

East Side Institute

Developing Teachers Fellowship Program

The Need for the Program

With all the talk about standards and the pressure to turn out learning products it is easy to forget that learning is essentially a creative process.

- Children are most able to learn when they are developing culturally and socially.
- Teachers need new tools that reinstate development while still addressing the daily demands of public school teaching.
- Teachers need to develop as educational leaders who can make use of the latest innovations in human development and learning.

The **Developing Teachers Fellowship Program** is looking for a select group of New York City teachers who want to develop as educational leaders and innovators. The program is designed to enhance teachers' creative group building skills and develop their capacities to create more collaborative, creative, playful and participatory learning environments.

The Developing Teachers Fellowship Program (DTFP) is one of several programs of the East Side Institute, an international research and training center for new approaches to human development, learning, psychotherapy and community building. The Institute trains teachers, social workers, counselors and other professionals in its performance-based developmental learning methodology. The Institute is part of a broad community that fosters human development through performance, including the NYC-based All Stars Project, Performance of a Lifetime, as well as the international Performing the World movement.

Program Overview

The DTFP consists of ongoing training and classroom supervision by Institute faculty. The program begins in late August and concludes the following June. Applications are due July 1 and applicants are notified by August 1.

The program includes:

- Bi-weekly Saturday workshops
- Participation in the Performing the World 2008 conference
- Visits to outside-of-school youth development programs
- Monthly on-site mentoring
- Culminating project (e.g., performance piece, action research, article, conference proposal)

The Approach

The DTFP uses a performatory approach to support teachers (and their students) to continuously develop. We relate to teachers as performers who can actively create new classroom plays and we encourage teachers to relate to their students as performers of their learning and their lives. Tools of the theatre, particularly improvisation, are the core of the program. Learning to improvise helps teachers creatively incorporate anything going on in the classroom (even such challenges as behavior problems or a range of reading levels) in the service of building a dynamic and productive learning environment. As their students experience the fun and success of improvisation, they will increase their capacity to focus and gain confidence, self-motivation and the willingness to access these skills when faced with unknown learning activities. This approach can be used in any subject area and with children of any age. This program aspires to provide schools with model classrooms where learning, creativity and development can easily coexist with — indeed immeasurably enhance — academic rigor.

While they are experimenting with this new methodology in their classrooms, teachers will be exposed to the advances in learning made by a variety of outside-of-school programs, putting them in a strong position to contribute to the dialogue on key educational issues on school, district or national policy levels.

This program will:

- provide teachers with practical new tools for creating classroom environments in which students can discover their capacity to create with others
- introduce teachers to a community of cutting-edge programs and practitioners
- give teachers a new understanding of what groups are and how they work
- help teachers embrace the unexpected and take risks

Program Director

Carrie Lobman, Ed.D. is the director of teacher training at the East Side Institute and is also an Assistant Professor of Education at the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. She is the co-author, along with Matthew Lundquist, of *Unscripted Learning: Using Improv Activities Across the K-8 Curriculum* (Teachers College Press, 2007) and many articles on the relationship between performance, improvisation, play and learning.

To Apply

We are accepting applications for the 2008-2009 school year. The application deadline is July 1, 2008, with notification by August 1, 2008.

To be eligible to apply to the Developing Teachers Fellowship Program, you must

- Be a certified K-12 teacher currently employed in a New York City public or charter school
- Have U.S. citizenship, or permanent residency with a valid green card, and fluency in English
- Have regular email access

To complete the application, you should prepare the items below beforehand to submit online:

- An updated resume
- A detailed personal essay of 800-1,000 words that includes:
 - your teaching experience
 - your teaching and learning philosophy
 - your greatest challenges
 - examples of classroom successes
 - any performance experience you might have (theatre, music, dance, etc.)
 - why you want to become a Developing Teachers Fellow

If accepted for an interview, you will need to bring undergraduate and, if applicable, graduate transcripts. If accepted into the program, you will need to provide a letter of support from your principal.

What Teachers Say

Lauren Jacobs High School English Teacher New York, New York

The Developing Teachers Fellowship Program has helped me to understand the many intriguing connections between performance, play, learning, improvisation, ensemble work, and development, and to appreciate the relevance of those connections for my roles as an educator, a learner, and a human being. I will certainly recall and utilize my learning from the games we've played, the discussions we've had, the performances we've experienced, and the environment we've created when I face challenges in my classroom - and in my life! The rewards from this program are countless and ever-emerging.

Nilaja Mussa First Grade Teacher Montclair, New Jersey

Using improv games is helping my students to develop skills such as cooperation and risk taking. With the focus on doing what will allow the group to work well, there is more awareness of how the action of an individual impacts the group. Additionally, students have the opportunity to be creative in ways that extend beyond doing written tasks.

Jessica Tiare Bowen, Special Education Teacher The Damrosch Day Treatment School Bronx, New York

As a teacher of students diagnosed with severe emotional and behavioral disorders, I was searching for a methodology that would allow my students to view education as not just academics, but as an environment that promoted teamwork and collaboration. The Developing Teachers Fellowship Program has provided this for me. The approach supports students to view the classroom as a group. If individuals are acting out, it hurts the entire class. My students have learned that their performance can be changed from moment to moment. If someone is having a bad day, they can choose to change their performance. The program has not only made my students' roles in the classroom more versatile, but it has promoted personal growth in me as an educator.