

Transformative Teacher Education

Facts about the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program at Union Graduate College:

- Secondary (7-12) Initial Certification Program; includes Master's degree necessary for Professional Certification.
- Includes one year mentored Internship delivered in one calendar year in full-time program; each Intern works with an experienced Mentor teacher for one year and is supervised by an experienced College Supervisor **who observes every two weeks.**
- Program begins with intensive **8-week summer** "boot camp" introduction to every aspect of teaching.
- Certification in Academic Disciplines (Biology, Chemistry, Chinese, Earth Science, English, French, German, Latin, Mathematics, Physics, Social Studies, Spanish, Technology).
- Generally certify 40-60 candidates per year.
- Program aligned with National Board Certification Principles and Standards.
- Program is a school-based, practice-based model of new teacher development **focused on Student and Teacher Growth, Development, and Learning.**
- Candidates enter with BA or BS (sometimes with MA, MS, ABD or Ph.D. in academic discipline).
- Includes graduate course work in academic discipline.
- Program founded in 1990.

One-Year Program Design Outline:

SUMMER (INTENSIVE):

- **Foundational** Teaching Methods Course; integrates Teaching Adolescent Reading in the Disciplines **as well as introduction to special education issues**.
- Methods Course in the Academic Discipline (ELA, math, foreign languages, sciences, social studies, or technology).
- Teaching Laboratory (focus on basic teaching strategies with teaching episodes video-taped and critiqued).

Team-taught by full-time university faculty AND National Board Certified Teachers; effective teaching practice is modeled and analyzed **continuously**.

All course work and teaching based on **A COMMON LANGUAGE**, Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*.

FALL: Focus in Internship on **nine** essential behaviors for effective teaching.

- Seminar on Special Needs Populations (taught by special education teachers).
- Using writing effectively in the disciplines (National Writing Project faculty).
- Academic Course (s) in Discipline (Union College & UGC faculty).

Interns video-tape classes for analysis/reflection every two weeks throughout year.

WINTER: Add **six** essential practices of professional teaching to the initial nine.

- Seminar on Assessment (**conventional** & alternate/performance); taught by full-time university faculty; Interns produce professional teaching portfolio including evidence of student learning.
- Technology course (using it effectively in service of student learning; taught by effective teachers who use technology in the classroom).
- Academic Course(s) in Discipline includes research project (**either MA Thesis in academic discipline OR MAT classroom-based project**).

SPRING: Include all **twenty** practices of professional teachers in Danielson model.

- Seminar on School Reforms that work or are in common practice (**Charter Schools, Coalition of Essential Schools, Value-Added Assessment, Professional Learning Communities, etc.**).
- Academic Course(s) in the Discipline.
- Throughout the year program assembles a monthly **Urban Round Table**: invite effective urban educators of high risk students to lead a discussion/analysis of their practices that work with high needs students.

What transformations occur in new teachers in our year-long Internship?

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1. Entering novices face disorienting dilemma(s).
Occurs in intensive summer program when NBC teachers/full-time faculty immerse novices in every aspect of research-based teaching by modeling and then dissecting/analyzing effective teaching and learning strategies.
 2. Faculty and novices form a Professional Learning Community based on mutual critique and mutual support (every aspect of what occurs is open to analysis/dissection, including the practices of the faculty).
 3. Novices face *NEW* approaches to teaching and learning with feelings of anger, fear, dismay, surprise, and excitement.
Novices must critically analyze/dissect what they experience in terms of when and why the strategies will be effective with students and when and why they will not be effective. They must do so in writing weekly, in class in formal debriefs of teaching episodes, and orally in teaching laboratory.
 4. Leads to a critical re-examination of their assumptions about teaching and learning.
 5. Novices recognize that their sense of disorientation is shared by their peers and mutual conversation/discussion and analysis of the causes and the solutions to that condition become commonplace.
 6. They realize that planning a course of action that is open to revision, re-examination, and alteration dependent on student/experienced teachers' responses to what they do is essential.
The recognition that failure is the norm (and something to be embraced) is critical to growth and development as a teacher and a learner.
 7. Exploration of new roles, practices, and actions, including a detailed knowledge of their students and differentiation of their practices with individual students' strengths and weaknesses in mind.
 8. Learning to celebrate even partial successes and to embrace new roles and relationships. (Learning, like professional athletes, to forget/let go of failures and to enter each day with renewed enthusiasm and excitement.)
 9. Reintegration of new roles and relationships into a new "experienced" professional persona. Realization that to become an expert teacher *requires* constant new learning, revision, critical reflection and analysis of data, and new learning. Becoming an excellent professional teacher is a life-long project.

It is difficult if not impossible for these transformations to take place in a traditional eight to ten or even fourteen week student teaching placement for most candidates.

Essential building blocks of transformational practice:

- Excellent faculty who can model the techniques they advocate. We have 17 NBC teachers on our faculty. Our full-time faculty AND supervisors all have a demonstrated record of excellent classroom practice. They model what they advocate in the college and in secondary classrooms.
- Student-Centered curriculum at the college/university and a diplomatic movement of new and experienced teachers toward that model in their practice. (*This is an exceedingly delicate issue requiring tact and compromise.*)
- Reflective writing and discourse. (This is so completely integrated in our program that our students find it easier to do it than NOT to do it.)
- Spiraled Curriculum (a constant revisiting of critical topics requiring new perspectives, data, and new approaches). Topics include special needs populations; motivating the unmotivated; reliable, valid & fair assessments; mastering multiple research-based teaching strategies; ability to plan and deliver effective instruction; using data to analyze teacher/student performance; teaching reading in your discipline; including appropriate technology; making effective use of writing in your discipline; challenging and engaging students; differentiating instruction; appropriate discipline/management strategies; professional and ethical learning and behavior; English language learners; etc.)
- **A common language for teaching and learning** that all participants know and use effectively. (*DANIELSON, DANIELSON, DANIELSON*)
- An **Active and Supportive** Professional Learning Community.

Evidence that the MAT Program is Transformative and Effective: (based on the last 10 years of graduates, about 450 - 500 new teachers)

- A. Initial Accreditation (2003) and Re-Accreditation (2008) by Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC); cited as exemplary teacher education program by TEAC.**
- B. Until 2010** all graduates were hired as teachers in a competitive market within six months of graduation.
- C. At least 100** have been hired and retained in high-risk urban (Albany, **Amsterdam**, Schenectady, Troy, **Utica**, New York City, and Boston), **small town** (Cohoes, Rensselaer, Lansingburg, Cambridge, Gloversville), and **rural** districts (Hoosick Falls, Hudson Falls, Lake George, Ravena-Coeyman's-Selkirk, Greenwich, Mayfield, Little Falls).
- D. At least 30** have become National Board Certified teachers.
- E. At least 20** have become principals and department chairs, including two principals in Boston charter schools.
- F. At least 28** have won national or regional fellowships/scholarships, including Fulbrights, NEHs, Cornell, NSFs, Freeman Foundation, Teaching American History, Service Learning, etc.
- G. At least 12** have won teaching awards in their schools. If our faculty are included who are not **graduates that** number increases to **18**.
- H. At least 3 novels** and **1 book of poetry** have been published.
- I. At least 50** have presented professional sessions in their discipline or on pedagogy at state and/or regional conferences.
- J. At least 35** have become teachers at colleges/universities, mostly of other teachers, some using NBC as a Ph.D.-equivalent while continuing to teach in secondary schools.
- K. At least 30** have sought Ph.Ds to teach in colleges/universities **in their subject matter or in teacher education**.
- L. At least 25** have completed one of our Teacher Leadership Certificates of Advanced Study.
- M. We have established** successful Certificates of Advanced Study in Teacher Leadership and...
 - **Mentoring** (helping districts to establish focused, research-based, mentoring programs that systematically induct new teachers into the profession and lead experienced faculty toward accomplished teaching skills.)
 - **National Board Certification** (we established the first NBC support groups in NY State and continue to operate a successful support group for those seeking NBC; those wishing to translate their NBC certificate into a teacher leadership position can enter this certificate program.)

- **Service Learning** (helping teachers integrate service learning into their curriculum and their schools and communities.)

Program under development: Teacher Leadership and Student Achievement (introducing practicing teachers to collect and use existing or teacher-directed student performance data to analyze student and teacher performance and to design curriculum that will improve both.)

All certificates are based on the new APPR and on the expectation that there will soon be a career ladder for teachers where promotion and appointments will be based on professional pedagogical knowledge and skills.

Long-Term Vision:

Establish a Center of Pedagogy (a professional development center where improved professional teaching and learning practice focused on effective student learning is the major goal.) This center could lead to:

- **A Ph.D. or Doctorate** in Pedagogy based on practitioners continuing to work in K-12 classrooms while acquiring advanced and accomplished teaching skills.
- Credentialing and/or course work that serves as a basis for promotion in a school-based career ladder for teachers.
- School-based faculty and university faculty teaming to lead focused, standards-based and research-based professional development programs for classroom teachers. Some of these sessions could be delivered in schools/districts.
- Promoting clear time, resources, and money to establish on-going professional development plans for schools/districts that focus on the school/district's short-term and long-term goals to improve student, teacher, and principal performance.
- Promotion of a professional pedagogical community that maintains currency in pedagogy and establishes criteria, standards, and resources to create and promulgate professional learning in as many schools and districts as possible.

Problems we as Teacher Educators face in working effectively with schools:

We believe strongly that every public school has many outstanding educators. What troubles us most is that no school we work with, no matter how good its reputation or actual quality, has a coherent professional development plan that links teachers and administrators working together on focused efforts with enough time, resources, and access to relevant data to establish short-term and long-term student- and teacher -improvement plans. We see a great deal of professional development activity, some of it outstanding, but mostly fragmented and focused on addressing specific issue(s) rather than on clearly identifying the major school and district issues that impede the best possible educational performance for their students, teachers, and principals.

1. **Lack of meaningful collaboration between administrators and teachers.** (A simple example: administrators are being trained all over the state about the new APPR and what they mean for assessing teachers and principals. There may be a few schools where teachers AND administrators have attended these sessions together and returned to their schools to map out a cooperative plan, but we do NOT know of a single school in the Capital Region where that is the case.)
2. Placing Interns with **Quality Teachers**. (This has become a major impediment given the new assessments of teachers/principals.)
3. Schools “infecting” Interns with negative school culture. (Often this manifests itself in teachers being totally overwhelmed with new requirements, mandates, and goals, most often with little or no say in the formation of these demands.)
4. Lack of Professional Learning Communities in schools.
5. Principals who want Interns to work with needy teachers to improve the *challenged* educator.
6. Insufficient focus of school culture on planned & targeted professional development for teachers/administrators.

7. Teachers who are unfamiliar (in many cases ignorant) about different forms of assessment and assessment criteria such as reliability, validity, and fairness.
8. Teachers who have no experience with (in many cases no access to) student performance data and the knowledge/experience **AND TIME** during the school day to work with the data to improve student/teacher/administrator performance.