

# Understandings and Procedures Necessary for a Teachers Institute

The following Articles of Understanding provide the necessary basis for partnerships that adopt the New Haven model, wish to participate in the Yale National Initiative, and are members of the League of Teachers Institutes. Although listed as separate Articles, they are interrelated elements of an organically unified approach. Each Article is followed by one or more Procedures designed to clarify its intent and guide its implementation. Continuing membership in the League of Teachers Institutes will depend upon the maintenance of a Teachers Institute in accord with these Understandings and Procedures, as demonstrated in annual reports. Experience has shown that Teachers Institutes that remain in accord with these Understandings and Procedures are more likely to succeed in a long-term effort than are Institutes that depart from them.

## Article 1: Partnership

Each Teachers Institute partnership links an institution (or institutions) of higher education to a school district (or districts) in which a significant proportion of the students come from low-income communities. Administratively and financially, the Institute is situated as an autonomous academic unit in an institution of higher education, not subordinate to any other unit in the institution or any external entity. It reports to the office of the president or provost. That institution must assume, and may not delegate, full responsibility for the academic and fiscal management of a Teachers Institute. A sponsoring institution of higher education serves as fiscal agent and, in most cases, acts as recipient of any grant for the Institute. The size, scope, and emphasis of the Institute depend upon the needs of the district(s), the educational resources available, and the expected funding. Policies within the school district(s) pertaining to curriculum and professional development (as established by the state, the school board, the union, and specific administrators) must encourage the development of such an Institute.

**Procedures for Article 1:** The initial scope includes no fewer than 20 schools encompassing at least two of the three levels of schooling (elementary, middle, and high), a minimum pool of 500 potentially eligible teachers, and a minimum of four seminars to be offered annually. If the number of seminars increases, the number of schools and eligible teachers may also be appropriately increased. Letters from the highest administrators of the institution(s) of higher education and the school district(s) should explicitly state their commitment to long-term collaboration in support of the Institute. In a jointly written and executed letter of agreement they should lay out the terms and expectation of the collaboration entailed by their

partnership, specifying their respective roles and mutual obligations. The letter of agreement must be renewed when there is a change in university or school administration or an Institute director.

## Article 2: Participants

Teachers who participate in an Institute become Fellows in its seminars. The body of Teachers Representatives in a given year will consist of teachers who are intending to be Fellows in the seminars being planned and (except in an Institute's first year) have been Institute Fellows. Faculty members from the institution(s) of higher education are invited to serve as seminar leaders and/or serve on a University Advisory Council composed largely or entirely of faculty members.

**Procedures for Article 2:** The director organizes a body of Teachers Representatives and a University Advisory Council. The director, while ultimately responsible for the appointment of Teachers Representatives to this largely self-perpetuating body, actively solicits recommendations from current Teachers Representatives and Coordinators and relies upon their advice. The director recruits faculty from various parts of the institution(s) of higher education to offer seminars that address the Fellows' interests and needs in the areas of further preparation and curriculum development. The president(s) of the institution(s) of higher education, on recommendation by the director, will invite and appoint faculty members to serve on a University Advisory Council.

## Article 3: Direction

A continuing, full-time director of the Institute serves as convenor, administrator, liaison between the school district(s) and the administration and faculty of the institution(s) of higher education, and fund-raiser. The director, while reporting to the chief officers of the institution(s) of higher education and the district(s), is administratively and financially responsible to the institution of higher education in which the Institute is situated. Those institution(s) provide a job description for the director that establishes the director's place within their structure. The director shall have full authority and responsibility for the operation of the Institute to ensure compliance with these Articles of Understanding. She or he must enjoy the confidence of the teachers of the district(s), the faculty members of the institution(s) of higher education, and the Yale National Initiative. The director acts as leader and facilitator of the participating teachers or Fellows and, in consultation with the executive committee of the University Advisory Council, recruits seminar leaders from among the faculty members of the institution(s) of higher education. The director is also the liaison with the National Initiative and arranges the Institute's participation in League activities.

**Procedures for Article 3:** A planning director or director for a new Institute must be identified in close consultation with representatives from local teacher leadership and university faculty, and with the superintendent(s) of the school district(s) and chief administrative officer(s) of the institution(s) of higher education. During this process the partnership is encouraged to communicate with the National Initiative with some frequency. A candidate who has been identified through this process may then be recommended to the Yale National Initiative, after which there must be opportunity for further consultation with the Initiative. If a mutual decision is favorable, the candidate must then receive formal approval by the superintendent(s) and chief administrative officer(s), and by the Yale National Initiative, after which the candidate may be appointed planning director. A planning director for a new Institute must be prepared and willing to become director if again approved as such through the process here specified. Any replacement for the director should be advertised and publicized internally and externally in accordance with the search procedures in place at the partnering institution(s) of higher education. The search committee for a replacement for the director should involve representatives from the local teacher leadership and university faculty advisory groups. A replacement for the director should then be recommended by the superintendent(s) of the school district(s) and chief administrative officer(s) of the institution(s) of higher education in the partnership, and approved by the Yale National Initiative. If the institution requires that a Principal Investigator other than the Institute director be assigned for a grant, that person should be a member of the administration, at least at the level of Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

## Article 4: Leadership of Teachers

The Institute is led in crucial respects by participating teachers in the district(s), who, as Teachers Representatives and Coordinators, play a major and indispensable role in the planning, organization, conduct, and evaluation of the programs intended to benefit them and, through them, their students. They are responsible for persuading other teachers to understand the Institute as having been designed to strengthen teaching and learning throughout the schools and to have a significant impact upon the school district.

**Procedures for Article 4:** Through the body of Teachers Representatives the teachers are involved in initiating and approving decisions with respect to seminars offered, encouraging teachers to request and apply for seminars, and enrolling them in the seminars. From the body of Teachers Representatives the director will annually select Coordinators, one for each

seminar, who will assist with application procedures, handle administrative details within the seminar, help to establish its collegiality, act as a resource for members of the seminar, and monitor its progress.

## Article 5: Faculty Role

Faculty members from the liberal arts and/or sciences in the institution(s) of higher and professional education who teach at the undergraduate and/or graduate levels lead seminars, advise in the shaping of the seminars to be offered, and review each year the seminars offered by the Institute.

**Procedures for Article 5:** The University Advisory Council meets at least annually to receive reports and offer advice on the progress of the Institute. An executive committee of the Council meets more frequently with the director to review and approve the proposed seminars and to provide consultation and assistance with regard to other administrative matters.

## Article 6: Seminars

The course of study consists of intensive seminars (not lectures) of relatively small enrollment in several disciplines on broadly defined topics, which meet over a period of no less than three months. These seminars are both collaborative and collegial. The seminar leader and the Fellows study and discuss certain common texts, objects, or places, and each Fellow prepares during the period of the seminar meetings at least two drafts of a substantial "curriculum unit" that he or she intends to employ in the classroom during the following year.

**Procedures for Article 6:** Seminars with about a dozen participants, meeting approximately weekly, afford the best opportunity for discussing every Fellow's work in progress. Each applicant's principal must verify that the teacher's participation in the seminar is appropriate, and that the proposed curriculum unit is related to, and significant for, the school curriculum, the district standards, and a course that the teacher will be assigned in the following school year. The curriculum units, which will have immediate application in the classroom, may bear a variety of relations to the general topic of the seminar, appropriate to the grade level and the aims of the teacher and to the school plans and district standards.

## Article 7: Curriculum Unit

The curriculum unit is important for the teacher as a means of articulating what is being learned in the seminar, applying it to the classroom, and sharing it with col-

leagues. Each curriculum unit consists of at least 15 single-spaced pages. It includes an essay of at least 10 pages that sets forth the unit's rationale and objectives, the material to be presented in the classroom, and the pedagogical strategies to be employed; it also includes several examples of the lesson plans to be used by the teacher, and one or more annotated bibliographies. The curriculum units are published electronically, and preferably also in printed format.

**Procedures for Article 7:** Relying on relevant documents provided by the National Initiative, an Institute will establish handbooks, manuals, or guidelines for Fellows that lay out the necessary structure and content of a curriculum unit, and the steps in the writing process. Such guidelines should provide for two or more individual meetings between the seminar leader and each Fellow.

## Article 8: Collaboration

The simultaneous consideration of subject matter and pedagogical procedures is fundamental to the Institute Approach and essential to the collegiality on which an Institute is founded. The seminar leaders are primarily responsible for presenting the "content" or "knowledge" of one or more disciplines, the inherent strategies whereby such knowledge is acquired and transmitted, and any pedagogical strategies that may therefore inhere in that field of study. The Fellows, individually and collectively, will be responsible for bringing to the seminar at appropriate points the pedagogical procedures necessary for encouraging active learners in their elementary or secondary classrooms to acquire this knowledge.

**Procedures for Article 8:** Seminar leaders should plan to incorporate in the sessions some discussion of common work and of curriculum units in progress. An Institute (again relying on documents provided by the National Initiative) will establish guidelines, handbooks, or manuals for seminar leaders that make clear the expectations with regard to collaboration.

## Article 9: Collegiality

Participating teachers from the institution(s) of higher education and the schools are considered professional colleagues working within a collegial relationship, and their respective contributions in the Institute process are valued equally. Seminar leaders and Fellows understand that all participants bring to the seminar important strengths, both experience and knowledge, with respect to the seminar topic and/or its potential relevance to the classroom.

**Procedures for Article 9:** The guidelines, handbooks or manuals for Fellows and seminar leaders will emphasize the importance in the seminar of a collegial relationship. The Fellows are considered full members of the university community during the year in which they are taking a seminar, and they will receive the privileges customarily given to faculty, such as library and computer privileges and net accounts. They are not to be regarded as students in regular university courses. Arrangements may be made for them, however, to apply to a relevant graduate program to receive university credit or certification of course of study for a Teachers Institute seminar they have already completed.

## Article 10: Eligibility

Within its designated scope, the Institute encourages any teacher to apply who has a teaching assignment relevant to a seminar topic, desires to increase preparation in the subject taught, can present a proposal for a curriculum unit relevant to that topic, and will be assigned to teach a course during the ensuing year in which that unit can be used.

**Procedures for Article 10:** The Teachers Institute makes every effort to ensure that the pool of teachers applying to the Institute represents a cross-section of all eligible teachers. Its program should attract and accept teachers regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, academic background, professional experience, and length of time in teaching. It should document annually the percentage of Fellows in each category and also specify the comparable percentages in the demographics of the teaching cadre in the district. To carry out its mission, an Institute must involve a significant proportion of all teachers within its designated scope, who, in turn, must actively engage teachers who have not participated before.

## Article 11: Remuneration

In order to recognize the intensive, demanding, and professionally significant nature of their participation in the seminars, the seminar leaders will be provided with some remuneration, and the Fellows, who participate on a voluntary basis, will be provided with an appropriate stipend and/or honorarium on completion of their unit and all Institute requirements.

**Procedures for Article 11:** The stipend for participating school teachers and the honoraria for Representatives and Coordinators do not constitute salary or wages and are therefore not to be regarded as subject to any conditions of employment. Teachers Institutes involving more than one insti-

tution of higher education should devise an equitable arrangement for remuneration for seminar leaders.

## Article 12: Long-Term Commitment

In establishing a Teachers Institute, the institutional and district administrations commit themselves to a long-term partnership with each other in support of the Institute during and beyond the Planning and Implementation Phases.

**Procedures for Article 12:** These commitments will be defined during the planning process and must be affirmed in the Implementation Application. The commitments must be re-affirmed or renewed when there is a change in the institutional or school administration or an Institute director.

## Article 13: Funding

The institution(s) of higher education and the school district(s) are committed to provide meaningful ongoing financial support to the Teachers Institute.

**Procedures for Article 13:** Cost sharing is essential for developing, sustaining, and institutionalizing a Teachers Institute. It not only buttresses the commitment of institutional and school district administrations to their partnership, but also stimulates private support for the Institute by offering potential donors the incentive of multiplying the impact of their gifts. Cost sharing consists of the cash contributions made to the Institute by the college or university, the school district partner, and third parties. Full indirect, overhead, or facilities and administration costs are contributed as cost sharing. In order that new Teachers Institutes can prepare to become financially sustainable, they should follow a cost-sharing strategy during the Planning Phase and Implementation Phase that will enable a gradual assumption of a major share of the core costs. During the Planning Phase at least half of the necessary core direct costs should be provided by the applicant institution and the school district partner. These costs consist of salary for the planning director, honoraria for teachers and faculty, and expenses for travel to events at Yale. During the Implementation Phase, the institution and the school district partner should assume an increasing ratio of cost-sharing—e.g., in graduated steps over three years of 1/2, 1/1, 2/1—thus reducing reliance upon temporary outside sources. For the Implementation Phase the necessary core direct costs consist of one full-time salary for the director, remunerations for seminar leaders, stipends for Fellows, honoraria for Coordinators, the publication of curriculum units, office assistance for the director, the expense of establishing and

maintaining a Web site, and travel to League events. Experience has shown that a budget (in 2007 dollars) of about \$20,000-\$40,000 in direct costs should be adequate for the Planning Phase, and that a new Teachers Institute would require in each year of the Implementation Phase (again in 2007 dollars) something on the order of \$200,000 in funding.

## Article 14: The League

There will be an explicit and visible relation among the Institutes and with the Yale National Initiative in which they are participating. Those Institutes recognized by the Yale National Initiative as following the Institute Approach in accord with these Articles of Understanding—initially through approval of the Application for Implementation, and thereafter on the basis of annual reports—will be members of the League of Teachers Institutes and will be eligible for benefits specified in the section on "Benefits to Participating Cities and Communities and to League Institutes."

**Procedures for Article 14:** Each Institute is committed to join the League of Teachers Institutes, to participate in League activities and meetings, to add materials to the Web site that illustrate its operation in accordance with these Articles, to communicate in more informal ways, and to disseminate its experience of the Institute model in various ways to other actual and potential Institutes across the nation. The means of communication include participation in national seminars, the Intensive Sessions, Annual Conferences, personal visits, e-mail, news groups, online chats, text-based forums, etc., and will also include written accounts by participants in the Institutes for publication in *On Common Ground*.

## Article 15: Evaluation

The Institutes are committed to undertaking at their own cost, in cooperation with the Yale National Initiative, an annual review of their progress and, at the end of the Implementation Phase, a final review. They assume responsibility for continuing self-evaluation, in cooperation with the Yale National Initiative. They will submit to the Yale National Initiative (and also, through this Initiative, to the relevant local or national funders) annual financial reports and annual narrative reports.

**Procedures for Article 15:** The reporting that is required of a Teachers Institute is more fully described in a later section of this manual: "Reporting and Evaluation." This reporting serves several functions and provides several advantages. It constitutes a detailed account, in depth and through time, of the operations and accomplishments of the Institute. It



contributes greatly to the process of obtaining funding; and it also contributes to the wider understanding by teachers, district administrators, university faculty members and administrators, and policy-makers of the role and importance of Teachers Institutes in this nation. The Yale National Initiative will offer advice in this review process and may suggest means of obtaining funding to support it.