

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Lola Rodriguez de Tio Academy of Future Technologies

**Middle School 162
600 St. Ann's Avenue
Bronx
NY 10455**

Principal: Maryann Manzollilo

Dates of review: May 30 – 31, 2012

Reviewer: Yolanda Torres

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Lola Rodriguez de Tio Academy of Future Technologies is a middle school with 557 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 25% Black, 74% Hispanic, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 26% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 87.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Resources are aligned to the school-wide instructional goals in response to the academic needs of students. (1.3)
 - The establishment of the United Federation of Teachers Teacher Center, the hiring of a literacy consultant, and an additional assistant principal, align with the instructional goals by providing consistent academic support and creating the focus to move the school forward for overall academic progress. The school budget is suitably used in its majority for instruction and teacher development, thus adding a sense of direction and congruence between teaching and learning that result in improved outcomes. These instructional individuals provide teachers with opportunities to develop action plans in sync with the school-wide goals resulting in more focused instructional practices lesson delivery and improved student products.
 - The school-wide time schedule is structured to allow teachers to engage in weekly planning sessions by grade and by content areas. English language arts teachers plan lessons on the impact of social media providing students with an experiential topic to which they can relate. Students are engrossed in the use of technology, research, and small group discussions, for the development of their persuasive essays. This content-wide endeavor challenges students to think critically and produce meaningful work aligned to the school-wide instructional goals.
- School leaders gather and analyze data to provide teachers with areas in need of focus for improved student outcomes. (2.1)
 - Student performance is analyzed via a variety of data sources such as performance-based tasks, mid-terms, teacher-developed rubrics, and interim assessments. Teachers look at these results to identify trends across grades and/or content areas in order to inform their planning that addresses students' targeted needs in English language arts and math.
 - School leaders and teachers engage in ongoing data talk discussions to evaluate the effectiveness of goal setting and teacher practice. These data-driven talks help them identify the stumbling blocks that stifle students' growth and ascertain the impact of the instructional and organizational decisions made thus far, resulting in agreed-upon next steps for continual instructional improvement.
- School level data-driven goals provide teachers with a framework resulting in the development of skills and strategies for instructional improvement. (3.1)
 - Teachers discuss and set school level goals vis-à-vis a baseline-writing piece and Periodic Assessment results focused on how to support students' writing across content areas. This conversation has led to identifying needed grade-specific micro skills and the development of reading comprehension and math strategies that can be used by all

content teachers for consistent delivery of instruction in order to accelerate students' learning and leverage change in classroom instruction.

- The use of professional books guides staff's work in the attainment of school-wide goals relative to the improvement of student academic and social/emotional needs. Teachers' reference portions of the professional books, are able to compare their classroom observations or findings with the stated research, and implement strategies into their classroom practice. In addition, as teachers confer with students during advisory on their academic progress, students take notes of their next steps towards improvement, thus helping them understand identified goals. Consequently, students articulate their own goals based on the 100-Book Challenge program, which aligns to the overall literacy expectations to increase student performance.
- School leaders use classroom observations to provide teachers with feedback for professional growth. (4.1)
 - Data-driven instructional walks and informal and formal observations provide school leaders with low inference information. School leaders and teachers then meet to set teacher individual goals based on the data and provided feedback, leading to next steps for instructional improvement and student progress. Teacher support morphs into the adjustment of professional learning that meets the needs of individual teachers, co-teaching opportunities with coaches and/or school leaders, and visits to other colleagues' classes for growth and reflection on instructional practices.
- Teachers engage in structured professional collaborations leading to reciprocal support and some instructional cohesion. (4.2)
 - The majority of teachers engage in structured collaborative team meetings where they share strategies, assess student work, and hold each other professionally accountable for ensuring that the agenda items are discussed in-depth, including setting expectations for upcoming meetings. Ongoing interactions and discussions lead to granular conversations on how to support the work across content areas as teachers find out students' challenges. Each teacher is empowered to contribute and provide classroom experiences that lead to further discussions on the practices that best suit the needs of struggling students. This sharing provides teachers with a risk-free venue where teacher consultation translates to colleague-to-colleague conferrals leading to shared instructional improvements.
 - Teachers are empowered to observe each other for the improvement of teaching strategies and practices. They welcome this risk-free, teacher-friendly opportunity to provide feedback that helps them grow as a community of learners and leaders. Grade-wide lead teachers spearhead instructional performance tasks in literacy, writing, and math, in collaboration with the UFT Teacher Center specialist and consultant contributing to improved student learning and growth in teacher practice.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the alignment between the curricula, key standards and performance tasks, cognitively engage students across all content areas, including the arts. (1.1)
 - School leaders' analysis of that last year's curricula alignment to the key standards did not give positive results in reading and writing. This year, in collaboration with teachers, they have adapted the curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and looked at the Department of Education bundles in order to ensure a cohesive instructional alignment. The focus on student learning modalities and questioning techniques to scaffold student work through meta-cognitive reasoning is a major discussion amongst teachers and school leaders. Although performance-based activities with adapted lessons from the bundles are evident tasks are not challenging or differentiated to sufficiently meet the needs of varied student subgroups. This lack of consistent rigorous instruction across classrooms inclusive of the arts, results in uneven levels of cognitive engagement of all students thus depriving students from engaging in instruction that involves critical thinking and problem solving.
- Connect students to differentiated curricula with multiple entry points and supports in order to meet their learning needs. (1.2)
 - The principal shared her concern relative to the delivery of differentiation of instruction for student subgroups, such as students with disabilities and English language learners. Although the curriculum is being aligned to the standards and a variety of instructional strategies, the multiple entry points vis-à-vis students' learning styles are not consistently evident in classroom instruction. Understanding and addressing the targeted struggles of these student subgroups continues to challenge teacher planning and the execution of differentiated tasks across content areas. Therefore, the differentiated needs of English language learners and students with disabilities are not being met, and the lack of 'scaffolded' instruction places these students at a disadvantage as they evidently struggle in their academic engagement and in the production of meaningful work resulting in low academic achievement.
- Improve teacher use of assessments and rubrics in order to identify the instructional and resource needs of student subgroups. (2.2)
 - Teams of teachers meet regularly to analyze a variety of data and assessments such as tests, student work and exit tickets to identify students' instructional needs. Staff have revised the curriculum units and adopted learning task bundles as a means to focus on specific strategies for the improvement of student performance. However, the outcomes of the data analysis are not sufficiently granular to provide a clear picture of relevant subgroups' instructional strengths and areas in need of focus, thus leading to uneven academic student progress.
 - School leaders and teachers have made a concerted effort in providing students with strategies to learn how to self-assess and take ownership of their learning by holding them accountable using the protocol of teacher

check-ins. Although these strategies are beginning to emerge in some subjects, this is an inconsistent practice across all content areas. Therefore, sporadic teacher check-ins for understanding leads to uneven instructional adjustments resulting in unreliable student learning outcomes.

- Ensure that the communication of high expectations is consistent from classroom to classroom for student support and academic achievement. (3.4)
 - School leaders meet with teachers to discuss data, student goals, and look at instructional practices relevant to college/career readiness that lead to a school-wide communication of school-wide academic and social/emotional expectations. Teachers participate in on- and off-site trainings on academic and behavioral performance in support of students' needs. However, currently there is a lack of consistent communication of high expectations amongst all teachers resulting in uneven levels of guidance and support in order to prepare students for the next level of academic performance.
- Revise the structures for evaluating and measuring progress in the attainment of goals for student improvement and instructional coherence. (5.3)
 - School leaders continue to assess teacher and student data to monitor school-wide progress toward meeting set goals. As they look at student work in folders, portfolios, response journals and notebooks, there is a focus on students' work and results to provide teachers with feedback for the next steps to ensure there is adequate measurement of students' progress towards attainment of their goals. Some teachers use excel sheets to track student progress. During data talks, teachers share with school leaders their understanding of how to support students' learning. These discussions provide school leaders with another lens of understanding how to provide school-wide support in teacher development. However, while some teachers have systems for the measuring of progress, this process is not consistent throughout the school. While there is some progress in the attainment of school goals, there is no evidence of a transparent collaborative system that leads to coherent and sustainable learning towards the achievement of student interim goals.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Lola Rodriguez de Tio Academy of Future Technologies	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score		X		
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		X		
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?		X		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?		X		
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?		X		
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?		X		
Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X	
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?		X		
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		X		
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?		X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?		X					
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?		X					
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?		X					
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		X					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		X					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed