

# New York University

## *Documentation of the Teachers for a New Era Learning Network*

### INTRODUCTION

The Academy for Educational Development (AED) sent a research team to New York University (NYU) on December 8-9, 2008 to conduct interviews with individuals who play important roles in the university's teacher preparation program. These interviews, along with additional documentation provided by NYU and identified by the AED research team, provide the basis for the case study that follows.

This case study is one of nine prepared by AED to document evidence of institutional change in teacher preparation at nine of the 30 universities that took part in the Teachers for A New Era (TNE) Learning Network, an initiative supported beginning in 2005 by a grant from the Annenberg Foundation, with additional funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. AED selected the nine universities based upon a variety of factors, including their degree of engagement in the Learning Network, and their willingness to specify a program objective and indicator(s) of change that reflected important work underway and would serve as the focus of this case study.

*Institutional change*, for the purposes of this study, means change that goes beyond adjusting course curricula, or degree requirements, or even holding meetings across university departments. It means change that transforms a teacher education program's organizational structure, culture, external relationships, and ways of assessing the outcomes of its work. Such change is often based on research evidence, involves sustained partnerships with school districts and personnel, establishes cross-college and cross-departmental pathways for work and communication, increases the quality and length of time that candidates spend in school settings, and assesses its teacher candidates on their effectiveness in the classroom. Institutional change is not change for change's sake, but a mission-driven effort to refocus the activities of the teacher education program on the effectiveness of their graduates in helping pupils learn.

Based upon the nine case studies, the AED research team will prepare a cross-case study that will document and analyze evidence with bearing on four broad research questions:

1. Is there evidence of institutional change along the lines of the TNE design principles in the preparation of teachers at these institutions?
2. In what categories of change does this evidence appear?

3. Around which indicators do these appear?
4. What aspects of the Learning Network, if any, are reported to have triggered or enhanced the occurrence of change or supported its continuation?

The nine case studies will be made available to the Annenberg Foundation and to Carnegie Corporation of New York. The cross-case study will be published as part of a major publication, also funded by the Annenberg Foundation, which will serve as a final report and recommend next steps for the TNE Learning Network.

### DETERMINING THE FOCUS FOR THIS CASE STUDY

University-based teacher preparation is a complex enterprise with many elements and many players, and this is especially true for universities attempting fundamental change. To provide a manageable focus for these case studies, AED staff asked the TNE Learning Network universities to select one program objective by which they would wish to document their progress. AED asked that this objective (1) reflect an important aspect of teacher preparation at their institution, (2) address one or more of the TNE principles, and (3) logically connect to pupil success. They were also asked to specify indicators that the change sought was occurring. The case studies would focus on that objective, indicators of change, and link to student success.

The authors of the NYU Measuring Progress statement selected as their objective:

*Development of a process for assessing student teacher proficiency reliably and validly in the domains of effective teaching, and from multiple perspectives: those of the supervisor, cooperating teacher, and student teacher.*

This objective would address the first TNE Principle, “Decisions driven by evidence,” by beginning with “a persuasive scholarly discussion of what constitutes excellence in teaching” (*Carnegie Corporation of New York*, p. 9). The development of a student teacher observation instrument that would reliably and validly assess proficiency would generate credible evidence that might, in turn, be infused into program reform efforts.

This new student teacher observation instrument was to be based on a coherent set of pedagogical standards common across levels, content areas, and domains<sup>1</sup>: The authors of the NYU statement proposed as their indicators of change:

- DRSTOS- R developed and validation study now underway
- A majority of supervisors now trained in the assessment
- All 2007 student teachers assessed. Analysis of data underway
- Curriculum task force will review data in February 2008
- NTC tools training for cross-section of NYU teacher educators (faculty, supervisors, cooperating teachers) aligned with DRSTOS-R, scheduled for April 2008

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<sup>1</sup>) Case Statement: NYU and New York City: Principles in Context.

Lastly, the authors described the relationship of their objective and indicators to student success through a renewed and enhanced focus on standards. One important aim of the student teacher assessment work, as with much of the work performed in connection to NYU's membership in the Learning Network, was to correct what NYU faculty saw as a loss of focus, in terms of standards, in the teacher preparation program as a whole due to its size and diversity. This focus on standards in student teacher evaluation was to produce data that diverse participants might use to establish a shared vocabulary around standards, correct other problems, and serve as an important link to broader efforts in teacher education.

### HISTORY OF INNOVATION

NYU was one of thirty universities selected by the Annenberg Foundation and Carnegie Corporation of New York to take part in the Learning Network, whose most basic purpose was to encourage a broader circle of universities to adopt the three principles of Teachers for a New Era as the guiding directions for their work. Originally published in the *Prospectus* for TNE, the three design principles are: 1) decisions driven by evidence; 2) engagement with arts and sciences; and 3) teaching as an academically taught clinical practice profession.

Recent and continuing reform efforts in teacher education at NYU have been informed by four principles that align closely with those of TNE, though they are worded slightly differently to account for the contextual factors that attend a particular university program<sup>2</sup>: 1) *It takes a university to educate a teacher.* That is, arts and sciences faculty are crucial to strong and effective academic preparation for aspiring teachers, and should be engaged with education faculty in a community of practice. 2) *Effective teacher education programs apprentice their students to thoughtful communities of practice.* School-university partnerships, manifested successfully, can provide this. 3) *Effective teacher education programs operate on the basis of a coherent set of standards for teacher development that incorporate state and local standards, and reflect best practice as determined by research.* These standards should articulate with those by which teacher candidates will be mentored and evaluated as novice teachers. 4) *Effective teacher education programs continually monitor their effectiveness in order to ensure their standards and the teaching quality of their graduates.* Information collected through these efforts should feed back into program improvement.

Founded in 1831, NYU is now the largest non-profit private university in the world, enrolling nearly 40,000 undergraduate and graduate students. NYU's teacher preparation program is housed within the Department of Teaching and Learning at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. Steinhardt was founded in 1890 as the School of Pedagogy, the first professional school devoted to teacher education established at an American university. Since then, Steinhardt's mission has expanded to include media studies, health, and the visual and performing arts in a single graduate and undergraduate school, while maintaining a strong commitment to research and service in teacher preparation. NYU's Department of Teaching and Learning enrolls over 1000 aspiring teachers, both undergraduate and graduate. Aspiring teachers may also enroll in graduate-level education programs

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1) Case Statement: NYU and New York City: Principles in Context.

within Steinhardt's departments of Art and Art Professions, Music and Performing Arts Professions, and Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology.

As one of the largest sources of teachers for New York City schools, NYU's teacher preparation program is calibrated to the unique challenges and opportunities of preparing a teacher workforce for high-needs urban schools in general and the New York City public school system in particular. New York City schools are extremely diverse, with regulations and discipline guides published in English, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu. The system faces teacher shortages in all areas, but particularly in bilingual education, science, math, ESL, and special education. Most NYU graduates go on to teach in New York City schools, and field experience in city schools is an increasingly important facet of the teacher preparation program.

As the largest school district in the nation with more than 1,400 schools and 1.1 million students, school reform in New York City is closely watched by the education community. The pace of change has accelerated since Mayor Bloomberg gained control of the school system from the state legislature in 2002. Bloomberg and Schools Chancellor Joel Klein implemented the Children First initiative in 2003 to pursue the three interrelated principles of leadership, empowerment, and accountability for schools. As part of this initiative, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) adopted a single system-wide approach for instruction in reading, writing, and math. The Chancellor has also moved to streamline bureaucratic structures and reallocate funding to the school level. Principal empowerment is a key tenet of Klein's reforms: structural changes and the Fair Student Funding policy, launched in 2007, aim to give school principals more flexibility and autonomy in decisions around programs, personnel, and finances in return for increased accountability for pupil learning outcomes. NYU works closely with the DOE in preparing aspiring teachers for the evolving landscape of urban education in New York City.

The receipt of several high-profile grants, from the likes of the federal Teacher Quality Enhancement program, the Gates Foundation, and the Petrie Foundation, has allowed Steinhardt to pursue a program of reform that is deeply rooted in the exigencies of urban, high-needs schools. School-university partnerships are one important facet of these efforts, evidenced by the opening of University Neighborhood High School in the nearby Lower East Side in 1999. The school was designed to provide a unique learning laboratory for NYU aspiring teachers as well as high quality college preparatory instruction for high school pupils. NYU's partnering work has subsequently expanded to include a network of secondary schools in the Lower East Side, Harlem, and South Bronx through the Partnership for Teacher Excellence.

Steinhardt, and Steinhardt's dean, are now taking an increasingly visible role in national conversations around educational reform and teacher preparation, especially with regard to increasing federal funding for educational research. In the fall of 2008, Steinhardt dean Mary Brabeck led a briefing to congressional staff titled *Teacher Quality: Research on the Science of Teaching and Learning*. The briefing was hosted by the Learning and Education Academic Research Network (LEARN) Coalition, an advocacy group composed of seventeen deans from schools of education around the country concerned with federal investments into research on teaching and learning.

## PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING A STUDENT TEACHER ASSESSMENT

In 2006 the TNE Learning Network gave a mini-grant to NYU to pilot a process for assessing student teacher proficiency from multiple perspectives. It proposed to employ a quasi-experimental, treatment-comparison group design. The framework and protocol that was to be used for assessing student teachers, drawing from Charlotte Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* (1996), was known as the Domain-Referenced Student Teacher Observation Scale (DRSTOS). The framework was to be used as a summative assessment to measure both teaching skill and, in concert with other sources of data like GPA, rank, transcript data, and SAT or GRE scores, content knowledge.

DRSTOS was developed to address the problem that, though there were some commonalities within disciplines in assessing student teachers, to a great extent individual student teacher supervisors "did their own thing." DRSTOS was introduced as a common assessment measure with the intent that it would eventually be used across the teacher education program. The protocol lays out the "tools" NYU student teacher supervisors and, ideally, cooperating teachers use to observe and talk about student teachers. The instrument was first conceived of in the fall of 2003 as the Domain-Referenced Teacher Observation to assess practicing teachers, and was adapted in 2004, with faculty input, to assess student teachers. Revisions to the original instrument have led to the latest iteration, DRSTOS-R (Domain-Referenced Student Teacher Observation Scale- Revised). DRSTOS-R consists of 21 items assessing student teachers' professional practice across four domains: 1) Planning and Preparation; 2) Classroom Environment; 3) Instruction; and 4) Professional Responsibilities. On each item, student teachers are rated on a one to four scale, one being "Not Yet Proficient," and four, "Proficient" (the "Exemplary" category included in Danielson's original framework was eliminated to avoid grade inflation). Early pilots showed evidence of high inter-rater reliability, and additional supervisors and student teachers have been added to the pilot each semester since.

University supervisors, typically retired teachers or administrators, are paid \$400 per student per semester to perform three formal observations for each student teacher. Over the course of these three observations they will collect evidence of effective practice and generate recommendations. Though DRSTOS-R is not yet universally employed by student teacher supervisors, those that do use it are required to attend a one-day training session in the use of DRSTOS-R, where they are asked to independently rate training videos. DRSTOS-R asks them to provide evidence in the form of specific examples of teachers' and students' behavior. NYU research staff from the Center for Research on Teaching and Learning (CRTL) then assess inter-rater reliability, and supervisors are required to achieve a standard of agreement. TNE Learning Network mini-grant funding has been used to finance small incentive payments to supervisors to encourage them to attend the DRSTOS-R training. As of the fall of 2008, 44 supervisors, 26 of them still in the field, had been trained in the use of DRSTOS-R. CRTL and Steinhardt's Office of Clinical Studies in Teaching, which coordinates clinical placements for the 100 hours of field work required by New York State, are now exploring ways to sustain and scale up the training without the support of external funding.

CRTL piloted the multiple perspectives concept proposed in the Learning Network mini-grant application, but found that it was difficult to reach agreement between the cooperating teachers and the university supervisors. In an early joint DRSTOS training session for university supervisors and cooperating teachers, the cooperating teachers systematically rated training videos lower than the university raters did, largely because they were assessing samples against the standardized curriculum

and methodologies that have been implemented in New York City. NYU has attempted to address the disjunction by using training videos featuring New York City teachers, but ultimately does not require that cooperating teachers use DRSTOS-R.

The Office of Clinical Studies and CRTL have encountered a number of challenges in implementing and sustaining DRSTOS-R. One issue is high turnover among student teacher supervisors because most are retired and many leave the area. The high turnover rate has been problematic for scaling up and sustaining the effort. CRTL therefore tries to focus DRSTOS-R training and subsequent data collection efforts on the supervisors who are working with the largest number of student teachers. Another challenge has been early resistance from some faculty. In fact, according to CRTL's director, "DRSTOS-R was the hardest of our research agendas to implement because it required the most buy-in." The delicate process of building faculty buy-in with DRSTOS-R was helped along by clinical faculty, typically full-time non-tenure faculty with a background in the field, and by several key senior tenured faculty who bought-in early and provided the effort some leverage.

### **INTRA-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS**

While the scale and diversity of NYU have made cross-college collaboration difficult to effect, there remains a strong interest in intra-university connections and efforts have been made towards greater collaboration between education faculty and faculty from the arts and sciences. These efforts reflect the first of NYU's guiding principles for teacher preparation, "It takes a university to educate a teacher."

The Teacher Education Council (TEC) is an advisory council comprised of deans and faculty from Steinhardt and the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), co-chaired by the two deans and with equal representation from each college. Major activities of the council have included curriculum revision, alignment of majors to state standards, and the development of minors, particularly in math and science. An associated Teacher Education Working Group, comprised of Steinhardt and CAS faculty, is focused on STEM issues, including the possibility of developing an elementary science education track. Results of collaboration between Steinhardt and CAS faculty include the establishment of courses in math, science, and American history that are being co-taught by Steinhardt and CAS faculty and partnership programs that recruit and train CAS science, math, and technology majors for careers in teaching.

Steinhardt is also collaborating with other colleges in the university, including the Silver School of Social Work. Building off the relationships established with local schools by the teacher education program, Steinhardt is now working to place social work and counseling students in partner schools. The Department of Teaching and Learning is also committed to collaboration across departments in the Steinhardt School itself, and aims to make sure that research performed in schools by faculty from departments outside of Teaching and Learning, such as applied psychology, is always shared with schools.

### **HISTORY OF SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS**

NYU is committed to working closely with New York City schools along a number of different avenues, including sending NYU students into public schools as teaching interns, health interns, and counseling interns. The university also dedicates much of its federal work-study funding to paying 1000 NYU students as tutors in one of the nation's largest America Reads programs.

This commitment extends to intensive partnering with individual New York City schools. The vision for a partnership network of local schools began with the establishment of University Neighborhood High School in the nearby Lower East Side in 1999. NYU, with the New York City DOE, helped to found the school and every year 20 to 30 NYU students serve as tutors and mentors there. Many have gone on to teach there as well. Since the school's founding, NYU's partnering work with New York City schools has expanded and intensified, evidenced by the Partnership for Teacher Excellence.

*The Partnership for Teacher Excellence (PTE).* The PTE, launched in 2005, is a network of almost 20 schools located in three of the city's poorest neighborhoods that maintain mutually supportive relationships with NYU. The Partnership is funded largely by grants from the Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation and the Teacher Quality Enhancement Project of the U. S. Department of Education. Working with the New York City DOE and school superintendents, NYU selected partner schools based on teacher shortages, primarily in areas such as science and math. For that reason most partner schools are secondary schools, but some elementary schools are "quasi-partner schools" in that they work closely with NYU faculty (NYU plans eventually to extend formal partnering agreements into elementary schools and early childhood programs.) While NYU initially intended to work exclusively with schools in the Lower East Side, a neighborhood to which the university already had historical ties, the DOE encouraged the university to expand into East Harlem and the South Bronx. According to the chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning, PTE has quickly become a "nexus of change" for NYU teacher preparation, particularly at the secondary level.

Partnering work started with visits to schools to establish relationships and to lay out expectations for each of the partners. NYU maintains a memorandum of understanding with each of the schools that sets parameters for what each partner is committing to and formalizes the partnership so that the relationship can continue even with staff turnover. The MOU establishes a relationship of mutual self-interest that offers enhanced opportunities for teachers and students at partner schools, including NYU tuition credits for partner-school teachers, and unique access to urban schools for NYU student teachers and researchers. Social capital and responsiveness to school needs has been vital to establishing and building on relationships with partner schools, such that NYU has been able to win over even skeptical school administrators over time.

Communication between NYU and partner schools is maintained by two full-time partner school liaisons, designated liaisons at each partner school (usually assistant principals or lead teachers), and NYU faculty liaisons for each school. With liaisons both in schools and on NYU's campus, the partners are able to bring their mutual needs and interests to light. Results from a December 2007 survey of host school liaisons, NYU student teachers, and university liaisons indicated 100 percent satisfaction on the part of partner schools with school-university communication, with the time to benefit ratio of being a partner school, and with the performance of their NYU liaison. The role of the two partner-school liaisons, NYU staff members who split time between partner schools and the NYU campus, was singled out as particularly vital to identifying the needs of both partner schools and NYU faculty and matching those needs to the appropriate resources. One a former principal and one a graduate of Teach for America, the two liaisons have deep experience working with New York City schools and serve as "ethnographers in both worlds," scouting for opportunities for mutual support at partner schools and at the university. As members of both the NYU community and school communities, the



liaisons are intimately familiar with the demands placed on all members of the partnership and strive to accommodate those demands in carrying out partnership activities.

In a recent development, some early coursework is now co-taught in partner schools by teachers and school staff. The first teacher education course taken by freshmen and first-semester master's students, *Inquiries into Teaching and Learning*, is now taught in partner schools on the Lower East Side; 21 sections of the course were taught in the fall semester of 2008. The course is co-taught by public school teachers who are appointed as NYU adjunct faculty. Another course, *The Social Responsibility of Teachers*, which focuses on issues like drug and alcohol education, child abuse identification, and school violence prevention, brings together social workers and school counselors to talk to aspiring teachers about real school situations. These courses are intended to expose NYU teacher candidates to an urban school environment at an early stage in their preparation for teaching and "melt away the fear" some may initially feel on entering such an environment.

In addition to research and student teacher placements, NYU and partner schools also collaborate on activities such as graduations and honor society events, which NYU hosts for partner schools, and bringing teachers together in focus groups in shortage areas such as science. Student teachers are often included in such learning communities. Teachers and administrators from partner schools and NYU faculty and staff are brought together periodically for "intervisitations," day-long events at one of the partner schools that allow the partners to explore common issues.

The PTE also influences placements of student teachers and pre-student teaching interns in the Learning Partners Program. Through the Learning Partners Program, in what used to be known as "100 hours of observation" pre-student teaching interns are involved in tutoring, assistant teaching, visits to classrooms outside one's own teaching field, participant observation in community agencies that support schools, and in some cases action research projects. Rather than having student teachers and Learning Partners "scattered all over," NYU faculty now strive for concentrated and strategic placements of student teachers and pre-student teacher interns in "whole school mentoring environments." While faculty still plan strategically as to which host teachers to assign student teachers, one great advantage of placing students in partnership schools is that they are apprenticed to "communities of practice" instead of to individual teachers and are expected to participate in daily school activities both in and out of the classroom. The new placement model benefits schools and student teachers alike: partner schools see placements as "social capital," while in most areas, surveyed student teachers gave more positive ratings to their cooperating teachers in host schools than non-host schools. And, in an unforeseen outcome of PTE, the partnership has become something of a pipeline to employment for NYU graduates. Although the partnership has faced challenges, including changeovers in school leadership and uneven implementation across partner schools, in the few years since its founding PTE has already, according to one Steinhardt professor, "changed [NYU's] relationship with the schools enormously."

**EARLY CAREER PROJECT.** NYU is also collaborating with local schools on the Early Career Project, a foundation-funded induction initiative that will invite first, second, and third year teachers, including non-NYU graduates, to six seminars over the course of the school year to discuss issues confronting novice teachers. The first meeting, held in the fall of 2008, was an open meeting at NYU at which the



90 early career teachers attending were asked what they wanted to focus on. Topics they proposed included classroom management and differentiated instruction. Later, five evening sessions will be held simultaneously at each of five partner secondary schools, with the attending teachers at each site determining the topic of the meeting. Teachers who attend all six sessions will receive a small stipend.

The Early Career Project is just one facet of the work that NYU is doing to improve the support mechanisms available to early career teachers and aspiring teachers placed in the field. The Office of Clinical Studies in Teaching coordinates field placements and coursework for graduate and undergraduate students to ensure that the field experience sequence offers students a qualitatively rich experience and does not conflict with other demands. NYU students currently in their student teaching semester called this field experience “the best thing in preparation for actually teaching.” University supervisors meet with student teachers once a month to go over lessons and observations and maintain a policy of open communication. With this support and the support of cooperating teachers, said one student teacher, “I feel that I’m ready to cut the umbilical cord.”

**CLINICAL INQUIRY RESEARCH GROUPS.** NYU also received a TNE Learning Network mini-grant in 2007 “to design and implement ‘history education clinical inquiry research groups’ to support undergraduate and graduate middle and secondary history/social studies teacher candidates, and to extend the focus on disciplinary content and sound pedagogy from their last year of preparation through the first two years of professional teaching.” The Social Studies Education program at NYU now runs two critical inquiry groups focused on civic education, one for current student teachers and one for novice teachers now in their second year of teaching professionally. The groups’ advisor allows both groups to set their own agendas, and thus the two groups operate slightly differently, but members of both expressed appreciation for the support provided by the advisor and other group members. “It’s been an unbelievably welcome experience,” asserted one student teacher. For student teachers, the group offers members the opportunity to be part of a professional team and provides a sounding board of people who are going through the same experiences in different schools. Practicing teachers see the group as a way to remain mindful of the academic theory and pedagogical methods they learned at NYU amidst the everyday demands of teaching: “The group helps us remember why we’re doing it in the first place,” declared one. The ongoing partnership work with schools has also enhanced these induction efforts, and the Office of Clinical Studies has proven “enormously helpful.” The critical inquiry groups’ advisor, a faculty member in Social Studies Education, works consistently with the two PTE liaisons to help manage the program’s relationships with schools.

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#### **EVIDENCE OF INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE**

At the outset this case study described NYU’s proposed program improvement objective, as well as the indicators of change and evidence of pupil success that they hoped would result from the development of a new process for assessing student teacher proficiency. The AED site visit and other background information documented the development, implementation, and validation of the DRSTOS-R as part of a larger effort to move toward coherence in standards across the teacher education program. The changes observed document the university’s fundamental commitment to the first TNE principle, “decisions driven by evidence.”

### ***Impact on Student Teacher Assessment***

As noted above, challenges with turnover among university student teacher supervisors and with achieving inter-rater agreement between university supervisors and cooperating teachers have meant that the DRSTOS-R assessment has not yet been implemented universally across NYU's teacher preparation programs. Nevertheless, beginning in the fall of 2007 NYU has been able to achieve a three-fold increase in the number of student teachers assessed with DRSTOS-R each semester and almost double the number of supervisors trained to administer the DRSTOS-R.<sup>3</sup>

In some cases, more often for student teachers in secondary clinical placements, university supervisors have requested that cooperating teachers use DRSTOS-R as their observation tool and found that their ratings are usually fairer in practice than in the training. For secondary student teachers, the observation score is 70 percent of the overall score for the student teaching semester, and DRSTOS-R is becoming the "backbone" of the observation process. This is less true in the early childhood and elementary tracks, where observation tools are modeled on INTASC standards and used more as an "occasion for conversation" between university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and student teachers; the Office of Clinical Studies would like to see a translation between INTASC and DRSTOS-R. Some DRSTOS-R elements are included already on the observation cover sheets for early childhood teacher candidates to ensure that there will be agreement on important elements if and when all of NYU's teacher education programs move to DRSTOS-R assessment.

### ***Impact on Student Success***

In describing the relationship of their objective and indicators to student success, the authors of the NYU statement noted that DRSTOS-R assessment of student teachers would generate data that participants across NYU's large and diverse teacher preparation program might use to correct problems. DRSTOS-R is contributing to CRTL's efforts to build a comprehensive database of pre-professional, induction, and follow-up measures of NYU graduates' effectiveness. CRTL began building an evidence base for the validity and reliability of DRSTOS-R in the fall of 2004. As of spring 2008, the DRSTOS-R database included 610 student teacher assessments. The assessment evidence has been used to identify areas of relative need for improvement in Steinhardt teacher preparation programs. The goal of achieving assessment of 100 percent of NYU's student teachers with DRSTOS-R is not likely to be achieved unless training in and use of the instrument are required at the time of hiring for all supervisors, but in the words of CRTL's director, "We may be getting close to that." Predictive validity is the "holy grail" of DRSTOS-R, and CRTL hopes eventually to be able to match data on student teachers assessed with DRSTOS-R against pupil achievement data.

### ***Elements of Learning Network Influence***

A core purpose of the site visits was to document any evidence that participation in the Learning Network contributed to institutional change in teacher preparation at the university. NYU was an active member of the Learning Network, sending teams to all three annual meetings, winning two mini-grants, and taking part in the New Teacher Center professional development opportunity. NYU saw involvement with TNE and the Learning Network as another opportunity to engage with colleagues

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3) New York City Partnership for Teacher Excellence: December 2008 Progress Report to Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation.

across the country. The TNE principles also offered a coherent “vision” of reform for some of the efforts already underway at NYU, including emphasis on the role of research and the role of arts and sciences and a justification for deep investment in clinical schools.

**ANNUAL MEETINGS.** NYU faculty found the annual meetings useful as public forums for the exchange of ideas and as sources of innovative practices that might be shifted to the New York City context. Steinhardt faculty also believe that bringing schools of education together is important because it keeps teacher education on the national agenda. Representatives from NYU attended the regional meeting hosted by Montclair State University in 2007 as a follow-up to common issues that arose at the 2006 Learning Network meeting. Bringing together New York and New Jersey area schools—Bank Street College of Education, Columbia University Teachers College, Montclair State, NYU, and Brooklyn College—to discuss engagement of arts and sciences faculty and assessment, the meeting was a “fabulous” way to build professional relationships and share ideas.

**MINI-GRANTS.** NYU was the recipient of two TNE Learning Network mini-grants, one to support research into the reliability and validity of DRSTOS-R, and the second to support the critical inquiry groups in social studies education. Although the grants were small, NYU faculty found them specific and useful. CRTL was able to use grant money to provide small incentive stipends to student teacher supervisors who attended the DRSTOS training, and the social studies critical inquiry groups were able to purchase books and provide food at meetings, fostering camaraderie among the group. The groups’ adviser indicated that they felt “hugely supported” by the TNE grant.

**NEW TEACHER CENTER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.** In February 2007, the New Teacher Center, based at the University of California Santa Cruz, announced a new professional development opportunity in induction for university-based teacher preparation programs, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Universities participating in either Teachers for a New Era or the Learning Network were invited to participate in an Induction Institute in the spring of 2007, and subsequently to apply for more extensive assistance from NTC, specifically an assessment visit to be followed by some combination of the professional development training NTC offers.

A cross-section of NYU teacher-educators (faculty, student teacher supervisors, and cooperating teachers) participated in the first two professional development trainings in the NTC sequence. While the NTC work was generally well-received, NYU found that NTC was not prepared to tailor their workshops to the New York City context, and therefore opted not to pursue a third training.

### ***Other Factors Contributing to Institutional Change***

**UNIVERSITY COMMITMENT TO TEACHER PREPARATION.** NYU president John Sexton is deeply committed to K-12 education; in fact, according to Steinhardt’s dean, “he has said if he wasn’t president he would want to be dean of Steinhardt.” Sexton, who had an established relationship with New York City Schools Commissioner Joel Klein, was personally involved in establishing PTE. The success of that partnership has hinged on high-level leadership involvement at both organizations. A history of university commitment to partnering with local K-12 institutions is evidenced by the foundation of University Neighborhood High School in 1999, led by a previous Steinhardt dean. This

same orientation was one important reason for the selection in 2003 of Mary Brabeck, then dean of the College of Education at Boston College and known for her collaborative style, as dean of Steinhardt.

Despite the commitment to K-12 education on the part of high-level university officials, NYU's scale and status as a research university present challenges to Steinhardt's teacher preparation programs. The university's dedication to a research agenda makes it difficult to hire faculty who are interested in K-12 because, notes Steinhardt's dean, "schools are not a lab." NYU's teacher preparation programs have in many cases attempted to circumvent this issue by working with tenured faculty from other disciplines who have "already earned their reputation." The Department of Teaching and Learning's research initiatives are also intended partly to "put pressure on the rest of the university" by demonstrating the effectiveness of its reform efforts and thereby encouraging further investment.

**RESEARCH INITIATIVES.** CRTL and the new collaborative Research Alliance for New York City Schools are evidence of a growing commitment to evidence-based practice within the Department of Teaching and Learning, a development commensurate with the DOE's emphasis on data-based accountability and empirical assessment against standards. The chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning captured this development with, "Evidence-based practice is the future of teacher education. We're not the department we were when I came here."

**STEINHARDT'S CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON TEACHING AND LEARNING (CRTL)**, formed in 2002, is tasked with coordinating, designing, and implementing research and evaluation projects to inform and enhance teacher preparation programs at NYU. The formation of CRTL reflects an institutional effort to track the impact of all the other design elements involved in program reform. Institutional commitment to this effort was affirmed by both the dean of the Steinhardt School and the chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning. As the "research arm" of the Department of Teaching and Learning, CRTL is building a comprehensive database comprised of multiple pre-professional, induction, and follow-up measures of program graduates' success, of which the DRSTOS-R is only one piece. Other measures include course grades, NYS Teacher Certification Exam Scores (NYSTCE), End-of-Term Student Teacher Feedback Questionnaires (ETFQ), Dispositions Survey: Educational Beliefs Questionnaires (EBQ), student exit surveys, State and City Information System Follow-Up Tracking Data, and One-Year and Five-Year Graduate Follow-Up Surveys. A one-year employer follow-up survey and pupil work samples are currently under development.

The links that NYU has forged with the New York City DOE, and its willingness to work with the DOE's agenda, are integral to the success of the Department of Teaching and Learning's research agenda. NYU tracks graduates using the New York City and New York state educational databases, after finding that neighboring states New Jersey and Connecticut had inadequate databases or did not employ a significant number of NYU graduates. The city database has proven particularly useful after CRTL's discovery that roughly 50 percent of NYU graduates from 2001 to 2006 taught in New York City. The New York City database offers information including the schools that graduates teach in, their subject, and grade level. CRTL can then match graduate information against school data like AYP and demographics.

CRTL has also begun the complex task of matching graduate data against student achievement data from the New York City database to assess the impact of NYU's graduates upon the learning of their pupils through value-added modeling. Beginning in 2006-2007, CRTL identified a set of NYU graduates who had taught in the same New York City school for three years, and matched their data against two years of standardized testing achievement data for their pupils in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. An early analysis of 97 of these NYU graduates showed that the value-added growth of their pupils placed these graduates in the 70th percentile in ELA and the 64th percentile in math among New York City teachers with similar experience in similar schools.<sup>4</sup> CRTL will repeat these analyses on additional samples of graduates provided by the DOE in the future.

CRTL also serves an important reporting function within the Department of Teaching and Learning and Steinhardt as a whole. In addition to producing reports that are e-mailed to faculty, the Center also hosts special forums on issues including DRSTOS-R, and delivers presentations to supervisors' meetings, to individual program areas, and to TEC.

In the fall of 2008, several major New York research universities, including NYU, Columbia University Teachers College, and City University of New York announced the establishment of the *Research Alliance for New York City Schools*, a new independent nonpartisan research consortium on the city's schools, based on the model provided by the Consortium for Chicago School Research. The DOE, the teachers' union, and major New York City school reform and community organizations were involved in the consortium's planning phase. The Alliance, to be housed at NYU, will perform applied social science research on policy and practice in New York City schools. Schools Chancellor Klein has promised that the Alliance will have access to New York City's database on student, personnel, and school characteristics and performance. The group has secured \$3.5 million in initial funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

**CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINABILITY.** School partnerships and new teacher induction support are high priorities for teacher preparation at NYU going forward. One recent change singled out as likely to "stick" was the practice of offering some courses onsite in partner schools. Steinhardt's Development Office is actively pursuing funding from several foundations for continued partnership efforts. Through the Research Alliance for New York City Schools, NYU intends to enhance its collaboration with other area universities, as well as with the New York City DOE, in service of the city schools. NYU's close and evolving relationship with a reform-oriented DOE is just one among many indicators that "real change is afoot" in teacher preparation at NYU.

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4) New York City Partnership for Teacher Excellence: December 2008 Progress Report to Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation.

#### References:

- Carnegie Corporation of New York. (2001). *Teachers for a New Era: A National Initiative to Improve the Quality of Teaching*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- Case Statement: *NYU and New York City: Principles in Context*. (2007). New York University.
- New York City Partnership for Teacher Excellence: December 2008 Progress Report to Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation* (2008). Fund for Public Schools.

## **APPENDIX A**

### ***INTERVIEWEES***

#### **New York University**

Mary Brabeck, Dean, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development

Robby Cohen, Professor of Social Studies Education and Department Chair, Teaching and Learning

Joe McDonald, Professor of Teaching and Learning

Rosa Riccio Pietanza, Senior Associate for Partnership Schools

Frank Pignatosi, Director, Office of Clinical Studies in Teaching

Bob Tobias, Director, Center for Research on Teaching and Learning

Diana Turk, Assistant Professor of Social Studies Education

NYU student teachers

NYU student teacher supervisors

#### **New York City Schools**

Michelle Lewis, Teacher

Christian Toala, Teacher

Sarah Woodbury, Teacher

## APPENDIX B

### LEARNING NETWORK – MEASURING PROGRESS

NAME OF INSTITUTION: New York University

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TNE PRINCIPLE BEING ADDRESSED: Decisions driven by evidence

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#### OBJECTIVE RELATED TO PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT:

Development of process for assessing student teacher proficiency reliably and validly in the domains of effective teaching, and from multiple perspectives: those of the supervisor, cooperating teacher, and student teacher

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#### INDICATOR OF CHANGE IN INSTITUTION, PROGRAM, OR FACULTY

- ▶ DRSTOS-RC developed (supported by 2006 mini-grant), and validation study now underway
  - ▶ A majority of supervisors now trained in the assessment
  - ▶ All 2007 student teachers assessed. Analysis of data underway
  - ▶ Curriculum task force will review data in February 2008
  - ▶ NTC tools training for cross-section of NYU teacher educators (faculty, supervisors, cooperating teachers) aligned with DRSTOS-RC, scheduled for April 2008
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#### RELATIONSHIP OF OBJECTIVE AND INDICATOR TO STUDENT SUCCESS

##### [DESCRIBE LOGICAL CONNECTION OF OBJECTIVE TO STUDENT SUCCESS]

NYU is a large teacher education program covering many fields and levels of teaching. Its sheer size caused it over many years to lose centrality of focus in terms of standards. Over the last several years, the University has used its participation in the TNE Network to correct this problem, as suggested above. That effort in turn has produced data that diverse participants can now use to correct other problems, a vocabulary to talk together (across all the sectors of people who play important roles as well as the multiple levels and fields), and finally an important link to broader efforts in teacher education to ask and answer questions related to what makes a good teacher and how do we know. This remains a work in progress, to be sure, but TNE has provided crucial assistance – the mini-grants, the opportunity to present in Denver a case that focused largely on the standards issue, and the NTC grant to use faculty interest in good tools to create movement toward coherence in standards.