

WHAT would learning to teach look like if we built on what we know about what works? Here is one vision of the future:

For as long as she could remember, Gloria had wanted to teach. As a little girl, she would sit and read to toddlers, round up her friends to play school, and explain the mysteries of the universe to anyone who would listen. In high school, as part of a Teacher Cadet program, she began to look with interest at the many ways young children learn when she served as a teacher's aide. She felt she could spend a lifetime studying children without ever running out of mysteries.

When she arrived at college, Gloria pursued a math major, taking some courses that encouraged her to track her own process of learning mathematics. She was admitted as a junior into the highly selective teacher education program, which offered courses in learning, development, and teaching that gave her the chance to observe and work with students in elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as in recreation centers and at community sites. Because she was always in the field, the theories she encountered gave her a powerful set of lenses to interpret her experiences. In addition, her professors modeled the kinds of strategies she would use as a teacher, enabling students to

develop and apply knowledge in the context of practice.

In her fifth year, while completing her master's degree, Gloria was placed in a year-long internship guided by a faculty of university- and school-based teacher educators in a professional development school. There, she worked with a team of fellow student teachers and expert veteran teachers who planned and taught together. Most of the school- and university-based teacher educators who comprised the professional development school faculty had been certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, having completed a portfolio of evidence about their teaching along with a set of subject-matter assessments.

The professional development school enabled new teachers to discover how to support learning for new English language learners and to examine teaching from many cultural perspectives. In her seminar and class-

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THOUGHT LEADER

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The story of Gloria is a future vision of the new teacher

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room work, Gloria observed and documented specific children; evaluated lessons that illustrated important concepts and strategies; tutored and worked with small groups; sat in on family conferences; engaged in school and team planning meetings; visited homes and community agencies to learn about their resources; planned field trips and curriculum segments; taught lessons and short units; and ultimately took primary responsibility for the class for two months near the end of the year. Her clinical work was supplemented by readings and discussions grounded in cases of teaching.

A team of teachers at the professional development school videotaped all of their classes over the course of the year to serve as the basis of discussions of teaching decisions and outcomes. These teachers' lesson plans, student work, audiotaped planning journals, and reflections also were available in a hypermedia database that allowed student teachers to look at practice from many angles, examine how classroom situations arose from past occurrences, see how various

strategies turned out, and understand the teacher's thinking about students, subjects, and curriculum goals as she made decisions. Because the school was also wired for video and computer communication with the school of education, master teachers could converse with student teachers by teleconference or e-mail when on-site visits were impossible.

When Gloria finished her internship year, she was ready for her first year of teaching. She submitted her own beginning teacher portfolio to the state professional standards board and sat for the tests of subject matter and teaching knowledge that would grant her an initial teaching license.

Gloria spent that summer developing curriculum ideas for her new class. She had advice from the district mentor teacher already assigned to work with her in her first year of teaching and an online database of teaching materials developed by teachers across the country and organized around the curriculum standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. She could access writers and users of these materials online to discuss how they had designed and used particular ideas and to work on how the materials might be adapted to students' needs.

Gloria's mentor teacher worked with her and several other new middle school mathematics and science teachers throughout the year, meeting with them individually to examine their teaching and provide support. The mentors and their first-year colleagues also met in groups once a month at the professional development school to discuss specific problems of practice. These meetings kept Gloria connected to peers and teachers from the

university as well as to a group of expert veteran teachers across the district. With these resources and her teaching team at the middle school, Gloria never felt as though she was alone. Her internship and ongoing mentoring had prepared her to set up a well-functioning classroom from the start.

She met weekly with the other math and science teachers in the school to discuss curriculum plans and share demonstration lessons. This extended lunch meeting occurred while her students were in a Project Adventure/physical education course that taught them teamwork and cooperation skills. She also met with the four other members of her teaching team for three hours each week while their students were at community service placements. The team used this time to discuss cross-disciplinary teaching plans and the progress of the 80 students they shared. In these two different settings, Gloria had access to her colleagues' knowledge about subject matter and students.

In addition to these built-in opportunities for daily learning, Gloria and her colleagues benefited from the study groups they had developed at their school and the professional development offerings at the local university and Teachers Academy. The study groups, created each year based on faculty interests, met during the school's staff development sessions on Friday afternoons while students were in academic clubs. Each group was led by a faculty member and had funds to purchase books, materials, or consulting help. This year, various groups were studying strategies for supporting mainstreamed instruction of special needs

students; improving the teaching of research skills; implementing the state's new mathematics and science curriculum standards; and understanding language development for new English language learners.

At the Teachers Academy, school- and university-based faculty taught extended courses in areas ranging from advances in learning theory to different teaching methods, from elementary science to advanced calculus. These courses usually featured case studies and teaching demonstrations as well as follow-up work in teachers' own classrooms. Multimedia conferencing allowed teachers to "meet" with each other across their schools and to see each others' classrooms. They also could connect to courses and study groups at the university, including a popular master's degree program that helped teachers prepare for National Board certification. The academy provided the technology for online conferencing and televised classroom observation. It also sponsored meetings for many of the networks that teachers used to create professional learning communities for themselves, such as the National Writing Project, the Urban Mathematics Collaborative, and the Coalition of Essential Schools.

Gloria knew that all of these opportunities would be available to her when she was ready for them. With the strength of a preparation that had helped her put theory and practice together, and with the support of so many colleagues, Gloria felt confident that she could succeed at her life's goal: becoming — as she now understood, always *becoming* — a teacher. ■