

Meeting Old Challenges
and New Demands:
The Redesign
of the Stanford Teacher Education Program

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Teacher education in the United States has been the subject of persistent and abiding concerns (Goodlad, 1990; Holmes Group, 1986; NCTAF, 1996). These concerns were reflected in a recent evaluation of the Stanford Teacher Education Program (STEP), which concluded:

Many of the issues raised in the earlier . . . evaluation reports and in this final report have been discussed in past evaluations and dissertations focusing on STEP . . . For example, in a 1980 evaluation and an evaluation focusing on 1979-1983, students praised supervisors in the same manner reported in this evaluation. Similarly, STEP students were severe critics of the program in 1942, 1948 and 1980, as they were in 1997. For example, over 56 years ago, STEP students and faculty complained about their coursework being “too theoretical” and wanted it to be more “practice oriented” . . . (Fetterman et al., 1999, p. 2)

Teacher educators have struggled for years to connect theory and practice, to place student teachers in classrooms that reflect state-of-the-art practice and to construct program coursework that illuminates research on effective teaching in ways that are practice-relevant. The articulation and sustenance of a common vision, and the development of a shared understanding of the goals of student teaching, are similarly

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long-standing challenges. The creation of a curriculum that is systematic and synergistic across courses and across the university and school components of preparation has been difficult in most institutions. Finally, teacher education programs remain the stepchildren of most universities, underfunded and under resourced by many and treated with intellectual disdain by nearly all (NCTAF, 1996).

Dissatisfaction with these conditions provoked a redesign of Stanford's Teacher Education Program when one of the authors became faculty sponsor of the program in 1998, just as the above-noted evaluation of the program was being completed. The redesign efforts aimed to address not only the problems that had been identified (see Figure 1), but also the many new demands facing teacher education programs in California and nationally. These include growing student diversity, which requires greater attention to social equity and inclusion, as well as the evolving knowledge economy, which demands higher levels of learning for all. If teachers are to develop new standards-based approaches to curriculum and assessment and meet the needs of a wide range of students, they must be prepared to engage these responsibilities from a deeper base of knowledge than much teacher preparation now provides.

In response both to the constant challenges of teacher education and to these recent, pressing demands, the STEP redesign focused on four goals:

- ◆ To develop a coherent program organized around professional standards and a common vision of good teaching;
- ◆ To strengthen knowledge about how to teach challenging content to diverse learners;
- ◆ To support stronger links between theory and practice;
- ◆ To contribute to the re-shaping of local teaching and schooling by creating powerful opportunities for student and teacher learning.

In this paper, we describe how the redesigned STEP program seeks to pursue these goals, what the strategies have been for implementing specific changes in the program, and what additional efforts are needed to fulfill this vision.

The Redesigned STEP Program

The STEP program traditionally had several strengths. These included the involvement of senior faculty throughout the program; an

Figure 1
Concerns Identified by the Evaluation of STEP in 1997-98

- ◆ Faculty and staff did not appear to share a common view of the purpose or mission of STEP, resulting in “contradictory practices and mixed messages” (p.9).
- ◆ Both leadership and faculty involvement were uneven and inconsistent over time (p. 4).
- ◆ Coursework was fragmented due to the addition of state requirements in a piece-meal fashion, faculty turnover, and lack of planning across faculty members. Specific course needs were identified:
 - During the critical Fall quarter when students were beginning their student teaching and intern placements, there was no instruction in teaching methods (p. 5);
 - Technology training was sparse (p. 5, 15);
 - Classroom management and other pragmatic concerns were untreated (p. 5);
 - There was inadequate instruction in reading / literacy (p. 16).
- ◆ The curriculum sequence within existing courses was not guided by a concept of the developmental progression of teaching knowledge and skills or by state or national standards for licensing, certification, or accreditation.
- ◆ The pedagogy used in teacher education courses was not always well-developed or reflective of strategies prospective teachers were seeking to learn (p. 30).
- ◆ Placements in schools were often not well-matched to the teaching vision embodied in STEP courses, as there had been no involvement of STEP faculty or supervisors in selecting CT placements based upon direct, first-hand knowledge of the teachers’ practices (p. 5).
- ◆ Coursework, supervision and field placements were not integrated and were conducted as wholly independent events with little communication among the parties engaged in them.
- ◆ The STEP portfolio did not serve as a unifying force or final assessment:
 - Many parts were never reviewed or assessed by anyone.
- ◆ Finally, STEP students frequently noted a lack of connection between theory and practice:
 - Many missed opportunities to make this link were observed by evaluators, particularly in foundations courses where the connections need to be explicit, frequent and anchored in activities that help students learn to apply theoretical constructs to their classroom practice.

emphasis on content pedagogy and on learning to teach reflectively; and a year-long clinical experience running in parallel with coursework in the one-year credential and masters degree program. The redesign of STEP sought to build on these strengths while incorporating new efforts. These included:

- ◆ The incorporation of professional standards into course design, program assessments, and clinical work;
- ◆ The development of a sequence of core courses designed to build a professional knowledge base across several interrelated strands of work representing knowledge of learners and learning; knowledge of content and pedagogy; knowledge of language, literacy, and culture; and an understanding of educational purposes and social contexts;
- ◆ The development of structures that facilitate coordination across STEP courses and strong connections between students' coursework and clinical work.

Creating Coherence through a Common Vision and Standards

One of the central elements of the redesigned STEP program is the development of a common vision of what good teaching looks like — what a STEP graduate should be able to do—and a common vision of the pedagogy and practice that contributes to that development. The program is designed to graduate teachers who are prepared to work with diverse learners, reflect upon their practice, and inquire systematically into questions of teaching and learning that arise in their work with students. STEP also emphasizes a teaching stance that is concerned with understanding and responding to student needs in the light of challenging curricular goals rather than merely “getting through the book” or implementing teaching routines. Teaching practices are informed by research on learning, development, culture and context, and families and communities. STEP hopes to graduate teachers who not only practice effectively in the classroom but who also can take into account the “bigger picture” of schools and schooling; who are able to consider how what they do might be supported and reflected in school organizations and reform work more broadly. STEP’s mission, in sum, is to help prepare its teachers to practice state-of-the-art teaching and to be agents of change in their school communities.

In order to reflect this vision, the new curriculum includes a much stronger emphasis upon learning—including learning differences and

disabilities; first and second language acquisition and development; reading and writing across the curriculum; child and adolescent development; and culture and social context. Courses have been added as well in subject matter pedagogy (increased to three quarters of instruction from two), classroom management, and school reform. A new technology teaching plan was developed to ensure students' proficiency in integrating technology into the curriculum. The curriculum has also been redesigned to increase the opportunities for purposeful reflection on practice and to make connections across class work and clinical experiences. Additional practice in inquiry has also been infused into the curriculum, so that students may learn how to ask good questions about the teaching and learning in their classrooms as well as how to go about exploring those questions in fruitful ways.

STEP has implemented new structures that help to create tighter relationships between Curriculum and Instruction courses and faculty, supervisors in the subject field, and cooperating teachers. STEP faculty meet regularly each quarter to discuss central assignments and to learn about other courses STEP students are taking so that they can build upon and reinforce key concepts, principles and standards as well as the work in which students are engaged in other courses. They often develop cross-course plans for specific activities, assignments, and readings and plan strategies to create stronger connections between theory, research, and practice. STEP supervisors meet regularly as well—at least monthly and sometimes more frequently—to discuss the development of their student teachers with regard to the standards, to share challenges and insights regarding their mentoring and support, and to continue to develop common norms and expectations about the work of student teaching and mentoring. Supervisors attend selected courses and meet periodically with faculty to share information about coursework and clinical work.

A new classroom assessment instrument and a new portfolio design for student teachers were developed during the first year of the redesign effort. These incorporate the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) and include tasks based on those of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) that facilitate teachers' examination of their practice in relation to student learning. The earlier portfolio had a set of entries that were variable and independent from one another (e.g., assessments from one lesson; a lesson or unit plan from another; a videotape of practice from another). The new portfolio has entries representing key courses and areas of learning, along with more integrated investigations of teaching (e.g., a child case study; a curriculum unit; a teaching event that includes lesson plans, videotapes of lessons, evidence of student learning, and analysis of

practice from a single unit of teaching). The entries in the portfolio are analyzed in terms of how they represent each of the CSTP standards; in the portfolio summary statement, each student reflects on how s/he is progressing in each of the areas outlined by the standards, including plans for ongoing professional learning.

In addition to the traditional portfolio conference sponsored by STEP each spring, juried portfolio presentations now enable student teachers to present their work to a four-member committee of university- and school-based faculty and peers. This practice has begun to create a set of shared understandings about teaching, teacher development, and teaching standards across the program, and to enable faculty to consider how their combined efforts “add up” to create a beginning teacher who will practice knowledgeably and continue to learn and grow.

A Sequential Program of Study Grounded in Understanding of Learners and Learning

The 12-month STEP program is designed to help students gradually develop a knowledge base of professional teaching practices, modes of inquiry and reflection. A critique of the earlier program had been that courses were offered in some years but not others, that the sequence of courses was not always appropriate for students' developmental needs, that there were gaps in the curriculum, and that theoretical work in courses did not always include links to practice. The redesigned curriculum now includes five “strands” of coursework which address Social and Psychological Foundations; Curriculum and Instruction in the Content Area; Language, Literacy and Culture; General Pedagogical Strategies; and Practicum and Student Teaching (see Figure 2). While courses change somewhat each year based on evaluations and instructors' joint planning, the overarching goals and shape of the curriculum are stable.

Each strand addresses a central aspect of the knowledge base of teaching and seeks to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions through connected coursework and clinical work. Students are introduced to key ideas that are then deepened over time throughout their coursework. For instance, the Foundations strand is designed so that student teachers develop an increasingly complex understanding and appreciation of their students—from thinking about them as adolescents, to thinking about them as learners in schools, to thinking about the schools and community systems that support their learning. In the fall term, in Adolescent Development, students are introduced to thinking about adolescents beyond the commonly held stereotypes (e.g., they are ruled

by their hormones) to appreciate the multiple, contextualized aspects of student identity and development. During the winter term, in Principles of Learning for Teaching, student teachers are encouraged to think about how to build upon their adolescent students' interests, knowledge, linguistic and cultural backgrounds in order to make connections with their subject matter. And in the spring, in School Reform and Equity, student teachers wrestle with questions around the character of school contexts that might best support student learning.

Each course now includes analyses and assignments that link directly to the classroom and are pursued as part of student teaching. A number of courses include the use and conduct of case studies that build sequentially upon one another. For example, in the summer during their Literacies course, students write a case study of the literacy development of a child in their classroom. In the fall, in Adolescent Development, students then write a case study of an adolescent, focusing upon describing and understanding him or her through a developmental-contextual perspective. In the winter, in

Figure 2
STEP Curriculum, 2000-2001

Strand	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring
Foundations	Educating for Equity and Democracy	Adolescent Development	Principles of Learning for Teaching	School Reform or The Ethics of Teaching
Curriculum and Instruction	Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) <i>(meets in subject matter groups)</i>	Curriculum and Instruction (C&I)	Curriculum and Instruction (C&I)	<i>Electives in the subject field</i>
Language and Literacy	The Centrality of Literacies in Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning in Heterogeneous Classrooms	<i>ESL Methodology (elective)</i>	Second Language Practices and Policies
Practicum and Student Teaching	Practicum <i>Introduction to teaching as a profession, standards, & inquiry</i>	Practicum <i>Developing learning environments; Working with parents</i>	Practicum <i>Assessment of student work and learning</i>	Practicum <i>Meeting the needs of exceptional learners; Assessing one's own teaching</i>
Pedagogical Strategies	Uses of Technology	Classroom Management <i>(half the class)</i>	Classroom Management <i>(other half of class)</i>	Literacy Development for Struggling Students

Principles of Learning, they write a case study of instruction in which they focus upon an instance of teaching and examine it in terms of what it reveals about both teaching and learning.

The power of these case studies is that they call upon students to use theory purposefully to explore, analyze and understand their clinical experiences (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Shulman, in press; Roeser, in press). In the curriculum case assignment, for example, students focus upon an instance of teaching a central topic, problem or issue in their subject matter, such as evolution in science, ratio and proportion in mathematics, the use of the subjunctive in foreign language, or irony in English. Using key course concepts about learning such as transfer, metacognition, and cognitive apprenticeship, they analyze some of the challenges they encountered in teaching their subject—and their students had in learning it. Writing these cases helps students begin to appreciate the usefulness of theory in helping identify, articulate and explore the dilemmas at play in their classrooms.

Central assignments such as these cases are developed in and reinforced by work in other courses. During the fall when students are writing their adolescent case, Practicum focuses upon developing and practicing methodological skills such as observing individuals and classrooms, interviewing, shadowing, and conducting student assessments. In the winter, when students are writing their case of instruction, Practicum focuses upon further developing and practicing their skills in assessing student work. They also construct a curriculum unit, teach it, and examine student learning in relation to their teaching goals.

Graduated Clinical Experiences Linked to Teaching Knowledge and Standards

Placements consistent with the STEP vision. Pairing students with cooperating teachers (CTs) who reflect STEP's vision of teaching has become a priority for the program. Rather than selecting CTs based on self-nomination or principals' recommendations alone, cooperating teachers are now selected based upon direct, first-hand knowledge of their classrooms and teaching practices. STEP faculty and supervisors look for evidence that CTs' practices are consistent with the STEP vision of teaching using an observation protocol that allows for the rich description of what occurs in the classroom and that directs observers to focus carefully upon how learning happens in the classroom. The protocol asks observers to record what samples of student work look like (if visible); what the climate of the classroom is like; how the goals of the lesson were

communicated and assessed; how the teacher found out what students knew prior to the lesson; and how the needs of different learners were addressed. This process heightens the probability that students are paired with cooperating teachers whose teaching practices reflect and reinforce what students are learning about in their STEP coursework. In order to develop more settings in which novice teachers can learn from expert practitioners, STEP has begun to offer a mentoring seminar to supervisors and current or prospective cooperating teachers, and is developing stronger relationships with a number of local schools, as described below.

Graduated Responsibility. A second key shift in the student teaching experience has been the development of a more carefully scaffolded learning experience with an emphasis on graduated responsibility. In the past, many STEP students took on full teaching responsibilities shortly after they began in September with little mentoring or guidance from cooperating teachers. Although many learned to manage a classroom and get through lessons on their own, few learned in this way to work successfully with struggling students, and some developed counterproductive teaching habits focused more on survival than success with learners.

Rather than looking for schools willing to offer classrooms where novices can learn more or less by trial and error, STEP now looks for mentor teachers who are willing to offer their expertise. The STEP redesign has developed a new “graduated responsibility” plan that provides for a gradual assumption of teaching responsibilities. While student teachers play an active role in the classroom immediately as they engage in co-planning and co-teaching, helping small groups, leading mini-lessons, and working on curriculum design, they do not take on fully independent teaching until much later. Even when independent teaching begins (which for most student teachers occurs sometime in the late winter or early spring), the cooperating teacher is responsible for ensuring that the student teacher still has ample guidance. This process is also personalized so that student teacher and Cooperating Teacher and Supervisor agree on a timeline that makes sense for each student teacher depending upon his or her strengths and abilities as a developing teacher and that fits within the classroom’s particular schedule.

Standards-Based Clinical Work. The California Standards for the Teaching Profession that are used to guide the curriculum and portfolio also guide STEP’s supervision and assessment processes (see Lotan and Marcus, this issue). Teaching supervisors and cooperating teachers use a standards-based observation protocol as a means of assessing student teachers’ progress and development over the four quarters of STEP. The

new classroom observation instrument gives clear guidance about the criteria to be used in developing and evaluating teacher performance. For example, rather than ask for unguided comments about classroom management, it provides concrete indicators of the beginning teachers' progress toward constructing a classroom that is psychologically safe for all students, as well as purposeful and respectful of different learners' approaches and needs. Rather than ask for general comments about teaching quality, the instrument provides benchmarks for a kind of teaching that takes account of students' prior knowledge, carefully structures learning experiences to address this knowledge and specific learner's needs, appropriately uses different teaching strategies for different purposes, provides clear assessment criteria and opportunities for feedback and revision, helps students learn to self-assess, and so on. This approach makes it clearer to STEP students, instructors, faculty and cooperating teachers what "quality teaching" is—and enables much more purposeful, carefully triangulated work on its development in courses and clinical experiences.

Contributing to the Development of Local Teaching and Schooling

Good practice cannot be easily sustained in oases that stand in stark contrast to the desert around them. The STEP program has begun to create a web of professional relationships that seek to reinforce and continue to build environments where ambitious learning for diverse students can flourish. In addition to professional development opportunities for teachers, it has created professional development relationships with a small number of Bay Area schools.

Professional Development School Relationships. Professional Development Schools (PDSs) are school-university partnerships that seek to develop leading-edge practice through ongoing learning for novices and veteran teachers, research, and mutual renewal of programs. We believe that these kinds of relationships are essential to continued improvement in schooling and teaching, which relies on simultaneous changes in how teachers are prepared and how schools are organized and run. They are perhaps the only way to solve the chicken-egg dilemma that plagues school reformers and teacher educators: If schools of education prepare teachers for schools as they are instead of schools as they might become, long-term change is difficult. Yet teachers cannot be prepared for schools as they might be unless such settings exist as sites for training. Transforming schooling must go hand in hand with transforming teaching and teacher development (Darling-Hammond, 1994).

In order to support the improvement of practice, STEP has been developing professional development relationships with local schools that serve diverse populations and that are engaged in reforms of teaching and schooling aimed at excellence and equity. These schools serve as sites for the placement of cohorts of beginning teachers and as hubs for professional development activity focused upon strengthening teaching and redesigning schools. The PDS relationships promote further coherence in STEP by providing opportunities for school and university faculty to co-construct coursework and clinical work. PDSs can also be a force for transforming practice in a region as they work simultaneously to restructure schooling and teacher education programs and provide professional development opportunities for veterans in the field.

STEP is developing and deepening relationships in a number of potential PDS schools, while reducing the total number of sites where student teachers are placed. In the 2001-02 school year, STEP has placed all sixty of its students in about fifteen local schools, in most cases, with clusters of about four to eight students in each school. Three years ago, STEP student teachers were placed in thirty-five schools. STEP faculty envision that all of Stanford's prospective teachers will ultimately undertake their student teaching in professional development schools.

Within these schools, current and prospective cooperating teachers have access to Stanford courses, support for National Board Certification, and a mentoring seminar that is now regularly available for supervisors and CTs, as well as others who may be working on the support of beginning or veteran teachers in BTSA (California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment program), PAR (Peer Assistance and Review), or other programs.

A variety of other partnership activities occurs in PDS contexts. For example, the mentoring seminar was offered on-site at a PDS and served cooperating teachers, mentors, and others from neighboring schools. Two faculty at the school co-taught STEP courses with Stanford faculty. A special education teacher at the school helped develop field-based activities for student teachers and gave a guest lecture for the STEP class. An advisory committee at the school constructed additional learning opportunities for student teachers, including "understanding teaching visits" to various classrooms where practices illustrating the CSTP standards could be observed. These standards were adopted for veteran teachers in the school, after CTs used them for observing student teachers. A more ambitious school-wide approach to student teaching was developed by school- and university-based faculty; one that includes rotations through a variety of classrooms, guided observation experiences, and a common plan for graduated responsibility in assuming

teaching duties. This document serves as a model for other PDS sites. Other PDS partnerships have infused technology into the curriculum for both high school students and student teachers and have supported technology-oriented professional development for veteran teachers, have worked on teaching strategies for heterogeneous classrooms, and have developed workshops for learning to teach English language learners.

In the fall of 2001, Stanford helped to launch a new public high school in East Palo Alto, which serves as professional development school with Stanford. STEP faculty are involved in staffing the school, designing the curriculum and finding curricular resources for the school, and supporting professional teacher development. The school supports student teachers and provides a demonstration site for the development of other schools and teachers in the area. This model of new school creation will likely be the source of several other professional development school partnerships in the future.

Creating Professional Development Opportunities

Creating a profession of teaching—and a professional preparation program—depends upon the widespread availability of knowledge and standards for practice that provide a basis for teacher development and for program decisions. One source of such standards is the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification process. These standards provide a foundation for practice that is grounded in leading edge knowledge about content pedagogy, sensitive to the diverse needs of learners, committed to equity as well as excellence, and supportive of powerful professional development that deepens teachers' learning. In 1998-99, Stanford launched the Bay Area's first support group for National Board Certification. As of September, 1998, there were only six Board-certified teachers in the Bay area. All six accepted the invitation to serve as support providers, along with a group of teacher educators, for Bay area teachers who wanted to pursue Board certification. Three years later, more than 100 teachers are meeting in this support group, and other support groups have been launched with Stanford's assistance by colleges, districts, and county offices in the area. This process has begun to develop a community of teachers who are armed with deeper knowledge and greater certainty about practice, more articulate about both their own practice and about instructional policy, and able to provide leadership in the profession. Some of these teachers have started new schools; some have mobilized the use of the standards in their districts; some have served as BTSA mentors; and some have begun to serve as cooperating teachers, supervisors, and teacher educators at

Stanford and elsewhere. The planting of these seeds allows cross-pollination that helps good practice spread across schools.

These spillover effects are a key to attaining STEP's vision. The goal is to create multiple pathways to productive professional learning for educators so that communities of practice can emerge that are ultimately more self-sustaining. Other strategies also support this goal. For example, to support the growth of knowledge about school reforms that better support teaching and learning, a school redesign course was offered as part of the Stanford Principals Program and was opened up to teacher leaders in selected schools. Additional work for the leaders of redesigning schools is being launched with the Graduate School of Business. A Stanford Scholars program has been designed to support ongoing development of content knowledge for practicing teachers, and to offer pedagogical institutes around such areas as the use of group work in heterogeneous classrooms; literacy development, especially for new English language learners and others who struggle with reading and writing; integration of technology into content area instruction; and school reform. Web-based resources, including sites that share curriculum units and assessments and email listserves that allow teachers access to each other's ideas, are a supplement to face-to-face supports. These kinds of efforts will support teacher education by developing settings in which teachers can learn—and can continue to learn—to teach effectively.

Conclusion: Continuing Challenges for STEP in the Future

Despite the many positive changes that have been made in the program, STEP faces continuing challenges. While the redesigned curriculum has enabled student teachers to engage with many concepts, problems and issues that underlie powerful teaching, there are areas in which the tightly packed curriculum has not been able to give sufficient attention to matters that are central to the STEP vision. For instance, while many courses spend some time on assessment, a full course on that topic would be extremely useful for STEP students. Efforts are currently underway to create such a course. At the same time, creating an appropriate balance between curriculum demands and time for experience and reflection is a challenge. Even as the knowledge and skills needed for effective teaching and the requirements for credentialing become more intense every year, student teachers need time to engage in the kind of learning STEP wishes to support. A program that is too tightly packed can also inhibit reflective learning.

Thus, in the next year or so, STEP plans to evolve into two separate, but interlocking pathways: (1) A co-term program that formally admits

a cohort of Stanford undergraduates in their junior year. These students will progress through 3 years of blended study of content and pedagogy (junior year, senior year and post-baccalaureate year) to receive their master's degree and credential after their fifth year of college. This pathway will include about half of the secondary candidates in STEP and all of the candidates in a new elementary program; and (2) A two-year post-baccalaureate program, whose students will receive their credential after one year and take their remaining masters degree courses part-time during a second year while they are salaried teachers in nearby school systems. Whereas the co-term students will have completed some of their coursework before they enter the student teaching year, the post-baccalaureate students will complete their remaining coursework after the student teaching year. They will spend the student teaching year as overlapping cohorts in shared coursework tied to their clinical placements.

Challenges such as these are plentiful, complex, and continuing. Redesigning teacher education to meet both its long-standing challenges and the new demands that face teachers is, truly, steady work. Like others of our colleagues across the country, we are satisfied that this work is never completed, but that the process of learning to teach—for ourselves as well as our students—will be a lifelong endeavor.

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