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# Accountability for Our Claims: Exploring the Relationship Between our Teacher Education Graduates and 1-6 Student Learning

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Nazareth College

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# Nazareth College: Context

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- Comprehensive institution located in Rochester, New York
- Approximately 1,060 *graduate* students
  - 450 full-time students and 610 part-time students
  - **50% are enrolled in teacher education programs**
- Approximately 2,200 *undergraduate* students
  - 2,000 full-time students and 200 part-time students
  - **35% are enrolled in teacher education programs**

# Department of Inclusive Childhood Education: Context

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- Program options offered at both the undergraduate and graduate levels:
  - Undergraduate:
    - Inclusive Childhood/Middle Childhood Education (Grades 1-9)
    - 264 students
  - Graduate:
    - Inclusive Early Childhood (Birth-Grade 2): 3 certification program options
    - Inclusive Childhood Education (Grades 1-6): 4 certification program options
    - 250 childhood and early childhood graduate students
- Eleven full time department faculty members and 40 part-time faculty members who teach in the department regularly (fall, spring, summer)



## GOALS FOR THIS SESSION:

1. National context for the conversation and relevant literature
2. Claims of student learning
3. Exploring the relationship between graduates and 1-6 student learning via *collaborative partnerships*
4. Three different types of partnerships in which we are engaged
5. Next steps
6. Provide opportunity for questions and discussion

# National Context

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- Engagement in on-going program evaluation
- National conversations about teacher education program quality and PK-12 student learning outcomes
- Tensions teacher education institutions are experiencing, and not “giving in” to narrow versions of evidence and accountability (Cochran-Smith, 2005)
- Shifting the focus of accountability: external policy AND internal practice

# The Literature: Informing Us in Multiple Ways

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- **Framing our research in a larger philosophical and policy context** (Blackwell, 2003; Reckase, 2001; Sanders, Sterner, Michaelis, Mowry & Buff, 2004; Shulman, 2002)
- **Guiding our thinking about the connections with teacher perceptions** (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Dana & Yendol-Silva, 2004, Lava, Recchia & Giovacco-Johnson, 2004; Lyon, Vaassen & Toomey, 1989)
- **Highlighting the importance of using complex performance assessments rather than single measures to connect teacher education and PK-12 student learning** (Basile & Townsend, 2004; Cooper & Corbin, 2003; Denner, Norman, Salzman, Pankratz & Evans, 2004; Hamel & Merz, 2005; Little, 2004; Mariage & Garmon, 2003; Renaissance Partnership for Improving Quality, 2005; Sanders, Sterner, Michaelis, Mowry & Buff, 2004)
- **Providing us with other potential data sources to consider**

# Accountability for our Claims

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- As we have engaged in on-going program assessment, we have become interested in the intersections between our claims, our teacher education candidates and graduates, and their students' learning.

# School of Education

## Claims of Student Learning

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Teachers prepared at Nazareth College:

1. are competent in the subject matter that they will teach and are knowledgeable about the corresponding NYS standards and standards of their respective professional organizations.
2. have gained a liberal education and demonstrate competence with the tools of the liberal arts (e.g., critical thinking, aesthetic appreciation, intellectual curiosity, engagement with moral/ethical issues)
3. **have the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to teach all children in varying educational contexts (e.g., in urban/suburban/rural schools; in inclusive/self-contained classrooms; via multiple pedagogical approaches).**
4. **are advocates for the profession as well as for the children and families with whom they work.**

# Claims of Student Learning (cont'd.)

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5. demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills.
- 6. demonstrate the ability and willingness to critically reflect on their own beliefs and practices.**
- 7. are caring and committed professionals.**
8. understand that schooling is a social construction affected by cultural, historical, and political forces.

# Accountability for our Claims

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- As we have engaged in on-going program assessment, we have become interested in the intersections between our claims, our teacher education candidates and graduates, and their students' learning.
- Collaborative partnerships have been the vehicle for our understanding.

# Collaborative Partnerships

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- We cannot deeply understand the intersections without being situated where the 1-6 learning is occurring.
- This positions our work in schools.
- We believe we need to be active participants in the conversations with pre-service students, public school teachers, college faculty, and elementary learners.

# Three types of collaborative partnerships:

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1. Site-based coursework
2. Cluster model and action research
3. Longitudinal research study: How do our program graduates impact 1-6 student learning?

# Nazareth College and School Partnerships Site-Based Courses/Clusters

Greece  
(2 schools)

East Irondequoit  
(2 schools)

Webster  
(2 schools)

Gates-Chili  
(1 school)

Rochester City Schools  
(11 schools participating)

Penfield  
(1 school)

Gananda  
(1 school)

Brighton  
(3 schools)

Pal-Mac  
(2 schools)

In 2007-2008, Nazareth students engaged in 2165 field placements in 325 schools in 13 counties for field participation experiences.

# Site School Model

- Courses taught on site in schools and educational settings
- 15 sections/semester
- Offered at the graduate and undergraduate levels
- Involves school and college faculty, pre-service students, and preK-6 learners
- It looks different in different locations
- Positive impact on preK-6 student learning



# Site School Model

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- Student support as determined by public school needs (e.g., ELL, students with disabilities)
- One-on-one assessment, planning and intervention with identified elementary learners
- Test preparation support
- Content specific needs (e.g., “Math” night for parents and students, literacy)



# Impact on student learning

Department of Inclusive Childhood Education

**STUDENT SUPPORT LOG**

French Road Elementary School – Fall, 2008

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>GOAL(S)</b><br>What do you want the student to be able to do by the end of the session?  | <b>LEARNING EXPERIENCES</b><br>List step by step details of your student support session | <b>REFLECTION ON SESSION &amp; PLAN FOR NEXT MEETING</b> |
|---|--|--|
| Please insert the DATE for each entry. Refer to your Cooper (2006) and Cunningham (2005) texts for your plans. If you use a specific strategy from one of the texts, identify the strategy you are using and show its application to your plan. |  |  |
|   |  |  |

- In each site school teacher education candidates provide upwards of 500 hours of student support/ semester.
- Student learning data are primarily informal
- Currently using qualitative indicators to measure impact (e.g., interview data)

# Cluster Model

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- Graduate students are clustered in elementary schools (urban, suburban, and rural) – reflects the nature and needs of the school
- College faculty meet throughout the semester with school-based faculty to support the process
- Purposeful and continual collaboration between teacher education students, Nazareth faculty and public school teachers

# Cluster Model and Action Research

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- Course specific: “Literacy Assessment, Program Planning and Assistive Technology for Diverse Learners”
- Incorporates action research project:
  - identify the strengths and needs of a struggling reader through the administration of a variety of assessments
  - develop intervention plan based on a research question, analysis of the literature, and consultation with classroom teacher
  - implement plan and analyze the impact of the instruction on student learning

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“I wanna learn to read a  
thousand books in one day!”

3<sup>rd</sup> grade student  
Rochester City School District

What instructional strategies can be used to improve  
the reading fluency of a struggling reader, who  
demonstrates a tendency to read word-by-word?

Action Research Project

David Muscato

Student in Graduate Inclusive Childhood Education Initial Certification Program –  
Fall, 2008

# Student Profile

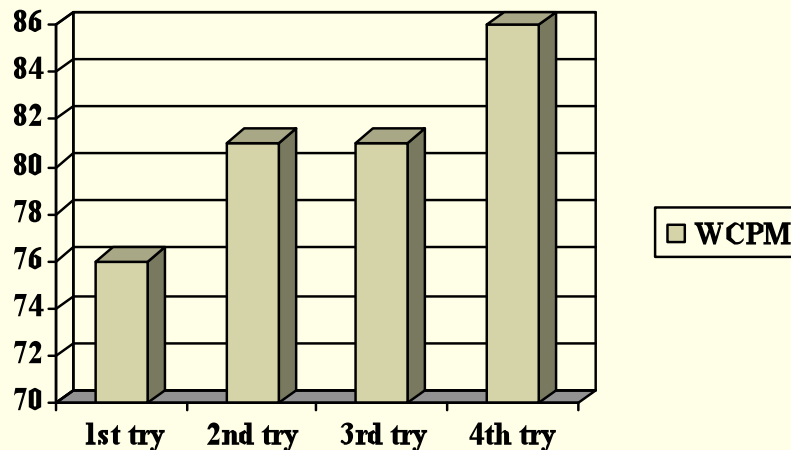
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- ORF: 47, 38, 54, 49, 60, 50 (3<sup>rd</sup> grade benchmark: 77)
- Beginning Decoding Survey: 42/50 (3<sup>rd</sup> grade benchmark: 48/50)
- Advanced Decoding Survey: 13/33 (3<sup>rd</sup> grade benchmark: 25/33)
- Dolch Sight Word Assessment: 186/220
- Fry Instant Phrases: semantic cueing
- Running Reading Records w/ Miscue Analysis: word-by-word; visual cueing; little expression

# Impact on Student Learning

## Rapid Read:

- Explicit teaching model (I do, we do, you do)
- One-minute timed readings



**Fluency**  
Rapid Read

**F.029.AM2**

### The Bakery

Jill and her dad went to the bakery for breakfast. Jill could see the baker placing trays in the large oven. The baker asked Jill if she would like to get a tour of the kitchen. Jill smiled and said, "Yes!"

The baker showed Jill and her dad the large mixer, the oven, and the huge baker's working table. Then the baker told them how he prepares the dough to bake cookies. As Jill listened, the shiny switch on the giant mixing machine caught her eye. She reached out her hand and flipped the switch. "Whir!" went the machine.

The baker, Jill, and her dad jumped back. Chocolate cake batter sprayed around the room and all over Jill. The baker ran toward the machine and turned it off. Jill wanted to cry and was afraid to look at her dad or the baker. Suddenly, the baker started to laugh. Then, Jill's dad started to laugh. Jill still felt bad but she began to giggle too.

Jill's dad sat and had a cup of coffee while Jill cleaned up the chocolate cake batter. When she was finished, she told the baker she was sorry about making the mess. He smiled and said, "That's okay." Then, he handed her a box to take with her. When she got outside the bakery, she looked in the box to see a huge piece of chocolate cake. Jill smiled.

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# Distinguishing Features



- Long-term commitment
- Everyone approaches it as a *partnership*, versus “I am the expert” – trust in each other’s expertise
- It can look different in different places; it is based on needs
- Administrative support, including an understanding of the value
  - Integrated into workload
  - Fits with institutional focus on effective teaching and collaboration across the institution
- Cluster of committed faculty members
- Accountability for our claims: Claims #3 and 6

# Longitudinal research study:

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- How do program graduates impact 1-6 student learning?
- How do program graduates perceive their impact on 1-6 student learning?
- How do program graduates perceive the relationship between their teacher education experience and their impact on 1-6 student learning/performance?

Research Project conducted by:

E. Contopidis, K. DaBoll-Lavoie, D. Darling, K. Dunn, and K. Wieczorek

# Procedures

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- Yearly cohorts
- Volunteers from Capstone Seminar
- Survey
  - Demographic data about themselves, their classrooms, and the students with whom they work
  - Their definition of student learning
  - Identification of the five most important factors they believe impact the learning of the students with whom they work
  - Data about their own indicators of student learning for the students with whom they work
  - Data about the New York State indicators of student learning for the students with whom they work
- Initial interviews
- End of the year interviews (more specifically focused on evidence of individual student learning, and evidence that they might share with us to demonstrate student learning)
- Annual interviews over five year period

# How do program graduates *perceive* their impact on 1-6 student learning?

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## ■ Factors that impact student learning:

- ❖ classroom environment
- ❖ parental involvement
- ❖ knowledge and expectations of learners
- ❖ effective teaching
- ❖ collegial collaboration
- ❖ administrative support

## ■ Attribution of teacher influence on student learning: used specific examples and used language that mirrored our claims of student learning and departmental mission, e.g. critical reflection (Claim #6)

# Critical reflection and student learning

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“So the reflecting piece ... I did a math lesson the other day and it was on subtraction with regrouping, so I was teaching the kids how to borrow ... I remember I taught the same lesson last year and I remember there were a few kids who didn't get it which is understandable, and we worked on a few things, and things got better. This lesson I taught ... I had better than half the class that didn't get it and I thought 'okay, so we broke up from full group, I brought four kids over and we worked on things, sent them on their way, brought four more kids over, small group, ... but felt like something is not right.' And I thought 'oh my gosh, something is not right.' ... The kids had to go somewhere but I thought 'what just happened in there? I couldn't let it go. I said 'I don't remember this happening last year, something is not right. I'm really feeling stressed over this.' I picked up the kids from whatever ... I went on with my day, but I couldn't let it go. I went home but I wouldn't let it go until I figured out what I did ... I know what I did .. I couldn't understand, when the kids were borrowing, instead of knocking the number down one they were crossing it out and putting a one ... and there were several kids doing this and I was like 'why are they doing this?' I kept saying 'no you don't want to put a one there, we're just borrowing one from the tens place ... so you're going to take one away.' If I said this once I said this ... I can't tell you. But when I teach adding and regrouping and carrying I have the kids put a square, a visual, so when they carry they put a one up in the box ... I don't know why I did this, but I told them, with the subtraction to keep putting the box there, THAT'S what was confusing them. And I got home, and it just dawned on me ... That was just a moment of reflection. I went home and I would not let it go until I figured out 'by golly I figured out what I did!' So I went back the next day and I said 'we need to rewind and go back to what Mrs. X told you to do and we're going to make a minor adjustment.' So what was interesting, once I went back up, made that change, the entire class was good to go! ... so ... you want to talk reflection, don't even go there with me, because I beat myself up.”

# What evidence do our graduates use to demonstrate student learning?

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Context: For our second interview, we asked participants to pick one student on whom they had a significant impact on his/her learning and bring evidence of that students' learning – these data derive from that prompt:

- Multiple variations of teacher-created assessments
- Student work samples
- Scores from state and published exams
- Declassification of students with disabilities

Additional Finding: Teachers often did not bring artifacts as evidence and instead held the student-teacher interaction as the key evidence; “I interact with the student and therefore I know they are learning.”

How do program graduates perceive the relationship between their teacher education experience and their impact on 1-6 student learning/performance?

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- Dispositions
- How-to's/Strategies
- Specific courses and specific faculty
- Areas that were lacking

# Dispositions

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- **Classroom Environment:** “*Students need an environment to meet their needs.*” (Claim #3)
- **Knowledge of Learners:** “*You have to know individual learners – you have to seek multiple ways of understanding learners.*” (Claim #3)
- **Expectations for Learners:** “*It is important to have high expectations for all learners, to offer multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their understandings, to understand that there is more to learning than grades, and to focus on growth.*” (Claim #3 and 7)
- **Collegial Collaboration:** “*We were taught to see that working in our own little world was not an effective way to teach students; we need to collaborate.*” (Claim #3, 4, 6)
- **Teaching:** “*Naz gave insight into different learners, and taught that all kids learn differently.*” (Claim #3)
- **Agents of Change:** “*Nazareth taught there is ‘another way,’ and that there are ‘others out there,’ ... be the change needed.*” (Claim #4, 6, 7, and 8)

# Next Steps

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- Purposeful in our qualitative and quantitative data collection (e.g., teacher interview data from site schools)
- Examine the tension between how our graduates understand student learning and the broader conversations about assessment (e.g., singular measures and state test scores)
- Increasing our understanding of the multi-dimensionality of these connections
- Inform program and curricular development

# Questions ...

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