

## From "El Puente" to "Los Puentes"

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Centro has been collaborating with the El Puente, a community-based organization in Brooklyn, for more than 12 years working on research focused on their innovative high school, the El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice. This partnership is entering a new phase as we begin exploring more direct involvement in the instruction and curriculum of the school.

Also, the partners are considering a national Latino/a teacher recruitment and preparation project undertaken by a National Latino Education Research and Policy Project (NLERAP) and New America Alliance NAA. The goal of this national initiative is to prepare teachers for Latino populations in five regions of the nation. Centro will be hosting the Northeast Region of the national initiative. The pedagogy and program design for the El Puente-Centro 13th Grade program parallels the core elements of CUNY's New Community College initiative.

In this initiative, CUNY is introducing a new educational model wherein credit-based coursework is required for all first year students—those who traditionally would be assigned to remediation and those assigned to introductory level work.

Under contemplation is the eventual creation of a 13th grade, which will function as a transition to college for El Puente and possibly other students, thereby fulfilling the expansion requirements of their newly renovated leased building. Centro's new effort with El Puente begun with the teaching of a course offering college credit via Hunter's College Now program. The course "Making a Difference: Understanding Leadership, Identity and Social Change," focused on developing academic skills through research on community issues. In the context of the 13th Grade initiative, this course would be part of a set of courses designed to link the college with the high school while implementing an innovative transition program.

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