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URBAN LEARNING, TEACHING, AND RESEARCH

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Edited by Angela Louque

Editor: Angela Louque
                  California State University, San Bernardino

Associate Editor: Pearl Chen
                  California State University, Los Angeles

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Pre-service Teachers' Reasons for Selecting Urban Teaching

J. Amos Hatch
University of Tennessee

Abstract

This article is a description of the perceptions of pre-service teachers who have chosen to study in a teacher education program designed specifically to prepare them to work in urban elementary schools. Twelve volunteer participants were interviewed in the spring following their admission into the program. Participants and the researcher also made weekly interactive electronic journal entries. In this article, data related to pre-service teachers' reasons for deciding to teach in urban settings are reported and discussed. Professionals interested in urban teaching and teacher education will find these initial findings useful as they select, plan for, and support those preparing to work in urban schools.

The purpose of this article is to report findings from the first stages of a longitudinal study of the perspectives of new professionals on teaching in urban settings. The overall study will track a cohort of individuals from their entry into a teacher preparation program through their first three years of teaching. This article is a description of the perceptions of pre-service teachers who have chosen to study in a teacher education program designed specifically to prepare them to work in urban elementary schools.

The teacher education program into which the participants have been selected is rooted in a strong orientation toward preparing individuals to teach in a complex, multicultural society. Students must apply for admission and sit for an interview before being accepted into the program. This Urban-Multicultural Teacher Education Program is built on a 5-year teacher preparation model, including a full-year's internship in urban school settings. The expressed purpose of the program is to prepare teachers who will be effective in urban settings and who will stay in those settings as their careers unfold. The theoretical foundations of the program include elements related to multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, and urban education (e.g., Banks, 2001; Delpit, 1995; Irvine, 2003; Kozol, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2001).

In terms of method, this study is grounded in critical/feminist ontology and epistemology (Hatch, 2002). The researcher sees himself as an active agent for social change, treating this project as a way to gather information about new teachers' perspectives at the same time he is trying to support their emerging understandings of what it means to teach in urban schools serving mostly African-American children and families. The research is self-consciously transformative in nature (Carr, 1995; Giroux, 1988). It is based on the assumption that the researcher and participants will interact together in ways that can lead to positive change that transforms the lives of participants and improves their abilities to contribute to the communities in which they will teach.

Data for the longitudinal study will include transcripts of open-ended interviews and participant-researcher interactive journal writing via email. For this report, twelve volunteer participants were interviewed for approximately one hour each in the spring following their admission into the Urban-Multicultural Teacher Education Program. Interviews were open-ended conversations based on a set of guiding questions developed by the researcher. The focus of the interviews was on capturing participants' perspectives on teaching in urban settings at this early stage of their preparation. Participants who volunteered for the longitudinal study agreed to join the researcher in an ongoing dialog about their experience of becoming urban teachers, the dialog to be accomplished through electronic exchanges via email. For this study, participants and the researcher made weekly interactive electronic journal entries during the spring semester.

Data analysis was guided by Hatch's (2002, p. 192) description of the "political data analysis model." The model includes inductive and deductive processes for revealing the perspectives of participants. It provides a rigorous method for generating data-based findings, while acknowledging the political positioning of the researcher. Interview and journal data were initially parsed by typologies related to reasons for deciding to teach in urban settings, beliefs about urban contexts, and beliefs about urban teaching. Potential generalizations within each typology were generated from an inductive search for patterns, connections, and themes. These hypothetical generalizations were then deductively checked against the entire data set, leaving those findings that were solidly grounded in the data. In this article, only findings from the data directly tied to pre-service teachers' reasons for selecting urban teaching are reported.

Twelve newly admitted students volunteered to participate in the longitudinal study. Demographic information about the participants is summarized in Table 1.

Table1: Participants

Name	Gender	Age	Race
Reina	F	21	EA
Judy	F	23	EA
Becky	F	24	EA
Johnetta	F	23	EA
Venessa	F	22	AA
Janet	F	25	AA
Annette	F	21	AA
Elsie	F	34	EA
MacKenzie	F	21	EA
Ernest	M	44	AA
Cheryl Ann	F	24	EA
Julie	F	32	EA

As the table shows, 11 of the 12 students were women, eight were European-American and four were African-American, and their ages ranged from 21 to 44 years. Because of the requirements of the teacher education program in which the urban-multicultural option is imbedded, all of the students had earned a bachelor's degree (with an arts and sciences major) or were in the final stages of completing such a degree at the time of the study. In this program, a one-year

internship in urban schools, with accompanying coursework, is completed at the master's degree level. Students experience their urban teacher education preparation as a cohort group, and all members of the 2006 entering cohort were invited to join the three-year study. The twelve volunteers signed IRB-approved informed consent agreements that outlined the requirements of participation and stipulated that their involvement was entirely voluntary.

As findings are reported below, data excerpts from interview and reflective journal entries are used to support the generalizations presented. Each excerpt includes identification of the speaker/writer of the quoted material using pseudonyms selected by or assigned to the students, and either an (I) for interview or an (R) for reflective journal entry follows the participant's name. This article reports generalizations that held up across the data for this cohort of pre-service urban teachers, and data excerpts were selected that represent the perceptions of the group. What is necessarily lost in any article-length report of findings is a rich understanding of the individual histories and personalities of the research participants. Given that limitation, what follows is a set of descriptive findings regarding this group of aspiring teachers' perspectives on their decisions to enter urban teaching.

Descriptive Findings: Reasons for Deciding to Teach in Urban Settings
All of the pre-service teachers in this study identified their <u>desire to have a positive influence</u> as a central factor in their decision to become an urban elementary school teacher. Two dimensions to their need to make a difference emerged from the analysis. They wanted to have a positive influence on the life chances of urban children; and they wanted to have a positive impact on the direction of society. Julie's journal entry reflects the commitment to helping urban children found across the group:

Julie (R): I feel thankful I am in the program so that I can be one of those people who steps into these children's lives and helps make their future just as positive and successful as a child who is not growing up in an urban community.

One of Cheryl Ann's entries reveals a desire expressed by many in the group to make a difference in terms of influencing positive change beyond the direct impact they hope to have on individual children's lives:

Cheryl Ann (R): The urban setting provides the strongest opportunities to implement change in our society, both in education and social reform. These are the things I would like to be involved in.

Many of the participants expressed a commitment to working in urban settings that rose to the level of <u>acting on a moral imperative</u>. While none of these teachers-to-be made any direct reference to thinking of urban teaching as a "calling" (religious or otherwise), several described their desire to teach in urban schools in terms that signaled deep moral compulsions that went beyond being attracted to helping urban children and society. Reina's excerpt is an example:

Reina (R): I decided that I could not stand back and watch these children turn into statistics. I see the tears of these children I work with and their outbursts of anger, and it would be wrong to turn my back and look the other way.

As a group, these students were quite savvy about urban teaching, and they reported that they were <u>attracted to the challenge</u>. In the texts and subtexts of the interview and journal data, evidence shows that students perceived urban schools to be difficult places to work (in relation to suburban and rural schools) and that they welcomed the challenge of overcoming those difficulties. MacKenzie speaks for herself and others:

MacKenzie (R): I find that a big benefit of teaching in an urban setting is the challenge of it. I thoroughly enjoy challenges and although from time to time things may fail or mess up, it is the only real way to learn new things.

These pre-service teachers also chose an urban teacher preparation program because they <u>wanted to teach in settings with which they were familiar</u>. All of the individuals in this cohort had some level of direct experience living, working, and/or volunteering in urban settings. Each of the four African-American students and several of the European-American students reported that they were raised in urban settings. These participants described their familiarity with urban schools and communities as a reason for wanting to teach in such places. As Ernest noted in his interview,

Ernest (I): My first preference would be an urban school. I was raised in an urban area, lived in urban areas, worked in urban areas. I see where the need is in urban areas. I feel more comfortable in those surroundings, actually.

Even those who spent their childhoods in suburban or rural settings had some familiarity with urban contexts. Urban experiences across the group included a wide range of paid experiences from teaching in urban parochial schools to serving as a social worker in urban settings to working in day care and after-school programs for urban children. Others had volunteered time in urban educational contexts through church, high school, university, and sorority/service club activities. Becky describes the positive connections she has made through her work experiences in urban contexts:

Becky (I): I definitely realize the challenges, especially being in the schools and interacting with the children. Working with them in the community and knowing as much about their background as I feel I do, there is a certain bond that I feel like I already have with them.

A final category of reasons for selecting urban teacher education is connected to <u>positives associated with teaching in urban schools/communities</u>. Understanding that these pre-service teachers were highly motivated to make a difference (see above), it is not a surprise that they saw opportunities to work alongside caring and dedicated urban teachers as a positive. Even though her research interview happened only a few weeks into her program, Johnetta was impressed with the atmosphere of the urban schools she was visiting:

Johnetta (I): It is almost like wow! I did not even know that there were schools like this. It is like the kids are so eager to learn. And the teachers are not just teachers, but they are there for the students. I mean you just walk in and you can feel the whole rapport of everybody there.

Another positive identified by many participants had to do with the attention being paid to urban schools by governmental and other funding agencies. While the attention and funding was seen as a double-edged sword, Venessa and her colleagues saw advantages that attracted them to urban teaching:

Venessa (R): Though many governmental pressures are put on urban settings, teaching in these settings means that there is more governmental involvement, more grants that could become available, and more programs set up to improve these settings. Although this is a recent occurrence, it is beneficial in teaching because there are more materials available and the most current methods of teaching are used—and some of the current methods are very successful.

In this findings section, pre-service teachers' reasons for deciding to focus their teacher preparation on urban teaching have been described. Categories that organized these reasons included: their desire to have a positive influence; their need to fulfill a moral imperative; their attraction to meeting a challenge; their desire to teach in familiar surroundings; and their attraction to positive attributes that they associate with urban schools. In the following sections, these findings are discussed and implications are presented.

Discussion
The findings represent patterns of response across twelve individual participants. No single individual would connect with all of the descriptors, and no single descriptor would connect to all of the participants. As noted above, differences in perspectives based on personality, race, age, gender, and background influences are not highlighted in this kind of analysis. Still, the findings are useful for understanding the motives of prospective and matriculating urban teacher education students and shaping the experiences they receive as part of their preparation. Below are some interpretations that will be used to inform future interactions with these students during their internship experience and beyond.

There is no intent here to mark these students (or others with similar beliefs and feelings) as wrong, deficient, naive, or bigoted. The whole purpose of this program and this study is to take students where they are and move them forward as successful urban educators. An important part of that forward movement involves processes of "becoming multicultural" (Zygmunt-Fillwalk, 2005, p. 133), including the development of a "critical social consciousness" (Ford & Dillard, 1996, p. 234). These key elements are seen as developmental processes, and these students are seen as "becoming" professionals in all the dimensions of their work.

Participants' commitment to making a positive difference and their sense of moral responsibility might be interpreted as evidence that they see urban contexts as being in need of fixing and that they are capable of and responsible for erasing or meliorating perceived deficits. To the extent that these deficit-driven assumptions are not critically challenged, these future teachers and others like them are in danger of projecting ethnocentric values on what they perceive to be less-than-normal "others." They would certainly not be alone in holding (or enacting) such beliefs (Phillips & Hatch, 2000; Swartz, 2003). However, not recognizing or not

trying to cultivate the development of commitments to children and social change like those expressed by the informants in this study would be a gross mistake.

In a study of experienced urban teachers, Nieto (2003) describes patterns of response from highly successful teachers that parallel many of the patterns described above. When asked what keeps urban teachers going, Nieto's participants described the motivation associated with feelings of anger and desperation when they contemplated the injustices endured by their students. Nieto points out that for her experienced participants, "A commitment to social justice—the ideals of democracy, fair play, and equality—figures prominently among the reasons why these teachers chose the profession" (p. 260). These experienced urban teachers also identified their ability to change lives and shape the future as a key factor in their willingness to stay in urban teaching. So long as they do not come to urban teaching with a "missionary zeal to convert the heathen masses," new (and experienced) teachers' feelings of social responsibility, willingness to take on a challenge, and desire to make a difference for children and society should be valued and nurtured.

Implications

Anyone interested in urban teaching and teacher education may find these initial findings useful as they select, plan for, and support those preparing to work in urban schools. Having a solid understanding of the backgrounds, understandings, and beliefs of those who expressly want to teach in urban schools can be invaluable to those responsible for preparing, hiring, and mentoring new urban teachers.

The results of this analysis contribute to an emerging picture of where these particular students are in their teaching careers and provide a substantial baseline on which to gauge (and guide) their future development. The findings point to places on which to continue to build knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be successful in urban classrooms. Because this study intends to be transformative, the activities involved in participating in the study (interviews and reflective journals) have provided avenues beyond the course curriculum through which the students can critically examine their beliefs, impressions, and actions. As research data are generated over the next two years, opportunities for critical examination will continue and changes in their perspectives on urban teaching will be charted.

As this cohort moves into the internship phase of their preparation, findings from this analysis indicate a need to focus future experiences in three areas. Other teacher educators may find similar experiences to be beneficial for their prospective urban teachers:

- Students should be given opportunities to explore their own reasons for wanting to teach in urban settings and to think carefully about what those reasons mean for those who live and work in those contexts.
- Students should have enriched experiences interacting with urban teachers, children, families, and community members.
- Students should be given support to develop tools for designing, monitoring, and controlling their own socialization as urban teachers.

Attracting, preparing, and keeping competent and committed professionals has never been more important to urban schools and communities. It is encouraging to examine the reasons for

selecting urban teaching revealed in this study. Knowing their motives can be a useful tool for assessing future urban teachers' multicultural development and guiding their future experiences. Ignoring or assuming that we know their values and aspirations is shortsighted and could contribute to the difficulties of keeping talented teachers in urban schools.

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Urban Teachers Immersed in Complexity in a Context that Assumes Simplicity

Carol V. Rozansky-Lloyd
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Abstract

PreK-12 teachers in an urban school district enrolled in a course designed to examine the complexities of teaching in urban schools. This course was part of a grant aimed at increasing math and science achievement of their students. Teachers critically examined local and national policies and conditions that added to the complexities of their students' lives. They examined school and district systemic practices that also created complex environments in which to teach. This qualitative study describes their understandings and the often simplistic view of education that contradicted what they were learning about.

There are many explanations for students' low academic achievement in science mathematics in urban schools. At the very least, these include 1) the complexities of students' lives, 2) the complexities of science and math teaching and learning, and 3) educators' beliefs about students and concomitant disenfranchising, systemic educational practices.

Effective change must account for these complexities. With the advent of the "standards movement" and the subsequent No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation (U.S. Department of Education, N.D.), educators have seen the definition of their work become increasingly simplified through the rhetoric of "scientifically-based research." Oversimplifying the issues and the solutions to urban students' low achievement results in misconceptions about both (Spiro, Coulson, Feltovich, & Anderson, 1994), further harming these students (Shealey, 2006). Teachers are increasingly expected to follow "teacher-proof" programs and teach to multiple-choice tests that ignore the complexities of students' lives (McCarty, 2004).

Students' socio-historical-cultural contexts explain some of the complexities of school achievement. Students' understandings and background experiences that impact their knowledge construction are culturally situated (Martin, 2000; Ogbu, 1992).

Culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; 1997) overcomes many of the barriers to learning for disenfranchised students. It focuses on academic excellence while supporting students' cultural and experiential backgrounds and may integrate the community's funds of knowledge (Moll, 1993; Moll & González, 2004).

When students experience low-level, uninteresting, unmotivating curriculum, they rarely learn or care about mathematics or science (Mehan, Villanueva, Hubbard, & Lintz, 1996; Tobin, Seiler, & Walls, 1999).

Science and math teaching are also part of the relevant complexity of achievement. Effective teachers must have content knowledge as well as pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). Pedagogy must reflect the ways in which people actually engage in the discipline being learned. In science education, this pedagogy is *inquiry* (National Research Council, 2000); in math, it is "problem-solving."

Further complexities are explained by educators' beliefs about students' abilities which influence their practices. Likewise, their beliefs are influenced by school policies and procedures. The pervasive, systemic practice of instructional grouping based on students' perceived abilities is part of a simplistic view of schooling – scores on tests become reified as descriptors of children (Sirotnik, 1994). The consequences are stratification of children that reflect race and class (Meier, England, & Stewart, 1989). Students in the low tracks usually stay there throughout their education as they learn less than their peers (Oakes, 1995). Teachers have lower expectations of them and have low efficacy in their ability to make a difference (Lloyd & Edwards, 2004; Weinstein, 1996). Such educational practices are institutionalized into a " 'deep grammar' of schooling" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003, p. 30) through a banking model (Freire, 1993) of education.

In contrast, the research literature provides many examples of teachers and schools that base their practices on the assumption that all students can meet high expectations. They heterogeneously group students, develop engaging lessons that connect to students' experiences, demonstrate respect for students, and provide extra support when needed (Ladson-Billings, 1997; Moll, 1993).

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this qualitative research were 1) to describe urban teachers' understandings of their low-performing students' lives outside of school and how these interact with their lives in school; and 2) to describe their beliefs about and actions toward their students to affect equitable educational opportunities for them.

Context of the Study
The Project

In an effort to increase students' mathematics and science achievement, a Midwestern urban school district embarked on a five-year National Science Foundation funded partnership with a local university. This district has more students of color than any other school district in the state. It also has more students receiving free or reduced lunch and who are English language learners (ELL's) than any of the other school districts in the city.

The main approach to effective change was a three-pronged focus on PreK-12 teacher development: 1) increasing teachers' knowledge of science and/or math content, 2) increasing teachers' knowledge of effective science and/or math pedagogy, and 3) addressing teachers' beliefs about the teaching and learning of science and/or math. The third focus was especially relevant to the research reported here since effective change requires more than knowledge about content and methods (Haberman, 1995) and will only occur if professional development addresses teachers' existing beliefs (Tobin, 2001). This perspective of teacher change views teachers as decision makers who understand theory, research, content, and methods as a *complex*

set of interactions (Fenstermacher, 1994) rather than as consumers of methods or programs, a more *simplistic* view.

The Course: "Contemporary Issues in Urban Education"

One professional development choice available to the teachers was a "university path" of 18 hours of graduate coursework in science and/or mathematics, action research, and pedagogy resulting in a Certificate in Instruction in Urban Schools. All of these teachers began with a graduate course in urban education: "Contemporary Issues in Urban Education." I taught this once a year. This research describes teachers' understandings who were enrolled in three sections I taught over a three-year period.

I developed this course to contextualize teachers' science and math teaching to the complexities of their urban school context and the lives of their students, moving beyond the simplistic view that their low-achieving students had deficits (Hilliard, 1997). I encouraged teachers to reflect on their beliefs and educational practices in critical (Kincheloe, 1999) ways. Educational contexts, state policies, and funding impact the work of educators (Haberman, 1995; Placier & Hamilton, 1994). Thus, the course included a study of urbanization and its effects on the education system (Anyon, 1997; Kozol, 1991). We applied this concept locally through articles from the city's newspaper and invited speakers who discussed the history of the city and school district.

We interrogated systemic, disenfranchising educational practices, including the pervasiveness of educators' low expectations of poor children and children of color (Diamond, Randolph, & Spilland, 2004; Irvine, 1999), the importance and impact of students' cultures (Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Moll, 1993; Nieto, 1996; Ogbu, 1992), the effects of tracking (Oakes, 1995), and marginalized students' perspectives of their education (Michie, 1999; Wilson & Corbett, 2001).

Additionally, teachers read one of four novels with urban students as main characters, viewed Spike Lee's film *Do the Right Thing* (1989), and read professional literature about successful science or math instruction in urban classrooms.

We met face-to-face for about two-thirds of the semester. About one-third of the class meetings were "virtual" discussions through an on-line discussion board. In these conversations, everyone in the class could read and respond to everyone else's posting. My guidelines directed teachers to discuss the salient points of particular readings, connect the main issues to their students and their teaching, and share their personal responses.

During these three years, their school district was developing criterion referenced tests that aligned with state and district standards across grade and curricular areas, resulting in less teacher flexibility to design motivating learning opportunities that connected to students' lives. The implementation of NCLB, with its high-stakes testing, further elevated these and standardized measures of assessment.

Methods
Participants and Data Sources
    The participants were 47 teachers from this urban school district who enrolled in one of three sections of the course I taught over three consecutive years. Thirty-five were elementary teachers; twelve were secondary math and science teachers. (See Table 1.)

Table 1: Participants' Teaching Responsibilities

Teaching Responsibility:	Elem.	Mid. Sch.	High Sch.
- Generalist	34		
- Science	1	6	2
- Math		2	2

    My data consisted of the written texts of on-line discussions in which teachers responded to the readings, speakers, and film previously described. They contemplated the ethical question (Freire, 1998), "What is the right thing?"

Data Analysis
    I used systematic qualitative methodology and inductive analysis to identify the teachers' understandings of their students' lives, their communities, and the impact of outside forces on the children's lives. I also looked for teachers' descriptions of their roles and responsibilities. Understanding their points of view is a phenomenological approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) to the data. I employed the constant comparative method (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), reading and re-reading the data, inductively developing themes and embedded categories from these data. I gave samples of this data and a list of my themes and categories to a graduate student in education. Her grouping matched mine. She suggested some changes in the wording of the categories for clarification, which I made.

Findings
Theme 1: Teachers seeing students in a context outside of school
    In general, teachers described unsuccessful students as human beings in the midst of situations that were not in their control.

a) Teachers described their students' lives outside of school. They also wrote about how they did or did not learn about their students' lives.

    A few teachers chose to interact with the community. An elementary teacher explained, "I have worked on becoming a member of the community in which I teach. I frequent the grocery store and attend community events that my students participate in. … I think that I have become more of a person to the people I see in the community." A secondary teacher wrote, "[My interactions in this community] have added to my rapport with students and parents. I have had parents say to their children, 'You listen to [your teacher]; I know where she's coming from and I agree with her.' " A teacher who taught in a Latino neighborhood "attended community events … [and] even marched in the Cinco de Mayo parade."

    In contrast, some teachers talked about the difficulty to getting to know their students. A first grade teacher showed her frustration at not being able to make connections with her students'

families when, "I know that I go out of my way to make contact with a parent. It becomes difficult to understand the lack of parental involvement in the education of a first grader."

One elementary teacher thought that visiting a home might help her understand "why students come to school late, then get picked up late, aren't fed enough, are so run down." Another elementary teacher explained how she finally understood a problem student when she met his mother and siblings at a school event. "He could not enjoy the event because he was busy watching over them."

Several teachers wrote about the foster children they had in their classes, wondering what kinds of circumstances led them to be in that situation.

b)   A second category within this theme was about violence in the immediate communities of their students. I use the term "violence" to mean physical, environmental, and societal violence.

In general, teachers did not consider ways in which society impacted students until we started reading articles from the local and national media about issues such as health care. Teachers wrote with emotion. For example, in response to a local news article about lead contaminated yards, one teacher chastised the EPA's intention to implement an experimental solution. She asks, "Didn't the Nazis perform experimental procedures, too?" Another teacher responded, "You can bet if this were a problem in a wealthy neighborhood it would quickly and properly be resolved ..."

Sometimes teachers described students who had perpetrated violence. One high school teacher told of "the number of kids we have in classes who have had a probation officer, parole officer, or wear an ankle bracelet for house arrest." Other students have been on the receiving end of physical violence: "There are two students in my room who have been placed in foster care because of physical abuse. There are also three siblings [in my school] who were taken from their father for sexual abuse."

Our city has a relatively high rate of asthma deaths. A teacher told of a third grader who had transferred into her school. Her records indicated a pattern of absences. She said, "We as teachers sometimes are very critical of absences. I made the assumption that school was not important to her. [Later I learned that] it wasn't in her control." A high school teacher showed his concern for the high cost of asthma medication.

Our state is rated below most others in its services for mental health and drug abuse. Reading about this made teachers angry. An elementary teacher explained, "Many of my students have family members that continue to battle these issues. Many people don't realize how much our children are exposed to drugs, violence, and mental illnesses. [Many want our test scores to rise.] However, what programs have been developed to assist families in the community?"

Theme 2: Teachers' roles and responsibilities in their school contexts
In general, teachers described the importance of meeting their students' needs at school and their frustrations with requirements that seemed to ignore who their students were.

a) One category in this theme describes teachers' awareness of their students and how their general needs impacted them in the classroom.

Sometimes parents were described as irresponsible, as when a parent sent their child to school hungry. "My frustration comes into play knowing that it is my responsibility to make sure that student has been fed." Teachers were also frustrated with parents of young children who, in their eyes, did not prepare them for school. Some teachers provided students with "…a stable, loving, learning environment."

Teachers referred to the necessity of teaching children about their asthma and following their doctor's directions. Some teachers have learned how to administer CPR and use an Epi-Pen for students' sudden asthma attacks. Since not all schools were air conditioned; those that were often had students with asthma transfer into their buildings. Some schools had problems with mold, exacerbating students' respiratory problems.

b) A second category focused on meeting students' academic needs. These related to cultural responsiveness and teacher expectations.

Teachers voiced concern about the low expectations that other educators had towards students of color and poor students. One teacher described that she "witnessed this first hand" as a substitute in this district. "One particular school was rule and worksheet driven with no higher level thought processes occurring."

One elementary teacher initially thought she was helping one of her English language learners when she lowered her expectations. But, she explained, the student was "very frustrated with" her. "Boy, did that shock me. … I will never do that again."

In contrast, many teachers gave examples of ways in which their school district was meeting these students' needs. They applauded the district for lowering class sizes in low-performing elementary schools, and for the grant that paid their tuition for this course and assisted in their professional development.

Many teachers, after reading about successful programs, wanted to know more. After reading about culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995b), several wrote comments such as, "I found it refreshing to know that there was no formula for [effective] teaching." Another teacher remarked, "The article (Nieto, 1996) prompted me to re-think our multi-cultural lesson plans for next year." However, they rarely made specific connections to ways in which they, too, could meet students' needs based on these articles.

A teacher who teaches in a school with over 90% African American students, voiced his realization that he needs to connect his teaching to his students' cultures, but that he does not have much knowledge of it. A middle school teacher asks parents to write about their child so she could know them better. A teacher with several ELL students encourages them to use both English and their primary language in class.

c) Teachers discussed a third category within this theme, namely obstacles to the success of students who were not succeeding. These included, for example, the narrowing of teaching possibilities as the focus on testing increased, problems with parents, school funding, and cultural issues. Some of these were systemic obstacles in their district or school.

On occasion, teachers described themselves as obstacles. One teacher demonstrated her critical reflection when she wrote, "Sarcastically I think, well, someone has to be at the bottom 'cause that's the law of averages. Then less sarcastically I ask myself, what can I do? But instead of rolling up my sleeves and jumping in I continue to sit in my comfy chair as my successful building offers suggestions that are filled with air. I could be a politician and I am ashamed."

Several teachers described systemic educational practices as obstacles. One teacher described the superficial level of commitment to multiculturalism. "I … gave some thought to how the 'culturally relevant' lessons in our curriculum are so lacking in any substance. Reading a short story about a Latino, Mexican, or Native American scientist for 15 minutes … or mentioning Cinco de Mayo is not a lesson plan to be proud of."

Another teacher saw ELL students and teachers as marginalized: "It is … frustrating to see how little support our ESL teacher gets from other teachers. I get the impression … that the ESL kids are a burden to some teachers."

Discussion
The hegemonic practice of characterizing students by scores on "objective" measures of achievement often results in viewing low performing students as having deficits (Hilliard, 1997). This deficit model puts most of the responsibility for learning (and failing) on students or on inadequate teaching. An increased focus on the achievement gap through No Child Left Behind furthers this perspective, as do simplified solutions of supposedly "scientifically-based research" that leads to teacher-proof instructional fixes (Sleeter, 2004).

This study demonstrates urban teachers' understandings of their students and the cultural-historical-social-economic realities of their lives, the complexities of which cannot be ignored in efforts to improve academic achievement. The oversimplification of teaching and learning in the current NCLB context puts these teachers in the difficult position of resisting (Moll, 2004) the status quo as they became more aware of the actual complexities that impact their students' lives in and out of school.

Teacher educators and PreK-12 teachers must be wary of viewing the education of urban students from a simplistic perspective. That is likely to lead to misconceptions (Spiro, Coulson, Feltovich, & Anderson, 1994) about the students and effective educational practices. In actuality, "[t]*eaching is unforgivingly complex*" (italics in original) (Cochran-Smith, 2003). We must "promote self-reflections that result in changes of perspective" (Kincheloe, 1999, p. 72). In other words, we must encourage future and current teachers to abandon a positivist lens and promote in its place a critical lens.

Macedo and Bartolomé (1999) emphasize the obligation of teachers to develop "political clarity, … the process by which individuals achieve a deepening awareness of the sociopolitical

and economic realities that shape their lives and their capacity to transform them. … Thus, it invariably requires that educators struggle to link sociocultural structures and schooling" (p. 140-141).

I certainly observed this developing perspective in these teachers. Weinstein (1996) identifies three essential components of effective change: 1) confronting and changing the entrenched beliefs about students' differential needs that result in differential expectations and teaching, 2) attention and commitment to teaching practices that are effective with low-achieving students rather than the continued practice of repetition and slower-paced instruction; and 3) a process for change that effectively engages educators and the community. Through this course in urban education, the teachers moved toward accomplishing these goals.

However, the momentum of NCLB grew over the three years of this study. As that occurred, teachers felt increasing pressure to focus on reading and math. The math focus was not always math as problem-solving as promoted by the grant, but math as computation. Many elementary teachers had, prior to this project, taught very little science (Lloyd, 2001). The elementary teachers in this study increased their science instruction; all teachers, to varying degrees, improved their math and/or science teaching. However, I am not sure if this is still the case. In a current study examining the impact of NCLB, (Center on Education Policy, 2006), "71% of school districts [across the country] have reduced instructional time in at least one other subject to make more time for reading and mathematics" (p. vii).

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Preparing Urban Educational Leaders: A Collaborative Community Model

Deborah E. Erickson
Janice Tucker
California Lutheran University

Abstract

The Educational Leadership program at a small liberal arts university serving a large urban district and surrounding regions has been redesigned to reflect state and national standards. In order to give students a unique setting in which to build community as well as practice leadership and coaching skills, candidates work in a cohort and fieldwork is embedded within each course. This research studies the effect of the cohort model and fieldwork designed specifically to provide skills needed by today's school leaders.

The Context

This research provided a procedural account and the student outcomes of a newly designed educational leadership program at a small liberal arts university which serves a large region across two counties in Southern California. Students in the leadership program come from a broad background of work experiences. A number of administrative candidates work in urban schools in the heart of a major metropolitan city with students from very low socio-economic backgrounds. Some candidates work in neighborhoods surrounding the university, which are predominantly filled with middle and upper class families. Other future school leaders work in nearby regions that are made up of largely agricultural farmland.

One of approximately one hundred and thirty colleges and universities in California, the university was founded in 1959; enrollment includes 1,800 undergraduates as well as 1,000 graduate students in the School of Education and the School of Business. The mission of the university is to educate leaders for a global society who are strong in character and judgment, confident in their identity and vocation, and committed to service and justice. This mission is exemplified in the conceptual framework of the School of Education, which calls for graduates to:

- **S**erve as mentors and models for moral and ethical leadership
- **T**hink critically to connect theory with practice
- **R**espect all individuals
- **I**nclude and respond to the needs of all learners
- **V**alue diversity
- **E**mpower individuals to participate in educational growth and change

Coursework is built around these tenets and is evident in the reflective strands running throughout the program. Classes are relatively small and the university has enjoyed a reputation of quality programs and giving personalized attention to each student.

The Preparation Program

   The program in Educational Leadership was designed to reflect the national guidelines established by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (1998) (ISLLC) and the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (2002) (CPSELs). These standards have become the basis on which leadership preparation programs in California are developed. The standards include: 1) promoting the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community; 2) promoting the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth; 3) promoting the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment; 4) promoting the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources; 5) promoting the success of all students by modeling a personal code of ethics and developing professional leadership capacity; and, 6) promoting the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

   There are multiple paths to the principalship in the state of California. Along with the traditional university coursework route, there are other means including local district and county office programs as well as the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA), which grants the Preliminary Administrative Services Tier I credential based on passage of the test.

   Completion of the university program grants the Preliminary Administrative Services Tier I credential and a Master's Degree with a choice of specialization in four areas: school site leadership, teacher leadership, leadership in reading, or leadership in technology. The program was also designed to be true to the values and stated goals of a liberal arts university while also reflecting the needs identified in the communities and school districts of the surrounding area. These include a focus on student achievement, working with diverse communities, integration of reflective practice, and an emphasis on developing a personal philosophy and vision of teaching and learning.

   The educational leadership program was redesigned in 2004 to better reflect the California Standards for Professional Educational Leaders (CPSELs). From questionnaire results, interviews with administrators from the districts we serve, and findings from research on the preparation of school leaders, new courses were developed. The program, structured in a cohort model, provides opportunities for candidates to practice the work of school leaders while learning in a caring environment supported by university faculty and school supervisors. Embedded within the coursework are assignments that promote active, authentic learning on the journey towards becoming a school leader. In addition to the embedded fieldwork, faculty worked with the superintendent from a local school district to design Leadership Training Centers. Leadership Training Centers (LTCs) are sites selected specifically for the quality leadership abilities of the principal. Candidates work in groups of five or six with a designated LPC principal to complete one capstone project per semester.

Theoretical Framework

   The business of school leadership has become increasingly complex over the past decade. Numerous reforms, testing and accountability, demographic changes, decentralization, and

globalization are just a few of the complicated shifts educators have endured over the past two decades. The pressures on institutions of higher learning and education in general can be linked to broader political, social, and economic movements that operate globally as well as locally (Apple, 2000; Bubles & Torres, 2000).

The principalship has become a much more difficult job and we must prepare our candidates to face the challenges they will be given. One of these challenges is building a learning community within their schools. Learning communities come together to create shared purpose, develop shared knowledge, and work together on creative solutions to complex problems (Fenning, 2004). The cohort model provides for a learning community amongst candidates and supports them in their growth towards becoming an educational leader. Students engaged in a collaborative learning community are more likely to foster those same conditions within their professional environments (McPhail, 2000; Teitel, 1997; Wesson, 1996). Candidates in a cohort model are also more likely to show growth in the areas of collaboration and reflective practice (Hatley, 1996).

New administrators must quickly assimilate into the culture of their schools (Lashway, 2003). By embedding fieldwork experiences into the coursework, candidates get leadership training in context and the opportunity to practice those skills while still being supported by university faculty and practicing site supervisors. The hosting of collaborative and meaningful internship experiences directly supports leadership development (Lashway, 2003; Wilmore, et al, 1999).

Since the advent of the Levine report (2005), several studies have discussed promising leadership preparation practices. Orr's study (2006) as well as the initial findings of the Darling-Hammond and Hunt-Davis' (2006) work on behalf of the Wallace Foundation found that quality leadership preparation programs include a strong university-school district relationship, a mentoring component, the use of a cohort structure, and are research-based with a strong curricular coherence. These components are all implemented within the leadership program being studied.

Methodology
This research project was qualitative in nature. Master's students, enrolled in an educational leadership program, worked together in a cohort model. Coursework was specifically designed to model collaboration and provide contextual experiences in which candidates had the opportunity to practice leadership skills in a school setting. All fieldwork experiences were based on helping students meet the CPSEL standards. Instrumentation included use of an electronic questionnaire and students were surveyed in class upon completion of coursework for the Preliminary Tier I Administrative Services Credential.

Data from the first cohort was collected in December. Candidates in the second cohort were surveyed in March. Additional data was collected through narrative journal reflections, researcher-student conferences, individual interviews, e-mails and other samples of student work pertaining to meeting the CPSELs.

Initial Findings

   A collaborative community: Content analysis of data found that the cohort model provided a sense of community and supported candidates as they moved through the program. When candidates were asked to respond to membership in cohort, the responses were overwhelming positive: "[A strength of the cohort was] working closely with classmates…creating strong educational bonds with educators from surrounding school districts." Another candidate noted, "I enjoyed getting to know the other professionals in the cohort. They inspired me and supported me." Other responses supported the cohort model in observing the phenomena of relationship building. "Being in a cohort allows students in the program to build relationships and to benefit from each other's unique experiences in education. I like the fact that we are not having to re-introduce ourselves to new people each semester. I honestly cannot think of a downside to cohorts…" was the response from one candidate. Another noted, "Great networking happened. It has been helpful to have the sense of family and know they are there when the need arises." It was also mentioned that members of the cohorts had established relationships that would continue into their administrative careers: "You really get to know the other cohort members, developing relationships where we trust one another. Also, [the cohort model] sets up opportunities for long-term professional relationships."

   Authentic leadership experiences: An innovative component of the program embeds fieldwork into the coursework. The candidates complete assignments in each course that are tied to the standards and provide experience in the work that leaders do, such as using data to inform instructional practice, working with teachers to develop curriculum, and working with various community constituents. Candidates replying to the questionnaire reported that the embedded fieldwork was a valuable component of the educational leadership program. "The fieldwork and projects afford the students an opportunity to explore all of the other areas of educational management that one does not see as a teacher, and to gain some experience in administrative roles." Additional comments included, "[A strength of program is] the ability to include fieldwork assignments in coursework." It was also noted that the embedded fieldwork assisted candidates in the transition from classroom teacher to school leader. "The fieldwork helped change my mindset towards a direction of leadership and not just course completion."

   Leadership Training Centers: The Leadership Training Centers (LTCS) were developed to give candidates the opportunity to work outside of their district with principals recognized for their excellent leadership skills. Groups of five or six candidates worked with one of three principals each semester on capstone assignments. As reported by instructors, candidates noted the value of the LTCs in class discussions. When asked to give feedback on the LTC projects, candidates noted the importance of this experience. "I enjoyed this project and learned a lot about K-8 schools. Fieldwork at the schools is a viable part of the program that provides students with real-life experiences." Another candidate noted, "I loved the LTC project; great discussion/facilitation and excellent groundwork for theory."

   Readiness for leadership roles: This program was designed to prepare leaders for schools and assist their readiness in becoming a principal. One hundred percent of the respondents to the class questionnaire responded that they were "prepared or very prepared" to take a position in educational leadership. In addition, 91% of the candidates reported the coursework and

experiences in the educational leadership program have prepared them well to take on leadership positions. Candidates also answered, with 91% in agreement, that the embedded fieldwork assignments were appropriate and helpful in meeting the goals of the leadership program.

Areas for Further Study and Consideration

Initial findings show that the cohort model supports students in building relationships that they expect to continue throughout their leadership careers. Deep professional bonding occurred in relationships developed among cohorts members as well as across district and grade-level boundaries. Candidates in the program were able to participate in authentic leadership experiences, which assisted them in the transition towards a more broad view of leadership. All candidates surveyed reported they were prepared to take on leadership roles in schools.

This study reported initial findings of an innovative principal preparation program. As part of ongoing data collection, members of future cohorts will be surveyed and data will be used to inform program revisions in order to meet the needs of future leaders.   Areas of future study include the impact of marketplace forces on university preparation programs as well as the factors that promote collaborative learning experiences that assist future administrators in a smoother transition to a school leadership position.

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Assessing Preservice Teacher Readiness to Teach Urban Students: An Interdisciplinary Endeavor

Jorgelina Abbate-Vaughn
University of Massachusetts Boston

Abstract

Novice teachers who begin their careers in urban settings abandon teaching at dismal rates. Although teacher education programs make varying efforts to incorporate awareness about the diverse contexts of urban schooling into the preservice teacher curriculum--from the "one course approach" to whole curriculum imbedded--little is known about the effects of such curricular efforts on teacher retention in urban settings. An interdisciplinary curriculum and assessment model of preservice teacher knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work in urban settings is discussed.

Introduction

School districts throughout the United States, but most compellingly those of large urban areas, have steadily increased its racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and national origin diversity in the last few decades (Council of the Great City Schools, 2003). This poses a challenge to teacher education programs which must update the programs provided to aspiring teachers--as well as support those already in the workforce--while devising new ways to prepare those who will work in the most diverse settings.

Additionally, new teachers who begin to teach in urban, low-income, diverse schools abandon the profession entirely at alarming rates (Ingersoll, 1997; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). A potential explanation for such poor retention of novice urban teachers may be linked to the types of curriculum, instruction, and assessments teacher education programs employ to teach and gauge their candidates' readiness for such settings[i]. In this paper, I argue that the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that preservice teachers (PT) ought to possess to work effectively with diverse urban pupils need to be nurtured and monitored not only throughout the completion of basic preparation but also during the first years of teaching. Learning to teach diverse students in today's urban schools can neither be accomplished through the schematic approach of the one-diversity course, nor through isolated field experiences in urban settings if they lack a strong theoretical and reflective component (Abbate-Vaughn, 2005b, 2006). Concomitantly, the processes and tools with which such preparation and induction outcomes are monitored remain a relevant area of inquiry. .

Urban Schools and Urban Teaching

The largest 65 urban school districts in the nation enroll 15 percent of all schoolchildren, and over 31.8 percent of all children in whose homes a language other than English is spoken (Council of the Great City Schools, 2005). Segregation of Latino and African-American children in urban schools is high (Council of the Great City Schools, 2003). Yet, the challenge is far from being one involving the education of those minority groups alone, as metropolitan school

districts report student bodies representative of myriad linguistic backgrounds, which include Spanish but also languages less familiar to American teachers such as Somali, Serbo-Croatian, and Hmong (Antunez, 2003). Most compellingly, whereas almost 40 percent of the public school students come from low socioeconomic backgrounds nationwide (as determined by their eligibility for free or reduced lunch) that number raises to over 62 percent when considering the largest urban school districts alone (Council of the Great City Schools, 2003).

The literature alludes to the urban teaching challenge in different ways. For instance, Au and Blake (2003) narrow the definition of diverse students in the United States to include those who differ from their English speaking, White middle-class mainstream counterparts in three aspects: family socioeconomic background, race/ethnicity, and language used at home. Diverse students so defined are the backbone of urban schools (although it is wholeheartedly acknowledged that the broader spectrum of diversity encompasses much more than those three markers). Similarly, Anderson and Summerfield (2004) identify urban schools as those which receive considerably more federal money for the following areas: bilingual education (now ELL), vocational education, and Title I (supplemental services for low-income children), acknowledging that urban and suburban schools receive federal funding for special education in comparable amounts. The U. S. Department of Education (2004) refers to high need schools as those where 30 percent or more of its families' income are below the poverty line. The National Catholic Educational Association (2006) makes the distinction between *urban schools* as those "within the limits of a major city or one with at least 50,000 population" while differentiating them from *inner-city schools* as those "located within a major city and characterized by a concentration [40 percent or more] of low income inhabitants" (p. 1).

In spite of the different terminology utilized by various agencies, it is evident that urban schools deal with low-income, culturally and linguistically diverse students in ways that grant the need for specialized training for those expecting to become effective teachers of their constituencies. The complexity of urban work settings inevitably poses a challenge to teacher educators in charge of preparing future generations of teachers that can effectively instruct students who endure varying degrees of poverty, speak languages whose structures are unfamiliar to the mainstream, and hold beliefs and values that differ from what the typical American aspiring teacher is equipped to manage.

Curriculum to Address Student Diversity in Teacher Education

In contrast with the increasing diversity of the K-12 student body, and according to AACTE (1996) and NEA (1997) reports, 86 percent of those pursuing a career in teaching are White. Those numbers are consistent with an earlier study by Zimpher (1989), who depicted the typical PTs as females of approximately 21 years of age, born in English-speaking suburban homes, attending nearby colleges and who expressed a preference for teaching in schools whose children exhibited similar social markers. Current research indicates that fewer than six percent of those graduating from education programs wish to work in underserved urban settings (National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching, 2000).

A significant number of conceptual and empirical studies have investigated aspects related to the preparation of teachers to deal with student diversity broadly speaking (Boyle-Baise, 2002; Dilworth, 1998; Irvine, 2003; Murrell, 2001; Vavrus, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Reviews of

research in multicultural teacher education i.e., (Bennett, 2001; Sleeter, 2001) and "reviews of reviews" in the area (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2002) have also been published in prestigious venues.

Two approaches specifically linking diversity curriculum and urban teacher retention can be highlighted. On one hand, a large number of teacher education programs take the "one-course-approach" to teaching about diversity with varying results (Brown, 2004; Marshall, 1999; Weisman & Garza, 2002). On the other, *Center X*, a two-year teacher education program at the *University of California- Los Angeles* (UCLA) with a strong diversity component has endeavored efforts to a study centered on the examination of career pathways followed by over one thousand teachers who received specialized urban teacher preparation. Unlike the typical preservice teacher population nationwide, *Center X* boasts an extremely diverse pool of students--35 percent White, 32 percent Asian, 25 percent Latino, 6 percent Black (Quartz *et al.*, 2005). After rigorous coursework and fieldwork during the first year, *Center X* students are employed as full-time teachers in some of the high poverty schools of Los Angeles during their second year in the program, while completing additional coursework. Preliminary studies suggest that *Center X's* students remain in teaching after five years in the profession at a rate of 71 percent, in comparison to the 54 percent retention rate of a nationwide sample, and that a large percentage of their Latino and White graduates stay teaching in urban, diverse schools (Lyons, 2005). *Center X* is of relevance to this quest in that it appears to confirm the link between the type of curriculum and assessment afforded to PTs and their increased retention in diverse urban schools, although its highly diverse roster and graduate program's length constitute an anomaly in teacher education.

Measuring Diversity Learning

To assess readiness for diverse settings in teacher education, researchers have relied on inquiry centered on teacher beliefs, concentrating on: (a) the initial beliefs[ii] about diverse populations with which candidates arrive to a given program and the potential sources of such beliefs (Dee & Henkin, 2002); (b) the effectiveness of diversity-related courses in altering beliefs, particularly those that rely on deficit perspectives of diverse students, and the likelihood of belief system change (Brown, 2004; Larke, 1990; Marshall, 1999; Sleeter, 1995); (c) the effectiveness of diversity-related courses in altering practices as PTs complete field placements in diverse settings (Abbate-Vaughn, 2005a; Boyle-Baise, 1998; McAllister, 2002; Murrell, 2001); (d) factors that contribute to PTs' development of multicultural skills and dispositions (Garmon, 2004); and (e) other related factors that affect practice of multicultural education in schools, such as cooperating teachers' own perspectives and habits of practice (Sudzina, 1997; Vavrus & Ozcan, 1995).

Scholars have produced useful models to assess PTs' awareness of and learning about diversity in general that include continua of racial awareness (Helms, 1990) and multicultural acceptance (Diaz-Rico, 1998); and a host of surveys to measure attitudes towards diversity. Although useful in yielding information regarding diversity learning previous to graduation, those efforts shed no light on what happens after degrees are conferred. The model proposed in the next section is a composite of practices at several teacher preparation programs and teacher educators that endeavor to prepare teachers who can effectively work with urban students, conceptualizing the curriculum, instruction, and assessment necessary to carry that goal as a long-term endeavor beyond completion of a program.

Assessing Readiness for Urban Teaching in an Interdisciplinary Way

For multicultural teacher education research purposes, longitudinal research efforts of a program's graduates and their evolving thinking in terms of diversity would provide vital data in the assessment of the program's success with diversity education (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). In contrast with the one-course approach, this way of framing the education of PTs for diverse classrooms as a program-wide effort includes elements such as clinical supervision, service learning, staff development and school-university partnerships. Those elements can be connected in efforts to design meaningful curriculum and assessment experiences for candidates early in the induction process, and even for cooperating teachers assisting universities in the preparation of future teachers. This model is a roadmap to teaching diverse students in urban settings, and whose implementation should complement other specific goals that each institution has for its candidates.

If the overall goals are to document and monitor the changing beliefs, improved skills, and actual practices as PTs engage urban learners, the process should take place throughout the teacher education program and continue through the first years of teaching. Table I summarizes the various procedures to be considered, and teaching/assessment tools to be administered at different stages and in different disciplines that impact the development of PTs' readiness to work in urban settings with diverse learners.

The table depicts a sequence of instructional and assessment commitments involving various steps. Amongst the most salient are: faculty development as part of the process of preparing teachers for diverse settings (Costa *et al.*, 2005); thorough monitoring of PTs belief changes regarding urban populations (Abbate-Vaughn, 2004, see Appendix I), as beliefs are known to drive behavior (Pajares, 1992); and emphasis on support due to candidates beyond graduation while working in urban diverse schools, conceptualized as a collective effort of university faculty, teacher mentors and school administrators. This model follows evidence from research which suggests that teacher retention in diverse settings is likely linked to the support provided by a quality program (Quartz et al., 2005). It does by embracing a comprehensive approach to diversity in teacher education (Villegas & Lucas, 2002) that require monitoring PTs' readiness and effectiveness in urban settings.

Table I: Curriculum and assessment for diverse setting readiness

Item	Assessment/evidence to collect	Recipients	Administered/ taught by	Stage in program
I- Institute or workshop to develop university faculty awareness of diverse learners.	Changes in faculty's syllabi to incorporate issues involving diverse learners.	Arts and Sciences faculty, all teacher education faculty, school staff.	Faculty specializing in urban, bilingual, and culturally diverse student populations.	Initial and ongoing training.
II- Survey.	*Readiness to Teach LCLD Students Survey*: pretest (Abbate-Vaughn, 2004, see Appendix I).	Preservice teachers.	First core course faculty or program administration.	First course.
III- Survey.	*Readiness to Teach LCLD Students Survey*: posttest.	Preservice teachers.	Clinical faculty.	After student-teaching is completed.
IV- Themed clinical interventions clinical faculty training.	Diversity-imbedded student-teaching observation and post-observation protocols.	Clinical supervisors.	Faculty who specialize in instructional strategies and multicultural education.	Prior to assignment of clinical supervision of PTs.
V- Themed clinical interventions.	PTs products that reflect an understanding of the proposed diversity-imbedded interventions (i.e., with specific lesson accommodations).	Preservice teachers.	Faculty who specialize in instructional strategies and multicultural education.	Courses prior to pre-practicum.
VI- Themed clinical interventions.	Themed clinical intervention survey.	Preservice teachers.	Clinical supervisors.	After themed pre-practicum is completed.
VII- Themed clinical interventions.	Pupil survey.	K-12 students recipients of PTs intervention.	Cooperating teacher.	After themed prepracticum is completed.
VIII- Student-teaching.	Clinical supervision observations/logs.	Student-teachers.	Clinical supervisors; cooperating teachers.	Student-teaching.
XIX- Unannounced visits.	Logs/tabulation of instances where showcased interventions are implemented by PTs.	Student-teachers, first-year teachers.	Diversity education faculty, research assistants.	Student-teaching, first-year teachers working in diverse settings.
X- "Critical friends" conversations.	Logs of interaction.	Student-teachers, first year teachers.	Diversity education faculty, research assistants.	After unannounced visits during student-teaching and first-year teaching.
XI- Clinical themed interventions as professional development.	Administrator/teacher initiated requests for staff development on PTs' showcased interventions.	Teachers in partner schools.	Administrators, university and school faculty.	Ongoing.
XII- Percentage of graduates who seek and maintain teaching jobs in diverse settings.	Tabulation of percentage of graduates who elect to work and stay in diverse settings.	Graduates of teacher education programs.	SoE administration with information provided by both graduates and school principals who hire them.	First-year teachers and beyond.

Conclusion and Implications

Teacher educators face the growing complexities of preparing teachers that can successfully teach diverse children in various settings and are retained at higher rates (Ingersoll, 1997). The field must pioneer efforts to promote sustained mentorship to and assessment of graduates beyond completion of a teacher education program. If only from a utilitarian perspective, sustained mentorship of a teacher education program's graduates can in time provide a sizeable number of excellent, geographically accessible cooperating teachers for future cohorts of PTs. From a research perspective, it can provide support to claims that the impact of diversity education in teacher education programs extends beyond program completion and can positively affect teacher retention, helping to provide well-prepared teachers for all children.

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Appendix I

Readiness to Teach Low-income, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (LCLD) Students Survey

1.   The number of students who don't speak English is diminishing.
  1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

2.   Students who do not speak English mostly live in urban areas.
  1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

3.   All teachers can expect to teach students with limited English proficiency.
  1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

4.   School districts should refuse to enroll students whose parents are undocumented aliens.
  1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

5. Schools should ask for proof of citizenship, resident visas, or Social Security numbers when enrolling second language students.
1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

6. Teachers of courses where English is the medium for the curriculum should allow students to use their native language if it fosters content understanding.
1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

7. Low-income students stand equal chances for academic success than their suburban counterparts if appropriate enrichment activities are afforded to them.
1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

8. ELL students slow down the whole classroom because the teacher has to explain everything multiple times.
1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

9. All languages, including vernacular English, fulfill the purpose of enabling communication, and thus deserve to be recognized.
1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

10. Schools populated by children of poverty typically don't function well because their parents don't care.
1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

11. Family literacy programs help schools deal with parental illiteracy and thus encourage parental participation in school activities.
1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

12. Those whose cultures differ from the mainstream's should learn the "American way" to get along.
1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

13. Bilingual students with limited English proficiency just need to be placed in an English environment, and they'll learn the language. That's how other immigrant groups did it.
1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

14. Students with limited English proficiency or speakers of Ebonics can often be helped by placing them in less demanding special education classes.
1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

15. Parents of students with limited English proficiency are generally not as involved in their children's education as their mainstream counterparts.
1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

16. Research is unequivocal about the most effective program for students with limited English proficiency.
1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

17. English has always been the language for classroom instruction in the United States.
    1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

18. In the United States, Fluency in Latin or Japanese is socially as highly regarded as fluency in Spanish.
    1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

19. Tracking by ability ensures that every student obtains the best possible education.
    1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

20. Students living in primarily Black, Latino, or Asian neighborhoods know enough about diversity and should be used as spokespersons for their communities.
    1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

21. The education imparted in American K-12 public schools has historically been Eurocentric.
    1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

22. Teachers should expect limited academic performance from students who are low-income or ELL.
    1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

23. Multicultural education serves the purpose of helping Black, Latino, Asian, and/or Native American students to "melt" into mainstream settings.
    1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

24. All students should be encouraged to become fluent in a second language.
    1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

25. A person who truly embraces culturally and linguistically diverse others would consider befriending--as well as dating--people from those diverse backgrounds.
    1 (strongly disagree)   2 (disagree)   3 (neutral)   4 (agree)   5 (strongly agree)

White Student Teachers' Capacity to Consult Schoolchildren of Color

Danné E. Davis
Montclair State University

Abstract
Student teachers are rarely encouraged by experienced educators to consult schoolchildren to understand teaching and learning. Sometimes student teachers are not encouraged because of a believed incapacity to interact discernibly with schoolchildren—a belief stemming from minimal life experiences with people unlike themselves. Notions of deficiency attributed to urban youngsters may offer another explanation. Using a phenomenological perspective, this study demonstrates the capacity of eight White graduate student teachers, who, when urged to consult urban schoolchildren of color, to understand teaching and learning, were able to engage youngsters in meaningful conversation.

The Problem

Student teachers are rarely encouraged by teacher educators, university supervisors, or classroom/cooperating teachers to consult schoolchildren to understand teaching and learning. While this lack of encouragement from experienced educators may stem from a belief that only they have "the answers," notions about student teacher incapacity posit other reasons. Typically, undergraduate student teachers are in their early twenties, with graduate prospective teachers in their mid-twenties, and those entering the profession as career changers in their thirties (Chambers, 2002; Murname, Singer, Willet, Kemple, & Olsen, 1991). Some experienced educators reason that the minimal life and professional experiences among student teachers are obstacles that preclude them from being able to discernibly talk with and listen to youngsters about schooling (Cook-Sather, 2002; Lincoln, 1995). Issues of authority may be other reasons. For example, regarding school-age children as professional resources challenges the historical hierarchy of grown-ups as omniscient and young people as unknowing (Cook-Sather, 2002, Glickman, 1998; Habashi, 2005). Add the situation of a pupil's race—which if dark hued is usually associated with deficiency—and arrive at yet another supposition as to why student teachers are not commonly urged by experienced educators to consult schoolchildren about teaching and learning.

The disregard for people of color is not a new phenomenon (Davis, 2002). Intricately woven into the fabric of American schooling are notions of deficiency. Schoolchildren of color, who in large numbers live and learn in urban settings, are routinely labeled by K-12 educators as academically, motivationally, and intellectually inferior (García & Guerra, 2004; Skrla & Scheurich, 2001). Such views posit that schoolchildren of color and their family have little interest in grasping academic concepts and comprehending subject matter. Other educators contend that urban youngsters choose to avoid learning (Ayers & Ford, 1996). Although disturbing to consider, some educators embrace the idea of Eugenics and physiological

differences in youngsters of color (Valencia, 1997). Teachers who hold notions of ineptitude about city schoolchildren are of particular concern given the demographic disparity in urban, public K-12 classrooms.

There is an overrepresentation of White preservice and in-service teachers in urban education. Within that same context, schoolchildren of color are the majority (Gay & Howard, 2000; Hodgkinson, 2002). This racial disparity has instilled a sense of urgency among teacher educators and policy makers about how best to prepare and support teachers for city classrooms. Amid prevailing beliefs that White student teachers come from homogeneous backgrounds, which contrasts the diversity among city pupils, requiring student teachers to establish personal relationships with urban youngsters has been a common approach to teacher preparation (Grant & Tate, 1995; Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996). The goal is for student teachers access to pupil's vast sociocultural backgrounds and experiences for subsequent planning and scaffolding of appropriate classroom instruction (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Although a plausible, the emphasis on understanding the interpersonal dimensions of urban youth is a shortcoming of this process. Little if any attention is specifically devoted to grasping youngsters academic experiences. Direct queries into children's learning histories or current schooling situations are minimal with specific requests for pupils' ideas and insights about education are rarely sought (Hernandez Sheets, 2003). To emphasize whether student teachers have capacity to talk with and listen to schoolchildren to understand teaching and learning is the purpose of this study.

The Methodology
Methods related to phenomenology were used to examine student teachers' capacity to consult schoolchildren of color for the primary purpose of grasping teaching and learning. Phenomenology seeks to locate and illuminate the essence of phenomena from an emic perspective instead of describing events from an etic vantage point (DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1994; Gubrium & Holstein, 2000; Van Manen, 1990). As a qualitative approach, it "generates rather than tests theory" (Flowerday & Schraw, 2000, p. 634) and is fitting when examining classroom events (Van Manen, 2002b). Since K-12 schools are commonly considered places that foster literacy and numeracy, along with the current national emphasis on cognitive outcomes, it seemed appropriate to use a phenomenological stance to examine student teachers' new understandings about teaching and learning from schoolchildren.

Participants
Boris, Carmella, Jacqueline, Kameron, Lisa, Mary, Matilda, and Terri[1] were the eight participants in the study. Although a small number, it is an appropriate participant pool size (Polkinghorne, 1989). All were full time, master's degree candidates attending one of three private universities located in a major, New England city. Six participants were members of the same urban teachers' preparation cohort program. None received remuneration for their 12-16 week practicum but all earned three graduate credits except for Kameron who received six. Participants offered self-descriptions of racially White or ethnically European. Each told of growing up in low or moderate-income homes, and of attending suburban or rural K-12 public

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[1] Participants selected pseudonyms to shield identity.

schools. Professional connections with the school district and one of the universities facilitated participant recruitment.

Setting Location

The school district in the New England city served as the student teaching venue. At the time of the study, its website listed the pupil racial demographic as: 15% White, 48% Non-Hispanic Black, 28% Hispanic, 9% Asian/Pacific Islander. The high school student teachers were divided between two comprehensive schools with citywide enrollments. Jacqueline and Lisa were placed in separate 9th grade remedial literacy classrooms while Matilda and Terri were placed in 11th grade history, and American Literature. The city's prominent magnet middle school hosted Boris and Kameron. Both worked with 6th, 7th, and 8th grade youngsters in advanced, general education, and IEP curriculum tracks. Carmella and Mary were placed in separate 4th and 5th grade classrooms in the same elementary school. Although located in a neighborhood surging in gentrification, the majority of the elementary pupils were of African and Latino descent.

Data Collection Procedures and Sources

To gather data semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, and observations of teaching events were conducted. Additional data sources included reaction papers written in response to the teaching event, and reflection journals. Since a phenomenological research perspective requires researcher subjectivity—a shifting of researcher "authority" to the background and situating the voice and perspective of participants in the foreground (Van Manen, 1990). The following bracketing process was completed: (a) no sharing with participants any prior personal experiences of learning from city schoolchildren; (b) maintaining a research log to record study concerns and participant issues; (c) avoiding the use of a priori codes, criteria, or categories during data analysis; and (d) analyzing the data to demonstrate particularized not generalized phenomena (Van Manen, 1990). This bracketing process also helped to minimize validity and authenticity concerns.

Encouraging Consultation

Encouraging student teachers to consult schoolchildren was integral to the study. During the initial interview, participants received verbal and written information about children as professional resources via "wonderful ideas "(Duckworth, 1987; 2001), "pupil consultation" (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004) schoolchildren as "critical friends" (Bambino, 2002; Featherstone et al., 1997), and honoring student voice (Cook-Sather, 2002; Glickman, 1998; Lincoln, 1995). During subsequent interviews, participants were asked whether they had actualized any of the theories. A Post Teaching Interview Guide for Children for children was designed and distributed to aid participants in gathering information from the pupils. The guide included seven questions such as, "Tell me what you liked/disliked about today's lesson" and "what should I remember when I teach again?" Journal and reaction paper prompts urged participants to write about their new understandings resulting from the schoolchildren.

Data Analysis

Scrutiny of the corpus of data followed Van Manen's (1990) thematic analysis. Below are the findings of the analytic process.

Findings

Student Teachers' Capacity to Consult Schoolchildren about Teaching and Learning

Albeit to varying degrees, the eight White student teachers in this study demonstrated capacity to consult urban schoolchildren of color to understand teaching and learning. This was apparent through idiomatic expressions, prefacing statements, direct inquiries, and collective and individual consultative interviews.

Student teachers demonstrated their capacity to consult schoolchildren through idiomatic expressions. Although the rationale for using idioms was unspecified, gaining awareness about classroom events was the apparent goal. For example, Carmella's desire to "get at the root of what's going on," revealed her objective to figure out classroom happenings. Lisa's intent to "keep her finger on the pulse of the class" meant she did not want to lose sight of pupil activity.

Another demonstration of capacity prevailed when student teachers used prefacing statements. Prefacing statements were verbal precursors that student teachers used to situate themselves before asking questions. Prefacing statements were reminders about being a student teacher and new to teaching. Lisa stated, "I tell them I am brand new at this and I want to know what they think I can do to make it better." Terri compared herself to the children stating she needed information because she was learning as they were. Mary indicated, "I am a new teacher and that I have not done this before and if you have any suggestions for me…." Student teachers used prefacing statement to substantiate questions.

Student teachers consulted youngsters by posing questions of them. Mary raised queries of, "How did that work? Was that interesting to you? And do you think that you learned something" while Terri asked, "Do you think this works, not works, should we trash it?" and "What do you guys think about…?" This line of questioning represented participants' straightforward attempts to gather information about instruction from schoolchildren.

Student teachers' also demonstrated capacity to consult school-age children via collective and individual consultations. Through interviews, student teachers sought information from the youngsters en masse. For elementary teachers, collective consultations occurred when escorting schoolchildren to and from the playground or cafeteria. For middle schoolteachers, the consultations happened when accompanying pupils between classes and the cafeteria. An illustration of this is Boris's routine practice of stopping pupils in the corridor before entering the classroom to explain the task awaiting them. After he spoke, the youngsters were permitted to ask clarifying questions and offer responsive comments.

For high school teachers, collective interviews happened within the classroom as a mini lesson. Terri's "Heart to Heart" talk with eleventh graders exemplifies collective interviewing.

> Yesterday we had a big Heart to Heart [talk]. I had to really think about how I
> wanted to teach writing and the actual unit because a couple of my students who
> worked really hard, seemed to shut down after I gave them their paper back. I
> thought of [the Heart to Heart] myself…. I knew that I wanted to talk with them. I
> was really frustrated, so my supervisor helped me come up with a plan for how to use
> a Heart to Heart to approach. I asked the [children] if they had ever had a Heart to

Heart…. about what it means, and then about the paper. I only gave them a week to do the assignment and they told me that was not enough time.

The Heart-to-Heart talk provided Terri with insight about her teaching. First, Terri recognized that despite devoting class time to the essays, she discovered one week was an insufficient amount of time to complete the assignment successfully. Second, she realized that allowing children to provide evaluative information was helpful in handling her frustration. Further, this example illustrates how the university supervisor supported Terri in her desire to consult the schoolchildren. In addition to seeking information from children in whole groups, student teachers consulted schoolchildren about instructional matters individually and in small groups.

Student teachers consulted pupils one-on-one or privately in small groups of fewer than four. Among middle and high school teachers, the individual interviews were to avoid "embarrassing children in front of their friends" according to Kameron. Individual consultations occurred when teachers wanted to understand why children were off task. Individual consultations commonly happened after school and were unplanned and planned. Boris used the one-on-one time he spent with a 7th grade boy after school to query him spontaneously about school while Jacqueline and Matilda always planned their individual interviews. Jacqueline wrote in her journal about how she used after school time to query ninth graders about her classroom instruction and management.

> In another effort to analyze my effectiveness in the classroom, and to highlight areas that need change, I try talking to the students when they are hanging around the classroom at the end of the day. I ask them about their experiences in the class; to tell me things that they enjoy…dislike…want to change and…recommend remain the same."

Although Matilda preferred individual interviews, small group chats often resulted.

> Once after school, I saw a boy and asked him, "Do you have a minute? Can you come and talk to me for five minutes?' He said, 'yes' and then, another girl asked if she could talk to me too. I didn't feel right saying no. Then another time the same thing happened and another kid, who was hanging around ended up joining in on the interview.

Conversely, Carmella planned her talks with fourth graders. In conjunction with her master's thesis, she consulted Sonia, the only Latina, and Armando, one of three males, in the 4th grade class, to assess her use of multicultural materials.

> During my interview with Sonia…I was surprised to hear… she clearly considered her culture Salvadoran, not Latino. When asked if she thought of her culture as Salvadoran, or Latino/Spanish-speaking, she quite firmly told me, "Salvador."

> My interview with Armando offered a slightly different slant on how he defined his culture. When asked if he considered his culture as Central American, from Honduran, (where his family comes from), or Latino/Spanish-speaking, he told me Central American. As I plan a reading unit for Sonia's class that focuses on a Latino

author, it is now apparent to me that writers should be from El Salvador and another Central American country if I want the [children] to see their culture represented.

Although working with elementary schoolchildren, Carmella's appreciation of their perspectives was apparent in the design of her inquiry project. Interviewing the children was an integral aspect of her action plan. The time Carmella spent consulting schoolchildren strengthen her value of their insight.

These examples of consulting schoolchildren are of note. First, student teachers demonstrated capacity to consult youngsters. Participants developed verbal strategies to approach youngsters and request information. Student teachers decided whether to make a statement or raise questions.

Second, although the statements and questions emanated from the student teachers, they arose in response to the study's focus on consulting schoolchildren to comprehend teaching and learning. Participants were encouraged to consider schoolchildren of color as professional resources, which they did albeit to varying degrees.

Third, seeking input and advice from urban schoolchildren of color presents them in a positive light, which counters notions of deficiency. As abovementioned, when teachers assume that urban schoolchildren of color have "limited intellectual abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack of motivation to learn, and immoral behavior" (Valencia, 1997, p. 2) deficit thinking prevails. However, the student teachers in this study had high regard for pupils' feedback and ideas. In fact, a quote from Jacqueline's journal is given as a fitting summary, "the [children] had a lot to offer to me. Their feedback was very important…."

Conclusion
Whether as idiomatic expressions, direct queries, prefacing statements, or consultative interviews, White student teachers engaged in meaningful talks with urban schoolchildren of color. This is significant because it challenges the argument that student teachers' lack the capacity to discernibly talk with and listen to schoolchildren about teaching and learning.

As previously mentioned, the goal of this study was to generate data and present information in useful ways for others to draw on during current practice or future research. Ideally, these findings will advance the practice and scholarly inquiry of urging student teachers to consult youngsters to make sense of teaching and learning, especially as a way to prepare White student teachers to work with pupils of color. The findings are a means to an end rather than an end.

Educational researchers should realize that student teachers have capacity to interact with and to learn from school-age youngsters in discerning ways. However, research that explores the theoretical aspects of talking with and listening to schoolchildren is one way to advance the concept. Particularized rather than generalized data provide opportunities for teacher educators and researchers to consider, analyze, "rework, and adjust practice" (Carini, 2001, p. 125). The patterns and commonalities among these data offer useful information and perspectives for educational inquiry into consulting schoolchildren. The concept exists and findings from this study are available for academic consideration.

Moreover, given the current racial disparity between White student teachers and urban schoolchildren of color, exploring ways to urge student teachers to consult youngsters about teaching and learning is an innovate yet useful modification of the student teaching apprentice model. The current classroom based-field experience has its origins in a time when cultural and social sameness between teachers and pupils was prevalent in public schools. During the 1950s and early 1960s, the apprentice model placed same race preservice and in-service schoolchildren together in the same classroom (McIntyre, Byrd, and Foxx, 1996). Issues of ethnic and cultural diversity were not paramount, leaving student teachers to make sense of teaching and learning from a monocultural dimension. However, with the 1970s surge of racial integration in public schools discovering the contributions of historically ignored groups and developing ways to incorporate their experiences into the curriculum became the new emphasis in the apprentice model. Providing student teachers with the rationale, methodology, and encouragement to consult youngsters to create meaningful learning experiences offers additional and authentic opportunities for professional growth.

This study does present one caveat. The participants were graduate student teachers with prior experiences atypical of White preservice teachers. Unlike the prevailing view that White student teachers represent homogenous, encapsulated lives, the backgrounds of the student teachers in this study are vast and varied. Perhaps then, the ability to comprehend information from schoolchildren stems unique practical life experiences and chronological development. Maybe the range of personal and professional endeavors fosters the capacity of White student teachers' positive responsiveness to being encouraged to consult schoolchildren of color.

Finally, a prerequisite to researching or teaching about the notion of consulting urban schoolchildren to grasp meaningful instruction necessitates purging deficit thinking. All too often city youngsters are deemed part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Labeling their lives as marginalized and their experiences as minimal leaves little room for schoolchildren of color to have a direct impact on teaching and learning. Developing ways to talk with and learn from schoolchildren is a way to gather information about their educational successes and failures, and in turn, use such details to enhance learning and reform schooling. Consulting pupils of color helps to transcend dispositions of deficit thinking towards urban schoolchildren of color.

American democracy espouses equal regard for each of its members. Relative to schools and classrooms, its members include schoolchildren who should have full participation and parallel representation in all facets of the learning experience (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Shor, 2000). If American schools are considered places where democracy thrives, it is important that the perspective of all of its members have the opportunity to contribute to its existence and improvement. To advance this idea, teacher educators, university supervisors, and classroom/cooperating teachers must find ways to urge and facilitate student teachers to purposefully talk with and listen to schoolchildren about teaching and learning. Such professional activity will assuredly help prospective teachers become effective practitioners.

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Teaching and Learning Science in an Urban School: Analogy as a Key to Communal Science Pedagogy

Christopher Emdin
City University of New York

Abstract

This article articulates the results of an ongoing study in an urban school in New York City in which student and teacher researchers engage in practices that support the science success of the schools' predominantly Latino/a and African American population. By situating the study in the nature of corporate and communal practices, the article demonstrates the necessity for an expansion of approaches to teaching and learning that includes students' ways of knowing. Furthermore, the article shows the emergence of analogy as an outcome of embracing communal teaching practices.

For educators and researchers interested in urban teaching and learning, it is necessary to deconstruct the modes of thought and practice that currently influence urban education. It is also important for us to discuss how these factors impact urban schools and communities. As a science educator, I realize that this requires a critical questioning of current societal thoughts on science education. This involves the use of cogenerative dialogues where students and teachers have joint conversations about their experiences inside and outside of classrooms and reach collective decisions about the rules, roles, and responsibilities that govern their everyday lives (Roth, Tobin & Zimmerman, 2002). By employing cogenerative dialogues, we embark on conversations about the culture of urban schools and the complexities of the relationships among the varying factions within these schools.

In order to come into a full understanding of the issues at play within urban schools, it is necessary to acknowledge that in the United States, the general population is conditioned to look at schools as a militarized, orderly place where all students (particularly in science classes) look, sit, and interact in a certain way, learn specified information, and then possibly graduate. Schools function under the premise of western, middle class ideals that mirror economic productivity models of knowledge creation and dissemination determined by the scholars in a specific field (Diamond, 1999). We are further conditioned to see the science classroom as a place where students are trained to be successful at specific tasks, learn a prescribed amount of information and then utilize this information to benefit society (Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Ravitch, 2000). This ideology stems from the historical function of science classrooms as the gateway to the nations' economic and technologic livelihood in the global sphere of science achievement.

In the post Cold War era, we carry notions of a national competition against other countries that was fueled by the Russian launch of Sputnik in 1957 (Kliebard, 2004), and have been focused on a rhetoric for science education that supports economic efficiency and performance based outcomes ever since. These commonly accepted notions on science education abandon

communal approaches that contextualize schools by considering factors like the racial, ethnic, sexual, gender, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds of students into teaching and learning science. The abandonment of these critical factors can be linked to the populations targeted for success in science (predominantly white males) in the United States and the variance in American mainstream ideologies from those from populations that are more entrenched in communal practices.

Communal approaches to science education are informed by the aforementioned factors and are based on ideologies and practices that critically address difference and values co-responsibility and co-ownership despite difference. These are attributes that are prevalent in populations that value attributes like interdependence among groups and do not fit into the generalized independent nature of achievement of the mainstream American population (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

In science classes where communal practices are implemented, there is as much focus on the interactions between teachers and students as there is between students and the subject matter. Unfortunately, science classrooms are oftentimes so deeply ingrained in the fabric of corporate practices that are far removed from students' ways of knowing that the perception is that any thing other than a strict adherence to the scientific method, memorization of facts and testing of science knowledge has little use because of its lack of an ultimate, tangible economic return. The result of this practice is to have science education stand as an extension of the hegemonic arm of education in urban schools that serves the sole purpose of maintaining the status quo and valuing meritocracy and economic competitiveness by teaching students to pass exams and not learn the beauty of science, its relevance to their lives and become scientifically literate (Black, 2004; Puk & Haines, 1999). Consequently we see a lack of interest in science that can only be repaired through the enactment of communal practices that reclaim ownership of science and expands agency in urban science classes for historically marginalized students. It is therefore imperative to have an ongoing critique of, and plan to, redesign teaching and learning of science in urban schools in order to move these institutions to becoming more communal and therefore more genuine parts of students' lives (Cook-Sathan, 2002).

The research in this study addresses a seemingly unconventional approach to science teaching and learning that illuminates some of the issues that support transforming science education for inner city students. It reflects the discoveries that emerged from research being done with African American and Latino/a students in physics and chemistry classes in an urban school in New York City.

Student rituals and culturally relevant analogies: Analogy and metaphor as a key to communal practice
In this study, the research has discovered that heightened levels of emotional energy, synchrony, and student interest are achieved when analogies that are culturally relevant to students are enacted in the classroom. These culturally relevant analogies are a staple of student conversations when they try to explain chemistry and physics topics to each other. They are also present when students want to make sense of topics that they find challenging. As a result of this discovery, I echo the sentiment that "expressing an analogy orally and putting it into the public sphere in the classroom can serve as a basis for communication about the object or concept"

(Tobin, Elmesky, & Seiler, 2005, p.123). Furthermore, "the construction of such a figure of speech provides a link between the micro/individual level and the meso level where learning occurs" (Tobin, Elmesky, & Seiler, 2005, p.123).

The discovery of the ameliorating qualities of these analogies occurred via an initial process of having students who were performing well in their physics and chemistry classrooms tutor their peers. Students and teachers studied the videotapes of these tutoring sessions and students extracted vignettes from the videotapes where their peers either appeared to be most engaged in the lesson or that they would describe as examples of good teaching. The selected vignettes almost always included instances where the students used culturally relevant analogies to describe concepts in physics or chemistry.

As a cogenerative dialogue group, student/teacher researchers discussed the emergence of analogy in instances that were described as good teaching. They decided to move beyond these few classroom videotapes and co-generate mechanisms for the establishment of analogy on a more consistent basis in the classrooms. Since student-researchers had identified culturally relevant analogies as a key component of successful interactions, student/teacher researchers decided to look at and discuss practices that stem from the use of analogy and metaphor that may possibly support teachers in their pedagogical practices.

Through conversations with student researchers in cogenerative dialogue sessions about the extracted vignettes, the research uncovered that students not only identified instances where these analogies were used as examples of good teaching but could discuss the scientific concepts described by the teacher more accurately in instances where relevant analogies accompanied the instruction. By studying the ways that students taught each other physics and chemistry concepts, teachers were able to engage in an active process of deconstructing their perceptions of good teaching while reconstructing new approaches to pedagogy based on student perspectives.

With an active process of learning and researching students' lived worlds in place, the teachers were better able to enact culturally relevant analogies and expand the frameworks for teacher and student knowledge on a particular topic. The use of culturally relevant ways of explaining and describing (similes, metaphors, dialects) are "capable of giving us a new understanding of our experience. Thus they can give new meaning to our pasts, to our daily activity, and to what we know and believe" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.139). They also provide an initial step for teachers to enter into student lived worlds.

As opportunities for use of culturally relevant phenomena expanded in this study, they became an entry point for teacher interest in students lived worlds and caused the teachers involved to be more willing to learn more about their students' lives outside of school. The results of this portion of the study led to the conclusion that in instances where teachers actively searched for and utilized these analogies, they increased their cultural capital with students, became more culturally aware of student perspectives, developed more powerful lesson planning and fostered fluidity in interactions with students.

Symbolic and cultural toolkits in the science classroom

An individual's cultural toolkit encompasses an individual's schema and practices as they combine to create how one interacts within a field (Swidler, 1986; DiMaggio, 1997). An individual's experiences, background, and ways of knowing form a belief system (schema) that is directly related to ones practices (Roth & Tobin, 2002). In many instances, teacher's schema and practices are supportive of assimilation into a corporate science-teaching framework.

Science education courses and professional development offerings often emphasize a command of teaching techniques that focus more on an appropriation of canonical subject matter knowledge than they do on effective teaching and learning techniques for diverse populations.

Teachers' experiences in these courses become a component of their cultural toolkits and are enacted in classroom settings often times as an antithesis to the communal practices that are necessary for transformative science education. As teachers enact corporate culture as a result of the components of their toolkits, the process of making allowances for student culture becomes difficult. Instances where students would be able to provide examples for each other to help support their learning are not allowed to flourish because oftentimes teachers have become entrenched in a strict question and answer model that does not make allowances for students' ways of knowing (Vermunt &Verloop, 1999). The design and planning of lessons that are more communally grounded and culturally relevant to students rarely happens because that structure does not fit into the corporate classroom model and the cultural toolkits that teachers are prepared with.

The move to conscious praxis: From cultural to physical toolkits

In the next step of this study, we began to focus on the development of the cultural toolkits discussed in the previous section and the development of a physical toolkit of analogies that developed as result of this study. Beginning with the observations of increased eye contact, heightened emotional energy, fewer breaks in conversation, and head nods when students explained specific concepts using analogies to their peers, teacher and student researchers looked at instances where these same markers for student interest occurred in the teacher led classroom. When teachers entered the classroom and used analogies both with and without prior planning, the same markers for student interest were present. In addition, as teachers became more closely involved with students' ways of knowing by watching videotapes and observing when students explained work to each other, their actions and dispositions began to change. Teachers picked up practices from students that over time became part of their cultural toolkits.

These new practices resulted in teachers sitting on eye level with students, giving high fives when students responded correctly to questions, and using multiple examples in their explanations of concepts. As a result of the successful evolution of teacher practices and the identification of these new practices as being indicators of good teaching by students, the two teachers involved in this study had developed new schema for their cultural toolkits. Teachers then decided that it would be a good plan of action to identify and write down analogies that students used when interacting with each other. They also decided to use these analogies in their classrooms. This pooling of student analogies describes the development of a physical toolkit of analogies that accompanied their cultural toolkits. An example of this is described in the vignettes below.

Eric: Potential energy is like when somebody is getting picked on like everyday just taking it in, like storing the energy, then when they spazz out and flip out on somebody and get in a fight that's kinetic energy.
Brian: Oh aiight, I see that

One week later:
Mr. E: So potential energy is stored energy, sort of like if someone is getting picked on, storing all the anger, that's like potential energy. And Kinetic? Well you know what happens next. Who knows what will happen next?

Culturally relevant analogy and student notions of authenticity

In instances where the analogies being used by teachers were developed and previously used by students, student responses to the teachers' instruction dramatically increased. Evidence of this was seen in students volunteering to participate in class, willingness to ask/answer questions, and students volunteering to explain physics concepts to their peers.

After creating lesson plans on specific topics utilizing student analogies, the teachers decided to use additional information from cogenerative dialogues, and individual studies of the students' ways of teaching to develop their own culturally relevant analogies for upcoming lessons. While this process was initially challenging, the teachers involved slowly became more fluent in the ability to create such analogies and utilize them in the classroom. The physical toolkit began to consist of analogies that students used and also analogies that teachers developed by engaging in communal practices with students. While these analogies were not the main driving force in the science classrooms, the teachers used them when students were struggling with a concept or when a vivid example was necessary for the articulation of a specific concept. The consistent use of these types of analogies in the classroom either established or solidified the teachers' authenticity, created opportunities for distributed classroom management, and eliminated the occurrence of behaviors that were not conducive to science learning.

Analyzing the authenticity component

While the discovery of the ability of these analogies to improve classroom interaction has become evident, the research in this study also uncovered that analogies have the ability to radically change student perspectives of teachers. The use of culturally relevant analogies assisted teachers in developing the cultural tools necessary to meet the authenticity criteria required of any new member of the students' worlds.

In this study, one key theme that emerged from cogenerative dialogues was that students listened to rap music daily and utilized rap music analogies in their peer teaching. As a result of this discovery, the cogenerative dialogue group delved into a discussion of music and artists and why students listened to particular artists. The main question that surfaced was "What makes a rapper a good emcee?" Student responses exhibited that the authenticity criteria for a culturally relevant artist involved "making you feel like they know where you're coming from" and "having sick similes and metaphors." These authenticity criteria were then juxtaposed with the question of "what makes a teacher real?" and "what makes a teacher a good teacher?"

The authenticity criteria for a teacher were analogous to the requirements that students had for the rap artists. Student responses to the question of "What makes a teacher a good teacher?" included responses like "understanding where the student is coming from" and "having good examples in class." These results display that the interpolation of culturally relevant analogies and stories into the teachers' repertoire helps the teacher in meeting the students' authenticity criteria for being relevant and a good teacher.

Cultural relevance across fields: Actualizing theory as it informs praxis

In this paper, I transition back and forth between analogy and cultural relevance and look at how my focus on culturally relevant analogy was birthed by an interest in, and valuing of, student culture. These discoveries could not have been made without cogenerative dialogues. These sessions not only served the purpose of having students and teachers enact and sustain ongoing conversations about their lives and experiences, but they also helped to develop the "three R's: relationships, rigor, and relevance" which are central to improving student motivation, achievement and school engagement (National Research Council, 2004).

Learning from student rituals and transforming urban science instruction

Utilizing culturally relevant analogies in the science classroom requires both a thorough understanding of the subject matter (chemistry, physics) and a familiarity with topics that are relevant and of interest to students. The only means by which either of these two knowledges is attained is by an active and ongoing quest for a command of the nuances that encompass both the academic subject and the students being taught. The teachers in this study gained a command of physics/chemistry knowledge, by continuously teaching and learning the material, attending content related professional development, taking courses towards advanced degrees, reading textbooks and supplementary material, and researching the topics that will be discussed in class. It is often not viewed as pedagogically necessary for teachers to exercise the same rigorous practices when it comes to becoming versed in students' modes of interaction, discourse, interests, and family life.

The argument being presented here is that the same process that is undergone in gaining content knowledge in the subject matter is necessary in gaining knowledge about students' backgrounds. This occurs with the teachers' awareness of the differences in teacher and student knowledge in science and in culture, and with a respect for what the student offers to the act of pedagogy. It also requires the teachers' willingness to acknowledge that they often know less about the students' lived worlds than the students know about the subject matter. The enactment of communal teaching and learning practices in urban schools leads to the emergence of tools like analogy in teaching practice and is the key to fostering student interest and success in science and education.

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Exploring Issues of Support and Leadership in the Experiences of Prospective Teachers of Color: Retaining Minority Students and Producing Change Agents for Urban Schools

Djanna Hill-Brisbane
Kenya Easley-Mosby
William Paterson University, New Jersey

Abstract

One of the greatest challenges for the Unites States as a nation, and for Paterson, NJ in particular, is how to attract and retain academically and pedagogically talented teachers for urban schools - teachers who are committed to remain in those schools to do the difficult, long-term work of reform and renewal. This work is critical if urban students are to succeed in post-secondary education and in the world of work. In response to this increasing need, this paper will explore (1) how one university is actively recruiting and preparing urban teacher candidates through the Paterson Teachers for Tomorrow Program (PT4T) and (2) urban teacher candidate perspectives on their preparation experience as it relates to school leadership. Data analysis revealed several themes regarding their perceptions of support, leadership, and school change.

Introduction

The recruitment and retention of teachers for urban schools is an issue in the forefront of educational policy today. Alarmists have warned of mass teacher shortages, and this is true for certain geographic areas and subject specialties. The fact is that in many wealthy, high-paying school districts, there is actually a glut of teacher applications. Shortages exist in poor areas, mostly urban, where teachers are placed in classrooms for which they are unprepared and teacher turnover is extremely high. For example, Christenson and Levine (1998) reported that fourteen percent of teachers in schools with a student population whose majority were students of color were teaching with emergency certificates.

A serious situation has developed in the United States, as can be seen in urban communities like Paterson, NJ, where students who need the best prepared, most experienced, and most committed teachers are being taught by the least prepared teachers, many of whom are teaching out of certification area. The result of this is a substandard education for poor students, especially students of color; it is one that has serious ramifications for their post-secondary education and employment prospects.

One of the greatest challenges for the Unites States as a nation, and for Paterson in particular, is how to attract and retain academically and pedagogically talented teachers for urban schools - teachers who are committed to remain in those schools to do the difficult, long-term work of reform and renewal. This work is critical if urban students are to succeed in post-secondary education and in the world of work. In response to this increasing need, this paper will explore

(1) how William Paterson University is actively recruiting and preparing urban teacher candidates through the Paterson Teachers for Tomorrow Program (PT4T)[2] and (2) urban teacher candidate perspectives on their preparation experience as it relates school leadership. There were two guiding research questions: From the perspective of teacher candidates for urban schools, what programs can the university institute to support teacher candidates of color and teachers for urban public schools? What does effective school leadership and school change look like for urban public schools? Data was collected via interviews and analyzed for reoccurring similarities and differences. Data analysis revealed several themes regarding their perceptions of support, leadership, and school change.

Literature Review

It is not easy to discuss the selection process for teachers in urban schools. Questions about who can teach in urban schools raise topics such as what constitutes teacher competence, the ethnic match between teachers and students, and the appropriate dispositions to teach all children. Historically, teacher education programs have admitted, and states have certified, almost any teacher candidate who can manage to pass through an approved teacher education program.   But increasingly, educators have begun to provide evidence about the types of teachers who are most likely to stay in poor, urban districts (Garcia, 2002; Haberman, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994). This special group is characterized by, among other things, their strong content knowledge base, their ability to construct and teach lessons in multiple ways, and their commitment to students, parents, and the community whom they serve (Hill & Gillette, 2005).

Community Teachers

The literature indicates that there is a significant need for colleges and universities to actively recruit and rigorously train urban teacher candidates for highly demanding urban teaching careers. Murrell (2000) sets forth that universities need to develop community teacher programs to meet the needs of diverse urban school districts. Community teachers are invested in the uplift of the community in which they teach and live. Often, community teachers are graduates from the same or similar schools districts in which they teach. Consequently, these teacher candidates are invested in the community and in the process of educating urban students because they can identify with many of the experiences of their students. Additionally, they have a vested interest in making the school system work better. Moreover, as teacher insiders (Hill & Gillette, 2005) they understand both the student and teacher perspectives on many issues because they can reflect on their own past and current experiences within the urban environment.

According to School & Sandoval (2000), urban school districts experience higher rates of teacher shortages in math, science, special education and other areas. Consequently, these shortages can negatively impact service delivery for urban school districts due to an increase in class size in these critical areas which may decrease the amount of individualized attention each student will receive. This could also decrease student performance overtime.

In the opinion of Cooper (2000), African American male students suffer the most due to improperly trained teachers. Therefore, teacher training programs need to prepare teachers more vigorously in various learning styles and cross-cultural awareness. According to Murrell (2000), universities need to develop community teacher programs to meet the needs of diverse urban

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[2] Please see Hill & Gillette 2005 for a full description of the Paterson Teachers For Tomorrow Program.

school districts. The PT4T program was developed to address the urban teacher shortage and urban teacher retention issues. PT4T scholars were raised in Paterson and attended Paterson public schools. We also see this special group as teacher insiders of their community. As insiders they hold a vision particular to lived experience. They know from first hand experience what students and schools in Paterson, NJ, need to be successful (Hill & Gillette, 2005).

Paterson Teachers for Tomorrow

Paterson Teachers for Tomorrow is a collaborative project that began during the 1999-2000 school year, with the establishment of Future Teacher of America (FTA) clubs in the three largest high schools. Each club is lead by at least one faculty advisor selected by the school principal, and one WPUNJ faculty liaison. If the FTA club members participate in club activities, perform community service, and promise to return to Paterson in order to teach, they are eligible to apply for and receive a four-year scholarship to complete their college degree with teaching certification, pending admittance to the university. There are currently thirty PT4T scholars at WPUNJ working toward a bachelor's degree with teaching certification.

The PT4T project is rooted in social reconstructionist theory. This theory posits that the purpose of schools is to develop individuals who are skillful, knowledgeable critical thinkers who will use their talents to reconstruct society to be more equitable and just (Brameld; 1956, Freire, 1996; Grant & Sleeter, 1998).   In addition to social reconstructionist theory, we also utilize theoretical perspectives that emanate from non-traditional epistemologies, particularly the notions of race uplift (Washington, 1901; Collins, 1991), other mothering (Collins, 1991), and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1996; McLaren, 2003). These are key, interrelated concepts that support the perspectives of PT4T staff as well as help us understand and analyze the experiences of students of color and provide guidance and support. In short, these perspectives forefront issues of race, class, gender and power.

A basic assumption in the design of PT4T is that those who understand a system by virtue of having lived in the system and learned to deconstruct that system (insiders) are in the best position to utilize their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to improve that system. Students, having been empowered themselves, will empower others.

Producing Change Agents and Effective Leaders

Often, the changing political climate of the urban educational system can hinder teacher performance. Consequently, prospective teachers need to be empowered with the tools to become resilient change agents and school leaders. As teacher insiders, PT4T students are already motivated to change urban schools in some manner. According to the literature, change agents must be leaders who possess ethics, vision and a belief in the abilities of others. In the opinion of Evans (2001), change agents should be authentic leaders who promote the growth and development of the staff members. These leaders are not competing for recognition, however, they recognize an institutional need and are inspired to facilitate change. Additionally, leaders must provide credence to the communal growth and development of the organization. Being an ethical innovator is important because it allows all staff members know that personal and corporate integrity are an integral part of the change process. This raises the standards by which all should operate and creates an atmosphere of respect. Consequently, although staff members

may not initially agree with the proposed changes their respect for the change agent may open the door for them to reconsider the efficacy of the new program.

The vision of the leader helps to maintain the focus of the change process and inspires others to be committed to the development and implementation of new programs. Often, the change process is difficult for a variety of reasons, therefore, the vision of the leader will also help weary staff members to see the overall purpose of the innovations. Evans (2001) suggests that leaders should not have a narrow vision that is not inclusive of the perspectives of others. The vision of an authentic leader has respect for the input of others and the latitude to include the input to create a new comprehensive collective vision for the organization.

Additionally, a leader that believes in the abilities of others will empower staff members to help create the new program and the implementation process. This empowerment of staff will help to reduce resistance to change because they will be apart of the change process from the beginning. This is validates the input of staff members and enables them to feel included in the decision making process which is important for the implementation process.

Patterson, Patterson & Collins (2002) identified seven strengths that increase resiliency in school leaders: 1) remaining positive in spite of adversity, 2) focusing on what really matters, 3) being flexible in how you achieve your goals, 4) taking charge of what you can do, 5) creating a climate of personal and professional support, 6) setting high standards of student, teacher and parental success, and 7) share responsibility and encourage the participation of others. According to this research, these are important characteristics that resilient school professionals possess to reduce burn out. Similarly, these are required qualities described for those who are change agents.

Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of minority urban teacher candidates regarding their teacher preparation experiences and ideas on school leadership and school change. There were two guiding research questions: From the perspective of teacher candidates for urban schools, what programs can the university institute to support teacher candidates of color and teachers for urban public schools? What does effective school leadership and school change look like for urban public schools? Study results enable university administrators and teacher educators to identify strengths and weaknesses within the urban teacher preparation process. For example, teacher preparation program curriculum committees may want to continually ask, in what ways are the notions of leadership and school change embedded in our program curricula?

Sample Information

A snowball sampling approach was used to identify participants for this research. All participants are scholars in the PT4T program at William Paterson University. For this study, n = five. This consisted of three male and two female students. Four participants were African American and one participant was Latina. Two students were in the junior year of study and three students were university sophomores.

Data Collection

Data was collected via focus group interviews. An interview guide was developed based upon the results of a pilot study. This interview guide consisted of 11 open-ended questions designed to explore participant perspectives on the teacher preparation program at WPUNJ, urban school change and school leadership. Please see Appendix A for interview questions.

A semi-structured interview was conducted for three focus groups in the Spring 2005 semester. The focus group interviews were conducted in the WPUNJ Library. Each interview was tape recorded and lasted approximately one and one-half hours. Interviews were lively in nature and at times resembled a conversation between friends.

Tape recording the interviews increased the accuracy of data collection and allowed researchers to be more attentive to the participants. Throughout the interview, brief field notes were taken to assist with keeping track of information received and formulating new questions. These field notes also served as a guide by outlining the data for initial transcription.

Data Analysis & Results

Focus group interviews were taped and transcribed for analysis. We did not experience or anticipate a clear moment when data collection ended and data analysis began. Rather, analysis occurred concurrently with data collection. The analytic strategy most relevant to this study was the constant comparative method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and emphasized by Lightfoot and Davis (1997). Transcribed interviews and selected documents were analyzed for emergent themes that revealed similarities and differences related to support, leadership, and school change. Rooted in the analysis and conclusion is "a search for goodness" (Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) of the available programs at the University and success stories of students.

Pilot data analysis revealed 6 recurring themes reported by pilot study participants: (1) they were apprehensive about the college experience as first year students and the freshman seminar was not helpful in the transition, (2) they had difficulty with time management (i.e. balancing work, school and personal life), (3) the University should expand its current student support system (4) the University should develop better ways to enhance student awareness about basic services, (5) faculty should utilize a student centered instruction style, and (6) they felt isolated in classes because they were the only African American student in class.

Two important themes have emerged from preliminary study findings as it relates to "teacher insiders" and "university experiences". The first considers the notion that fostering interest in careers in teaching among high school students regardless of academic performance or personal issues makes a difference in the decision to teach. The second theme considers that self-esteem as a person of color and the ability to focus on school despite overwhelming personal issues are the single most important factors in students' success.

In answering research question #1, university support, participants' support systems included relationships with mentors, self, and the notion of education as freedom. Participants felt that the university provides effective support services.

In answering research question #2, school leadership and school change, data indicate that participant perspectives on effective leadership include having a philosophy of respect and efficacy.

Support Systems

The first set of themes is related to the development of support systems for students of color and teacher candidates for urban schools. Students support systems included "relationships with mentors", "self", and the empowering notion of "Education as Freedom". That is, students wanted to develop relationships with faculty members of color. They reported that they often had to rely only on themselves for support. Also, they viewed education as freedom from oppression.

One student says:
> I need enforcement. Not necessarily from professors, mainly from myself. I need to enforce not getting my work done, but taking my time and making sure it is perfect.

Another student says:
> I think that if the university, instead of handing out pamphlets about how to go about graduating, or what to complete in your major, I think if it was more about one on one experience not just with the advisors. Sort of like a place where students can go anytime.

These quotes indicate that the students feel personally responsible for their own success. Also, they look for relevant feedback from others to guide them through their educational experience.

Participants agreed that the university provided good support services to students related to tutoring, advisement and financial support. Students also indicated that they need to take more advantage of the university services. One participant noted, however that service hours should be more flexible in order to serve non-traditional students. For example, one student said:

> They have a lot of stuff on campus to help you to really support you like the academic support center, the writing center. There are a lot of ways to get that help. I just think that a lot of people on campus don't take advantage of it. I didn't take advantage of it until I really needed it. I never come at the beginning of the semester when no grades are in, I wait to the last minute to come and get some help. There is a lot on campus now but there always could be more stuff.

According to Cradle and Dean (1991), higher educational institutions must proactively identify and address the needs and concerns of students of color. Historically, institutions have interacted with minority student populations in a reactive manner by creating interventions or programs as issues and difficult situations on-campus. In the opinion of Cradle and Dean (1991), higher education institutions should complete the following steps to enhance the retention of minority students: (a) the examine their philosophies and missions; (b) assess its ability to work with minority students; (c) determine minority students' academic and social readiness; (d) schedule early visits to the institution; (e) establish a good rapport with minority students; (f) help minority students learn to navigate the organizational structure of the institution; (g) develop a mentoring program for students; (h) assist in career exploration; and, (i) assist students of color in preparing for the work world.

Participants also saw their college education as an act of freedom. For example, one student noted her ability to think differently when on campus and noticed that when she is home, she is reminded of the "narrow and un-educated" thinking that some of her friends and family members have. Thus, this Latina wants to return to Paterson to teach critical thinking.

> Education is like intertwining with other people. And then you go back where you came from to teach others. I don't want to grow up and have a family and be just like my mom or my cousins. They are narrow-minded and seem so closed in. Almost like they can't see any further, they don't see the future.

Another participant agrees and adds, "The people who learned basic education, they don't know anything else, and then they have children and teach their children the basics. It is a cycle."

One other participant has an urgency for the Paterson community to take a hard look at themselves and life circumstance. She notes:

> We have to put everybody together at some point so that we can all take a good look at each other and really evaluate ourselves and say to ourselves – is this what we really want in life?

Perspectives on School Leadership and School Change

A theme related to changing the system provided a wealth of information about student perspectives on school leadership. Particularly, the participants provided their concept of school change, school leadership and the differences between suburban schools and urban schools.

One student remarked:
> School change…The school can only change through the students first because students have to realize that school is fun only if you make it fun.

Another student said:
> So teachers come to work and some teachers are like, 'I'm just here because of the money'…we have to get rid of that and have them realize that they're here because of the students.

Another said:
> Oh, yes. I want to be like... First of all, I'm going make sure that my class is interesting 'cause if its not - you've lost your students in the first five minutes. And I only had two teachers who were interesting and made you not want to leave the class and its time for you to leave the class and you're so interested that you don't want to leave. They were probably not even teaching you they're just talking to the class about something and you don't want to leave. If teachers were like that, I think schools would be better. If you make school interesting and lesson plans interesting then your students will be interested in what you're saying.

These quotes indicate that the participants perceive the initiation of school coming from the students who attend the school. The participants have identified the student as an active participant in school change which is a grass roots perspective on change. Additionally, the participants have indicated that the teachers who are not teaching to support student development need to be identified and encouraged to change or be removed. These are strong sediments

presented by the participants who expressed concern about the number of urban teachers that did not really care about the students.

Students also gave their perceptions on school leadership. Themes like respect and proper student preparation emerged. One student said:

Every principal is a school leader and students may not like the principal but, every student evaluates their principal. My freshman year in high school, I hated my principal. He never talked to us, never explained anything to us. He had one meeting to say that if I catch you in the hallway you are suspended. He just came off too negative. And then we had Mr. Jakes, and it was like here is a positive guy that interacts with students and comes to our games, motivates us, comes to our classes and makes sure that we are doing are work.

Another participant said:

School leadership is preparing students in urban school for college. A lot of us are not prepared and we are taught that going to community college is good. School leaders should help and enforce and stress how important it is to pursue your education beyond the basics and make sure students take the SAT.

One other participant said:

From my experience what I think school leadership should be is preparing student in urban schools to go to college. A lot of us are not prepared for college or university. We are taught to go to community college and that it is as good as a university. So school leadership should tell how important it is to pursue your education, and leadership should stress not just the basis but education beyond the basics. In high school it's all about the basic skills test. They say pass that and they tell you oh your good, you can go to college but, they don't prepare you for when you get here. They don't tell you that you have to take your SAT, or to keep your gpa up, or not to be a procrastinator. All they do now is help you through that basic skills test.

These quotes on school leadership indicate that the participants expect to experience a personal connection with their principal. Moreover, they expect their principal to be a source of inspiration and motivation beyond the normal daily functions of the school. Additionally, the participants expanded the definition of school leadership past the position of principal but as universal concept regarding the school systems' overall preparation of students for college.

Participants also view a leader as one who will make sure urban students are as prepared for college as their suburban counterparts. For example, one student talked about basic skills vs. critical skills.

Then you come to college after the basic skills test. Of course Ridgewood and other white communities will have higher test scores because their students take classes further than basic skills. They are not just learning math, they are learning math applied to this and math applied to that. At the schools we went to, you just learn enough to get by.

This quote mirrored similar participant perspectives on their preparation experience in high school for college. There is a reported perception of not being rigorously prepared for college like those who live in suburban and predominately white communities. This quote reveals that participants believed that urban schools do not academically challenge students in the same manner as suburban students. Furthermore, it indicates a standard of reaching mediocrity (basic skills) for urban students.

Educational Importance and Implications

This paper explored the perspectives of PT4T scholars, also urban teacher candidates - on their preparation experience as it relates support, school change and school leadership. The results reveal broad and diverse implications for pedagogy, social development, and university policy.

Data indicate that in order to fully prepare teacher urban teacher candidates to work in urban school settings, we must equip them with the tools necessary to critically analyze the schools in which they teach. This will require urban teacher candidates to read specific literature about school leadership and school change. This information will empower them to become effective change agents in any school system.

Results from this study also indicate other major curriculum ideas for teacher education. Infusing information on the dispositions of an effective school leader and the notions of respect and efficacy may help to effectively prepare teachers for urban classrooms. These ideas support several of Patterson, Patterson & Collins' (2002) strengths that increase resiliency in school leaders.

Results also indicate that future urban teachers see school students as active participants in school change. This grass roots perspective builds on the notion of emergent leadership that comes from school participants and that is empowering.

Additionally, urban teacher preparation programs need to require teacher candidates to discuss and analyze school change models. This will build their skills in critical thinking, problem solving and organizational development. The expansion of this knowledge based will help increase the ability of urban teachers to negotiate their teaching experience as difficulties arise.

Results indicate that higher education institutions need to develop services that respond to the academic and social needs of students, which meet the unique characteristics of their students and institution (Sherman, Giles, Williams-Green, 1999). This will require the internal development of assessment tools and research methods specific to the institution. Moreover, this requires institutions to allocate time and funding to complete the assessment and program development processes.

These results indicate that there needs to be an evaluation of how services are delivered to minority students from the admissions process to graduation. Consequently, the university must identify and remedy these gaps in service delivery to increase the retention rates of minority students.

Results of this study also enable higher education institutions to find new ways of developing pipelines of effective leaders for urban schools. Universities must develop aggressive urban student teacher recruitment programs to meet the needs of the nation's urban schools. This will help decrease the urban class room size and give students the attention that they need to excel.

If we are to truly affect change in urban schools, we must find ways to recruit teachers who have firm identities and teacher selves (Hill, 2003), who are not afraid to "rock the boat" (Gillette, 2003), and who desire to obtain educational success, or freedom, for themselves and for their community. This study advances our knowledge of teacher candidates for urban schools, teacher retention, and teacher recruitment.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

1. How would you describe your interactions with faculty in the classroom?

2. Beyond student teaching, what can prospective school districts provide to help you successfully complete your academic program?

3. How can WPU's current support services be improved for students?

4. How do you motivate yourself to perform well in courses that seem irrelevant to real life?

5. From an Urban teacher candidate perspective, what support systems do you need to be successful in completing your academic program in higher education?

6. In K-12 schools, what is your idea of school leadership? Provide an example.

7. What is your idea of school change?

8. In K-12 schools, give an example of school change.

9. Is school change important? Why or Why not?

10. From the urban teacher perspective what support systems do you need to be successful as a change agent for community uplift?

11. As a teacher, do you believe that you will be able to facilitate school change?

12. In your elementary and high school experience, who in administration did you perceive to be a positive example of a change agent? Why?

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For further information about the ULTR or its activities, please email Dr. Rosario S. Morales at rmorale@exchange.calstatela.edu or write to:

Dr. Rosario S. Morales
Charter College of Education
California State University, Los Angeles
5151 State University Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90032