

# THE CHALKBOARD

The Newsletter of the School of Education, Brooklyn College ■ Volume 3 Number 2  
■ Summer 2003

## A Special Issue on Educational Change

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### *Greetings from the Dean*

This past year has provided a variety of exciting opportunities, across the city, state and nation, to reflect and engage in deeper conversations with our liberal arts and science colleagues, our school and community partners and policymakers as we face together the challenges outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act, the national accreditation movement; ongoing statewide school reform efforts, and a totally restructured Department of Education. While we embrace the changes and challenges before us, our mission and goals remain the same: We felt it important to share this statement of purpose with our readers

In "The Teacher as Researcher" Professor Bynoe expresses in detail the reflective process our students engage in to examine their teaching and its impact on student learning. This approach illustrates one of the ways the new standards for student achievement might contribute to the curriculum of teacher preparation.

We continue to be passionately committed to our work, and welcome your support of and feedback on our current efforts.

### *The Teacher as Researcher:*

#### *A Look at Evidence-Based Approaches*

**Pauline Bynoe,**

*Assistant professor, graduate program in special education*

Consider the following statements:

"My principal wants to know when I can share the results with her."

"There is so much talk of accountability in my school, I hear or feel it in everything we do."

The first statement comes from a graduating teacher who recently completed her master's research project as partial fulfillment of a master's degree in special education. Her presentation to the principal would report the findings of the question, How can authentic assessment be aligned with the standardized curriculum to provide opportunities for student success?

Over recent years, there has been an increased tone of accountability in schools, heightened by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of January 2001. One aspect of accountability within NCLB is a requirement for scientifically based research that informs classroom practices and, in turn, its impact on the learning outcomes for students. This leads to constructs for evidence-based interventions.

Since the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA of 1965) as the NCLB Act; the above teacher quotations are becoming increasingly representative of the tone, tenor, and perspective of teachers as they contemplate and act on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions braided into their training. They report that the NCLB is heard and felt in their daily teaching lives. Indeed, the ESEA Act, has been the most pervasive legislation of entitlement for children with differentiated needs. Five of

the entitlements within NCLB that are reflected most often by our teacher-researchers are:

**Title I - Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged**

**Title II- Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals**

**Title III - Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students**

**Title IV -21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools**

**Title V – Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs**

The second statement, from a teacher beginning the first sequence of paired courses in the master's degree in special education, is common among our teachers who enumerate multiple ways they "hear and feel" accountability" -- formal and informal testing, integrating students with disabilities in the general education classroom, and varied efforts at the school level to seek out what works to improve the academic performance of their students. This emerging need to find site-specific data and perspectives that may inform aspects of classroom instruction is being magnified by NCLB requisites of accountability and evidence-based interventions.

A teacher's voice can emerge to inspect and identify what works, what doesn't and why by using such tangibles as student and colleagues' reactions to work that has occurred, or as it occurs. Therefore, the teacher does not conjure work other than what is authentically done. When a teacher develops a line of inquiry--some aspect of the teaching-learning process that may range from a mere interest to a burning passion—he or she should have the skills for credible examination and reasoning of classroom practices necessary to foster improvement in students' performance. Such training of teachers to conduct action-research is an element of teacher preparation that is recommended by professional and accreditation organizations.

I believe that the potential and effectiveness of an emerging teacher's voice to sketch and fill in classroom practices that impact a student's learning depends on teacher preparation that: 1) viably engages teachers to consciously develop, refine, and reflect upon their practice so that they may consistently improve their students' performance through effective teaching skills and, 2) provides the knowledge and skills that promote the teacher's role as a viable professional.

My perspective of how these objectives are achieved during the program's course of study is based on the experience of teaching "bookends" courses --the initial course and the final course in the sequence. In the first course, students are required to conduct in-depth observations that scaffold into a case study. A magnified aspect of the case is then given a micro-examination through a literature review and accompanying critique. Each stage correlates theory and experiential practice. The ability to navigate between the two is threaded throughout the coursework and culminates in a focused line of inquiry that provides the opportunity for each teacher to closely examine an aspect of the teaching-learning process through action research.

Teachers are taught two primary approaches to action research--critical (theory-based) and practical. This research may be done qualitatively, quantitatively or using a combination of both approaches. Critical research is rooted in the social sciences and humanities, drawing from postmodernism. Practical action research assumes that teacher-researchers are committed to their own professional development and use this approach to reflect on what they do in order to improve their teaching and student learning.

The emerging role of the teacher-researcher who provides micro-examination of classroom practices bridges the historical breach with theoretical constructs of schooling. The latter emphasizes discrete examination for limited periods of time, using the findings at a macro level to generalize to broad populations. As such, data from discrete studies has been used to determine large scale models of classroom instruction. The teacher-as-researcher, on the other hand, provides data at a micro level particular to the variables in the classroom.

The variability of conditions that have an impact upon learner outcomes is immense, particularly for schools that serve students with targeted 'disadvantaged' needs of Title I that are addressed in NCLB, e.g., 'at-risk', poverty, low-achievement, etc. A prevailing number of our teachers work in Title I-designated schools. As such, the impact of NCLB resonates throughout the teaching-learning process.

As administrators are pressed to specify what works at specific school sites, teacher-researchers at those sites should have the opportunity to contribute data from critical examination of their own classroom practices. When these contributions are compounded, a more complete picture of the particularities and parameters that inform schooling practices will be the result. This target-specific, micro-generated data can then be used to enrich the macro scientifically-based research, making it more relevant to the needs of individual schools.

Schools have been gathering data for many decades, generally in compliance with state or local law. Over the last two years, however, teachers are increasingly illustrating how the NCLB requirement of knowledge-based decision-making is consciously interpreted in their teaching. The following list is a representative sample of research topics conducted over the past two years by students in the graduate program in special education. Their research conforms to the epistemology of teacher-researcher.

To what extent does positive teacher affect impact on students' willingness to approach new tasks?

Inclusion class placement: Attitudes, perceptions and concerns of parents and teachers.

The impact of multiage grouping on the academic success of emotionally disturbed students in an early childhood program.

Transition planning as a predictor of post-IEP status: A case study.

The effects of Ritalin on students' academic outcomes.

Teachers', parents' and students' perceptions and beliefs about inclusion.

The effects of praise on motivating junior high school students.

The extent of learning outcomes from an integrated therapeutic early intervention program that serves a multicultural urban population.

The placement and decertification patterns of young children with developmental disabilities in early intervention programs.

Do children with behavior disorders benefit less from cooperative learning in an inclusive classroom than children with learning disabilities?

The quantity and quality of multicultural education for teachers in the City University of New York.

An examination of the disproportionate number of African-American school age males in programs for the emotionally disturbed.

Learning-style modalities and attributes of an effective classroom environment: An analysis of adult learners in an adult basic education classroom.

Can a dyslexic Yeshiva student be simultaneously taught two languages (Hebrew and English)?

Are teacher preparation programs providing adequate information about the intricacies of teaching as a career and profession?

Cultural diversity and school success of children of ethnic minority groups.

Are standardized tests more accurate than portfolio assessment in measuring learning outcomes of culturally and linguistically diverse fourth graders?

**NOTE:** The teacher who conducted this action research has since been awarded a fellowship to complete a doctoral program. This research project was presented at a state-wide conference and will be the basis of the dissertation.--P.F.B.

## Program Updates

### Part of the Solution: The College Now Pilot Project

#### A Chalkboard Editor's Report

The New York City public school system, the most diverse and populous in the country, is poised to tackle the challenges of legislative initiatives that reach into the classroom--standardized testing based on a uniform core of knowledge, raising test scores in reading and math in the elementary grades, and producing New York State Regents graduates throughout the secondary school system--all in a relatively short time, and under media scrutiny.

Under these circumstances, we believe that success stories are extremely valuable. Parents, teachers, and students preparing to be teachers in the school system all want the same outcome for all schoolchildren, an education that brings out their highest potential. Such programs as College Now work with the schools, providing an extra dimension of attention and support that can translate into a lifetime of success for a young person.

As the name implies, College Now is dedicated to preparing high school students to enter-and succeed in-college. The program began its mission eighteen years ago as a collaborative project of the City University of New York (CUNY) and the New York City Department of Education. Originally, the program only offered academic courses. It has since expanded to include tutoring, the arts, campus tours, and a tuition waiver program that grants college credit to high school students who are admitted under the same requirements and share the same responsibilities and working standards as full time college students.

The waiver program is active in eleven Brooklyn high schools, with students participating in classes offered by fifteen departments within the College. Under the leadership of Vicki Irgang, adjunct assistant professor and executive director of the Center for Educational Change/College Now, a pilot project is under way to offer intensive preparation to high school students showing the potential for college-level achievement.

The new High School Pilot Program centers around a core curriculum of instruction, workshops, parental outreach, and classes for students aimed at building a bridge between the high school and college experience and supporting students' efforts to earn a New York State Regents diploma. With a heavy emphasis on literacy and writing, the program seeks to motivate students and strengthen the skills they need to succeed.

Funded by a combination of grants from CUNY in collaboration with the New York City Department of Education, the pilot program in literacy is now in its third year of operation. The program serves one hundred students, chosen by their schools on the basis of academic potential, in each of four schools in Brooklyn: East New York Family Academy, Canarsie High School, Samuel J. Tilden High School, and Bushwick High School. The program is tailor-made to fit the needs of each school, and is taught by College Now instructors from the School of Education. Also of major importance to the program is the strong collaboration with the Brooklyn College provost, the dean and assistant dean of undergraduate studies, the dean of the School of Education, representatives of the Brooklyn BASIS, alternative high school superintendents, and college and high school faculty members. This association of Brooklyn College with participating high school faculty and students fosters a supportive community for college-bound students which, in turn, maintains their interest in the program.

Currently, the four College Now teachers from Brooklyn College who form the backbone of the instructional staff, teach three days and spend a fourth in staff development and planning. At East New York Family Academy, Instructor Richard Stremme teaches college-level reading and writing skills and is working on developing a school-based learning center based on the Brooklyn College model. Instructor and Co-coordinator of Teaching Scholars Pieranna Pieroni works at Canarsie High School as a cross-curriculum instructional specialist. Alison Solomon is based at Bushwick High School, where she serves as an instructional specialist in playwriting, poetry, and literacy, and serves as editor of the literary magazine. Johanna Provenzano provides specialized instruction in poetry, literature at Samuel J. Tilden High School and English as a Second Language at East Brooklyn Congregations/Bushwick High School for Public Service.

The teaching force is augmented by College Now Teaching Scholars-Brooklyn College students recruited from such departments as Chemistry, Education, English, and History, as well as the B.A./M.D. (Bachelor of Arts in Medicine), and Brooklyn College Honors Academy. These students serve as peer teachers after a training period in tutorial techniques and writing across the curriculum at the Brooklyn College Learning Center.

All are now in place, and the participating schools report such satisfaction that College Now envisions replicating this program in schools across Brooklyn. While the literacy pilot program has not been in place long enough to gather data on graduates, the level of activity and enthusiasm is encouraging. East New York Family Academy, for example, expects its entire graduating class to receive New York State Regents diplomas, compared with a total of one diploma granted the previous year. At Bushwick, the College Now program is poised to become a new center of instruction within the school. Canarsie's after-school eleventh grade humanities and literature classes are engaged in social studies and English using debates and videotaped presentations, and Tilden High School's Future Teachers Academy is piloting a program developed by Instructor Sandra Gerber King for high school students wishing to major in education. Professor of Chemistry professor George Moriber is helping students prepare for the Regents examination on chemistry and the living Environment, while also serving as their career advisor and general counselor. Johanna Provenzano's ninth and tenth grade literature classes have their works showcased in a printed collection and an oral poetry presentation. An important part of the literacy pilot program is the Theater Initiative, led by assistant professor Dale Byam of Brooklyn College's Theater Department. Students from the four schools attend works at the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts performed by undergraduate and graduate students.

Sessions with teaching artists, who are also students in the theater program, introduce dramatic works and engage students in debate and analysis of their meaning in pre and post-performance classes. Recent performances seen and studied include *As It Is in Heaven*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Laramie Project*, and *Blood Wedding*. Byam plans to extend the theater experience into playwriting, and recently presented a workshop based on the Theater Initiative at an international education conference.

The program also sponsors the College Now Arts Consortium, a collaboration with the Brooklyn College Film Department and three participating high schools funded by The City University of New York and The Independence Community Foundation. Professor of Film Annette Danto is providing in-school instruction on video production, film editing, photography, and scripting. The College Now literacy program is also active in the High School of Arts, Telecommunications and Technology, where sociology professor Jerome Krase teaches community history and documentation. Students were taken inside the art world through a working slide presentation and lecture by world renowned installation artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude. ([www.christojeanneclaude.net](http://www.christojeanneclaude.net)). Students and their teachers presented their work in a comprehensive exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum.

In science education, the Pilot Program is sponsoring a series of eight biology workshops centered around the Aquatic Research and Environmental Assessment Center (AREAC) at Brooklyn College. These sessions are designed to expose students to college-level methods of study and scientific inquiry. Enlarging the scope of these seminars, the Biology Department, under Distinguished

Professor of Biology Martin Schreiber, is planning a series of two two-week summer institutes, funded by CUNY, for College Now students in all fifteen participating high schools. College Now is a premier collaborative program for high school students and teacher education. It is fostered by a strengthened commitment to the on-going professional development of high school and college teacher partnerships. The City University and the Department of Education are committed to expanding the program to all public high schools in the city, from freshman to senior year. School of Education students and faculty wishing to participate the College Now program can contact the College Now office at 2210 James Hall (718) 851-5209 or visit the College Now Website, <http://collegenow.cuny.edu>

### Kappa Delta Pi, Eta Theta Chapter Initiates Thirty-Two New Members

The 2003 chapter initiation ceremony of Kappa Delta Pi, the international honor society in education, was held at Brooklyn College in April, 2003. The following new members were inducted: **Rima Barsel, Richard Beck, Barbara Buchholz, Michael E. Dunbar, Dana Lynn Franco, Diana Maria Greene, Susan M. Green, Xin Xin Guan, Lauren Hall, Lori Ann Jacobs, Frank H. Jump, Rochelle H. Kreisler, Karen K. Lall, Anne-Marie Marrison, Danielle F. Mastrogiovanni, Jacqueline A. Newton, Ann Marie O'Brien, Mary Ann Parrish, Natalie Makeda Phillips, John Lindsey Prince, Jr., Jessica Ellen Prussman, Lynda B. Robinson, Elissa Gail Schwartz, SuGinia M. Sears-Jones, David A. Senechal, Candice Simon, Cindi Lynn Van Petten, Meredith Michelle Wihnyk, Janice Hope Winter, Maria Julia Wood, and Rose E. Yaou.** Recipients of Kappa Delta Pi, Eta Theta Chapter, Helen Brell Scholarship Award for excellence in Academic Achievement are **Susan M. Green, and John Lindsey Prince, Jr.** Runners-up: **Frank H. Jump, Jessica Ellen Prussman, and Mary Ann Parrish.**

### Science Education in an Urban Setting: A Collaboration for Teacher Preparation in Earth Sciences

The School of Education is pleased to announce the awarding of a National Science Foundation grant of \$483,612 for a proposal entitled "Teacher Renewal for Urban Science Teaching" (TRUST), developed by **Eleanor Miele**, assistant professor and program head, childhood science education; **Wayne Powell**, assistant professor of geology; and Heather Sloan, of Lehman College, in collaboration with the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). The project's stated goals are to:

- forge a teacher education collaborative between AMNH, Brooklyn College and Lehman College to prepare several cadres of master-level certified earth science teachers.
- prepare thirty science educators annually through enriching science education programs at Brooklyn and Lehman Colleges. TRUST will enrich their program through newly designed courses, summer institutes and lectures at AMNH, and advisement and mentoring groups.
- identify twelve aspiring science supervisors annually for participation in summer institutes for earth science teaching and learning and assist with advisement of teachers throughout the year.
- research, disseminate, and evaluate all aspects of the initiative.

Under Miele's leadership, the School of Education's partnership with the American Museum of Natural History has continued to develop innovative science education courses that use the resources of the museum to enrich science methods courses for elementary and middle school teachers.

### School Psychology Students Learn From an Alumnus

*Florence Rubinson, assistant professor,  
Program head, graduate program in school psychology*

On February 26<sup>th</sup> 2003 the graduate program in school psychology was proud to host a colloquium entitled *Bipolar Patterns in Children: Symptoms, Evaluation, and Intervention in Schools*. Dr. Ira Glovinsky, Brooklyn College-1974, spoke on bipolar symptoms in children and school accommodations for students with the disorder. Dr. Glovinsky is a nationally recognized expert on children with bipolar disorders, and is currently involved in a major research project with bipolar children. He recently co-authored the book *Children with Bipolar Patterns: New Perspective on Developing Pathways and a Comprehensive Approach to Prevention and Treatment* with the eminent psychiatrist Stanley I. Greenspan.

Bipolar disorders are considered spectrum disorders, meaning they fall on a continuum ranging from very mild to extremely severe. Unlike the symptoms experienced by adults, young children (ages 3 to 6) rarely experience the cycles ranging from depression to mania. Instead, children with bipolar disorder are generally irritable, and experience intense rages, sleep disturbances, hyperactivity, extreme risk-taking, and hypersexuality. Some children with bipolar disorder experience auditory hallucinations, suicidal ideation, extreme anxiety, and sensitivity to stimulation. Often they exhibit tangential and highly pressured speech patterns. Older children begin to display the cycling generally associated with bipolar disorders.

Considering the seriousness of symptoms and the potential consequences of bipolar disorder on academic achievement, Dr. Glovinsky's presentation became an important part of training for students as well as professional development for faculty. Since traditional medications do not seem to work for children with bipolar disorder, the school psychologist's input is an essential component of a plan to ensure school success.

This colloquium brought to light the rich training resources we have in our own graduates. The school psychology faculty is planning future colloquia showcasing our graduates talents and research. Be on the lookout for these events. Everyone is invited.

***The Chalkboard***

**A newsletter of the School of Education**

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