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# PARTNERS PROGRESS



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## THE PEER INTERVENTION PROGRAM CELEBRATES ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

**Y**ou may not think of the Peer Intervention Program as a union benefit, but, in fact, that's exactly what it is.

The program, which has helped more than 2,000 UFT members improve their teaching skills or make career decisions that better align with their interests and lives, is now in its 30th year. This collaborative DOE and UFT program, established in the 1987 collective-bargaining agreement, was considered a major win for UFT members and has repeatedly proved its worth for tenured teachers. Most recently, the program expanded its mission to help all members improve teaching practices, even those who are rated Effective but seek a rating of Highly Effective.

Recent surveys show that members who participate in PIP report an improvement in their skill sets, a better learning environment for their students and an increase in their observation ratings. It's not surprising, really. The program uses research-based, data-driven techniques and provides participants with individualized, one-on-one coaching with an experienced educator for up to a year.

PIP is part of a wrap-around approach to union services. As UFT President Michael Mulgrew said in a recent column for the *New York Teacher*, the union's newspaper, "You belong to a community of public school educators and other professionals who are motivated to help others and whose good deeds ripple far beyond education."

The union does everything it can to support its members. "Our members can do their work by being proactive in



*PIP staff stay in close contact with each other to keep on top of the work they're doing with teachers. From left, Jonelle Carter, peer intervenor; Lynne Ann Kilroy, PIP coordinator; Ellen Driesen, chairwoman of the PIP Panel, and Federico Anderson, peer intervenor.*

strengthening their professional growth. As well, they have the parallel support of our union services, union benefits and our contract," said Lynne Ann Kilroy, the PIP coordinator.

"Our program's job is to provide support to those who need assistance with their pedagogy or need help evaluating their career choices. We find our work rewarding when we hear feedback from PIP participants, when they tell us about how much better they're doing in the classrooms or how much happier they are in a new job, in or out of the DOE," Kilroy said.

*For more information about PIP, contact us at [pip@uft.org](mailto:pip@uft.org) or call (212) 844-0600. All the support provided by PIP is confidential and non-evaluative.*

The Peer Intervention Program is a multi-service program for tenured teachers who voluntarily apply for assistance. Participants commit to working one-on-one with a Peer Intervenor for a period of one year. Assistance is provided on a confidential basis and is tailored to the person's professional strengths and weaknesses. The goal is to help participants become more effective or, if necessary, explore a career change. PIP has been overwhelmingly successful in helping teachers remain in the classroom, with about 80 percent of PIP participants remaining on the job and reporting more success both in teaching and in their evaluations.





## What's New? A look at the latest from the Peer Intervention Program

**New Staff:** PIP welcomes new Peer Intervenor Jonelle Carter from District 18, where she taught special education. She is a Nationally Certified Teacher of students with exceptional needs from birth to young adulthood.

PIP also welcomes Mayerline (May) Joseph as the new administrative assistant. May comes to us from District 75 at the UFT Manhattan Borough Office.

**PIP Posting:** Seeking qualified candidates for intervenor positions in all areas. Applicants must be tenured, full-time pedagogues in the NYC Department of Education. You'll find vacancy circulars on the DOE and UFT websites.

**PIP Presents:** As the need for support to teachers in their classroom has grown increasingly important, demand for information about PIP services has also risen. PIP Coordinator Lynne Ann Kilroy recently addressed UFT chapter leaders and UFT staff about program services at several meetings around the city.

A big thanks to these UFT district representatives for their support in organizing these meetings: Dennis Gault (D-1), Servia Silva (D-4), Zina Burton-Myrick (D-5), Mayra Cruz (D-6), Iradies Munet (D-14), John Harrington (D-24) and the UFT Chapter Advocates.



*The people who make PIP work include PIP staff, UFT staff, PIP peer intervenors and DOE staff. Back row, from left: May Joseph, administrative assistant; Jessica Fredston-Hermann, director of the DOE's After School Professional Development Program; Karen Alford, UFT vice president; Lynne Ann Kilroy, PIP coordinator; Marilynn Massa, counseling support services liaison; Danielle Skarulis, peer intervenor; Federico Anderson, peer intervenor; Rhonda Rosenberg, UFT senior data analyst; Lauren Loizides, peer intervenor; Tabio DaCruz, UFT special representative; Anne Williams, deputy executive director, DOE Office of Teacher Recruitment and Quality; Taryn Sanders, peer intervenor; Jonelle Carter, peer intervenor; and Rich Mantell, UFT vice president. Seated, from left: Jessica LeRouge, peer intervenor; Ellen Driesen, chairwoman of the PIP Panel; Barbara Ogurek, PIP assistant coordinator; Manal Ashmauy, peer intervenor; Linda Pinzon, alternate careers liaison; Amy Silverstein, peer intervenor; Sitab Mabadeo, peer intervenor; and Christina Luzzi, peer intervenor.*



*From left, Tabio DaCruz, UFT special representative; Taryn Sanders, peer intervenor; Karen Alford, UFT vice president; Amy Silverstein, peer intervenor; and Sitab Mabadeo, peer intervenor.*





*The PIP Panel members speak at the annual PIP luncheon, introducing themselves to PIP Peer Intervenor staff.*

## ANNUAL PIP LUNCHEON PROVIDES TIME TO BRAINSTORM

The annual PIP Panel luncheon took place on Jan. 16 at UFT Headquarters in Manhattan, giving Peer Intervenor staff a chance to meet with Panel members and discuss the work of PIP.

"It's about 'getting to know you,'" said Lynne Kilroy, the PIP coordinator. "It gives the panel and staff a chance to match faces with names." Panel members wanted to know how they could best support the program, she added. "The staff felt really appreciated," Kilroy said.

The PIP Panel comprises Karen Alford, UFT vice president of elementary schools; Rich Mantell, vice president of middle schools; Ellen Dreisen, PIP Panel chair; Lawrence Becker, CEO, Labor Policy, Chancellor's office; Anne Williams, deputy executive director, the DOE Office of Teacher Recruitment and Quality; and Jessica Fredston-Hermann, director, the DOE After School Professional Development Program.

"We get a chance to meet halfway through the school year," said Dreisen, who is also the UFT D-20 (Brooklyn)

representative. "PIP intervenors have a very isolating job when they're out in the field," Dreisen said. "They have pride in what they're accomplishing. When they're working in the classroom, they have to be chameleons to fit in with everyone."

It was Williams' second time at the luncheon. She enjoyed hearing peer intervenors share their stories about the teachers with whom they work. "It's always nice to meet the people doing the work," she said. "I understand the work more and its impact."

The luncheon also provided an opportunity for the staff to make their pitch for expanding the program, funded by the DOE as per the UFT contract. "Imagine if we had more staff," said Kilroy. "That was the theme of the day."

Amy Silverstein is in her 12th year as a peer intervenor, one of 10 in the program. "It was lovely that they were able to hear us," Silverstein said. "This program really works. I want them to see we're important and that we need more peer intervenors."

For Jonelle Carter, who joined the PIP team in September, it was all new. "There are faces to put with names and it helped me to understand the relationship between PIP and the different branches of the UFT," Carter said. "The Panel was really relatable, and the luncheon was meaningful for me to understand the roles of the Panel."

Taryn Sanders, who has 13 years' experience as a peer intervenor, said she tried to convey the program's large effect. "Each successive year, I have a deeper understanding of how what I do impacts on people's lives — teacher and student. We are impacting teachers' lives and children's lives." Sanders also explained the difference between PIP and other mentoring and coaching programs. "We not only explain how, we show how," she said.

Sanders said the PIP Panel is an important partner and guiding light. "It was a pleasure to meet people who make decisions that guide the work I do. Nothing happens without collaboration."

## HOLISTIC CAREER CHANGE FOR EDUCATORS

By Linda A. Pinzon, Ph.D., Alternative Careers Liaison

I've worked for almost 14 years at the Peer Intervention Program as an Alternative Careers Liaison and it has been an amazing experience.

The ACL role is to assist teachers who wish to make a career change within the Department of Education, pursue a new career or retire. These decisions require serious reflection and preparation.

During an intervention, the ACL explores a participant's personality and career interests to help the participant make a successful transition into the next stage of a career or life. Most of our participants share a common problem: they lack a work-life balance. Our goal is to help teachers re-establish balance in their lives and find satisfaction in a new job.

The approach is integrative and holistic.

We gather information about our participant's career including past jobs, interests, strengths and weaknesses. Then, we focus on making a plan.

As a participant reflects on life and work roles, the participant can more clearly see a path forward. This integrative approach provides a "wholeness" to what our clients may experience as fragmented parts of their world: their work and their personal lives.

We inventory a participant's skills and ascertain which parts give the most satisfaction and what skills are transferable. When people take note of accomplishments and assess the quality of and satisfaction with their careers, they become empowered to change jobs via the Open Market Transfer process, move into a different career or retire.

The ACL also helps with updating/creating a resume or portfolio in line with prospective jobs. We also provide job interview coaching and post-interview reviews.

For those who choose to retire, we make sure they understand retirement is a milestone and involves a significant life transition. We lose our work environment, leave valuable colleagues and say goodbye to students. We need to replace these connections with something meaningful.

While some choose to work following retirement, others fill their lives with hobbies, new jobs, travel or family time. Frankly, we rarely see an unhappy retired teacher.

Whether you want to change jobs, seek a second career or decide to retire, planning is essential. ACL services can help you with the decision during or after your PIP intervention.

Hanson, L. Sunny. (March 2001). Integrating work, family and community through holistic life planning. *Career Life Development Quarterly*, Vol. 49, Issue 3

## HOW PEER INTERVENORS NAVIGATE THE DANIELSON FRAMEWORK

By Fred Anderson, Jonelle Carter, Christina Luzzi, Sitah Mahadeo

The goal of the Peer Intervention Program is to meet teachers' needs. In recent years, pedagogical expectations have been embedded in the Danielson Framework. Assessing quality instruction through the lens of this rubric can be complicated. The PIP Program can help teachers translate the Danielson Framework into actionable steps. In fact, for the last 30 years, PIP has been successfully implementing its own framework to support teachers in their pedagogical practice—long before the Danielson Framework was used in our evaluation system.

Most recently, however, the emphasis of Danielson's Framework has been on Domains 2 and 3. Based on the teacher development and evaluation system, teachers should be proficient in creating an orga-

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From left, Lauren Loizides, PIP peer intervenor; Anne Williams, one of the DOE representatives on the PIP Panel; and Jessica LeRouge, PIP peer intervenor, chat during the annual PIP luncheon.



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nized and respectful classroom environment where there is a culture of learning. Teachers need to establish rules and procedures as early as possible in order to maximize student learning.

### Danielson Components 2a and 2d:

Classroom management has always been a key focus for most teachers. The creation of an environment that is respectful, safe, well managed, nurturing and supportive is crucial to student engagement and achievement. Below are some factors to consider and some strategies our peer intervenors have used with our participants.

### Early Childhood/Elementary

- Get to know your students and their families both in and out of the classroom.
- Establish a few important rules and procedures. Practice these procedures from the first day of school.
- Implement a discipline plan with leveled consequences.
- Your lesson plan is your best management tool. Plan for every single minute of every day!
- Remember to always involve parents and administration in supporting your behavior plan.

Students are not perfect. There are always one or two students who might have a difficult time following your class rules or procedures. When this situation arises, it's time to practice the 3 Rs: remind, redirect and reinforce! If a student still has difficulty following your class rules and procedures, it's time to create an individual student behavior plan.

### Junior High School/High School

Question: How do you approach a class full of rambunctious students who are all going through puberty at the same time? Answer: Very, very carefully.

Here are some tips for developing respect/rapport and managing this unique group of students:

- Respect, respect, respect. It's a two-way street! You've got to give it, to get it. Teenagers need to save face at all times!

- Establish no more than four meaningful class rules with your students. For example, follow directions, take turns speaking, be respectful of others and be prepared. Hold your students accountable to those rules.
- Build rapport and take time to find out as much as you can about your students and their classmates while they are getting to know one another. What do they enjoy? How do they learn best? What is life like at home?
- Plan activities that incorporate students' interests.
- Give students choice.
- Establish procedures to help manage your students and the classroom. This helps to create a safe environment. For example: How will the students enter and exit the classroom? Will they ask permission before bathroom visits, or will they simply sign out? What will they do during the first five minutes of class?

### Danielson Component 3c:

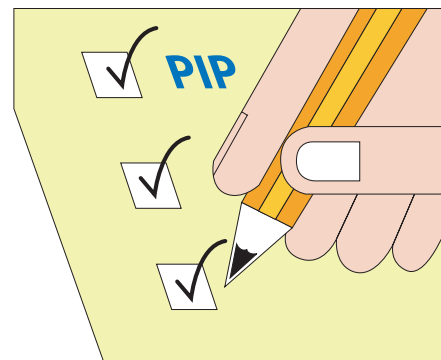
Effective management is just one piece of the puzzle. The Framework for Teaching recognizes Component 3c as the centerpiece of effective teaching. Peer Intervenors support teachers with strategies that ask students to engage in sufficiently rigorous activities and assignments to promote deep learning.

In the following case study, we will explore strategies PIP recommends for alignment and proficiency in these four elements: activities and assignment; grouping of students; instructional materials and resources; and structure and pacing.

*Teacher A has been a middle school science teacher for the past 25 years. She prefers the "chalk and talk" method. Currently, she is teaching astronomy. Because of the abstract nature of this subject matter, it is particularly difficult to create practical, real-world activities. She wonders how she can stay true to her pedagogical beliefs while meeting the needs of her students and the requirements of the administration.*

Peer intervenors collaborate and cre-

ate individualized strategies so their participants can meet their goal. Teacher A can be supported by creating an engaging lecture. Yes, lectures can be engaging at a high level! The peer intervenor provides an article on lecture-based formats for engagement. Teacher A reflects on her understanding of the article. Together, the peer intervenor and Teacher A collaborate to create a checklist to use while



planning a lesson, a portion of which will be delivered as a lecture.

Here is a sample checklist of characteristics:

- ☐ Invite students to self-assess what they already know about the topic.
- ☐ Use visual aids to complement the lecture.
- ☐ At various points, ask a question that requires students to refer to notes and respond.
- ☐ At mid-lecture, ask a reflection question and have students share answers within their groups.
- ☐ At the conclusion of the lecture, ask students to reflect: formulate a question, make a suggestion, etc. (Adapted from *Implementing the Framework for Teaching in Enhancing Professional Practice*.)

As Teacher A practices this strategy, the peer intervenor tracks planning and execution via a data table and video. Reflection on the lecture is very important. This informs next steps and empowers teachers.

### Danielson Component 3b:

Another important aspect of student engagement is Component 3b of the Framework: Questioning and Discussion Techniques. Intervenors collaborate with

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## The Danielson Framework for Teaching

Eight components of the Danielson Framework are used for supporting and evaluating teacher practice.

### Domain 1: Planning and Preparation

- 1a Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy
- 1e Designing coherent instruction

### Domain 2: Classroom Environment

- 2a Creating an environment of respect and rapport
- 2d Managing student behavior

### Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

- 4e Growing and developing professionally

### Domain 3: Instruction

- 3b Using questioning and discussion techniques
- 3c Engaging students in learning
- 3d Using assessment in instruction

participating teachers to design and model protocols for class discussion. In creating a protocol, teachers must consider the unique challenges of their specific populations.

For example, Teacher B teaches a self-contained, third-grade class and several students are speech-impaired. In this case, it would be prudent for Teacher B to create a protocol for small group discussion by following the steps listed below:

1. Assign students to groups of four or less. Be intentional in your grouping.
2. Give each group member a role. For example:
  - Member 1 – Answer question/offer an opinion to the first question.
  - Member 2 – Agree, disagree, ask a clarifying question, add to, or restate own words.
  - Member 3 – Agree or disagree with the previous group members and state your own opinion.
3. Make it clear that everyone has to participate. Decide how long each group member will share.
4. Decide if each group will also share with the rest of the class or if they will go directly to independent work. If each group will share with the class, which members from each group will do the sharing?

Middle and high school teachers often prefer to create larger groups or plan for whole class discussion. Whatever is decided must work best for your population. Then design a discussion protocol and introduce it early in the school year.

#### Danielson Component 3d:

This domain looks for proficiency in the areas of using assessment criteria, the monitoring of student learning, and the teacher's efforts to provide meaningful feedback. Assessment was once the summary of a lesson used to determine whether students had learned the content. Good pedagogy involves assessing students throughout the lesson, providing meaningful feedback, then using the assessment to determine how to move forward with instruction.

Proficiency in Domain 3d also involves the teacher making the assessment/evaluation criteria clear to the students and explaining it in student-friendly terms. Intervenor often model how to determine assessment criteria during the lesson planning stage.

Once students are involved in the lesson, teachers then use their expertise to monitor student learning. Asking tiered questions or utilizing strategies such as exit slips, allows teachers to quickly assess student understanding. With that student

feedback, teachers can determine what material needs re-teaching.

To learn to do all of the above, peer intervenors introduce our participants to PIP's student work protocol. The peer intervenor and teacher thoroughly co-plan a lesson with assessment criteria and expectations clearly worded. The latter two are shared with the students. At the end of the lesson, student work is collected and analyzed. Based on the data, a key component of using assessment in instruction, the teacher determines whether or not the objective was met, what material needs re-teaching to whom and what the next steps might be.

Additionally, teachers are responsible for providing detailed feedback to students about their work. Peer intervenors also help teachers use rubrics to provide appropriate feedback. For example, a teacher may confer one-to-one with a student using both an exemplar and a student-friendly rubric.

For 30 years, the Peer Intervention Program has supported thousands of teachers in meeting their professional and pedagogical goals. Peer intervenors skillfully guide teachers to enhance their practice and navigate the Danielson Framework to achieve their desired results.

## Dear Marilynn,



*I'm constantly overwhelmed by the responsibilities and demands that come with being a classroom teacher. I'm thinking about 100 things at once: my pacing, my content, and everyone's individual progress, behavior and needs — including my own.*

*No matter how well-planned I am, I can never account for all the variables involved in managing a room of 25-plus children. This creates anxiety for me. I'm always worried about what will happen if my lesson isn't good enough. This worry often leaves me exhausted, and it clouds my view of how things are going. I've been hearing a lot about the use of mindfulness in the classroom to help teachers stay focused and grounded in the face of all these challenges. Can you explain what mindfulness is and how to use it in my classroom?*

Sincerely,  
Mindful-ness

## Dear Mindful-ness,

You are not alone in the wish to find new ways to manage the increasing demands and expectations that teachers face in the profession today. The use of mindfulness in the classroom for teachers is becoming more widespread in the field of education. Patricia A. Jennings, a former teacher and current researcher, provides useful tools and techniques to help teachers integrate mindfulness into the classroom. Her book, *Mindfulness for Teachers: Simple Skills for Peace and Productivity in the Classroom*, is the culmination of her 40-year practice and research that supports the many benefits of mindfulness not only for the classroom but also for all aspects of life.

There are multiple ways to define mindfulness but, in its essence, mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of thoughts, feelings,



From left, Manal Ashmawy, PIP peer intervenor; May Joseph, PIP administrative assistant; and Jessica Fredston-Hermann, a DOE representative on the PIP Panel.

bodily sensations and surrounding environment without any judgment. Through this awareness, we learn to fully accept our internal and external experiences rather than using energy to fight them. This acceptance allows us time and space to respond (instead of react) to the feelings and situations happening in the moment.

Viktor Frankl, an Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, is the author of this well-known quote: "Between stimulus and response there is space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

Rather than falling into automatic patterns of reacting to things around us, mindfulness gives us an opportunity to slow down and say, "OK, this is happening right now. I accept that. How am I feeling? Now what can I do about it?" Practicing mindfulness gives us space to be aware of our feelings, aware of what's going on around us, and time to respond in a thoughtful and productive way. Here are some specific ways that mindfulness can help teachers in their classrooms.

- **Mindfulness can help teachers better understand their own emotions.**

Bringing your awareness to your emotional life can help you to see regular patterns that may be unproductive or unhelpful. For example, if your lesson does not

go as planned, do you become anxious or angry? Are you likely to blame someone or be overly harsh in your judgment of yourself? Or can you accept what you can no longer change and reflect on which elements of your lesson you can improve on next time? Becoming more aware of your emotional "go to" positions when things don't go your way can help you to respond differently over time. Better responses can have far reaching positive effects on the overall environment in your classroom.

- **Mindfulness helps to communicate more effectively with students.**

A new teacher ended every direction to her students with "Okay?" as in, "We're going to do math now, okay?" This gave her students the impression that doing math was optional. Think about the way that you might be communicating with your students. Are you using threats for disruptive behavior rather than referring back to a structured set of routines and expectations? When you feel stress, do you resort to using guilt and shame to get the desired behavior rather than encourage-

*Continued on page 8*



Dear Marilyn continued from page 7

ment? Slowing down and thinking about what you say to students and the impact of those words can clarify some long-standing roadblocks to improved communication.

- **Mindfulness helps teachers work with difficult students.**

Bringing awareness to how disruptive students make us feel might be a clue to a more thoughtful intervention. For example, students who try to annoy a teacher may be seeking attention. Those students, many who have troubling histories, are often hyper-vigilant and put less energy into cognitive attention. This can make them seem inattentive or uninterested in the lesson. It's helpful to look at disruptive students as in need of assistance with self-regulation rather than purposefully trying to ruin your day. Bringing awareness to your own feelings and to the patterns you see in your students' behaviors can help you respond in a more thoughtful and effective way.

- **Mindfulness helps to strengthen relationships with students.**

When you can tune into yourself and slow down what's going on around you, it allows for space to tune into what's going on with your students. Creating an environment of mutual respect between student and teacher can be fostered through recognition of each student's academic and personal achievement. As teachers, praising academic success is natural. For those students who may struggle in that area and act out or feel less valued, recognition of other achievements can have a positive impact. Behaviors such as

helpfulness, friendliness, and conflict and problem solving, when recognized, can help a student feel understood, and acknowledged by the teacher.

- **Mindfulness helps teachers slow down the lesson when needed.**

The pressure to get through full curriculums in a timely manner can often make teachers feel anxious and unconsciously rush through a lesson. Rushing doesn't feel good to us or our students. Young children need more time to process information, and all children process information at different speeds. Slowing down gives you and your students time to check in, process and digest important information. Often teachers forget to pause after asking a question or interrupt students as they pause while answering questions. Let them have that time to think through their answer.

Using mindfulness can be a simple yet effective way to slow down, feel and think about your own teaching practice, your students' learning experiences and the environment you create and share. It's important to remember that mindfulness is a practice. Like any other practice, it takes time to learn and develop. Below are a few resources to help you with general mindfulness practice as well as using it in the classroom.

– Marilyn Massa,  
a licensed clinical social worker  
and nationally certified psychoanalyst,  
is the counseling support services liaison for PIP.

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## PIP at a Glance

#### Coordinator:

Lynne Ann Kilroy

#### Assistant Coordinator:

Barbara Ogurek

#### Administrative Staff:

Mayerline Joseph,  
Administrative Assistant

#### Peer Intervenors:

Federico Anderson  
Manal Ashmawy  
Jonelle Carter  
Jessica LeRouge  
Lauren Loizides  
Christina Luzzi  
Sitah Mahadeo  
Taryn Sanders  
Amy Silverstein  
Danielle Skarulis

#### Alternative Careers Liaison:

Linda Pinzon, Ph.D.

#### Counseling Services Liaison:

Marilynn Massa, L.C.S.W., NCPsyA.

#### PARTNERS in PROGRESS

#### Editors in Chief:

Lynne Ann Kilroy  
Barbara Ogurek

#### PEER INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Visiting address:  
50 Broadway, 15th floor  
Mailing address:  
52 Broadway, New York, NY 10004  
Phone: 212-844-0600  
Fax: 212-514-8469  
email: [pip@uft.org](mailto:pip@uft.org)  
Web site:  
[www.uft.org/pip](http://www.uft.org/pip)

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