don't come home dead."¹⁵

Zanlandingham is in good company. Within three years of starting teaching, "29 percent of all beginning teachers have left teaching altogether and after five years, 39 percent have left teaching altogether," reports Richard M. Ingersoll at the University of Pennsylvania.¹⁶ Recruiting teachers without improving the teaching profession is, he told *Education Week*, "like pouring water into a bucket with holes."¹⁷

Filling Holes in the Bucket

During recent years, many public and private organizations have drawn plans for rebuilding the teaching profession and there is widespread agreement about many of the steps that need to be taken. But what has been lacking from most of these well-thought out proposals is an overall vision that links teacher education with strengthening the profession, and that is what Carnegie Corporation is offering with its new teaching reform initiative. It won't work on a bumper sticker, but "make teaching into the modern clinical profession that the nation needs" provides a new framework

for making improvements—and a new way to help policymakers and taxpayers understand why they should support a major makeover of one of the nation's most important professions.

Teachers for a New Era builds on the unprecedented national consensus about strengthening the teaching profession. For example, there is enormous consistency in three recent sets of blueprints that were developed separately by business leaders, university presidents and educators with Corporation support.¹⁸ Overlapping recommendations on teacher education include: making schools of education central to the parent university's mission; insisting on accreditation for all schools of education; creating national standards for what teachers need to know and be able to do; organizing teacher education around academic standards for both teachers and students; requiring a bachelor's degree in the arts and sciences prior to studying pedagogy; and substantially increasing investment in teachers' professional development.*

These recommendations raise little controversy, with one major exception concerning the role of the nation's 1,300 schools of education and the "preservice" training they provide to most public

* On teachers' compensation and working conditions, recommendations in the three reports included: making teachers' salaries and career opportunities competitive with those in other professions; providing teachers with progressive career steps, with more pay and responsibility; making teachers' licenses and retirement benefits portable so that they can move freely from state to state; offering teachers 12-month employment options; giving teachers authority to design instructional programs in keeping with students' needs, rather than locking them into a one-size-fits-all curriculum; providing technology, services and staff that are essential to teacher productivity; providing new teachers with mentors and teaching coaches; and requiring all school districts to hire only qualified teachers and to remove incompetent teachers.

school teachers. Jon D. Snyder, dean of the Graduate School at Bank Street College of Education in New York, summarizes the controversy: “There is little difference across ideological lines about what new teachers need on the job. But there is major disagreement about what teachers need to know before they enter the classroom. The deregulation camp says preservice education is so bad that all it does is prevent good people from entering the field. They want to eliminate certification requirements and let school districts determine teacher qualifications. Most people on the other side, myself included, come down very hard on schools of education, but say ‘let’s make them better.’”

Among those in the deregulation camp is Kate Walsh, a senior policy analyst at The Abell Foundation—a Baltimore philanthropy that promotes educational reform, job creation and tourism; strengthening families; reducing drug addiction; and alleviating hunger and homelessness in Maryland. Walsh, with assistance from a group of other researchers, wrote the 2001 report, “Teacher Certification Reconsidered: Stumbling for Quality.” The report argues for eliminating regulations that require prospective teachers to take extensive course work at schools of education to be certified. Unconvinced that teacher education is linked with student achievement, they urged Maryland to replace its teacher education requirements for certification with a simple requirement for a bachelor’s degree and a passing score on an appropriate teacher’s exam. School districts, they argue, should be given more hiring authority and should also

provide novice teachers with comprehensive “induction” or transition programs that include reduced teaching loads and ample on-the-job training and professional development.¹⁹

The Abell report, seen by many as unintentionally undermining efforts to strengthen the teaching profession, prompted a fierce debate about the value of teacher education. Darling-Hammond, leading the defense, countered that teachers who enter the profession without preparation leave at rates of about 60 percent within the first two years of teaching and produce lower student achievement while they are teachers. Noting that advocates of deregulation also tend to oppose efforts to equalize public resources among rich and poor school districts, Darling-Hammond concludes, “These strategies routinely disadvantage urban students of color and low-income students who are disproportionately taught by those who are unprepared.”²⁰

Carnegie Corporation’s *Teachers for a New Era* initiative—in which Bank Street College participates—represents a strong endorsement of dean Snyder’s perspective: Many if not most schools of education are not doing a good job, but the nation can’t possibly get along without them, so “let’s make them better.”

The initiative is grounded on the fact that teachers have never before needed to know so much before entering the classroom—as well as the fact that all strong professions have excellent professional schools and high standards for entry. As mentioned

earlier, the initiative seeks to improve colleges of education by increasing faculty involvement in the clinical practice of teaching—in effect, bringing the ivory tower into the schoolyard.

This isn't a new idea, but it's rarely pursued with any depth. Bank Street College, which is a free-standing graduate school, is participating in the Carnegie Corporation initiative to expand its pioneering work in support of beginning teachers. Currently, Bank Street does not offer its graduates a two-year residency program, as envisioned by the Corporation initiative, but its MA program gives a hint of what a postgraduate residency might look like. Bank Street, for example, requires its graduate students to complete an academic year of supervised teaching. In this program, advisors visit schools and coach the novice teachers for a half day at least once a month. If a grad student is a student teacher, assistant teacher or intern, the advisors also work closely with the master teacher. In addition, the novice teacher meets a minimum of twice a month for an hour each time with the faculty advisor and once a week with the advisor and five or six other students to discuss ongoing challenges, and experiences with such things as curriculum, classroom management, policy issues, working with parents and reaching individual children. The aim of the conference group is more than simply providing support. Students also learn about other perspectives and experiences while learning to take responsibility for their own professional development—two skills they will need in their teaching career, and are part of Bank Street's goal of developing teacher leaders.

“Our year of supervised fieldwork is quite intensive,” says Judith Leipzig, former director of the Preservice Program in Early Childhood and Elementary Education and currently an advisor and course instructor at the college. Once the formal program ends, most advisors and advisees continue working together on an informal basis. “It's common for graduate students to contact former course instructors at the college, since our classes are small enough and student-centered enough to promote strong relationships between teachers and students.” Graduates who want to continue group discussions led by a faculty member can sign up for Leipzig's new course, “New Teachers Online Forum.” Begun last year, the one-credit course helped new teachers deal with immediate classroom issues, including helping young children cope with the September 11th terrorist attacks.

The Bank Street program—ranked as one of the nation's best by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future—will expand substantially under the Corporation initiative, which allows schools to bring their special strengths to bear upon the redesign of teacher education. Although not highly prescriptive, the initiative sets out guidelines that include a requirement for extensive collaboration and communication between colleges and schools. Master schoolteachers are expected to serve as visiting faculty at colleges, and college faculty are expected to serve as coaches and mentors to their graduates during two-year residency programs, which are based in K-12 schools. These teaching residents will receive

guidance in both teaching methods, from education faculty, as well as in academic areas, from faculty in the arts and sciences. Residents will also be offered a wide range of other opportunities and supports, such as summer workshops and online discussions and conferences. After successfully completing a residency, graduates will receive a new credential, one that signifies their higher level of professional training and that could become a new professional standard.

By itself, faculty participation in residency programs is expected to strengthen the teacher education curriculum by, among other things, encouraging more integration of theory and practice. As Fallon, the initiative's designer, puts it, "I can imagine a faculty meeting with a professor saying, 'My residents are all having trouble teaching basic math skills—they say they have run out of ideas for explaining it to their kids. I thought our math courses covered this pretty well, but clearly we've got to do a better job.'"

Such problems will also be revealed and addressed by faculty research on how well graduates perform—not just in their residency programs, but also indefinitely, as they become experienced teachers. The initiative encourages schools of education to cultivate long-term relationships with their graduates, so as to discover which teachers are routinely producing strong gains in student achievement—and why. "Tracking the teachers' effectiveness is the most revolutionary and important aspect of the initiative," Fallon says. "Such research is essential to improve teacher education and student learning."

Again, this idea isn't new, but it has not been well-developed or integrated into teacher education programs. Western Oregon University, a pioneer in this area, requires prospective teachers to create two "work samples" that indicate effective teaching and student achievement in separate three-to-five week units of instruction; successful completion of two work samples by students in all teacher preparation programs has been part of the state's requirements for obtaining a teaching license since 1991. Ideally, the work samples provide evidence of student learning that could help teacher preparation programs continually refine their curriculum to promote the most effective teaching strategies. In practice, though, the work samples do not have to meet any minimum standard for student achievement and are judged on more subjective criteria, says Mark D. Schalock, associate research professor at the Teaching Research Division of Western Oregon University. "Teacher education programs should be constantly determining how they are doing and how they can do better, but I'm not sure it's built into the culture of many programs," he says. Even at his university, he adds, there has not been a sustained effort in using the work sample methodology to refresh and refine the teacher education curriculum. "Collecting the information, analyzing it, sharing it with faculty, having faculty chew on it and see what it means for them—all those things take a lot of time and resources and commitment. And time, resources and commitment have ebbed and flowed."

Teaching Reform: Resources Are Starting to Flow

Generally speaking, teaching reform has moved higher up on the public agenda than ever before. States, school districts, teacher unions and schools of education are making major efforts to strengthen the profession. Professional development schools—the name given public schools that are committed to having new teachers work closely with education professors and master teachers—have sprung up in hundreds of districts, largely due to the efforts of the Holmes Partnership, a national network of collaborating universities, professional organizations, unions and school districts.²¹ Most states, moreover, now require school districts to provide new teachers with so-called “induction programs.”

On paper, these induction programs provide novice teachers with mentors, teaching coaches and other supports; but in practice, these programs are often unworkable and uncoordinated. In addition, only 19 states require districts to offer such programs to *all* beginning teachers and only 10 of those 19 states pay any portion of the cost.²² California, one of the leaders in this area, last year spent about \$72 million to provide an induction program to every first- and second-year teacher. California continues to expand the popular program, which, among other measurable benefits, reduced new teacher attrition to 9 percent, compared to 37 percent for teachers who lacked similar professional assistance.²³

Darling-Hammond, at Stanford, has also collected a lot of data about pioneering efforts to strengthen

the teaching profession and improve student achievement. In her 2000 report, “Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of State Policy Evidence,” she highlights some of North Carolina’s successes, largely under the leadership of former Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., who, after leaving office, joined Carnegie Corporation’s Board of Trustees in 2000.

Starting in 1983, the state began investing hundreds of millions of dollars in programs to improve teaching quality. Policies included requiring schools of education to be accredited; increasing licensing requirements for teachers; starting a mentoring program for beginning teachers; investing heavily in professional development programs and academies; rewarding teachers for career achievements such as obtaining National Board Certification; linking new curriculum standards to teachers’ pre-service education and inservice training; creating a new professional standards board for teaching; requiring schools of education and public schools to provide prospective teacher with a year-long clinical experience; increasing salary incentives for teachers to pursue master’s degrees and National Board Certification; and authorizing funds to raise teacher salaries to the national average.²⁴

Since undertaking its investment in quality teaching, North Carolina has outpaced all other states in student achievement gains. In math and reading, for example, its fourth grade students moved from near the bottom in state rankings in 1990 to well above the national average in 2000.²⁵

Darling-Hammond reports that other states that have long invested in teaching reforms—Minnesota, North Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin and Maine—have the highest student achievement rankings in math and reading. At the same time, states like South Carolina and Georgia that established student standards and tests without investing in teaching reforms did not see increases in student achievement.²⁶

As welcome as the teaching reforms are, there still isn't enough agreement about what the profession should ultimately look like. Consequently, many educators interviewed for this paper welcomed the idea of organizing the renewal effort around the principle of transforming teaching into a modern clinical profession—one that includes a postgraduate residency program that continually cycles evidence of effective teaching practices back into teacher preparation programs. "It works for me," said Patricia A. Wasley, dean of the College of Education at the University of Washington. The college, with Corporation support, is developing another innovative teacher education model, which includes a master's degree program, mentoring and other supports. "Thinking about teaching as a clinical profession is helpful, because it attends to all the dimensions of teaching: the curriculum, the teaching strategy, the assessment. They are all interrelated, but over the years we have tended to focus on only one area or another instead of all of them at once."

Wasley also thinks teaching could be greatly improved by residency programs that convert all public schools into "teaching schools," akin to teaching hospitals in medicine. "When senior physicians do grand rounds with residents in teaching hospitals, they look at each patient's record, assess his condition, treatment and so forth," Wasley says. "We need to do exactly that in our schools: have senior educators help teachers assess what each child needs. Right now, teachers work all alone in their classrooms; they get no coaching, no feedback and no time to hone their skills. The only feedback they get is when they are evaluated twice a year by a principal. But when the only feedback is evaluative, teachers become overly sensitive to criticism, and freak out when told they could have done something differently."

Facing the Challenge

In some ways, the timing could not be much better for remodeling the profession as a modern clinical one. Education remains a top public concern and, more than ever before, is considered both a key to the middle-class and a ladder out of poverty. At long last, the school reform spotlight is finally focusing on teaching. And with research clarifying the critical importance of teaching, it is no longer politically or morally acceptable to respond to the chronic shortage of qualified teachers by lowering standards for new teachers. Consequently, the urban teacher shortage and the very high attrition rate of beginning teachers nationwide are putting enormous pressure on policymakers to raise teaching standards and salaries and improve working conditions.

President George W. Bush, in a recent radio address to the nation, put it simply: “The effectiveness of all education reform eventually comes down to a good teacher in a classroom. And America’s teachers are eager to put higher standards into action, and we must give them the tools to succeed. My administration has set a great goal for our public schools: a quality teacher in every classroom.”²⁷

The major barriers to an innovation of this scale include time, money, politics, public opinion and bureaucratic inertia. In addition, our highly decentralized education system—2.8 million teachers working in 90,874 public schools in 16,928 school districts—increases the magnitude and complexity of the challenge involved in remaking the teaching profession.²⁸

The challenge, of course, is greatest in poor urban and rural areas, says Levine at Teacher’s College. To a limited degree, he says, affluent suburban school districts already treat teachers as modern clinical professionals, for these suburbs get their pick of the best prepared candidates and provide them with relatively good working conditions, supports and salaries. But poor rural and urban districts have the least to offer in terms of salary, working conditions and support—and consequently, they can’t find enough well-qualified teachers. “Over the last 20 years of school reform,” he says, “we have done a marvelous job of improving American suburban schools, but with a couple of debatable exceptions we have never succeeded in turning around any

urban school system. We have a dual system of education, and the students who need the best teachers are faced with the least able teachers.”

Unfortunately, inner city schools will not likely be staffed by modern clinical professionals until federal law requires it, Levine believes. “I’ve come to favor an Education Bill of Rights that assures every child a qualified teacher, a safe school, a record for academic accomplishment and so on. Politicians know they need to talk about this issue, but don’t think they need to do anything about it,” Levine says. “People in the inner city don’t vote, and they are not on the street saying, ‘I’m mad as hell! I won’t take it anymore! I won’t send my kids to this school!’ We need the same kind of response to inner city schooling that we had to voting.”

Although the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1973 that schooling is a state responsibility, there is a federal precedent for stepping in—the government requires schools to provide children with disabilities an adequate and appropriate education. Do children from disadvantaged families have a disability? Levine thinks so.

No matter how change comes about, says Stanford’s Darling-Hammond, the heart of the political problem is a lack of public understanding about the demands of teaching and the knowledge, skills and training that teachers need today. To change attitudes, she sees the need for lots of good research that stimulates public discussion about the impact of different policy choices and strategies. “Many

policies have not been built on proof; we have got to have better data,” she says. As an example, she says, “State and federal policymakers throw billions of dollars into quick fixes and silver bullets. If we spent as much on improving teacher quality as we currently do on expanding testing, we would have much higher student achievement. Not a single one of the top ten ranked states for student achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress had a high-stakes testing program in place during the 1990s, yet most of the states at the bottom of national rankings had high-stakes testing and it didn’t help them get out of the basement.”

But teaching reforms of the kind advanced by *Teachers for a New Era* also require major investments. If beginning teachers, for example, start off with a lighter teaching load during their residency years, more teachers would have to be hired. If residency programs expand, schools of education would need to hire more faculty members. “It takes an enormous amount of faculty resources and there are already so many demands on people’s time for running a good teacher education program,” says Elaine M. Stotko, chair of the Department of Teacher Preparation at Johns Hopkins University. “Steps for professionalization have got to be tied to more money.” And prospective teachers, she adds, can’t be expected to pay any more, given what it already costs them to prepare for a generally low-paying profession.

Interestingly, Fallon, at Carnegie Corporation, believes the greatest obstacle to making teaching

into a modern clinical profession will not be money, but bureaucracy. “I think there are enough funds in the system that could be reallocated for new priorities,” he says. “The real challenge is to create a learning community where good practice gets replicated. Most school systems are not built to replicate success. Where there is innovation, these systems tend to stamp it out, even when that isn’t the intention. Innovation is threatening in a large bureaucracy.”

In a similar vein, Fallon does not expect schools of education to swarm over *Teachers for a New Era* as a brilliant model for renewing the profession. More likely, Fallon says, if the initiative is successful, it will be because more and more K-12 schools seek to hire teachers in residency programs—as residents and their sponsoring institutions develop a record for improving student achievement. Over time, he says, residency programs could become commonplace if states require them as a component of teacher certification.

It’s quite a challenge: remaking one of the nation’s largest, most neglected and under-appreciated occupations into an elite, research-based profession capable of providing all children with a first-class education. Given the limited public understanding of what it takes to be an effective teacher today, the term “modern clinical professional” may strike many people as meaningless wordplay—and that confusion goes to the heart of the problem. Our misunderstanding about the value of teachers, and the demands and challenges they face, may be the

biggest problem in American education. Solving it won't be easy, but an informed discussion is a good place to start. The strategy of strengthening colleges of education, as envisioned by Carnegie Corporation's initiative, *Teachers for a New Era*, will help to focus the debate.

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