The Development of the MET Program

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The development of the Master of Education in Teaching (MET) program is an evolutionary and on-going process. Since beginning planning in the spring of 1987 through present reflection, evaluation, and re-planning for the fall of 1996, there has been a pattern of steady growth, accompanied at times by growing pains. In this article the program coordinator and the chair of the original planning committee highlight some of the important events and ideas in that development.

The general direction of the MET program was established in the 1987 "Request for Authorization to Plan" approved by the University's Vice President for Academic Affairs.

> There is a national movement in the United States to upgrade teacher training. The faculty has made a commitment to move in this direction and we collectively are interested in developing the College of Education as a professional college on a par with other professional colleges and schools in the University. We are also committed to improving the quality of content knowledge that students possess before they enter the classroom as well as improving the teaching skills of students graduating from the College's teacher education programs. The College is a charter member of the Holmes Group and is dedicated to having a fully developed graduate level program for training teachers within the next five years. We believe that a jointly developed program with support of the DOE and support of the liberal arts colleges on campus can be a powerful influence in upgrading and improving the public school system in the State of Hawai'i. (Whitesell, 1987, Request for Authorization to Plan an Academic Program at Manoa).

John Dolly, Dean of the College of Education for a decade (1986-1995), brought the College into the Holmes Group and the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER) through the establishment of the Hawai'i School University Partnership (HSUP). Institutional members of HSUP were the College of Education of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa (COE), the Hawai'i State Department of Education (DOE), and the Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate (KSBE). The College's involvement in both of the national educational reform groups would subsequently influence all of the teacher education programs within the College. As a member of the Holmes Group, the Dean committed the College to developing a graduate level pre-service teacher education program with a significant part of the education and training taking place in professional development schools. In keeping with the agenda of HSUP and NNER, these "partner schools" and the College were to collaborate in both teacher education and school renewal. In his "Charge for Program Planning" (Memorandum, Dolly to Holmes Group Planning Committee, 6/26/87), Dolly said that the development of a graduate degree program that would qualify its graduates for initial teacher certification level would be "...an opportunity for the College to develop the most effective program it can offer within its available resources." During the next year, the planning committee was also designated as a task force of the Hawai'i School University Partnership, thus unifying the College's agenda in these two organizations.

The Holmes Group Planning Committee, made up of 13 faculty representing every department in the College of Education, public school teachers and principals, representatives of the DOE Office of Instructional Services and the Office of Personnel Services, the Executive Director of the Hawai'i School University Partnership, and representatives from the Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA) and Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate, took its charge seriously. The committee's early sessions were like graduate seminars with Chair Philip Whitesell leading discussions on school and teacher education reform. At the point when the committee felt that it had done enough reading and talking about "best practices" in other parts of the United States, members divided into work teams to design a graduate-level teacher certification program for presentation to the committee.

After much debate, the design that prevailed was one that drew its inspiration from viewing a ten-minute video on the medical training program at McMasters College, in Canada, based upon inquiry learning in clinical settings and case studies. Borrowing from innovative programs to prepare "better doctors," and the growing movement toward field-based teacher education programs, the Holmes Group Planning Committee voted to direct its energies to developing a proposal for a field-based program. A faculty member of the Department of Educational Foundations, Barry Bull, became principal writer of the program proposal. In Fall

1989, a draft document was presented to the faculty of the College. The proposal was formally approved by the College of Education Faculty Senate in Fall 1990 after thorough review.

For submission for approval by the Graduate School, the University Administration, and the Board of Regents, the proposal had to be re-written following administrative guidelines. In addition, individual course syllabi were developed, although planners had designed the program as an integrated series of seminars and field experiences. In practice, the program curriculum has been developed collaboratively by MET faculty, DOE partner teachers, and MET students. It continues to evolve with each new cohort.

In the Fall of 1990, a faculty member in the Department of Counselor Education, Aiko Oda, was asked by the Dean to "..see the proposal through the full approval process." To conform with other master's degree programs in the College, the degree designation was changed from Master of Science to Master of Education in Teaching. The final document, reviewed and approved by the Graduate Division (Spring 1991) and the UH-Manoa Faculty Senate, the MET program was described as:

> ...a two-year graduate program dedicated to the idea that teaching is a highly complex activity requiring reflective integration of theory and practice. The proposed MET will be a college program and will be inter-disciplinary and interdepartmental in theory and practice. Graduates of the program will qualify for teacher certification at the professional certification level in the State of Hawai'i. Students will be educated in cohort groups of approximately 40 each. The MET program uses an inquiry mode of problem-solving as the primary teaching/learning activity. Students will be placed in selected schools in the School/University Partnership from their first semester through their final semester of full-time teaching as interns. The program requires a high degree of collaboration among the MET students, the College of Education (COE) faculty, and the personnel from the Partnership Schools assigned to this program. (MET Program Proposal, January, 1991)

In Spring 1991, while the MET proposal was still pending approval by the Board of Regents, Dean Dolly and the MET Planning Committee decided to accept a cohort of 25 students as a pilot group to start in Fall 1991. The cohort of 15 students in elementary education and 10 students in secondary education was selected from among interested and qualified (i.e., qualified for graduate admission) students who had applied to the Professional Diploma (PD) program. In another example of inter-departmental collaboration, these students were initially admitted to the Master's in Educational Foundations program and later transferred to the MET after its final approval by the Board of Regents.

Meanwhile, under the leadership of Juvenna Chang, executive director of HSUP, an inter-institutional team undertook the establishment of partner schools for the MET program. In March, 1990, an HSUP task force had published a report entitled, "Exemplary Sites for the Education of Educators and School Renewal." Using this report's suggestions for criteria, school expectations and process, the team talked with district officers and school principals from every DOE district on Oahu and invited schools to submit a letter of application. This resulted in letters of interest from 24 schools, far more than the MET program could involve. This was a strong indication, however, that the public schools were willing to take a stronger role in teacher education.

The team, whose composition varied from time to time, then held conversations with the faculty of schools selected from the list of 24 to investigate further the possibility of forming a partnership. It was HSUP's position that the final decision lay in the hands of the teachers of the school. Ultimately, four DOE partner schools on the island of Oahu were identified for the pilot cohort (Ala Wai, Kaewai, and Aliamanu elementary schools and Kailua High School).

The decision to start a pilot program was based, in part, on "friendly advice" from the administrators of the John Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawai'i. The proposed MET program was very similar to the educational model of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) used by the medical school; both the Inquiry Approach in the MET program and PBL are student-centered and rely on small instructional/learning groups with the faculty serving as facilitators and resource persons rather than teachers in the traditional sense. Learning is collaborative in both the PBL and MET models and the advice from the medical school was to "not overplan" in the program proposal. To carry out the MET program principle of collaboration, it was essential that planning, implementation, and evaluation decisions had to involve all partners—DOE faculty, COE faculty, and the MET students. Following the experiences of the UH medical school and programs at other institutions which are highly collaborative in nature, the planners expected that much of the defining, refining and detailed development of the MET program would take place in the first full cycle of the program.

By late Spring 1991, six faculty members had "volunteered" to serve as faculty for Cohort I. The group was interdisciplinary, as planned, with Aiko Oda from Counselor Education as Coordinator; Frank Brown, Hunter McEwan and Neil Pateman from Curriculum and Instruction; Sarah Hodell from Field Services and Ralph Stueber from Educational Foundations. All faculty except Sarah Hodell maintained teaching and advising responsibilities within their respective departments as they took on the pilot MET cohort.

During Summer 1991, the six faculty from the College of Education and personnel from each of the four partner schools met in two planning sessions, one for two weeks in June and the other for two weeks in August, to make operational plans for the fall semester (the newly-admitted

MET students in Cohort I were invited to attend the planning meeting in August). The summer planning meetings resulted in more fully developed course syllabi for the seminars and detailed plans for the MET Orientation and Immersion.

More significant than the tangible results of these planning sessions were the relationships that were formed among DOE staff, COE faculty and the MET students; they learned much about themselves and about each other in the work groups. Some of the DOE teachers and administrators thought that the college faculty were rude and argumentative; others delighted in the free exchange of ideas and opinions. The college faculty learned about the cultures of each of the partnership schools. Some faculty and students were uneasy about the relative lack of structure and prescription in the program; others acknowledged the freedom to create and take risks.

After the first year, one of the partnership schools and the MET program separated, mutually agreeing that there were irreconcilable differences in philosophy. Two of the original partnership schools continue to work with us. They have been joined by three additional schools: Salt Lake Elementary, Dole Intermediate and Castle High.

Collaborative planning and decision making are essential to maintaining the MET partnerships at a highly effective level. We continue to have planning meetings during the summer and throughout the school year. The Executive Council made up of the principals of MET Partnership Schools, site coordinators, MET students, DOE liaison and COE faculty has been the primary decision-making body of the MET program.

A persistent problem has plagued school-based teacher education programs across the United States: the securing of resources to support collaborative planning time and staff development in partner schools. The need for additional resources was multiplied in the MET by its design for a paid, full-time teaching internship in the final semester. Initially, support for staff development was drawn from HSUP's operational funds and from DOE staff development funds. It soon became apparent, however, that MET required additional and more permanent sources of funding.

At the national conference of the Holmes Group in January of 1992, COE and HSUP staff attended a presentation by Keith Auger of the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque (UNM). They learned of a contract developed between the Albuquerque school district and UNM which supported their field-based teacher education program in exchange for teaching by student interns.

In the Fall of 1992, a team consisting of Alma Cirino, DOE Office of Personnel Services, Ann Port, new executive director of HSUP, Aiko Oda and Philip Whitesell visited the University of New Mexico to gain a working knowledge of this innovative contract. They returned with a model contract that was eventually adapted, with the input and endorsement of Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA), to fit the needs of the MET program. This contractual agreement between the DOE and the COE is unique in Hawai'i and has been a critical contribution to the high quality of the MET program.

The MET program has undergone two major program reviews and received positive evaluations in both cases. In transmitting the State Approval of Teacher Education (SATE) Report to Dean Dolly in July 1993, then Superintendent of Education Charles Toguchi wrote:

> May I take this opportunity to commend the College of Education for its active pursuit and support of new research based programs for teacher education such as the MET. This project has special significance for the Department as it 1) represents a successful outcome of the partnership between the University and the Department, and 2) supports the Department's SCBM [school-community based management] model especially in its emphasis on staff and school renewal.

The Board of Regents gave permanent program status to the MET program in Fall 1995 following the University's Council on Program Reviews (COPR) report and recommendation for permanent status. In a memorandum (9/5/95) to President Kenneth Mortimer, Senior Vice-President Carol Eastman reported:

> In reviewing the MET, COPR found that the quality of the students in the program was high, attrition rates were low, completion rates were high and almost all graduates remained in Hawai'i's public schools. COPR also found that graduates positively influenced school personnel to view existing practices more critically and to subsequently modify curriculum. The outcomes were beneficial for the schools' pupils.

The final point of the above quote is most important to both the history and the future of the MET program. An essential and innovative goal of the program is to develop teachers who will be agents for change in the renewal of teaching and learning both in the partner schools and in their future teaching assignments. To this end, COE faculty and DOE mentor teachers must also take active roles in school renewal. The final proof of MET's success in reaching this goal is the improvement of learning by public school students. The "stories" of MET faculty, mentors, and graduates indicate that such change is happening.

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