

Summary of the Case¹ (from the Inquiry Brief)
Colgate University
Teacher Education Program
Audit Dates: November 9–10, 2006

Introduction & program demographics

Colgate University is an independent, coeducational liberal arts college enrolling approximately 2,700 undergraduates with a small graduate program of Master of Arts degrees in a few academic subjects and a Master of Arts in Teaching. The Department of Educational Studies at Colgate University offers both an undergraduate degree in educational studies, which is a liberal arts major, and teacher certification for both undergraduate and master's degree students. The certification program, which graduates six to ten students a year, is seeking TEAC accreditation. Undergraduates may be certified at both the elementary (1-6) and secondary (7-12) levels; graduate students may be certified in the secondary level. Three of the six permanent faculty in the Department of Educational Studies are primarily responsible for the teacher certification program which has graduated 42 teachers between the years 2001-2006.

The guiding philosophy of the Colgate University teacher education program is to prepare excellent teachers who are reflective, life-long learners, child-centered, and dedicated to teaching "against the grain" in an education climate dominated by standardized assessments. Four themes cross all courses in the program: reflective practice, constructive theories of learning, multiple levels of self-awareness on the part of the teacher, and multicultural education with a special focus on equity.

Students who seek certification at Colgate must major in an academic discipline and take the required courses in Liberal Arts Core. The certification program is embedded in a liberal arts environment, and the program is described in the catalog as an all-university responsibility. The department collaborates with area teachers who serve as members of the Teacher Advisory Council and mentor student teachers from the program. Because of its size and intimacy, the program prides itself on the individualized support and attention offered to each student seeking certification.

Program's claims

The Department of Education Studies at Colgate University claims that graduates will:

¹ The Summary of the Case is written by the auditors and approved by program faculty. The Summary reflects the auditors' understanding of the case the faculty are making for accreditation.

1. know their subjects and how to teach them,
2. have a broad understanding of the liberal arts and are critical thinkers,
3. understand the relevance of educational research to teaching,
4. care about all students and are committed to their diverse ways of learning,
5. be reflective practitioners who create and manage effective learning environments,
6. be committed to principles of social and environmental justices,
7. use appropriate assessments to guide instruction, and
8. be active in their professional communities.

And they claim that these claims are aligned with both the TEAC Quality Principles and the New York State Standards for Teacher Education.

Table 1

Alignment of Colgate University Claims with NYSED Requirements and TEAC Quality Principles

<i>NYSED Requirements</i>	<i>TEAC Quality Principles</i>	<i>Colgate University Inquiry Brief</i>
Subject Matter Knowledge	QP 1 & 3	Claims 1 and 2
Pedagogical Knowledge	QP 1	Claims 1, 3, 4, 5, 7
Teaching Skills	QP1	Claims 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Faculty	Capacity Component 4.2	pgs. 6; 43-44, 53
K-16 Collaboration	Capacity Components 4.1 and 4.4	Teacher Advisory Council, pg. 5

(Compiled by auditor from pages 10-11 of the *Inquiry Brief*)

Method and categories of evidence supporting the claims

Eight sources of evidence demonstrate that graduates meet these claims:

1. Grades in academic courses, courses in the Department of Educational Studies, and CORE courses (Claims 1, 2; and 7);
2. Standardized test scores from the three licensure tests required by New York State: the Liberal Arts and Sciences Test (LAST), the Assessment of Teaching Skills – Written (ATS-W), and the Content Specialty tests (Claims, 1, 2, 4, and 5);
3. Web-portfolios designed by the students and rated on rubrics developed by three facultymembers (Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8);

4. Surveys of program graduates, their employers, and cooperating teachers (Claims 1, 2, 4, and 6);
5. Student teacher evaluations completed by cooperating teachers (Claims 1, 4, and 5);
6. Theorized logs written by students (Claims 3 and 5);
7. Exit interviews Claim 6); and
8. Memberships in professional organizations (Claim 8).

Table 2
The Alignment of Claims and Sources of Evidence for Them

Claims	Grades	Port-folio	Lic. Tests	Std. Tchg.	Surveys	CORE GPA	Theo. Logs	Exit Interv.
Know content & how to teach	√	√	√	√	√	√		
Critical thinkers	√	√	√		√	√		
Ed. research & teaching		√					√	
Caring		√		√	√			
Reflective		√		√			√	
Social & environmental justice		√						√
Assessments	√	√						
Professional		√						

(Compiled by auditor from pages 12-14 of the *Inquiry Brief*.)

Evidence that students also satisfy claims in the three cross-cutting themes of multicultural perspectives, learning to learn, and appropriate use of technology

is found in collegiate experiences and grades from courses across the university.

Results

Students enter the Department of Educational Studies having met the rigorous admission standards of Colgate University – the average combined SAT scores of those becoming certified to teach is 1285 (2002-2006). These students consistently achieve GPAs of nearly 3.0/4.0 or higher in their concentration (major), education program, and overall. They score well above the New York state cut scores of 220 on each of the three teacher licensure exams, exceeding the average scores of students at independent colleges and of students statewide.

As noted earlier, the Department of Educational Studies uses the students' web-portfolio as evidence for meeting each of the eight claims it makes of its graduates. The portfolios are scored by all three faculty on a rubric scale of 1-5 (1=no evidence to 5=exemplary evidence, and 3=basic evidence). The portfolio ratings are generally in the 3-4 range for each claim and analyses are consistent with the evaluations and the grades candidates receive from the cooperating teachers' narratives and rubrics about the quality of their student teachers' experiences.

Survey responses from employers, cooperating teachers, and alumni (reported from the May 2005 survey) generated confirming evidence that graduates of the program meet the expectations defined by the claims as the average ratings were in the 4.0 range on a five point scale (1, very poor, to 5, excellent).

The high grades and licensure test scores, coupled with high marks on the portfolios and student teaching, lead faculty to have confidence in both the reliability and validity of these measures to indicate the quality of their graduates.

Plan for Program Improvement

In preparing the *Inquiry Brief* for the TEAC audit, the faculty discovered a need to be more systematic and explicit in collecting evidence. For example, although the portfolio is used as evidence to support all eight claims, students were not specifically required to include work products that demonstrated mastery in each area and to conduct better self-analysis of the products they include. In addition, the faculty will provide more direction to students in the area of social and environmental justice.

The Department has instituted new advising forms and fieldwork documentation forms in order to track student progress and achievement more closely. It is reorganizing the methods seminars to precede student teaching,

and will institute more professional relationships with cooperating teachers and student teachers.

Internal audit results

The Internal Audit, conducted by Kay Johnston current Chair of the Department, was completed during the academic years 2004-05 and 2005-06 and examined the Quality Control System at the department level, the division level, and the college level. The files of three students – two undergraduate, one graduate – were used as the starting point to examine six inter-related categories:

1. Certification Students' Database (admission, screen for student teaching, web portfolios, screen for graduation, exit interviews);
2. Curriculum (catalog description, course approval, course syllabus, student evaluation of teaching, preparation of instructor);
3. Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies (classroom, equipment)
4. Faculty (hiring process, periodic review, promotion procedures, preparation of instructor)
5. Fiscal and Administrative (administrative support, budget, faculty salaries)
6. Program (catalog description, state approval).

All aspects of the audit were approved by the faculty when the initial *Inquiry Brief* was discussed and processed.

Overall, the audit revealed in very general terms the processes and procedures of the Department of Educational Studies within the culture of Colgate University and noted that most procedures worked as planned. Areas of concern for the department included a reliance on individual faculty knowledge of students rather than information routinely available in the database and a need to monitor and update advising checklists for adolescence science certificates. At the college level, the audit highlighted a need to provide better documentation of how faculty and/or departments respond to student feedback.

Evidence of commitment and capacity

On the whole, the program faculty found that the program had parity with regard to the institutional norms and concluded that Colgate University was committed to its teacher education program.