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Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice

**Publisher:** Routledge, part of the Taylor & Francis Group**Issue:** Volume 12, Number 1 / February 2006**Pages:** 69 - 86**URL:** [Linking Options](#)**DOI:** 10.1080/13450600500365452**Special Issue:** The 'dark side of the moon': A critical look at teacher knowledge construction in collaborative settings**The bright side: teacher research in the context of educational reform and policy making**Frances Rust <sup>A1</sup> and Ellen Meyers <sup>A2</sup><sup>A1</sup> Steinhardt School of Education, New York University, New York, USA<sup>A2</sup> Teachers Network Leadership Institute, New York, USA**Abstract:**

This paper focuses on the Teachers Network Leadership Institute (TNLI), an initiative designed to bring the voice of teachers into the educational policy arena through teacher action research. We view teachers' research on teaching and on school processes as an important means through which to expose the various sources of tension between policy and teaching, as well as to elucidate the impact of education policies on teachers' practice. For the purposes of this paper, four teacher studies were selected as representative of the quality of work that the TNLI teachers are producing and as referents for our discussion of the unseen and public or 'bright' sides of teacher research. In addition, we have used surveys, questionnaires and interviews with TNLI participants to assess the impact of TNLI on their teaching, their students, their schools and districts, as well as on teachers' knowledge of policy making. We find that teachers sharing research within teacher networks like TNLI constitutes a significant opportunity for professional development and can help teachers to build bridges across classrooms and schools, to the academy and to the larger policy community by opening up understandings of practice. The negotiation of meaning that ensues can make transparent the ways in which policy is translated into practice and it can highlight opportunities for policy reform.

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