

## Teachers for a New Era Newsletters

### Teachers for a New Era Quarterly Newsletter

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#### Now the Really Hard Work Begins: Implementation Challenges Ahead for TNE Institutions

by Michael Timpane, Senior Advisor, Aspen Institute Education Program (former President, Teachers College Columbia University)

It has been my distinct pleasure to be involved in the review of Teachers for a New Era (TNE) institutions and their proposals over the last two years. Each of the 11 institutions selected has developed plans and programs that are impressive in their scope and ambition. In every case, the institution set forward fresh new thinking and extensive redeployment of resources to undergird the redesigned teacher preparation programs they intend to create. Leadership from the presidents and provosts who oversee each institution's academic mission indicated their clear intent to make teacher preparation programs a campus-wide priority in ways they have not been in the past. In addition, each institution is making a large and extended financial commitment to back up this priority. A new course has been set on each campus; such a beginning augurs well for what is to follow.

Now, however, the really hard work must begin: determining how to use the new priorities, program designs, and campus-wide activities to produce lasting change and markedly stronger teacher education programs. The TNE institutions face the familiar "implementation problem," as new initiatives confront established cultures and incentives. The challenges are built into each strand of initiative activity. For example:

- How can these institutions pursue more rigorous creation and application of knowledge in new curricula for teacher education programs and in new measures of student progress (for the teacher education graduates themselves and for their students) where such activity is both difficult and controversial and is not always

- valued by higher education faculties or by public school teachers?
- How can institutions keep the liberal arts faculties involved throughout the project in the light of broader campus attitudes towards such work which is often not held in high regard and uncertainty as to the effect their involvement will have on their professional progress in terms of tenure, promotion, and future academic mobility?
  - How can institutions create a new order of participation with K-12 education where there are few shared perspectives between most teachers and most professors and where there are few established connections that have prepared the way for extensive and enduring collaboration at an institutional, not just a project, level?
  - How can these initiatives ensure sustained leadership by both university and school system heads, who are usually not rewarded for what they do, or punished for what they do not do, in the realm of teacher preparation and who are, in any event, likely to be elsewhere in the academic firmament by the time this project is concluded?

Finding answers to these questions will require sustained and innovative efforts. All concerned in the foundations, universities, and schools must remain highly committed to the initiative's core principles and must, working together, develop new incentives and rewards to create and sustain a new culture of collaboration in preparing excellent teachers for our schools.

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#### Fallon Addresses ECS Steering Committee on Value of Focusing on Instruction

Dan Fallon, Chair of the Education Division of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, addressed the Education Commission of the States Steering Committee on November 12, 2003, at its fall meeting in Richmond, Virginia. His speech, entitled "Case Study of a Paradigm Shift (The Value of Focusing on Instruction)," is posted in its entirety at <http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/issuesK12.asp> and ECS has invited comment through an electronic forum on teaching quality. Some excerpts follow:

"Let me begin this story by describing the first important rigorous work undertaken in the latter half of the twentieth century to try to help us understand what we could do to improve people's chances for success in our democratic society. This analysis was undertaken by the foremost mathematical sociologist of his generation, James Coleman. . . . The overwhelming weight of the evidence at the disposal of [his] research team pointed most clearly at one easily comprehensible conclusion, "only a small part of [student achievement] is the result of school factors, in contrast to family background differences between communities". . . . Less than a decade later, in 1972, another distinguished sociologist, Christopher Jencks, confirmed Coleman's basic findings in a highly influential book published at Harvard with his colleagues. . . . An implicit logical conclusion of the analysis put forth by Coleman and Jencks is that, when it comes to student achievement, teaching doesn't matter very much. . . .

"Recent research, beginning about a decade ago, has brought about a radical reorientation of thinking among scholars about the relative role of the teacher in bringing about student achievement gain. The electrifying rhetoric in the landmark report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, "*A Nation at Risk*," to Secretary of Education Terrell Bell in 1983 led to a rapid escalation of education on the nation's political agenda. . . Several . . . states then instituted mandatory state-wide assessments in certain core-knowledge domains. . . At the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, an agricultural statistician, Professor William Sanders, [and] one of the doctoral students in [his] seminar, June Rivers, were able to [gain] access to the thousands of records that had accumulated linking students, teachers, and schools. That led ultimately to the refinement of what has come to be called the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System. Sanders and Rivers discovered that students matched in performance on assessments at the beginning of the third grade were separated by more than 50 percentile points in comparable assessments by the end of the fifth grade, as a direct result of the quality of the teaching they received in the intervening years. Their results showed that good teaching always produced student achievement gain, and that when good teaching continued year after year the effects grew steadily. . .

"If ever there was a paradigm shift in social science, we are seeing it now. Today, because of value-added assessment studies, there is a growing consensus that the single most important factor in determining student performance is the quality of the teacher. . .

"The novelty of the new research . . . leaves us without good information as yet about the specific practices that are employed by teachers who routinely bring about high student achievement in their pupils. . . . We do know some things about teacher quality. For example, we've got good evidence that good students make good teachers. Coleman's findings that teachers who show high scores on verbal aptitude are teachers whose students show high achievement gains [have] been replicated sufficiently for us to know it is a reasonable predictor. Also, we know that teachers who have studied the subject matter they are teaching are better teachers of that subject matter than those who have not. . . We have good evidence that the students of teachers who have studied pedagogy show greater achievement gains than those of teachers who have not, especially for content-specific pedagogy, for example, math education. Finally, we have good evidence that students of teachers with several years of experience are more likely to show strong achievement gains than those of teachers with little experience."

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#### Four Original TNE Sites Leapt Forward Last Fall

At Bank Street College of Education, Teachers for a New Era (TNE) progress this academic year has focused on three key areas. Action-Oriented Inquiry (AOI) is the foundation of the college's initiative and consists of teams investigating classroom practice from the perspective of both teacher education and arts and science (A & S) disciplines to learn about Bank Street's influence on teacher candidates and graduates and their influence on the students and families in their care. This year, eighteen teams, composed of faculty in the Graduate School and the School for Children, invited partners

from other institutions representing the A & S, and practicing K-8 teachers, are taking a deep look at processes of teaching and learning. The case write-ups they are developing, along with the fifteen produced last year, provide the empirical grounding for a developmental continuum of teaching and learning that will lead to a mechanism for self study and renewal. In addition, Bank Street President Augusta Kappner appointed an institutional Induction Committee. The committee is in the process of selecting two programmatic options that will be available to this June's teacher education graduates in the fall of 2004, with available options increasing over the next three years. Finally, in September, Bank Street held the first meeting of the project's Coordinating Council and, with the assistance of that group, has strengthened ties to New York City, state, and national policymakers. For more information, visit the project's website, launched in December, at: <http://www.bankstreet.edu/TNE/index.html>.

California State University, Northridge (CSUN) recently hired a full-time TNE project manager who will oversee the day-to-day operations of the initiative, working under the project's director and co-associate directors. This increased staffing will assist in engaging hundreds of persons, on and off campus, in a variety of objective committees, working groups, and other advisory capacities to meet the ambitious goals the institution has set for this year. Areas of progress this quarter include: expanding and deepening relationships with Los Angeles Unified School District teachers, parents, administrators, and union leadership; changing university policies and procedures to facilitate the selection and appointment of K-12 teachers to the faculty; developing a model beginning teacher residency program that links to a CSUN master's degree; and creating multiple study groups that cross over disciplinary boundaries (education faculty, arts and sciences faculty from CSUN and community colleges, as well as K-12 teachers) to explore how to strengthen the university's current general education curriculum to build the pedagogical content knowledge of prospective teacher candidates. CSUN has endeavored to integrate evidence-based decision-making into all aspects of the institution's teacher education program and to further these efforts is planning a multi-day assessment symposium with consultants from across the country. This ambitious effort will assist the university in making concrete the role of data in the continual improvement of teacher learning, K-12 pupil learning, and its own teacher preparation program. Further information can be found at: <http://www.csun.edu/academic.affairs/tne/>.

Consistent with Michigan State University's (MSU) commitment to "make content and context central" to the education of prospective teachers, disciplinary and cross-cutting teams of faculty worked last fall on developing six standards that define expectations for what the professional teacher will know and be able to do. Team leaders and associates reached consensus on the draft of these standards in January. An unplanned outcome of the iterative process was an explicit recognition of the developmental trajectory involved in students' reaching the target, or "professional," stage. Following completion of the next draft, the teams will share the standards broadly and engage audiences across the campus in helping determine how well the current curriculum comports with the standards and in addressing gaps that are identified. Initial curricular experiments that flow from these discussions are expected to be in place during fall semester. The work of the induction team at MSU has been spurred forward by local teacher consultants and national leaders.

Ellen Moir and Janet Gless of the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) led a retreat to discuss the UCSC mentoring program and to help the team consider the contours of an MSU program. Finally, the university is preparing for the February meeting of its TNE Coordinating Council. MSU will engage this external advisory group in discussion of the university's urban initiative, including what students should learn and experience about teaching in urban settings from their undergraduate courses through the induction program to contribute to the quality and retention of teachers in such settings. Contact Assistant Provost Barbara Steidle at [bsteidle@msu.edu](mailto:bsteidle@msu.edu) for more information.

At the University of Virginia, the TNE initiative is supporting, through the Teaching Assessment Initiative and the Office of Teacher Education, twenty research and development studies, each of which is attempting to determine the value added to public K-12 education by the university's teacher education program. A focus of project efforts this academic year has been the creation of new courses providing students with either the arts and sciences content that they need for future teaching or an introduction to education issues. TNE Common Courses are lecture courses that use the multidisciplinary kinds of knowledge required of primary school teachers as the standard for the education of all undergraduates in the College of Arts & Sciences. This semester's course, Designing Matter, studies matter in all its forms from the subatomic to the cosmic; led by chemist Cassandra Fraser, it also features faculty from throughout the arts and sciences. The second Counterpoint Seminar (in which students revisit an arts and sciences lecture course to consider its content as the stuff of future K-12 teaching) is being offered in American historiography. There are two new Students Exploring Teaching courses (for "late deciders," students making their first approach to training in education at a late stage of their undergraduate careers) and a seminar for first-year students on minority issues in education. In addition, faculty from the colleges of education and arts and sciences are collaborating in new ways. Two dozen attend a seminar on evidence and education, hosted by Provost Gene Block, and faculty and administrators from both colleges are at work on new models of partnership with the two local school divisions. For more information, visit <http://www.virginia.edu/provost/tneuva>.

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#### Scotland Interested in Replicating TNE

The Teachers for a New Era (TNE) project is attracting international attention. The Hunter Foundation is partnering with the Scottish Executive to develop and fund similar efforts to transform teacher preparation in Scotland. Representatives of the foundation and the Scottish government have traveled to the United States to meet with Carnegie and AED staff as well as TNE program managers from three of the four original sites. In late January, Dan Fallon of the Carnegie Corporation, along with Robin White, Ivan Charner, and Ed Crowe of the AED technical assistance team, traveled to Scotland as guests of the Hunter Foundation to meet with government, foundation, and university officials. The AED team also provided technical assistance on proposal development to representatives of the seven Scottish universities that offer teacher preparation programs.

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#### TNE Sites Present at National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Conference

On November 15, 2003, representatives from the four original Teachers for a New Era (TNE) sites gave a presentation at the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' (NBPTS) National Conference in Washington, DC. Entitled "Teachers for a New Era: Improving Student Achievement by Transforming Teacher Preparation," the panel was moderated by Ivan Ching, a National Board Certified Teacher from California. Panelists described TNE implementation on their campuses and the roles that K-12 teachers are playing. Robert Floden spoke of Michigan State's efforts and successes in engaging arts and sciences faculty in teacher preparation; Virginia Roach of Bank Street College of Education explained how Action Oriented Inquiry is leading the college toward evidence-based decision making. Philip Rusche from California State University, Northridge spoke on the concept of schools as clinics and how the institution is envisioning a clinical setting, while Bob McNergney of the University of Virginia discussed assessment approaches for teacher candidates and their pupils. Joe Aguerrebere, president of NBPTS, visited the session and spoke of his connection to the TNE project, having formerly worked with the Ford Foundation, one of the initiative's funders.

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#### TNE to Be Featured in Major Forum at AACTE Annual Conference

The Teachers for a New Era project is the focus of a major forum at the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education's (AACTE) annual conference in Chicago, February 7 through 10. The forum, titled "Should Teacher Preparation Take Place at Colleges and Universities?," will take place at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, February 9. Boston Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Thomas Payzant will speak on the importance of high quality teacher preparation for urban school districts. Panelists from the Carnegie Corporation and the four original TNE sites will comment on Superintendent Payzant's remarks and Dan Fallon of the Carnegie Corporation will moderate a discussion on ways these institutions are responding to urban education challenges. Robert Floden will speak about how Michigan State is focusing on context urban schools, literacy and numeracy deficits among students and their teachers; Stella Theodoulou will describe how California State University, Northridge is bringing the arts and sciences front and center on subject matter understanding and pedagogical content knowledge; Bob McNergney from the University of Virginia will present approaches to assessment of pre-service teachers, of practicing teachers, and of K-12 pupils; and Virginia Roach will describe Bank Street College of Education's plans for new teacher induction. After opening the session up for audience discussion, Dr. Payzant will reflect on the discussion and offer summary comments.

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#### TNE Institute on the Engagement of Arts and Sciences to Be Held in March

Teams from the 11 TNE institutions will meet in Washington, DC in March 2004 for the first time to further their on-campus efforts to engage the arts and sciences in teacher preparation. Using an institute model, each site team will have time alone for facilitated discussion and planning interspersed with presentations by experts in the field and cross-institution conversations. Only teams from the institutions currently engaged in TNE are invited to attend.

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