

Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC)

**Summary of the Case
Manhattan College
Teacher Education Program¹
Audit Dates: March 22-25, 2010**

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 is making for accreditation.

Authorship and approval of the *Inquiry Brief*:

The *Inquiry Brief* was written by the TEAC Steering Committee: William Merriman, Dean of the School of Education; Elizabeth Kosky, Director of Graduate Special Education; Tedd Keating, Chairperson, Department of Physical Education, Shawn Ladda, faculty member, Department of Physical Education; Br. Augustine Nicoletti, Chairperson, Department of Education, and Karen Nicholson, Department of Education faculty member and Chair of the Steering Committee. It was approved by the faculty of the School of Education in January of 2010.

Introduction:

Manhattan College was founded in New York City in 1853 by The Brothers of the Christian Schools in the LaSallian tradition, which calls for teacher preparation that is practical, innovative, reflective (exhibiting interiority), attentive to the needs of the disadvantaged, and imbued with civility. Located in the Bronx, the College has consistently emphasized serving first-generation students, under-represented students and, since 1973, women as well as men. Over one-quarter of the current student population is from historically under-represented groups. Enrollment in the Fall semester of 2009 included 3052 undergraduate (2962 FT and 90 PT) and 409 graduate students (132 FT and 277 PT) served by 191 full-time faculty members. Ninety-five percent of the faculty hold a terminal degree.

Teacher preparation has a long history at Manhattan College and is now centered in the School of Education, one of five schools. The faculty describes its core philosophy as *Humanistic Dialectical Constructivism*—**humanistic** as it draws on the thought of Rogers, Freiberg, Maslow, and Combs in emphasizing the worth of every individual and the development of each individual's self-awareness and responsibility, and **constructivist** in Vygotsky's sense in which knowledge reflects the outside world as filtered through and influenced by culture, language, beliefs, interaction, instruction, and modeling. This philosophy is operationalized in small classes and in structured field experiences in which students engage in learning situations that require them to actively construct knowledge while developing the skill of and disposition toward self-reflection. Teacher preparation is offered at the undergraduate level, in a five-year bachelors-masters program, and at the graduate level. Seventeen full-time faculty members provide these options to 450 enrolled students (393 undergraduate and 57 graduate). In 2009, 87 undergraduate and 39 graduate candidates completed the program.

Program claims:

The faculty makes three claims regarding program completers, namely that they have:

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1. **knowledge of the subject matter content** that they will be certified to teach,
2. **pedagogical knowledge** which includes understanding of student characteristics, instructional design, and use of technology, and
3. **teaching skills** that allow them to meet the individual needs of diverse learners in a caring way through the planning, implementation, and assessment of instruction.

In addition, faculty assert that program completers exhibit capacity for independent learning, multicultural perspectives on their work, and competence in use of technology.

Evidence supporting the claims

Four lines of evidence are offered in support of the claims: course grades, field-based evaluations, standardized test scores, and surveys of graduates.

- **Course grades** in liberal arts and concentrations support claim 1, while grades in education courses support claim 2. Both GPAs and single course grades are considered. The content validity of course grades in pedagogical courses (related to claim 2) has been established by the use of claim-linked assignments and assessment rubrics. Mean GPAs for liberal arts, content concentration, and pedagogy all exceed program standards.
- **Evaluations of fieldwork** include student teacher and intern evaluations and student teaching grades. Evaluation instruments are framed around the claims and disaggregated to provide support for each claim and cross-cutting theme. Mean cooperating teacher ratings of student teachers were generally above four on a five-point scale.
- **Standardized test scores** that are monitored include SAT scores (gathered as part of College admission) and the New York State Teacher Certification Examination scores, of which the results from the Liberal Arts and Sciences Test and the Content Specialty Test are used in support of claim 1, and the Assessment of Teaching Skills in support of claim 2. Mean scores on each standardized test exceed the program standard.
- **Surveys and other forms of feedback** from program graduates are collected in support of all three claims. Respondents to the graduate surveys consistently rate each area between above three on a four-point scale.

Program faculty attended to the content and face validity of measures and to the correlations among measures associated with each claim in their effort to ensure reliable and valid assessment of student achievement.

Internal audit:

Faculty have audited their quality control system annually in preparing their annual reports to TEAC. The internal audit reported in Appendix A of the *Brief* combined the results of three annual audits with an audit based on program completers for 2007/2008

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and 2008/2009 drawn for the current audit: a total of 73 students comprised the audit sample. Stratified random samples were drawn for each program option (adolescent, childhood/dual, physical education, and graduate); within each option, the sample was drawn to include individuals from each of four quartiles of the grade distribution.

The audit trail began with the students selected and included examination of student files, identification of courses for which syllabi were checked. Instructors of those courses were further audited with regard to qualifications, hiring, teaching assignment, and course evaluations. Student transcripts were checked for evidence that the curriculum was followed and benchmarks for performance met.

The internal audit found the quality control system to be working as designed.

Plans for program improvement

The faculty report having successfully addressed the four targets for improvement identified in the 2005 *Inquiry Brief*: 1) refined data collection across students' program experience; 2) collection of NYSTCE data; 3) assessment of technology use; and 4) collaboration with Arts and Sciences faculty.

Based on the findings of the current *Brief*, additional investigations aimed at program improvement will be undertaken: 1) examination of the relationship between academic performance and teaching effectiveness for students with relatively weaker academic GPAs; 2) validity and reliability of subsections of the student teaching/intern evaluation form; 3) implementation of the electronic portfolio; 4) increased tracking of graduates and attention to evidence of the graduates' P-12 students' achievement; 5) enhancing use of institutional assessment data for program improvement; 6) broadening the sharing of assessment data with colleagues across the campus; and 7) exploring access to improved facilities for the program's education classes. Strategies for approaching each of these issues are suggested.

Statement regarding commitment and capacity:

The faculty concluded that Manhattan College is committed to the Teacher Education Program and that there is sufficient capacity to offer a quality program.

¹ Program options include:

Preparation for initial certification in Childhood Education (grades 1-6), Special Education (grades 1-6), Adolescent Education (grades 7-12 for teachers of biology, chemistry, English, French, mathematics, physics, social studies, and Spanish), and Physical Education (K-12) at the undergraduate level, and Special Education as an additional certification at the graduate level.