



Reforming Teacher Education

A First-Year Progress Report on a New Initiative

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In a bold attempt to reform the way teachers are prepared in the United States, the Carnegie Corporation of New York launched *Teachers for a New Era* (TNE) in the summer of 2001. The goal of this initiative is to fundamentally reform teacher education in a selected number of teacher preparation programs by providing these sites with large amounts of funding (\$5 million over a period of five years) and technical assistance. As a result of the TNE grant, Carnegie and its partners, the Annenberg and Ford Foundations, are expecting radical changes in the way teacher education institutions organize themselves academically, allocate resources, and partner with K–12 schools.

RAND and the Manpower Research Demonstration Corporation (MDRC) are jointly conducting a national evaluation for the Rockefeller Foundation of the TNE initiative as it is being implemented by the first four grantees. A new report by the joint research team offers a look at first-year implementation of the initiative.

TNE Design Principles

The TNE prospectus outlined three design principles that Carnegie believes characterize excellent teacher education programs:

A teacher education program should be guided by a respect for evidence. A culture of research, inquiry, and data analysis should permeate the program. Attention needs to be paid to pupil learning gains associated with teachers who are graduates of the program.

Faculty in the disciplines of the arts and sciences must be fully engaged in the education of prospective teachers, especially in the areas of subject matter understanding and general and liberal education.

Education should be understood as an academically taught clinical practice profession. This requires close cooperation between colleges of

Abstract

Teachers for a New Era (TNE) is an ambitious attempt to reform teacher education in selected institutions across the nation by providing them with substantial funding and technical assistance. The grantees are expected to reform their teacher preparation programs to align with several design principles. The RAND Corporation and the Manpower Research Demonstration Corporation were asked by the Rockefeller Foundation to conduct a national evaluation of the first four grantees. This brief offers a look at first-year implementation in these sites.

education and actual practicing schools; appointment of master teachers as clinical faculty in the college of education; and a two-year residency induction period for graduates of a teacher education program, during which graduates are given mentoring and support. (For a description of the design principles, see http://www.carnegie.org/sub/program/teachers_prospectus.html).

These principles—importance of a research-based teacher education program, engagement of arts and sciences faculty, and a rich, integrated clinical component—have been espoused by other reform efforts. What is new in TNE is the explicit requirement that programs provide evidence on the “value added” of their teacher graduates in terms of student achievement gains, and the insistence that both the teacher education and arts and sciences faculty be involved in providing support to graduates during their first two years of teaching (“induction period”).

The first four TNE grantees, selected in April 2002, were the following:

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- *Bank Street College of Education*, an independent institution in New York City, dedicated to improving the education of children and their teachers. Its Graduate School of Education offers master's degrees in teacher education and graduates about 250 new teachers per year.
- *California State University, Northridge* (CSUN), which offers undergraduate programs of teacher education and several versions of a post-baccalaureate program. The College of Education and the arts and sciences colleges offer the undergraduate programs jointly. Over 1,500 initial credentials are issued by CSUN per year, of which a little less than half are awarded to minority candidates.
- *Michigan State University* (MSU), which offers a five-year route to a bachelor's degree and a teaching certificate as well as an 18-month certification program for post-baccalaureate applicants. MSU prepares approximately 550–600 teachers per year.
- *University of Virginia* (UVA), which offers a five-year integrated teacher education program, leading to both the baccalaureate (BA) and the Master of Teaching (MT) degrees, and a two-year master's program for students with majors in noneducational fields. UVA graduates between 100 and 150 students per year.

Each institution was required to develop a design proposal to show how it proposed to reform its teacher education program to align with the TNE design principles. The sites received their first-year funding in November–December 2002 and were required to report on first-year progress in October 2003.

Cross-Site Observations Regarding Implementation in Year One

Based on an analysis of design proposals, data from site visits, and the institutions' own progress reports, the researchers concluded that the sites made progress over the past year in implementing their work plans, especially given that their "year" really consisted of nine to ten months. They also offer some observations regarding the first-year implementation experience.

Recognition by top-level university administrators and strong project leadership enhanced the credibility of TNE. The insistence of the funders that the leadership for TNE should rest in the provost's or president's office helped the projects gain visibility and prestige. The open and vocal support of university leaders attracted arts and sciences faculty into the TNE fold. Appointing senior and well-respected faculty from both arts and sciences and education to head the projects helped facilitate dialogue across the campus departments and fostered implementation.

The sites structured and supported their teams in very different ways. Some sites provided release time and overt recognition for their leadership teams; others did not. Some provided release time or stipends for all faculty working on TNE; others did not. Often the release time or the stipend was insufficient to cover the time required for TNE.

Junior faculty and those close to promotion points were concerned about the effect of TNE on their advancement. Some junior faculty—while excited about the work—worried about refus-

ing to participate, given the high visibility of the project, and felt they paid a heavy price for taking on this work. Some arts and sciences deans openly spoke of their concern about the publication records of junior faculty engaged in TNE, while some faculty members who were close to the tenure point expressed fears about whether they had done sufficient work on their tenure review packages. Despite these issues, most faculty were excited about their TNE collaboration, calling it a "learning experience."

All the institutions hired new faculty or staff to assist with TNE. Aware of the limitations of attempting to undertake such a large reform with faculty who are already overburdened with teaching, research, and service duties, the institutions all searched for or made new faculty hires specifically for TNE. This included full-time project directors and/or new faculty who will spend significant portions of their time on TNE. The "position open" notices for these faculty emphasized working with K–12 schools and teacher education, criteria that are different from those used for typical academic hires.

Changing institutional culture is difficult and requires different strategies at different institutions. The sites displayed perspicacity in choosing their overall approaches. Because CSUN and MSU already had a fair degree of overt and explicit collaboration between arts and sciences and education faculty, they chose to establish teams with leaders from both colleges. UVA offered funding for research focused on assessment issues and the opportunity to teach new, integrated courses in an attempt to get more arts and sciences faculty to participate in TNE and focus on teacher education issues. UVA also attempted to reach out to local school districts and to be sensitive to "turf" issues. Bank Street, realizing that it had the farthest to go in terms of educating its faculty regarding assessment and collaboration with arts and sciences, chose to establish small teams with some limited arts and sciences involvement that focused on developing a research base to help inform program improvement.

Overall, across the sites, most faculty reported that these collaborations were rewarding experiences, in that they learned to see through different lenses. But all the sites understand that changing institutional culture and making the project a cross-university endeavor is uphill work and will require time and patience.

Involving K–12 faculty in meaningful ways proved harder than expected. Although increasing the involvement of K–12 faculty in the teacher education program is one of the central principles of TNE, this has proven to be harder for some sites than expected. Some of the difficulty is due to scheduling problems (for example, the different teaching times for university and K–12 faculty); some of it, however, arises because the sites have not yet determined how best to involve teachers.

Site communication both within and outside of TNE needs improvement. TNE is large and complex, involving over 70 participants in two of the four sites. Communication is an issue both within TNE and between TNE and other non-TNE faculty, and the sites frequently mentioned the importance of clear and frequent communication of the vision, the process, and the progress of TNE to get buy-in from both internal and external audiences.

There was some redundancy in the work being done by the sites. Assessment is front and center in the TNE prospectus, but the work requires sophisticated technical expertise and access to high-quality data, both of which may be harder to come by in some institutions and in some states than others. All of the sites seemed to be going over the same ground—learning about value-added modeling and examining different ways of measuring both the learning of their teacher candidates and the pupils taught by their graduates. Teacher induction is another area where current efforts have been marked by a great deal of redundancy, with nearly all the sites conducting literature reviews of induction programs in an attempt to identify best practices.

Technical assistance played an important role in facilitating implementation in the first year. The role of the technical assistance provider is to manage the project, act as a spokesperson for the funders, arrange workshops on relevant topics, facilitate cross-site communication, and provide tools and techniques to help the sites manage the project. For example, each site was required to develop a work plan detailing specific activities, milestones, and timelines. While this was somewhat alien to the academic culture, the sites ended up appreciating the discipline imposed by the work plans and saw them as a roadmap and an important referent. The workshops were seen as generally helpful.

State policy environments have important implications for TNE implementation. State policies in terms of teacher licensure and induction requirements are already having an impact on all four institutions. In particular, all four sites are attempting to align the design of their TNE induction programs with those being administered by districts and/or mandated by states. The TNE work would also be facilitated by access to longitudinal data that

would allow the sites to track their teacher graduates over time and link them to the test scores of their students. Such data collection would be most efficiently done at the state level.

Reductions in state funding have thus far not affected the teacher education programs in the three public institutions. However, if there are further cuts, it is uncertain whether the institutions can continue to protect their teacher education programs. Reductions in faculty and/or support are likely to affect TNE implementation.

Recommendations

These observations translate into recommendations that might help improve implementation in future years. The sites are aware of many of these issues and are working on them in the second year.

- Providing tangible support and clear recognition of TNE leaders and participants would alleviate some of the time burdens and send a clear signal regarding the importance of TNE work.
- Explicitly recognizing TNE work in promotion and tenure decisions, and wide dissemination of these changes, would encourage the participation and ongoing involvement of junior faculty in the work.
- Ensuring that new TNE faculty receive contracts that detail explicitly the criteria on which they will be judged for promotion and tenure is important.
- Paying greater attention to ways in which K–12 faculty can be integrated into the TNE work and/or providing substantive roles for teachers-in-residence would be helpful in getting greater buy-in from these faculty.
- Working collaboratively on issues such as assessment and induction would be helpful. The technical provider could play an increased role in facilitating such collaboration. ■

This research brief describes work done for RAND Education documented in *Reforming Teacher Education: A First Year Progress Report on Teachers for a New Era* by Sheila Kirby, Jennifer McCombs, Scott Naftel, Heather Barney, and Hilary Darilek, TR-149-EDU, 2004, 172 pages, available online at <http://www.rand.org/publications/TR/TR149/>. It is also available from RAND Distribution Services (phone: 310-451-7002; toll free: 877-584-8642; or email: order@rand.org). The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors. **RAND**® is a registered trademark.

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