The Enduring Importance of Excellent Teachers

Are policy changes, standards setting, and federal, state and local legislation enough to transform education? Certainly not. Educational reform can’t happen unless we have a cadre of excellent teachers. Teachers can and must take responsibility for change. An article in a recent *New York Times* Education Supplement notes that systemic reform, through shifts to standards-based instruction, tougher and mandatory assessment systems, research-based curricula, and school size, for example, will not ensure change. Only excellent teachers can make a difference.

Think of the best teachers you ever had, in elementary school, high school, or college. Why were they memorable to you? What qualities did they possess that made them outstanding? Did they value you personally? Make a personal connection with you? Care about you, your feelings, and your life outside the classroom? Treat you with respect? Make you finally love literature, or math, or history? Help you understand connections between the textbooks and the world? Expect you to succeed and make you feel like you could?

The *Times* article quotes a study by John Ferguson, a Harvard economist, who correlated student test scores with teacher test scores and found that teachers’ knowledge about their subject matter, their knowledge of teaching, and their relationships with students affected student performance more than any other factors.

As the *Times* article notes, no one remembers a great curriculum, a great textbook, a great district superintendent. But we all remember a great teacher. Can you become one? We think you can.

Carol Rhoder
Chair

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Faculty Scholarship

Focusing on the Hidden Curriculum

By Marina Gair
Assistant Professor

I have been teaching in the School of Education for a little over a year now. I completed my Ph.D. in the Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Arizona State University. My emphasis is in the area of social and philosophical foundations of education with a micro-focus on sociology of education, educational anthropology, and qualitative research, particularly teacher action research. I also have a growing interest in discourse analysis (the examination of values and ideologies embedded in language), critical media literacy (understanding the social messages conveyed by videos, film, web pages, newspapers, and music), and the application of methods of visual ethnography to the study of education and schooling. Since coming to Pace, I have taught both graduate and undergraduate courses, including “Understanding Schools,” “Foundations of Education,” “Teacher as Researcher,” and “Language, Meaning and the Development of Global Perspectives.”

I am currently writing an article titled “It’s a Tough Time to Be an Idealist.” Specifically, this paper addresses some of the discourses used in teacher education. For example, I am looking at the “discourse of the market” (standards, assessment, and accountability talk) and the “discourse of liberal humanism.” This latter discourse involves a philosophy that is motivated by compassion, that recognizes the importance of human rights, that is concerned with pursuing the well being of society, that examines participatory democracy, and that takes up causes for social justice. In the context of teacher education, a liberal-humanist orientation frames students and their lives as one of the most important elements of the educative process. Given the current political milieu, we must ask whether the discourse of the market is dwarfing the discourse of liberal humanism.

I believe that it is important for teacher candidates to understand how schools and teacher preparation programs exist in a larger educational, economic, and cultural field of power. The transformations that take place in the larger field of power have both direct and indirect effects on how teachers are trained. For instance, the present field of power in which education functions champions accountability as a solution to the nation’s educational challenges. Thus, one of the primary restrictions upon teachers is the need to align school curricula with state standards and tests. Many scholars and educators maintain that performance-based testing, reward and consequence structures such as incentive pay, an over-emphasis on measurable outcomes, and other practices tied to the needs of the market divert attention from what are considered important human welfare issues and related curricular content. A number of important questions remain: In a society rife with injustice, what should we be doing to socialize future teachers? Who, if not teachers, will continue to engage the discourse of humanism?

Among the most rewarding professional experiences for me are teaching foundations and diversity-related courses. These courses are by far the most challenging for teacher candidates because of their often complex nature and their emphasis on developing critical habits of mind. I am committed to encouraging students to become critical readers, thinkers, and writers; I believe it is important in helping them to become reflective about the socio-cultural histories that frame their beliefs and to develop a critical consciousness about the world around them. For teacher candidates, this includes an awareness of the hidden curriculum of schooling (by definition, the norms, values, and belief systems embedded in the curriculum, the school, and classroom life, imparted to students through structural arrangements, daily routines, curricular content, and social relationships) and how it can function to undermine the educational experience and outcomes for particular groups of students. Most importantly, a large part of the teacher socialization

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**Hidden Curriculum**

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The process is modeling classroom practices and social dispositions that avoid reproducing values and ideological belief systems that are not always pursuant to democratic ends.

On a personal note, my educational autobiography has provided me with some insight as a teacher educator. I was born in Croatia (formerly a region of Yugoslavia that was under Communist dictatorship) and immigrated to the United States with my parents as a young girl. While my situation is certainly not unique, the appreciation of my cultural history and the experiences of my parents and others like them continue to influence the ethnographer in me and who I am and aspire to be as a scholar and educator.

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**Student Voices**

**Blind Brook Internship: Benefiting from Experience**

By Beth Robinson  
*MST Childhood Track*

As many of you know, Pace has partnered with the Pelham and Blind Brook school districts for the Graduate Teaching Internship program. I am currently eight weeks into a yearlong experience at Ridge Street School in Blind Brook. My decision to participate in the internship program did not come easily because of the full time commitment that is required. Despite the sacrifice of time and employment, I felt the internship was my best opportunity to learn how to become a better teacher. Like many of you, I came to education from a prior non-teaching career. The opportunity to spend a full year collaborating with various master teachers while increasing my skills, knowledge, and experience was the chance of a lifetime.

I was placed in a first-grade class, where I will remain until November. Later placements will include the various elementary grade levels, which will enable me to get a taste of what the curriculum and teaching are like at each of these levels. Throughout the first several weeks I have been immersed in all aspects of the school life of “my class”. I have been able to participate in their education by assisting the teacher in daily classroom instruction, conducting reading groups, and participating in field trips. I have been able to try various lessons and techniques while teaching the class. I have also prepared lesson plans, graded papers, and completed reading assessments with the guidance of my mentor teacher.

It has been a great opportunity to apply the many theories and approaches I have learned through my Pace coursework in a real-life educational setting. In addition, I have been able to interact and collaborate with other members of the school team such as the school counselor, speech therapist, reading specialist, and the school nurse. I have also been able to participate in grade level meetings as well as parent conferences and open house.

Although the experience is sometimes exhausting, I love working with the children and feeling like I have made a difference in their day. Overall, the experience is preparing me for a successful future as an educator. For now, I am looking forward to the remainder of the school year and welcome the continuing growth and knowledge, as they will both help me improve my teaching skills in the end.

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**Job Listings**

The Education Department in Buchsbaum keeps a job posting binder in the Curriculum Library with employment openings including tutoring and childcare jobs.

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**How to Pass the Teacher Certification Exam**

Do you have any advice for those still to take the LAST, ATS-W, or CST? If so, your fellow students want to know. Write your advice to jenni333@optonline.net, and we will publish it.
In order to assess a pre-service teacher’s readiness for certification, the Pace School of Education uses a portfolio. We ask people in our initial certification programs to document their professional growth and development by submitting work they have done in courses and in their fieldwork. (If you are in a combined degree program, you must submit a portfolio in reference to your first area of certification: adolescent or childhood.)

The portfolio is aligned with “core” standards for beginning teachers developed by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), a group of state education agencies and national educational organizations committed to reform of teacher preparation, licensing, and ongoing professional development. Meeting these nationally recognized criteria provides you, the School of Education, and future employers with proof of your competency as a beginning teacher.

For each of the ten standards (see sidebar for list), you will be asked to submit
• at least three pieces of evidence,
• a reflection that indicates how your evidence reflects your development and growth in that area, and
• a list of five websites that helped you in understanding or meeting the standard.

Some artifacts will come from your work in the field. Others will come from coursework. Assignments in your core MST courses (ED 630-633) and TCH 201 and 301 will help you demonstrate competency in several of the standards. Lesson and unit plans that you develop in methods courses will also be valuable pieces of your portfolio. The School of Education has prepared a list of suggested artifacts, including a list of course assignments, for each standard. For example, the school and community portrait prepared by students for ED 633 or TCH 201 can be used to help meet the School/Community Involvement standard. There are separate lists of artifacts for the childhood and adolescent programs, which are available from faculty members. The earlier in your program you begin to collect materials for your portfolio, the easier the process will be. If you purchase a loose-leaf notebook now and set up sections, you can add assignments as you complete them.

The portfolios are evaluated by your clinical supervisor, mentor teacher, or seminar instructor. You and that person will have conversations about the portfolio during your student teaching.
Important Dates and Times for Students

Spring 2005 registration begins Nov. 8 for graduate students and Nov. 15 for undergraduate students. Please call the Office of Student Support Services at 773-3571 to schedule an advisement appointment.

New York State Teacher Certification Exam 2004-05 Test Dates
December 18, 2004
February 26, 2005
April 9, 2005
May 14, 2005
June 25, 2005

NYSTCE registration bulletins are available at Buchsbaum House or go to www.nystce.nesinc.com for information about registration and registration deadlines.

MST Student Teaching Seminars Schedule
All seminars will be held from 4 to 6 p.m.
Tuesday, Nov. 16: Conference Room C/D, Kessel Campus Center, Pleasantville
Tuesday, Nov. 30: Conference Room C/D
Tuesday, Dec. 14: Conference Room C/D

CPD Student Teaching Seminars Schedule
All seminars will be held from 4 to 6 p.m.
Pleasantville Campus location to be announced
Thursday, Nov. 18: Pleasantville Campus
Thursday, Dec. 2: On-site at CPD School
Thursday, Dec. 9: Pleasantville Campus
Thursday, Dec. 16: On-site at CPD school

INTASC Portfolio
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experience. Generally speaking, it will be due at the end of your student teaching experience. However, exact due dates will be negotiated between students and their reviewer.

Further information about the portfolio can be obtained from Carol Corbin, Mary Rose McCarthy, or your faculty adviser.

More on INTASC
In addition to the “core” standards on which Pace bases its portfolio requirement, INTASC has also developed specific standards in arts education, elementary education, English language arts, foreign languages, math, science, social studies, and special education. These can be downloaded at http://www.cessso.org/projects/Interstate_New_Teacher_Assessment_and_Support_Consortium/Projects/Standards_Development/

A vast wealth of information and commentary about educational issues is available on the Internet. Future teachers may want to check out the following sites.

National Teacher Organizations-General
American Federation of Teachers
www.aft.org
The 88-year-old teachers union.
National Education Association
www.nea.org
The nation’s largest teachers’ union.
Teachers Count
http://www.teacherscount.org/community/
A not-for-profit organization helping teachers with information, services and resources.

National Teacher Organizations-Subject Specific
National Science Teachers Association
www.nsta.org
National Association of Biology Teachers
www.nabt.org
National Earth Science Teachers Association
www.nestanet.org

What are your favorite education web sites? Please email them to jenni333@optonline.net and we will publish them in the next issue.

Education On-line: A Select List
American Association of Physics Teachers
www.aapt.org
National Council of Teachers of English
www.nete.org/
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
www.actfl.org
National Council for the Social Studies
www.ncss.org

Education News
www.tcrecord.org
Teachers College, Columbia, site for scholarly education research.
www.edweek.com
Includes articles from Education Week and Teacher Magazine; both also send news by email.

Education Writers Association
www.ewa.org
Links to articles on a plethora of topics.

educationnews.org
Links to ed stories around the country.
# School of Education Directory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Building</th>
<th>E-mail Address</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Dean’s Office</strong></td>
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