

The New Teacher Project's Practitioner Teacher Programs pioneer new ways of preparing effective teachers for high-need schools. Emerging research has shown that teachers certified by the Practitioner Teacher Program outperform even experienced teachers in raising student achievement in some content areas.

The Problem: Inadequate Teacher Preparation

Teaching in high-poverty urban districts presents even the most talented new teacher with unique challenges. Yet, most traditional certification programs don't focus on preparing graduates to be immediately effective in this environment, and few programs are tailored to the needs of career changers making the switch to teaching.

In its work across the country, TNTP has heard common concerns from districts and teachers – including TNTP's Teaching Fellows – about traditional certification courses. They reported that these courses are:

- **not relevant** to teaching in high-need schools, where students are often two to three grade levels behind;
- **not structured** to meet the needs of teachers who have deep content knowledge from professional or academic experience; and
- **disconnected** from experiences in the classroom, with a heavy emphasis on theory.

As a result, thousands of new teachers enter high-need classrooms each year without the optimal training needed to maximize their effectiveness on day one. This further disadvantages the students who need great teachers most and betrays the promise of a quality education for all.

The Solution: Rigorous Training for Challenging Classrooms

TNTP's Practitioner Teacher Program (PTP) provides rigorous, relevant training that prepares career changers to have an immediate impact on student achievement in high-poverty schools.

Research has shown that the PTP's innovative preparation consistently produces highly effective teachers. As a *New York Times* editorial said in 2008, "high-quality programs like...The New Teacher Project have a big role to play in the effort to improve teacher preparation nationally."

In a national survey, 62% of education school alumni said the schools fail to prepare their graduates to cope with classroom reality.

69% of alumni said they wanted a better balance between subject matter preparation and field experience.

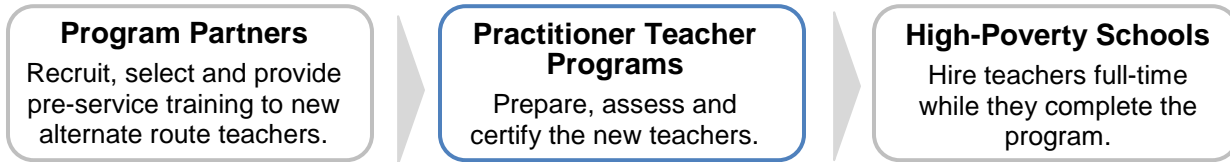
Source: *Educating School Teachers*, Levine 2006.



From Climbing to the Classroom

Throughout his diverse two decade career – with stints in rock climbing, construction management, and outdoor education – Kevin Cieszkowski found his math and science skills invaluable. In 2005, he put his skills to work teaching ninth grade physics while **earning his certification through TNTP's Practitioner Teacher Program.**

Cieszkowski, who teaches at Berkner High School in Richardson, TX (near Dallas), says he uses physics "to explain how to solve everyday problems" and interest his students in the "rules of the Universe." For the past two years, his students have outperformed others on the science portion of state tests. In 2009, Cieszkowski won the Innovations in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Teaching Award, for his use of innovative teaching methods and technology to enhance instruction and learning.



How It Works: Four Key Components

The Practitioner Teacher Program is grounded in a simple premise: Effective teachers can and must close the achievement gap. To that end, all program components are designed specifically to support new teachers in delivering quality instruction in high-need schools and subject areas.

1. Partnerships with teacher recruitment programs. PTP program partners, such as TNTP’s Teaching Fellows Programs and Teach For America, recruit and provide summer pre-service training to new alternate route teachers. At the end of the summer, participants start teaching full-time and begin their certification coursework through the Practitioner Teacher Program, rather than at a local university.

2. Practical training and classroom practice. Once in the classroom, participants attend bi-weekly evening seminars led by outstanding district teachers, who are carefully selected and trained by TNTP. The seminars emphasize the way excellent practitioners teach specific content in high-need schools, strategies that participants can apply immediately in their own classrooms. Teachers also participate in a district mentorship program while completing the PTP, receiving valuable feedback from experienced peers.

3. Research-based curriculum. TNTP’s unique *Teaching for Results* curriculum helps teachers become effective at understanding the content their students must master, delivering focused instruction, and using assessment tools to gauge student progress. With a clear picture of where students are and where they need to be, the new teachers can plan, teach, re-teach when necessary, and adjust their practice in order to close the achievement gap. The curriculum currently provides training in 14 subject areas.

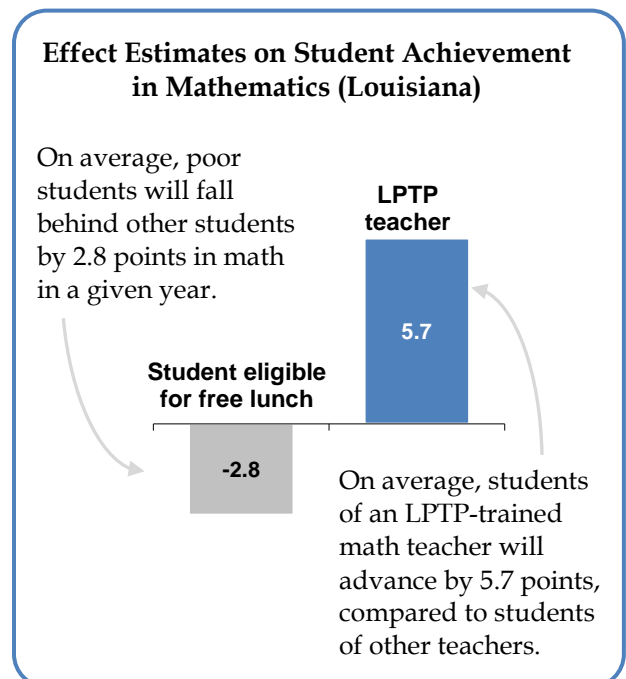
4. Certification recommendation. After participants have completed all program requirements, *Teaching for Results* coursework and their first year in the classroom, TNTP decides whether to recommend for state certification. Certification decisions incorporate comprehensive assessments of candidates, and can include principal observations and evidence of student achievement. By 2015, all candidates will have to demonstrate that they can raise student achievement above a target threshold in order to be recommended for certification and to stay in the classroom. Average time to certification is 12-16 months.

The Results: Effective Teachers

Since 2001, TNTP has certified approximately **2,100 teachers**. TNTP is currently approved to certify teachers in six jurisdictions – California, Louisiana, Maryland, Texas, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia.

TNTP-certified teachers say the training improves their practice: In 2009, 88 percent of participants said the *Teaching for Results* seminars increased their effectiveness in the classroom

This endorsement is validated by independent research. The 2009 results of a value-add study of Louisiana’s teacher preparation programs gave the Louisiana Practitioner Teacher Program (LPTP) the highest possible rating for teacher effectiveness in the core content areas of math and reading. Teachers certified through the LPTP **outperformed new and experienced teachers** in these areas. In math, LPTP teachers had a positive effect on achievement that could outweigh the negative impact of student poverty.



Source: "Value Added Assessment of Teacher Preparation in Louisiana: 2005-2006 to 2007-2008." Louisiana State University.