

TCBS WINTER 2011 UPDATE

As promised when we reported to you in the Fall, we are happy to announce the receipt of grants from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other private foundations to design the curriculum for an Advanced Program of Study for experienced, high performing K-12 classroom teachers. The project team is formed and we are deep into the design of curricular materials required for experienced, high performing teachers to:

- Improve their effectiveness
- Increase their value to their schools and districts
- Retain them in the profession

We have recruited a very strong team of course designers, enlisted the active support of five leading public districts and charter school organizations and made major revisions to our original Layered Curriculum and Coursework for Experienced Teachers schematic (see below).

The Center for Better Schools has recruited three outstanding education professionals to actively develop a suite of course materials specifically designed for experienced, high performing K-12 classroom teachers. See www.cbeterschools.org/team for their short bios. Additionally we are pleased to report that senior teacher and human capital development executives from Aspire Public Charter Schools (Oakland, CA), AUSL Chicago Public Schools, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Denver Public Schools and YES Prep Public Charter Schools (Houston, TX) form our Core Team of designer-reviewers.

Private funders and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are currently supporting the work. Other national and regional education reform donors are also reviewing our progress and weighing investments to extend our design efforts.

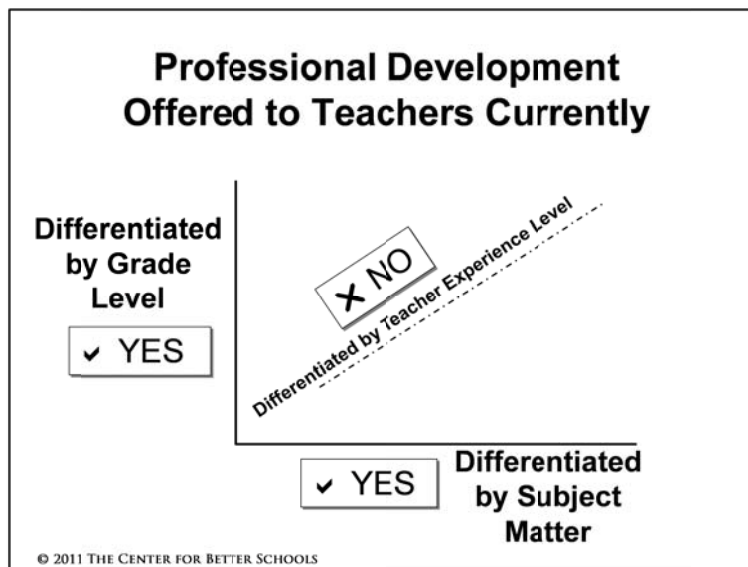
Early findings and activities:

We surveyed school leaders and experienced high performing teachers in each of our five Core Team organizations in order to learn more about what is in place in terms of professional development schemes as teachers migrate from beginner to master teachers.

Consistent with the findings of many other researchers, we found that there are numerous opportunities and systems in place to recruit, train and induct new teachers. These approaches vary from organization to organization, but seem to be well received by beginning teachers and have received considerable attention and investment in recent years. From summer induction programs to school year professional development to the formation of study groups and teaching academies, early career teachers are receiving more of the training and mentoring required for their success.

When teachers shift from novices to more experienced performers however a different picture is painted. Professional development opportunities (PD) do exist in all the organizations we have studied and inside each of our Core Team organizations. Reaction to the quality, timeliness and consistency of these professional development training sessions varies across organizations. Experienced, high performing teachers commented that some sessions relied too heavily on loosely organized “Powerpoint decks” assembled by knowledgeable colleagues, but presented in

an ad hoc fashion. Most often these approaches were understandably tailored to the needs of beginning teachers, offering less relevant content to the needs of this more experienced cohort. Consistently, we heard that PD that was offered was differentiated by grade level and by subject matter, but not by experience level (see diagram). Experienced teachers commented that while there was some usefulness to the regularly scheduled PD sessions, they found that more often than not, they served in effect as “adjunct faculty” in the typical training course. Additionally, PD by its nature is served intermittently and in short bursts. It is not a substitute for the deeper more reflective learning that a longer, integrated program of study would yield.



Curriculum Design for High Performing Experienced Classroom Teachers

“What do you teach experienced teachers, already demonstrating high student achievement improvements in their classroom, to increase their effectiveness, develop them as the most valuable people in their schools and networks and retain them in the classroom teaching profession?”

With this question as the overarching design objective, we have taken the work that TCBS has developed over the last 18 months as a starting point and dramatically revamped the basic design of a full Advanced Program of Study for experienced, high performing teachers. We have investigated numerous alternative certification programs and ed school degrees and continued discussions with researchers, content providers, think tanks, schools and teachers.

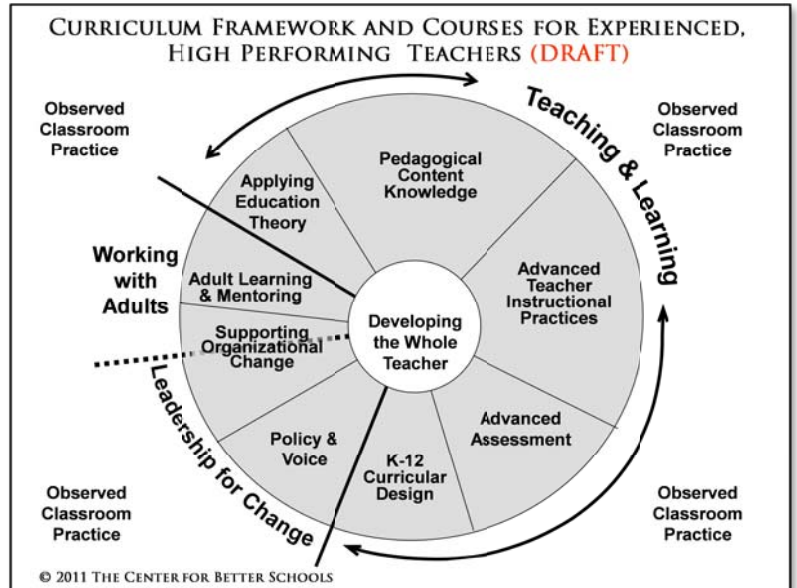
Our preliminary work on curriculum design (reflected in our Launch Plan, which is available upon request) represents the collective inputs of school leaders, education school deans, alternative certification program directors, researchers and experienced teachers themselves. We have compiled over 40 pages of bibliographic references to date on our Academy Project including materials directed at curriculum design.

Our preliminary map of a layered curriculum has been modified through our recent work. A revised Curriculum Framework, still in DRAFT form(!), is depicted below. The original is reproduced here for reference as well. Topics such as technology deployment and the management of large class sizes have been integrated into other course topics. Shulman’s (1987) usage of the term “Pedagogical Content Knowledge” has replaced our “Deep Subject Matter Content” course title.

Three main content areas define the overall program of study:

- Teaching and Learning
- Working with Adults
- Leadership for Effectiveness

We asked our Core Team organizations to allocate the classroom hours of a hypothetical year long program of study across the course areas and the depiction below is roughly proportionate. A course focused on the personal and professional (non-intellectual) development of the “whole teacher” has been added. We are now designing the detailed map of each course including learning objectives, teacher competencies, assessment elements, reading materials, case materials and instructor profiles.



Many of the organizations that have supported our work including other alternative certification programs, education schools, content providers and researchers are being solicited to provide feedback, content for specific course topics and serve in a general review capacity. We will report more on this later in the spring.

Original Curriculum Design Schematic

Other TCBS News

- University and Academy design discussions ongoing
- Additional team members being recruited
- Additional funds being solicited
- 501(c)3 status approved

Thank you for your continued interest.

Tony Klemmer

Founder, President

