

TESTIMONY OF

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PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
SOUTH CAROLINA T3 COALITION
ALTERNATIVE ROUTE TO CERTIFICATION

BEFORE THE JOINT MEETING OF

THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON BENEFITS,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

AND

THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON 21ST-CENTURY COMPETITIVENESS,
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

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Chairman Brown, Chairman McKeon, members of the Committees, distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen,

On behalf of the South Carolina T3 Coalition, I am proud to have this opportunity to address this august group, and I wish to thank Chairman Brown and Chairman McKeon for their kind invitation for me to provide this testimony on what we believe to be an exciting project that we have initiated in South Carolina and hope to be able to provide across the nation.

In 1996, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future issued its report, *What Matters Most*. In it the Commission stated, "What teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn." This phrase was to become the touchstone for the work of the SC T3 Coalition.

The Coalition was born in the summer of 1999 through the efforts of many dedicated people, including representatives from the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), our partner universities, school districts, agencies, and IBM/Lotus, to develop a training program designed specifically for military personnel who desire to become teachers. This program's genesis and its heart evolve from the Troops-to-Teachers program, and we embrace its origins.

I would like to begin by introducing you to some outstanding people:

Master Sergeant Virginia Dukes grew up in Newark, the only child of a single parent living in the inner city. The Army offered her an escape from her bleak surroundings and promises of opportunity, which she took. She completed her education, had an illustrious career in training and data management, and is retiring, but at 39, she is a vital, energetic, bright, and motivated woman who feels that teaching might be a viable option for her. She also wants to locate in the Sunbelt, and has chosen to live in South Carolina.

Lt. Col. Raoul Hernandez and Maj. Donna Hansen met while both were stationed at the Beaufort Air Station. They married, raised a family, and after successful careers in the Marine Corps (she in public information, he a Provost Marshal), have decided to return to the Beaufort area. She has her degree in Journalism from the University of Montana; he received his JD degree from George Washington University. They have a desire to give back to the community, and are considering teaching as a second career.

Commander Mercer Jamison was born and raised in Pocatigo, SC, a small crossroads in the South Carolina Lowcountry. A young African-American with few local prospects, he couldn't wait to get away, and when a Navy recruiter offered him a chance to see the world and complete his education, he jumped at the chance. Now, 25 years later, with a bachelor's degree in engineering from Old Dominion University and 15 years as a nuclear engineer, he is preparing to retire and is anxious to return home, where he hopes to make a difference for rural youth. He wants to become a teacher.

The players in these three fictitious scenarios have several things in common: all have had successful careers as military commissioned or non-commissioned officers; all want to locate in the Sunbelt; all want to teach; all are attempting to begin a new chapter of their lives; and all bring a abundance of talents and skills and a world view to an area and a career field that desperately needs them.

However, traditional programs would require up to two years to complete after the service member leaves active duty, and he or she would forego a paycheck during training. Also, if they were in traditional teacher-preparation programs, their maturity, experience, expertise, and training would not necessarily be valued. Or, as in some alternative-certification programs, they would be placed in the classroom with little or no preparation or supervision and left to their own devices to survive (or not) in the school setting.

To be successful, aspiring teachers need more than a textbook and a handshake. They need training--not a traditional undergraduate teacher-training program (although

those options continue to be available), but one tailored specifically for them, to provide necessary knowledge and skills, to provide options for demonstration of proficiency, to avail them of what they need to be successful in this social structure called “school,” while acknowledging the talents, experience, and expertise that they bring with them. The training also needs to be readily accessible, and it should enable military personnel to assume a teaching position immediately upon exiting their military careers, but with continued follow up, training, mentors, and supervision—all focused upon the new teachers’ success. Whether they are stationed at a base in Japan, retired in Hawaii, or in the Reserves in South Carolina, the SC T3 alternative route to certification program allows them to “jumpstart” their teaching career. By the time they leave military service or locate to South Carolina, they could be ready to step into the classroom and “be all that they can be” --again.

The South Carolina T3 Coalition has developed a program using “blended learning” (e-learning and practical, hands-on field experiences) to enable these folks to realize their dreams while concurrently ameliorating teacher-shortage needs--the needs for specific content areas, in grade levels, in small, rural, or inner-city schools, for minority representation, and for male teachers.

The South Carolina T3 Coalition consists of four institutions, five agencies, and a corporate partner: Clemson University, the University of South Carolina, the Citadel, and South Carolina State University have come together with the five agencies (the Governor’s Office, the South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment, the Commission on Higher Education, the Employment Security Commission, and the State Department of Education) and IBM/Lotus to craft an initiative to enable commissioned and non-commissioned officers with college degrees to secure the requisite training and credentialing to become teachers.

The target group consists of members of the armed forces, commissioned or non-commissioned officers, who possess a bachelor’s degree or higher.

The reasons to tap this talented pool are numerous:

1. The military began downsizing in 1994, sending well-qualified personnel into the civilian work force.
2. Military personnel often have strong content skills.
3. Commissioned and non-commissioned officers possess high levels of training and education; indeed, many have master’s degrees.
4. The potential pool is great; while the military is not presently downsizing, many active-duty personnel are making plans for retirement--often wanting to return “home.”
5. Within the ranks exists a high ethnic minority ratio; this will enable us to recruit, train, and place heretofore under-represented minorities.
6. Likewise, there is a high ratio of males; this cadre can provide more men for the classrooms.
7. Their military experience as trainers provides them with a solid foundation for a teaching career; all commissioned and non-commissioned officers have served in various training capacities during their careers.
8. They have the advantage of being trained in providing safe and secure environments; this is an added benefit for school safety and violence prevention.
9. In their military careers, they have gained organizational, interpersonal, technical, technology, and leadership skills.
10. They are great role models for kids--mature, drug-free, and physically fit.
11. Finally, they bring a wealth of personal and professional experiences and a world view heretofore missing in our schools.

Because of their high degree of training and education acquired during their military service, because the number of teachers who can be trained from this pool is potentially much greater than many sources, and because of the high ethnic minority and gender ratios which could significantly ameliorate under-representation of ethnic

minorities and men in these critical-needs areas of education, this group would be a benefit to and a resource for our schools and our young people.

Evolution of South Carolina T3 Coalition Alternative Route to Certification (ARC)

The SC T3 Coalition ARC began in August 1999; the first year was dedicated to planning. With a grant from DANTES, the Coalition undertook a rigorous process to design an alternative certification program to allow participants to complete their requisite course work while still on active duty using e-learning and blended-learning strategies.

The Coalition reviewed the existing literature on alternative certification, best practice, and research, to examine the programs of other states, teacher education programs, and other entities. While most states have developed or are developing routes for alternative licensure, none possesses the uniqueness of the proposed South Carolina model.

Based on the premise posited in *What Matters Most*, a report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, "*What teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn,*" the Coalition began by processing ten essential questions:

1. What do mature, new, second-career teachers need to know? Can we defend this through a scientifically documentable knowledge base?
2. What do mature, new, second-career teachers need to be able to do? Can we defend this through a scientifically documentable knowledge base?
3. What specific competencies do they need?
4. What specific competencies do they possess and can they demonstrate?
5. How do we identify these competencies?
6. How do we identify gaps?
7. Can we develop a training model based on this gap analysis?
8. What will it include?
9. How can we deliver it? Can we deliver via the Internet?
10. What resources (human, material, technological) do we need to do this?

Upon completion of this analysis, the Coalition then reviewed standards, best practice, knowledge bases, and research from the following agencies and organizations:

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)
National Association for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)
Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC)
Key Competencies (Australia)
Teachers College, Columbia University
National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (*What Matters Most*)
Renaissance Group
University of Arkansas Profile of a Beginning Teacher
American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)
Educational Testing Service (PRAXIS)
American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE)
Holmes Partnership
National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER)
Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
South Carolina's Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT)
Good Teaching Matters; a Report of The Education Trust
Conceptual Frameworks of the partner universities
American Council on Education

The Coalition also adopted the following guiding principles to manage the process and to keep the group on-track and on-target:

“Develop high-quality pathways to teaching for recent graduates, mid-career changers, paraprofessionals already in the classroom, and military and government retirees.” --National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future, *What Matters Most*, Recommendation 3

“The fundamental differences between an alternative and traditional program are the target audience, the training design, and the length of training, not the program content, rigor, [standards] or expected outcomes.” --AACTE, *Alternative Preparation for Licensure: Policy Statement*

“To do and perform all things necessary to encourage, uphold, and dignify the profession of teaching.” --*Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning*

The Coalition would return to these principles often.

The Curriculum

Upon examination of the standards and evidence, the Coalition developed two documents: (1) What teachers need to know and (2) what teachers need to be able to do. To achieve the necessary validation, these lists were widely circulated within and without South Carolina; teachers, teacher educators, parents, business people, community leaders, and the Military Assistance Council, then an advisory group for the Coalition, had the opportunity for input. It was important that this be as comprehensive, as valid, and as reliable as possible.

The result is a rich, valid, robust curriculum, grounded in best practice and research, based upon what career-changing professionals need to know and be able to do to become successful teachers, (acknowledging that pedagogy for a 40-year-old professional should differ from that for a 20-year-old college sophomore AND recognizing the vast expertise and experience that military professionals bring to the profession) in nine discrete modules divided into three blocks, from the more general and theoretical to the more specific and concrete:

Block One

- Psychological Foundations of Adolescent Learning and Development
- Technology in the Classroom
- Cultural Distinctions and Diversity

Block Two

- Community Resources
- Methods and Strategies (content-specific in mathematics, sciences, and English/language arts)
- Student Assessment and Evaluation

Block Three

- Application of Research
- Classroom Organization and Management
- The Culture that is School

The Technology

The group then, upon returning to the “Ten Questions,” determined that we could, indeed, take this list of what teachers need to know and, using a “gap analysis,” could tailor an individualized, performance-based, open-entry program based upon the client’s documented experiences and expertise, over the World-wide Web, using state-of-the-art technology and synchronous and asynchronous delivery of modules rather than traditional graduate-level courses.

From this point, we turned to the technology experts; upon reflection, we determined that we needed a vehicle not only of getting the courses on-line, but also a means of managing variable credit, generating student transcripts, providing means of interactivity between faculty and participants, among other significant issues, and an in-

depth review of technological potential yielded only one likely candidate: IBM/Lotus and its LearningSpace software. IBM/Lotus remains as a partner in crafting the technological methodology for on-line delivery and management of this complex project. The support and engagement of IBM/Lotus has been exemplary; not only is their LearningSpace a robust system, but their technical support has been exceptional.

The Academic Program

Military personnel may access the program during their last two years of active duty through the SC T3 Coalition ARC Website (<http://www.hehd.clemson.edu/TTT/>). Since all of these folks will have bachelor's degrees (and many will come with master's degrees), content expertise is presumed; however, the candidate must provide passing scores from the Praxis II subject-area examination to validate currency of content knowledge. The candidate's program will be determined based upon what experiences he/she can validate from the military. University faculty will provide the personalization.

The participants have the modules available around the clock; the professors maintain maximum availability. Options are available, also, for real-time discussions, chat rooms, white boards, and the like.

Additionally, since teacher education cannot occur in a vacuum, field experiences and practical applications of skills are built into each module. The experiences are as varied as the curriculum but are a requisite part of the training, hence the "blended-learning" methodology that complements e-learning.

Also, the Coalition has designed a schedule to allow the participant to work on as many as three modules in an eleven-week period. If deployed to a combat zone, however, the "clock stops," and he or she may resume the module at the point at which he/she left it. The academic schedule of courses is presently designed through 2008, and it takes into account holidays and other pertinent issues; the university Registrar has incorporated the [essentially quarter] schedule into Clemson's semester-based calendar, thus allowing for acceleration of participants through the program. All of the support mechanisms are in place.

Upon completion of at least six modules (Block 2), the participant will be placed in a one-year internship in a high-need school, during which he/she will not only undergo induction, as does any first-year teacher, but he/she will have to demonstrate the knowledge gained through the modules--the "What teachers need to be able to do" list. Resources will be made available to provide for mentor teachers and other resources necessary to assure candidate success. Accompanying this internship is a year-long seminar (also carrying academic credit), bringing together participants from the four regions with university faculty, school district and school personnel, and other pertinent, appropriate resources.

The Placements

The Coalition determined four criteria for placements as critical:

1. Districts "in greatest need of technical assistance;"
2. Geographic critical teaching needs, based on criteria and annual determination of the State Board of Education;
3. Top 12% in the State for high school dropouts;
4. Proximity to military installation; must be either inner-city or rural and must meet federal poverty guidelines for "high need LEAs"

Based upon recent information from the State Board of Education regarding geographic critical needs, the Coalition has identified 78 schools throughout the state that meet one or more of the above criteria; this will likely change as new data and funding sources become available.

The Coalition has designated four geographic divisions within the state; each of the partner universities will have responsibility for monitoring the internship and two subsequent years of follow up in partnership with the LEA and the school in which the

participant is interning. Subsequent monitoring and support for this three-year program will be provided in partnership among the Coalition, the LEA, and the partner university. Additionally, we will gather data on successful program completion, internship, and ultimate placement within the schools and districts most in need.

Project Uniqueness

The program is unique in many ways; following is a compendium of reasons:

- Participants may begin within two years of separation from military service;
- Participants may participate at their duty station, anywhere in the world;
- Program uses state-of-the-art technology;
- Participants are provided a waiver of out-of-state tuition (Section 5A.32 of the 2002 Budget Bill, SC General Assembly);
- Participants partake of a robust curriculum designed to prepare them for the realities of the classroom;
- Coordination among 4 universities and 5 agencies, school districts, and a corporate partner; over 90 people have been involved in the genesis of this project, including university faculty, corporate officers, technicians, university administrators, school district personnel, military representatives, and agency staff;
- Field experiences and practical application of skills are incorporated into every course;
- Curriculum developed by university faculty based on what teachers need to know and be able to do;
- Graduate-credit modules via Internet delivery with synchronous and asynchronous options;
- One-year paid internship with skilled mentor teacher; participants will not miss a paycheck;
- Placement in districts with greatest need;
- Strong research/evaluation component;
- Focus on retiring military with bachelor’s degree or higher;
- Program availability year-round, with course rotation;
- Flexibility:
 - Participant may “stop the clock” and resume at a later date;
 - Program will be available around the clock, seven days per week

The result is a program that is research-based, facile to use and to navigate, easy to access, is valid, is reliable, and is grounded in reality and a scientifically documentable knowledge base.

Lessons Learned

Throughout the development and implementation activities, the Coalition learned many lessons as we blazed new trails through the *Terra Incognita* of e-learning and blended learning. One of the most compelling was to identify, analyze, and document our processes as we proceeded. Following is a listing of some of the processes and some samples within each; of course, different projects will render differing processes.

Table 1: PROCESS ANALYSIS

Conceptual processes

Idea, needs assessments, literature searches

Analytical processes

Data, resources, best practice, research

Academic processes

Curriculum development, committees, materials selection

Political processes

Funding, support, consensus, residency

Marketing processes

Advertising, web site, monitoring, print media

Documentation processes

Data collection/analysis, participation, support

Fiscal processes

Grants, finances, resources

Implementation processes

Hardware, software, enrollments, fees

Continuous Improvement processes

Growth plans, adjustments, evaluation, realignment

Technology transfer processes

National rollout, Software and hardware upgrades

Finis

Military personnel represent a wealth of talent, experience, diversity, knowledge, expertise, skills, and world views; they are grounded in the content areas, and many have extensive training experience. What opportunities exist to install this leadership and talent in the inner-city and rural schools most in need! And our new cadre of teachers can “be all that they can be,” yet again.

Curriculum Vitae

Nancy C. Dunlap is the Associate Director of the Eugene T. Moore School of Education at Clemson University. Prior to that, she was for eight years a deputy superintendent of education for the state of South Carolina.

Dr. Dunlap is a South Carolinian, having done her undergraduate and doctoral degrees at the University of South Carolina, and she is a career educator. She has taught and worked in South Carolina public schools and universities.

Dr. Dunlap is the principal investigator for the South Carolina T3 Coalition, a project that is now in its third year of development. The genesis of the SC T3 Coalition was a need to address the impending teacher shortage with a population well suited for our classrooms. In a partnership with a retired two-star US Army general, four universities, five agencies, and IBM/Lotus, the program has evolved into its present unique iteration of a distance-learning program capable of reaching active-duty military wherever in the world they are deployed.

Federal Grants

The South Carolina T3 Coalition has been the recipient of the following two federal grants/contracts during the last two fiscal years:

1. U. S. Department of Labor, \$347,122, Veterans' Workforce Investment Program
2. U. S. Department of Education, \$546,719, Transition to Teaching Program