

Plan for the Teacher Education Initiative 2007- 08

Few issues in the United States are more important than improving the performance of P-12 students. Policy-makers and citizens increasingly recognize that teachers and the instruction they provide play a pivotal role in students' learning and thus in the success of any school improvement initiative. Surprisingly, however, no reliable system of teacher education exists in the United States. The Teacher Education Initiative (TEI) is a comprehensive project underway at the University of Michigan to redesign how teachers are prepared for practice, and to build knowledge and tools that will inform teacher education more broadly. We aim to develop professional education that will prepare novices to *do* the complex relational, psychological, social, and intellectual work of teaching. We also intend to study our efforts and to gather and disseminate systematic evidence of and about effective teacher education.

The core objective of the TEI is to make skillful practice the central goal of student teachers' learning. By "skillful practice" we mean instruction that can help all young people develop essential academic knowledge, skills, and dispositions as well as the capacity to be members of a democratic and just society. To reach this goal we intend to design a program that helps student teachers develop disciplinary knowledge and instructional skill that are flexible in the special ways that teaching requires, and learn to attend to and build upon diverse pupils' ideas, interpretations, and solutions in the complex environment of schools. [Note: Articulating clearly the program's goals related to a conception of "skillful practice" is something we should do this fall.](#)

This is an ambitious agenda. In order to do that, we must:

1. Enact a **comprehensive redesign** of the program: Because many elements of a teacher education program are interdependent, it will not be sufficient to change only part of our program. Instead, we will need to intervene on each of the primary components of our program, including curriculum, settings, students, instructors and staff, and program structure.
2. Engage collaborators with **diverse expertise and experience**: Teacher education has often been considered the purview of only a small group of faculty members, usually those who teach "methods" courses in schools of education. In fact, of course, "field instructors" who supervise and help student teachers in classrooms are central. Many more people are in fact "teacher educators," including many who do not think of themselves as such: LS&A faculty who teach our students in the disciplines, education foundations and educational psychology faculty in the SOE who instruct in the TE program, and cooperating teachers who supervise our students during fieldwork. Moreover, the project will also depend on the ideas and contributions of people who are not instructors in teacher education in any setting, but whose work provides crucial resources for the TEI.

Development Principles of the TEI

Achieving the goals of the TEI will require strategic work and sustained commitment. Many have tried to redesign teacher preparation in research universities before us, and many have failed. It is a large project, and we have no clear model to emulate. We do, however, have many resources at our disposal. In this section, we define six principles that underlie our strategy and form the basis of how we want to work as a learning organization.

1. Be mindful of **lessons from the past**: The past century has seen many attempts to reform teacher education in the United States. Many of these efforts have been both sensibly designed and carefully executed, and yet have failed. We have a great deal to learn by studying these earlier projects, paying attention to why they have not succeeded, and ensuring that the lessons they offer us inform every aspect of our work.
2. Learn from **other professions** and **other forms of teacher education**, and from **international comparisons**: Other fields such as nursing and law, medicine and business administration have designed programs of professional preparation far more successfully than teaching has. Teacher education programs not affiliated with universities are also proliferating, and many of them offer lessons in how to engage this work effectively. In addition, teacher education in many foreign countries differs in both form and content from teacher education in the United States. It is in our best interest to study these other efforts, gather ideas, and even work collaboratively across fields to solve emerging and continuing problems in professional education.
3. Build and use structures for our own **constant learning**: As we work, we will make mistakes; to succeed we will need constantly to take stock of our progress, seek feedback from others, and revise our work accordingly. [Needs elaboration](#)
4. Attend from the beginning to how we will **measure (or monitor or assess) our results**. It would be easy to begin this work with no clear sense of what results we want to see, or to how we will measure our progress. [Needs elaboration](#)
5. Build relationships with practicing school professionals . . .
6. Plan for teachers to learn to work in the schools and settings that they will enter in the present, as well as the profession they will inhabit in the future.

Domains of the Teacher Education Initiative

I. CURRICULUM FOR LEARNING TEACHING

- Curriculum and activities
 - Work of teaching
 - Arts and sciences disciplinary study
 - for subject matter preparation
 - for understanding foundations of education (e.g., society, culture, development, language, philosophy, history, sociology)
- Settings for learning teaching
 - Actual schools
 - Designed settings
 - Virtual settings
- Assessment
 - Entrance to the program
 - Performance of practice during and after the program
 - Subject matter knowledge for teaching
 - Different kinds and uses of assessment in the program
 - How consequential decisions using evidence are made in the program

II. PROGRAM STRUCTURES

- How students are organized
 - Pre-program
 - Program (e.g., TFA preparers, part-timers, freshmen entrants, community college joint¹, junior entrants, post-BA)
- How learning experiences are organized (e.g., structures other than courses, such as clinics, workshops, study groups)
- Program stages and markers
- How instructional teams are organized to teach student teachers the curriculum in different settings

III. RECRUITMENT²

- Outreach to high schools and admitted freshmen
- Preferred admits³
- Community colleges

¹ Programs that overlap enrollment at a community college with activities and experiences organized by us.

²

³ Freshmen who declare a special interest in entering education as juniors.

- Lower division UM students in LSA and other colleges
- Prerequisites and admissions criteria and evidence on these
- Retention and support

IV. CURRICULUM FOR LEARNING TEACHER EDUCATION⁴

- Year-long curriculum for instructor learning
- Seminar series for faculty, staff, and graduate students
- Structures for doctoral students' apprenticeships⁵
- Practitioner education (teachers in schools as "cooperating teachers"⁶, teacher leaders, school leaders)
- Structures for collaborative program work, including development of program, course pedagogy, assessment, etc.
- Clinical supervisors' (field instructors') learning

V. RESEARCH

- Developing program indicators across aspects of the program
- Documentation and data analysis of pilots
- Articulating and planning comprehensive research agenda on teacher education
- Instrument development
- Research training for doctoral students
- IRB and legal policies and procedures
- Publication series (research, experiments, conceptual papers, materials)
 - Criteria for types of publications
 - Review process
 - Review board
- Short-term contracted investigations, explorations, and basic inquiries on topics crucial to TEI development

VI. TEI INFRASTRUCTURE

- Communications, representations, and materials
 - Website
 - Recruitment materials
 - Fundraising materials (1-p. descriptions, brochures, etc.)
- Coordination with Teacher Education Program, Educational Studies, and the School of Education

⁴ This includes people who are not instructors per se but who are working on teacher education development.

⁵ When these are similar to the Math Methods Planning Group (MMPG), they would be the same as structures for on-going program development and redesign and for faculty members' continued learning.

⁶ Need a new name for this role.

- Documentation of TEI
- Steering group
 - Functions and roles
 - Membership
- Structures for convening others who work on TEI, including other leaders and people who work within initiatives of the TEI
- External advisory board (and connection to SOE Dean's Advisory Council)
- Budget
 - Determining costs (independent of revenues used to pay for them)
 - Analyzing general fund revenue sources
 - Developing and planning new revenue strategies within the general fund budget
- Enrollment management and planning in relation to capacity and costs
- Fundraising
 - Corporations and foundations grants
 - Private fundraising
- RFP process
 - How requests for specific proposals are designed, solicited, reviewed, and awarded
 - Field-initiated proposal process, review and award process
 - Resources for supported projects
 - Expectations, progress monitoring, and evaluation of supported projects