

**A Discussion Paper:**  
**Toward Identifying Attributes**  
**of**  
***Urban* Teacher Education**

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### *Introduction*

This paper is intended to generate discussion and promote further investigation into the attributes of teacher preparation programs designed specifically to prepare teachers for high poverty *urban* schools (50 percent or more students receiving free or reduced lunch). The ultimate goal is to identify just what programmatic policies and practices promote prospective teacher learning and development and in turn their students' learning and achievement.

The paper first examines definitions of urban and particularly urban high poverty neighborhoods. It argues that while the myriad interaction between a teacher and her or his students is the greatest determinant of student learning, those interactions are mediated in profound ways by the neighborhood in which the youngster lives and the general character of urban school districts and schools. In this regard, the correlation between students dropping out and teachers leaving urban schools after an abbreviated period is addressed. The multiple costs of teacher turnover and churn are examined.

The writer shares his core premises regarding urban teacher preparation, developed over several decades of promoting and studying programs designed specifically to prepare teachers for urban schools. An expansive perspective is taken viewing urban teacher preparation as *ideally* beginning in general studies, calling for rigorous professional preparation and extending in a seamless fashion into a multi-year induction program. The direct link between how schools are organized and teacher are prepared is underscored and the writer calls for simultaneous, aligned and intersecting renewal in teacher preparation and K-12 schools.

*Diversity as value-added* is a cornerstone upon which these programs can be built and this core value permeates a socio-cultural framework for teaching and learning, which addresses the question of just what type of teaching we expect from these future teachers. Derived from studies of exemplary programs of teacher preparation, a programmatic framework is put forward in the nature of a heuristic for further study. Distinctive understandings and abilities for urban teachers are identified to be addressed in an iterative thematic manner throughout the preparation programs.

Finally, brief attention is given to the nature of a distinctive approach to the general studies preparation and induction programming that sandwich professional studies. The necessity of being very clear about the nature of clinical training or preparation is underscored.

### *The Urban Context*

The Urban Serving Universities' (USU's) Urban Educator Corps (UEC) has as a priority recruiting, preparing, placing and retaining teachers for *urban* schools and especially *high poverty urban* schools. In this regard, it is helpful to first define urban. Urban can be defined first in terms of population density as the following sources illustrate. First, the Census Bureau classifies as "urban" all territory, population, and housing units located within an urbanized area (UA) or an urban cluster (UC). It delineates UA and UC boundaries to encompass densely settled territory, which consists of

- core census block groups or blocks that have a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile and

- surrounding census blocks that have an overall density of at least 500 people per square mile.

Wikipedia reports that an urban area is an area with an increased density of human-created structures in comparison to the areas surrounding it. Urban areas may be cities, towns or conurbations, but the term is not commonly extended to rural settlements such as villages or hamlets. The website Demographia adds that an urban area means an area of continuous urban development. An urban area will virtually never be the same as a municipality. Usually it will include many municipalities, though in the case of many geographically large municipalities, such as Anchorage or Shanghai, the urban areas will be smaller than the core city. For example, the Chicago urban area (population over 8,000,000) includes the city of Chicago and many other cities. An urban area might be thought of as defined by the lights seen from an airplane on a clear night. Urban neighborhoods within UA's or UC's vary widely.

The USU's have as a priority not only preparing teachers but also contributing to successful community-wide partnerships, school district and individual school reform, especially in high poverty neighborhoods wherein there are often failing schools. Thus, the USU's core mission also addresses health disparities and more general community renewal and development as well as improved teacher preparation. A forerunner to USU's Urban Educator Corps was the Urban Network to Improve Teacher Education (UNITE, 1996), a coalition of universities working in partnership to reform teacher education programs particularly focused on preparing teachers for *high poverty urban* schools. UNITE identified the following general attributes of high poverty urban neighborhoods and the school districts and schools attached to them. There exists:

1. the physical and structural properties of neighborhoods in decay,
2. fragile family structures,
3. influential youth subcultures, often oppositional to school norms and conventions,
4. both historical and contemporary racism,
5. segregation, even hyper-segregation,
6. policies and practices that sustain a weak attachment to labor markets,
7. urban school districts that tend to be both highly bureaucratic and highly political organizations with the inability to respond in a timely manner,
8. individual schools that are often lacking in facilities and resources as well as stable faculty and students populations.

In summary, UNITE and the UEC hold to the premise that you cannot understand a child outside the context of their family and you can't understand a family outside the context of their neighborhood. As well, a thorough understanding of school districts and schools in high poverty neighborhoods is also essential.

### *Understanding Urban School Districts and Schools*

As Weiner (1993) argued, while the nexus between teacher and student is critical in determining student success, this relationship needs to be nested in a clearer understanding of urban, high poverty locales as well as the school districts and the individual schools within them. She writes "by using 'inner city' as a euphemism in describing poor children of color, educators have encouraged confusion about two wholly different issues, the demands of the setting and the needs of the children. The issues of student characteristics and school setting are interwoven but not identical, and the use of

‘urban’ or ‘inner city’ to describe students has muddled discussion of both topics and obscured the relationship between them. Scholarship in the social sciences has confirmed that the urban school setting shapes student and teacher performance. Yet, for the most part, discussion of urban teacher preparation has ignored this work and remains fixed on identifying characteristics of teachers and students, completely divorced from the school context. Using the work of sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and historians in a study of urban teacher preparation shifts the traditional focus on individual student and teacher attributes to a broader portrait of schooling that includes analysis of problems generally excluded, like funding and school regulations” (p.10).

There is danger in labeling and lumping poor and minority students together and not acknowledging that there is great diversity therein and that these youngsters have a range of aspirations and strengths as well as understandable obstacles to overcome in contexts characterized by economic deprivation. As Rentel and Dittmer (1999) wrote:

Sensitivity and deep appreciation for children, their circumstances, and their uniqueness are essential but not sufficient for successful teaching in inner city schools. Teachers require administrative and economic support as well. The common, recurring temperament of urban schools is to bury teachers and students in rules, anonymity, lock-step programs, and standardized examinations that drive curricula. The problem for teacher educators is to prepare teachers to resist the forces that strip them and their students of both individuality and community while denying them the opportunity to deal with each other in human terms (1999, p.16)

A potentially powerful and integrative strategy then is to prepare veteran teachers for leadership and teacher education roles concurrently with prospective teachers to address both ends of the teacher education continuum simultaneously. The goal is to enable these veteran teachers to both work in all facets of initial teacher preparation and at the same time develop the leadership understanding and abilities to help combat the kinds of conditions identified by Rentel and Dittmer; that is to enable more positive interaction between and learning by teachers as well their students.

A collective as well as individual sense of efficacy needs to take hold. Teachers in these challenging school settings with less than desired high stakes test scores have to overcome the pressure to just ‘teach to the test.’ They indeed have to address the tests - and in substantive ways - but also teach in creative and caring ways that are not bounded by or tied to these tests. Teaching in collaborative structures wherein they can concentrate on their teaching strengths assists greatly in this regard. Having test scores examined in terms of gains from one year to the next also helps. The school district and the school can also make the particular challenges which different schools address, such as high student transiency, more public as a needed context for interpreting the test scores. Finally, employing multiple measures of student learning, such as student work samples and portfolios, is essential. It is imperative that teachers have the ability to blend multiple forms of assessment into their teaching.

Just as policies, practices and conditions in school districts can mediate teaching and learning in powerful ways, surely the same applies to conditions in *schools*. It is a psychometric challenge to sort out teacher effects on student learning from school effects

on student learning. Two similarly competent and caring teachers in two quite different schools can obtain quite different results. Goe (2007) summarized conditions that are correlated with differences in student achievement. Although the following list is not exhaustive, it includes many of the variables often correlated with differences in student achievement:

- school climate
- students' peers
- absenteeism
- students' fluency in English
- community support for schooling
- parental "press" for schooling
- availability of resources (textbooks, supplementary materials to support learning, laboratories, computers, Internet connectivity, libraries)
- appropriate facilities (orderly, safe, and comfortable, with adequate space to conduct a range of learning activities)
- instructional offerings appropriate to the grade level
- time on task without intrusions (from announcements, disturbances in the halls, disruptive classmates, other adults or students entering and exiting the classroom)
- alignment of curriculum with books and materials
- alignment of books and curriculum with the standardized test
- appropriate support for teachers (induction, mentoring, and high-quality professional development opportunities)
- Teachers' sense of community and collegiality
- Release time during regular school hours for teachers to engage in professional development (observing colleagues' classrooms, engaging in collaboration, and attending professional development) (p.11)

This author would argue that teams or communities of qualified teachers working closely together over time is a critically important variable as well.

### *Why the Emphasis on Preparing Teachers for Urban Schools*

This writer argues that it is a moral imperative that the USU Urban Educator Corps have as a priority recruiting, preparing, and retaining teachers for high poverty schools. While the largest 100 urban school districts represent less than one-tenth of one percent of the almost 17,000 public school districts in the United States, they educate almost one quarter (23 percent) of all public school students in the country. These 100 urban districts serve two of every five nonwhite students and a third of all students from low-income families (Education Commission of the States, 2003).

Too often urban students are ill served. Despite repeated calls over the past three decades for educational reform and renewal, urban student academic proficiency in math and reading remains below national averages, the achievement gap between white and minority students remains unacceptably large and urban high-school dropout rates are unacceptably high. A recent study of 600 schools in 35 of America's largest urban school districts revealed that in more than 300 of them, 50 percent of those enrolled in 9<sup>th</sup> grade failed to complete 12<sup>th</sup> grade with their cohort. More than half of these weakest schools had at least a 90 percent minority enrollment (Balfanz & Legters, 2001).

This crisis is most visible in our nation's 50 most heavily populated cities, as reported in a study undertaken by Swanson at the Editorial Project in Education Research Center (2008):

Our analysis finds that graduating from high school in America's largest cities amounts, essentially, to a coin toss. *Only about one-half (52%) of students in the principal districts of the 50 largest cities complete high school with a diploma.* That rate is well below the national graduation rate of 70%, and even falls short of the average for urban districts across the country (60%). Only six of these 50 principal districts reach or exceed the national average...

The principal school districts of *America's 50 largest cities collectively educate 1.7 million public high school students* – one out of every eight in the country. However, these 50 education agencies *account for nearly one-quarter (23%) of the 1.2 million students nationwide who fail to graduate with a diploma each year.* (Swanson, p. 8, italics added)

The pernicious personal effects on tens of thousands of young people is incalculable. In addition, concentrating large portions of our cities' young people in schools that are low-performing and fail to graduate the majority of their students has profound implications for the economic future of our urban centers. As Paul Loeb (1999) has noted, young people in the bottom economic quarter of the population have only a 4percent chance of graduating from college by age 24, a percentage that has actually been declining since 1979 when more than a quarter of such students would graduate.

#### *Urban School Conditions and Teacher Quality*

While it is important to remember that urban districts are hardly alike – in fact they represent a 'stunning' diversity of social, academic and cultural assets (Cuban, 2001, p.48) – the sad truth in America today is that the majority of urban schools face a host of similar challenges. As parents in America's cities know too well, "schooling is at its worst where the kids' life experiences are at their worst" (Berliner, 1997, p.25). Urban schools are more likely to have:

- Larger percentages of poor students (90 percent of urban districts have poverty rates above statewide averages).
- Larger enrollments than non-urban counterparts (705 students versus 504 students).
- More students per classroom.
- Larger percentages of students for whom English is a second language (three-quarters or urban schools have higher percentages of English language learners than their state's average) (ECS, 2003).

In addition to these challenges, urban schools must contend with fewer resources to combat them. The Education Trust found that across the United States in 2001, on average, districts with the greatest number of poor students receive almost \$1,000 less per student than districts with the fewest poor students (Carey, 2003).

More troubling than these structural and financial differences, however, is the disparity in teacher quality in urban public schools, compared to more affluent suburban counterparts. Teachers at predominantly high-poverty urban schools are frequently less

qualified. Nationally, students in the schools with the highest minority enrollments have less than a 50 percent chance of getting a mathematics or science teacher with a license and a degree in the field that they teach (Edley, 2002). Jepsen and Rivkin (2002) in their study of class-size reduction in California, reported that minority students in high-poverty schools were six times more likely not to have a fully qualified teacher than white students in low-poverty schools.

Why is it that there is such disparity in the quality of many teachers in higher poverty urban schools? First, many new teachers are prepared in “fast track” programs and are ill-prepared to teach in such schools. Second, they don’t receive adequate support and continuing intensive on-the-job-education once they take a position. Third, there are not enough highly qualified teachers and other district and university personnel working in a *collaborative* manner to assist them and to institute a school culture and organization that allows the school to be successful. This huge disparity in teacher quality is of immense importance because we know that qualified teachers make a major difference. Research during the past decade, studies involving more than half a million students and 3,000 teachers (Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain, 1998, rev. 2000), have identified the single most important variable in improving student learning: the quality of the teacher in the classroom.

#### *Urban School Conditions and Teacher Dropouts*

The *student dropout* epidemic in our urban schools is associated with another pressing problem; it is the *teacher dropout* rate. Teachers are not only leaving the profession in increasing numbers, they are doing so earlier in their careers, and particularly leaving those schools that need qualified teachers the most – high-need, high poverty urban public schools. Almost half of the teachers in urban schools have been in their school for three years or less and the principal for only four years. High-poverty schools experience considerably higher annual turnover rates (15.2%) than do low-poverty schools (10.5%) (Ingersoll, 2001). Similarly, Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004) found that high-minority schools in Texas experienced higher rates of turnover than did low-minority schools.

The costs of such teacher turnover are substantial in terms of dollars, school efficacy, and student learning. The *financial* costs to replace teachers include the recruitment, hiring, placement, orientation, induction and professional development of the replacement teachers. There are various estimates of these costs, but a conservative figure, derived from guidelines employed by the U.S. Department of Labor, estimates turnover costs at 30% of the departing employee’s salary. In the decade between 1996 and 2006 some 2.7 million teachers left the profession at various stages of their careers. If one used a fairly conservative estimate of 30 percent of a salary of \$50,000, the total costs of replacing these teachers would be an astounding 40.5 billion dollars. Whatever the dollar estimate, this is only part of the cost of teacher turnover.

Teachers who leave the profession impact school effectiveness, disrupting staff cohesion, institutional memory, curriculum continuity across grade levels and collective accountability. The loss in regard to the operation of the school is largely incalculable, but has direct implications for the remaining teachers as well as students.

Finally, there are instructional costs in the constant churn that is evident in such urban schools. The continuing influx of new teachers unfamiliar with both the

curriculum and the community contributes directly to persistently weak instruction and student learning. What is patently clear is that continuing education in the early critical, formative first years of teaching in the way of *programs* of teacher induction are much in need if we are to stem the tide of teacher dropouts.

Ultimately, it is teachers who make the difference - teachers who understand and can accommodate the nested contexts in which they operate; that is urban neighborhoods, the school district and their school. Teachers in high-poverty urban schools, as with all competent and caring teachers, have to know the content they teach in-depth as well as how to actively engage youngsters with that content. Content and pedagogy are two of the legs of a three-legged stool supporting teacher preparation. The youngsters they teach and the contexts in which those youngsters live and learn are the critical third leg of the stool. What do programs look like that address this latter set of understandings, sensitivities and abilities?

### *Core Premises Regarding the Preparation of Teachers for Urban Schools*

Before specific attributes of programs of urban teacher preparation are addressed, it might be helpful to share premises about this endeavor which this writer holds after several decades of work in the design, development and study of urban teacher education programs. I argue that:

1. Teacher preparation and school renewal should be reciprocal, interlocking endeavors.
2. Teacher development should be viewed as an aligned continuum from coursework and experiences in general studies, through professional study into a multi-year induction program.
3. Strong partnership arrangements are needed with key leaders in the university, the school district, the teacher's union, the policy arena, and the community at large working together in a sustained and persistent manner in order to advance aligned reform in teacher preparation and school renewal.
4. Teachers and other P-12 school personnel should be centrally involved in all aspects of teacher preparation; conversely university faculty should be partners in school renewal.
5. Teacher preparation is truly an all-university enterprise involving multiple academic units and strong central leadership. Faculty in the Arts, Letters and Sciences in partnership with the faculty in the School of Education and P-12 professionals are responsible not only for strong pedagogical content preparation for teachers but also in-depth disciplinary and cross disciplinary study addressing the multiple cultures and communities found in urban contexts.
6. Programs preparing teachers for urban schools and urban school communities are grounded in a corpus of knowledge about high performance teaching and learning in such settings wherein the experiences and assets of students' homes and communities are acknowledged.
7. Teacher education reform and school renewal are aided by formal networking and continuing interaction with others engaged in similar initiatives in urban settings across the country.
8. The ultimate criterion for assessing the efficacy of teacher preparation should be pupil learning and achievement on trustworthy measures.

9. Support for this criterion is undergirded by the belief that all youngsters can and should succeed in school.
10. Teacher preparation is of necessity an inquiry driven enterprise with continuing formative assessment needed to ensure improvements over time.

### *Teacher Preparation and School Renewal*

Allow me to address briefly the first of these premises before I expand on a few of the others. This writer holds to the position that the manner in which schools are organized and teachers are prepared are directly related one to the other and that they represent a deep structural flaw in our educational enterprise. In a recent chapter for a book titled *Building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century U.S. Education System* (2007) and published by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, this writer along with Zimpher posed the problem as follows:

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) (1996) called for schools organized for success. What do such schools look like? Studies of effective schools have yielded a growing corpus of knowledge that demonstrates that youngsters, in their early formative years especially, succeed academically when schools are organized so that youngsters remain together for multiple years with the same teachers working closely together in teams. Teachers in these teams have differentiated but complementary responsibilities for providing high quality instruction and support to their students. The curriculum in these schools is organized so that fewer subjects than typical are taught at any given time and correspondingly fewer, albeit major, ideas and concepts are pursued in greater depth and for sustained periods of time.

Despite increasing evidence as to how teachers and the curriculum should be organized and time structured in school, elementary teachers commonly continue to be prepared to work alone in lock-step, graded organizations wherein they attempt to teach a wide range of subjects to a different group of youngsters every year. An outdated school structure and a competitive rather than cooperative school culture remains pervasive. A major reason for this is the manner in which most teachers are prepared.

In order to move to a new and improved model of schooling, both how schools are organized and how teachers are prepared will have to change in a *simultaneous* model of renewal and reform. If teachers are prepared to work in collaborative cultures, jointly prepare instructional materials, and mutually evaluate student work, and then can only find positions in self-contained classrooms, little will have been accomplished. Similarly, attempting to change schools without fundamentally changing the nature of teacher preparation won't work either. Teachers will have great difficulty working in teams if they have been prepared as an independent operator (2007, p. 90,91).

### *Diversity as Value Added*

The rich diversity that exists across the faculty members and student body in most urban universities also contributes to students' appreciation of and ability to flourish in urban schools and urban communities. In her testimony in support of the affirmative

action undertaken at the University of Michigan Law School, Gurin (2000) delineated three types of diversity and the long-term positive benefits for students who had the opportunity to engage extensively in each. She defined the *structural diversity* of an institution primarily in terms of the racial and ethnic composition of the student body. The incorporation of knowledge about diversity in the curriculum she labeled *classroom diversity*. Equally important, she argued, is informal *interactional diversity* in the host of social, cultural, entertainment, and athletic events available in university settings. A fourth dimension this writer would add is *instructional diversity*, found in faculty members who have the pedagogical or instructional expertise to draw positively upon diversity in their classroom interactions. As Gurin underscored in her review of the literature: “a racially and ethnically diverse university student body has far-ranging and significant benefits for all students, non-minority and minorities alike. Students learn better in a diverse educational environment, and they are better prepared to become active participants in our pluralistic, democratic society once they leave such a setting” (p. 1).

Knowing how to capitalize on diversity is critical to the success of teachers in urban contexts. Capitalizing on diversity has manifold dimensions. When put at the center of teaching and learning interactions and transactions, it promotes not only cognitive but social and cultural development. Much of the curricular content engaged in by students at any given time is enriched by multiple perspectives. If students are repeatedly asked to contribute to discourse and discussion in ways that build on their cultural capital and their particular perspectives and in turn they are socialized to listen carefully to their peers who have different experiences and different views, then *both* their understanding of the subject matter is enriched and their understanding and respect for alternative views and the individuals who hold these are enhanced as well. Classrooms continuously allow for social development concurrent with cognitive growth. The accomplished teacher, like a symphony director, orchestrates the individual diversity and distinctiveness in her classroom into a harmonious community.

### *A Socio-Cultural Framework for Teaching and Learning*

At the cornerstone of any program of teacher preparation, urban or otherwise, is a clear conception of teaching and learning and the powerful interactions and transactions which occur in these often reciprocal endeavors. Because of the diversity common in so many urban schools, language, culture, race, and social status are essential properties of such a delineation of teaching and learning; it lays the groundwork for the program. *Learning* best occurs when it is active, is related to prior experiences and personal beliefs, and is often self-directed and self-regulated. A central point in terms of *learning in schools* especially is that students know how to learn with and from one another.

This ambitious conception of *learning* has direct and major implication for how one views *teaching* and is prepared as a teacher. While whole-group, teacher-directed instruction can surely be effective for given purposes and for abbreviated periods, the priority in teaching is on establishing learning communities wherein all members (students) assume responsibility not only for their learning but also for assisting and learning from one another. The development of such abilities can be promoted by teachers regardless of the subject matter and regardless of the age of the students involved. Students explicitly sharing not only what they think they know, believe, or feel but also more fundamentally, how and why they have come to these understandings,

attitudes, and behaviors characterize classroom culture. Again, the social and cultural dimensions of a classroom greatly mediate the nature and extent of learning. Borko and Putnam (1998) underscored this point:

Rather, interaction with the people in one's environment are major determinants of both what is learned and how learning takes place. This *sociocentric* perspective (Soltis, 1981) represents a confluence of ideas from numerous disciplines, including philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, linguistics, and literary theory. In psychology, much of the current emphasis on social aspects of learning and knowing has its basis in the work of Vygotsky (1978) and other Soviet activity theorists (Leontev, 1981).

From this sociocentric perspective, what we take as knowledge and how we think and express ideas are the products of the interactions of groups of people over time (Soltis, 1982). Individuals participate in numerous discourse communities (Fish, 1989; Michaels & O'Connor, 1990; Resnick, 1991), ranging from scholarly disciplines such as science or history, to groups of people sharing a common interest, to various workplaces and profession [and the author of this proposal would underscore classrooms as well]. These discourse communities provide the cognitive tools – ideas, theories, and concepts – that individuals appropriate as their own through their personal efforts to make sense of experiences. An important part of what it means to become competent in a particular domain is to learn the forms of argument and discourse – the accepted ways of reasoning, acting, and valuing – within that disciplinary community. (p. 38)

More specific to learning in an urban school setting is the theoretical and empirical corpus of knowledge that has been developed by scholars and practitioners over several decades at the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE). Over time these scholars developed six teaching standards particularly appropriate to *diverse* school settings. Space does not permit elaboration on the specific standards but Dalton (1998), at that time one of the leading scholars at CREDE, captured the socio-cultural nature of the research and theory undergirding those standards when she wrote:

More than ever before, teaching or pedagogy means that teachers assist students continuously through interaction and activity in the ongoing social events of the classroom. For example, oral language development undergirds all exchanges that teachers have with their students, not only in lessons. Pedagogy also means that teachers learn about their students' homes and communities to understand how to draw on local funds of knowledge for academic learning. Today's pedagogy applies the concepts and findings of research that show promise for all students' achievement, such as communities of learners, language development, guided participation, emergent literacy, funds of knowledge, cultural compatibility and instruction conversation (Brown & Campione, 1994; Cobb, 1994; Gonzalez et al., 1993; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Purcell-Gates, 1995; Rogoff et al., 1996; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Vogt, Jordan & Tharp, 1992). This

pedagogical movement as it is demonstrated in many classrooms complements the efforts of standards-based reform (p.5).

### *A Programmatic Framework*

Just as a theoretical-empirical undergirding is essential for determining just what kind of teaching and learning the program is intending to promote, in a broader sense such a framework is also needed to determine the type of teacher education *program* that is being implemented. This writer and Zimpher (1989) were among the first scholars to study just what constitutes a *program* of teacher preparation and we found multiple positive derivatives from programs having explicit conceptual frameworks. We stressed these positive attributes as follows:

Programs have one or more frameworks grounded in theory and research as well as practice; frameworks that explicate, justify, and build consensus around such fundamental conceptions as the *role* of the teacher, the *nature* of teaching and learning, and the *mission* of school in this democracy... Programs embedded in such frameworks clearly establish priorities in terms of key dispositional attitudes and behaviors that are enabled and monitored in repeated structured experiences. Programs reflect consideration of ethos and culture building and the critical socialization of the prospective teacher. The nature and function of collegial relationships is considered both between and among faculty and students as well as with those who assume responsibilities for teacher preparation in K-12 schools. Conceptually coherent programs enable needed and *shared* faculty leadership by underscoring collective roles as well as individual course responsibilities. Programs also contribute to more mutual endeavors in research and evaluation beyond the individual course level. Various student cohort arrangements and other temporary social systems such as inquiry teams, cooperative learning structures, or political action committees are considered. Finally, programs provide considerable guidance both in terms of the nature and pattern of preprofessional study and also extended experiences in school in the nature of induction programs. (p. 242)

Understanding the *structural* and *organizational* as well as the *curricular* and *instructional* properties of programs greatly assists in eliminating the “black box” of teacher education; that is, they help identify just what is it that produces desired outcomes or effects in prospective teachers.

### *An Urban Teacher Education Mission Statement*

Beyond a conceptual framework, urban programs should have mission statements which speak directly to the urban context. Each teacher education program in UNITE, for example, had an explicit mission statement as illustrated in the following example:

The purpose of the program is to prepare highly qualified teachers to work in schools in urban/multicultural settings with children who come primarily from impoverished families. It is framed in the disciplines of social foundations, particularly sociology and anthropology of education. The politics of schooling

are examined through a sociological analysis of school structures. They examine the ways in which political and social structures impact teachers' work lives in urban school bureaucracies. The traditional "methods" of language arts, science, math, and social studies are addressed within the *sociocultural context of children's lives*. The methods portion of our program is also grounded in transformative school practices based in the premise that traditional schooling has often not been successful in urban/multicultural communities and that teachers must have a wide repertoire of pedagogical and curricular practices that engage students from diverse communities.

### *Urban Core Competencies and Derivational Themes*

Once again, it cannot be stated strongly enough again that teachers need to know the subject matter they teach in depth and need to be able to engage youngsters with it in multiple ways. This is a bedrock, and essential precondition, but it is not enough to succeed in many urban classrooms. Within both the UNITE consortium and the Urban Educator Corps one can find multiple examples of the core competencies established for teachers who teach in high need urban schools. The following example orders these understandings and abilities into four clusters as follows:

#### Developing a Learning Community

- Sensitive to the experiences of low-income students from diverse backgrounds
- Identifies sociocultural factors that influence student development
- Can promote a community of diverse learners
- Provides a safe and supportive school experience responsive to cultural differences

#### Assessing At-Risk and Protective Factors

- Knowledge of at-risk factors in urban communities and their influence on student development, such as poverty, prenatal substance exposure, child abuse and neglect and gang involvement
- Conducts assessments including information on home and community

#### Developing Personal Social Competency

- Knowledge of materials that examine social problems
- Knowledge of educational practices designed to develop self-efficacy, social interaction skills, and interpersonal problem solving
- Skill in implementation of units of instruction that address simultaneously both academic and social goals

#### Teachers as Advocates

- Knowledge of and able to access available community resources including health and social services
- Works in cooperation with other professionals and families, educating parents as to their legal rights and assisting parents to obtain appropriate services

Across UNITE and UEC sites the following were common understandings and abilities addressed in a thematic spiraling manner over time; these programs:

- Provided knowledge of sociocultural and political factors that influence learning and behavior by youngsters in and out of school.

- Helped them understand forms of bias and discontinuity in curriculum materials and classroom interaction (e.g., linguistic bias, invisibility, stereotyping).
- Engaged them through both scholarly analyses and in-depth experience with another culture and language in order to examine in-depth their own cultural norms, references, and behavior patterns.
- Helped them examine in a continuing manner the interactions and relationships between language, learning, and culture.
- Enabled them to inventory resources and assets in urban communities and how these can be brought to bear to enable learning in and out of school.
- Helped them understand biases and prejudices as these relate to social class, race, gender, religion, sexual preference, and such commonplace manifestations in school as dress, physical appearance, ability, and behavior.
- Enabled them to engage subject matter and social issues especially from multiple perspectives.
- Assisted them in becoming advocates for all youth and especially those who do not have equal opportunities (1996, p. 26).

The following examples of competencies and understandings thematically addressed in teacher education programs at the University of Louisville is instructive:

- The teacher respects the dignity and worth of students as individuals and as members of racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, gender, and economic groups.
- The teacher seeks professional development opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding and to affirm various and diverse groups.
- The teacher provides continuous opportunities for students to develop a better sense of self, to strengthen their self-identities, to develop greater self-understanding, and to better understand themselves in light of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious heritages and special needs.
- The teacher designs curriculum that reflects knowledge of societal problems some group members experience such as racism, prejudice, discrimination, and exploitation.
- The teacher works with parents, families, and caretakers of students to serve the best interests of their children; makes use of local community resources; and encourages students in the study of the local community by enlisting members and contexts within the community as classroom resources. (2006, p. 46-47)

In summary, urban program structures should accommodate a balance between activities on campus and in urban schools and urban neighborhood communities and community agencies; a balance between theory and practice, action and reflection, and challenge and support.

### *General Studies as the Launching Pad for Urban Teacher Preparation*

Simply immersing the prospective teacher in an urban school cannot be what defines an urban teacher education program. It should be very clear that this writer advocates a very robust and challenging form of teacher preparation for teachers who will be highly effective and remain in urban high-poverty schools. This preparation, ideally, would begin in general studies and proceed in a seamless fashion into the early critical formative years of teaching. General studies need not only to address strong content

preparation and *pedagogical* content preparation but also provide opportunity for gaining understandings and appreciation of diverse urban cultures and communities. Such a cultures and communities curriculum is important for a variety of reasons including the fact that the present and projected teaching force is grossly underrepresented in terms of race and ethnicity relative to the population of K-12 students.

In our nation's 100 largest public school districts, which enroll almost one-fourth of all public school students, just under 70% are students of color (NCES, 2003). In contrast, prospective teachers are also overwhelmingly white, female, and monolingual. Zumwalt and Craig (2005) report:

In its most recent data, AACTE (1999) reported that White students made up 80.5% of enrollment in SCDEs [schools, colleges, and departments of education], a 2-percentage points decline since their initial study in 1989. African Americans increased their representation over the decade to 9%, a 40% increase, and Hispanics comprised 4.7% or 80% higher than before. Asian and Pacific Americans and Native Americans comprised 1.7% and 0.7% respectively...Prospective teachers are different from the K-12 student population in another conspicuous way. Most are English-only speakers, whereas in the last decade, the number of school children with limited English skills doubled to 5 million (p. 115).

It is clear that much needs to be done to develop understanding and appreciation of diverse culture and communities. When this writer moved from Ohio State to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, a university with a distinctive urban mission, he worked closely with a group of colleagues to design a general education requirement that would also be distinctively *urban* in nature. The idea was to identify scholars who taught core disciplines in general studies but who also focused their disciplinary and trans-disciplinary scholarship on the urban context. These professors teamed with urban teachers and other community leaders. These teams developed what is not called a Cultures and Communities general education strand. This Cultures and Communities curriculum is particularly appropriate for prospective teachers but is offered to any interested students as a core aspect of their general studies. It is designed:

- to allow students to acquire an understanding of the local community and its diverse neighborhoods as these exist in the context of an interdependent global community through scholarly study and firsthand experience. This series of courses examines community contexts through such lenses as those provided by the urban historian, the urban sociologist, the urban cultural anthropologist, the urban political scientist, and the urban geographer. Similarly, courses in literature, the fine arts, architecture, business, engineering, and religion, all allow our students to acquire multiple interpretations and understandings of community.
- to provide all students with multiple opportunities to apply their learning in a problem-oriented manner in real community contexts and to engage in some service learning as part of this series of courses.
- to ensure all students in these courses are positively socialized in a planful manner through interaction with a sustained student cohort or persistent learning group

that is structured to reflect differences in race, culture, gender, age, and background experience.

This general studies option is intended to recruit as well as educate prospective teachers and especially prospective teachers of color.

*Extending Teacher Preparation, Induction and Residencies*

Teacher induction or entry year programs are a critical element in any comprehensive approach to teacher education. This critical period of time draws attention to issues of teacher education, teacher evaluation, licensure, and the respective but different roles of educational partners in these endeavors. Feiman-Nemser and her colleagues (1999) noted that when induction is defined primarily as a short-term support to help teachers *survive* their first year on the job, then its role in fostering quality teaching and learning is greatly diminished. They described the type of teaching that should be fostered in this induction period:

To teach in ways that support and extend student thinking, teachers must be able to elicit and interpret students' ideas and generate appropriate pedagogical moves as the lesson unfolds (Ball & Wilson, 1996; Heaton & Lampert, 1990; Lampert, 1985). The need to attend to what students say and construct appropriate responses on a moment-to-moment basis rather than following a prepared lesson plan places special demands on teachers. It also highlights challenging aspects of teaching which must ultimately be learned in practice learning to size up teaching situations, investigate what students are thinking, and use the information gathered to inform and improve practice (1999, p. 18).

A national study of *urban* teacher induction programs and practices was completed by Recruiting New Teachers, a non-profit organization addressing the shortage of qualified teachers in the United States. This report, authored by Fideler and Haselkorn (1999) reviews diverse efforts to provide for beginning teachers in *urban* areas and makes the following six general recommendations with regard to induction programs. The programs should:

1. View induction as a multiyear, developmental process and an extension of preservice preparation.
2. Ensure that school administrators understand how to orient inductees, create supportive working conditions for them, and effectively meet their professional needs.
3. Provide a first-class mentoring program backed up by funding adequate to serve all eligible inductees.
4. Link the inductee evaluation to district- and state-level standards for what a beginning teacher should know and be able to do.
5. Invest in technology to facilitate communication between and among inductees, their mentors, and university faculty.
6. Evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. (1999, p. 116-117)

Fideler and Haselkorn, as Feiman-Nemser and her colleagues, stress the *educative* aspects of induction, viewing it, as this author does, as an *extension* of preservice preparation and a multiyear endeavor.

Entry years(s) or induction programs obviously cannot be some peripheral nicety in which a nominal orientation to the school and the district is provided to the first-year teacher and they are assigned a “buddy” or “mentor” teacher with whom they can meet occasionally to learn the “lay of the land in schools” but with little attention to the urban school community. Rather, veteran collaborating or consulting teachers who have the time, understanding, and support to assist them are needed. These veteran teachers should be provided rigorous preparation themselves consonant with the best understandings that have been acquired about what it means to learn to teach. Learning to teach is not some form of social modeling behavior wherein a novice teacher can learn by observing more expert and experienced teachers. Rather it is a developmental process of acquiring principles to guide sound teaching practice; of making explicit “theories-in-use.” This highly *clinical* enterprise is best undertaken through sustained discourse between novice and expert guided by inquiry into practice and especially examination of teacher impact on student work. Rentel (1994) describes the type of teacher reasoning desired:

Growth of teaching knowledge and skill is an extraordinarily complex process, apparently organized around a web of abstract beliefs, principles, and justifications about the teaching of rather specific subjects. Yet the process of growth is deeply sensitive to students and to the social and political contexts of classroom and school life. No simple description of subject mastery can capture how teachers become skilled in their craft...The most direct implication of this literature on teachers’ reasoning for preservice teacher preparation is that preservice teachers should be exposed to as much clinical and firsthand experience as time and resources permit, coupled with opportunities to reflect on and reason about these everyday situations. Teaching is not simply a didactic procedure. (p. 197)

Indeed learning to teach is not some simple didactic exercise. Rather the type of clinical preparation seen in rounds in physician and nurse preparation is akin to what should occur in expert/novice teacher clinical sessions, with each individual having multiple opportunities to observe another but followed by for rigorous analyses of these teaching and learning activities.

Whenever possible beginning teachers should be part of a mosaic of aides, student teachers, lead teachers, and occasional university faculty. Veteran lead and consulting or “linking” teachers, perhaps a better term than “mentors,” could broker additional resources throughout the school and school community to assist the novice. Such a linking role is commonly overlooked in the induction literature as induction is too often not viewed as enculturation, as well as education, that is demanding attention to the larger school and community culture.

This writer believes programs for further preparing consulting teachers should be jointly designed and developed by exemplary teacher educators and accomplished experience teachers. These select teachers, working hand-in-glove with school-based teacher educators from schools and colleges of education, can increasingly serve as the lynchpin for improved cooperation between higher education and the K-12 school community to pursue the simultaneous renewal that is needed. Individuals from both

sectors can pilot new boundary-spanning roles to foster K-16 collaborations. Fostering such “blended culture” roles is only part of the puzzle, however, as strong *interinstitutional* partnerships such as The STRIVE Partnership in Cincinnati are also needed.

The engagement of students in high-quality learning, when planned by a team of teachers with both differentiated and graduated roles and responsibilities, is from this vantage point a critical component of school reform that blends nicely with how teachers should be prepared and inducted initially. These ‘experimental’ staffing patterns could be piloted in a number of Professional Development, Partnership, or Portal Schools. The direct links between how teachers are prepared and how schools are organized and how students best learn cannot be emphasized enough.

This writer favors the *clinical* model developed by Joyce and Showers (2003), which calls for continuing examination of one’s teaching by both the consulting veteran teacher and the prospective teacher with an emphasis on making explicit the reasoning and justification for teaching actions and the examination of their teachings’ impact on student work. This clinical model moves from 1) expository theory, to 2) demonstration by the consulting teacher, to 3) guided practice by the preservice or novice teacher and 4) finally to feedback and analysis based on how student work was impacted by the novice’s teaching.

It is only over time in this *clinical* model that increasingly examines the impact of specific aspects of teaching on student work samples, that gains in student learning are demonstrated. In addition to the *nature* of the clinical assistance the prospective teacher receives, the *extent* of that clinical training is also an important factor.

Action /reflection cycles with both laboratory and clinical experiences should permeate a *program* from the outset. One of the major misconceptions about university-based teacher preparation is that experiences in schools are limited to a ten to fifteen week capstone experience. Exemplary programs build opportunities to work in schools in courses throughout the program. Teacher preparation needs also to exemplify a broader and more powerful range of instructional activities and teaching approaches in the preparation of teachers *on campus* than witnessed at present. They seeds for the disposition to continuously inquire into one’s instructional practice and to support that practice with principled reasoning need to be nurtured in pedagogical laboratories, teaching clinics, and through the fuller utilization of instructional cases in a campus setting. Prospective teachers should view dozens of hours of video representing both principles which guide teaching and the pervasive problems teachers will encounter. These preservice teachers should be able to do this in a context in which complex phenomena can be represented from several perspectives, through multiple media, and at a time and in a manner conducive to their learning. They should be able to critically inquire in a setting and at a pace that fosters such activity. At present, critical examination of such practice is neither fostered well in the lecture hall nor in the teacher’s workplace.

This writer also advocates a *distributed* or *differential* model of mentoring; that is one veteran teacher takes the leadership for instructional coaching, as in the above, another for helping the prospective teacher learn about the neighborhood community, a third assists with gaining knowledge about the school and district curriculum, a fourth focuses on assessment and portfolio development, and so on. In this manner *both*

rigorous teacher preparation is advanced and a collaborative school culture with a variety of leadership roles for veteran teachers is established as well.

Just as general studies provides a requisite foundation for professional studies, a teacher residency, entry year(s) or induction program builds upon, extends and enriches the professional preparation constrained for too often to relationally abbreviated ‘preservice’ programming. Urban Teacher Residencies (UTRs) are a growing phenomenon and can be viewed as a form of induction and this writer (2008) recommended the following guidelines for these emerging residency programs:

*Focus on learning alongside an experienced, effective Mentor.* Co-teaching with an experienced teacher for a full year is laudable and a departure from the great majority of both alternative route and university-based programs. The selection and preparation of these mentors and the extent of release time they have to assist the residents are keys to the success of these co-teaching arrangements as is the nature and quality of clinical assistance itself.

*Group teacher candidates in cohorts.* Cohorts, when organized to provide ongoing support and demonstrate collaborative working relationships, are especially helpful to novice teachers placed in challenging urban school settings. In such instances they represent a positive form of professional enculturation and also assist in making teaching a more transparent process, thus enabling learning on the job.

*Build constructive partnerships with districts, schools, communities and unions.* Partnerships arrangements are invariably challenging, but when implemented to meet the criteria that NCATE has established for professional development or Partner Schools (Levine & Trachtman, 2007), they greatly add to and strengthen the resources for effectively preparing competent and caring teachers.

*Serve school districts* is an understandable goal of the UTRs. In UTRs the district is first attracting and retaining the type of teachers that they desire and need. At the same time they are developing leadership opportunities for many veteran teachers and enhancing their teaching competencies as well. Embedding major aspects of the teacher preparation curriculum in the context of the *district’s* curriculum and teaching standards, and their current reform initiatives is also commendable. This type of curricular and instructional *embeddedness* is an asset of the UTRs, especially when the selection criteria for residents underscore an understanding of and commitment to the city. In this regard, the Boston Teacher Residency has as a priority: “recruiting community workers and leaders who have a tie to the city and the experience and passion for working with Boston’s children (<http://www.bpe.org/btr/faq.html>).”

*Support the residents once they are hired as a teacher of record.* Providing the novice teacher support beyond the year long residency is highly commendable. The fact that up to 50 percent of novice teachers in challenging urban school settings leave these positions within three years underscores the importance of such arrangements.

*Establish and support differentiated career roles for veteran teachers.* This emphasis in the UTRs serves several purposes. First, such arrangements help the novice teacher. Second, they also contribute to a more collaborative school culture, fostering improved instruction for students. Third, they provide new leadership roles for veteran teachers and address another aspect of the teacher retention problem as many outstanding *veteran* teachers leave the profession due to a lack of instructional leadership opportunities.

### *Summary*

There are learning-to-teach skills that can only be *seeded* in what we at present construe as preservice preparation. How these are best enriched and expanded over time is little studied or fully understood. However, residency models or induction programs are a needed step in the right direction. Hopefully, this paper and its expansive view of urban teacher preparation will serve as a heuristic for more fully delineating what are the necessary qualities of *urban* teacher education.

The core understandings and abilities that prospective teachers acquire and their eventual impact on the youngsters who they will teach are the ultimate determinants of how successful preparation programs are. However, we have much to learn about how best to acquire these understandings and abilities. It is necessary to advance our understandings of the organizational and structural as well as curricular and instructional aspects of *programs* that best prepare prospective teachers to acquire these complex abilities and understandings. Earlier, several of these attributes were depicted in what this writer and Zimpher (1996) defined as a conceptual framework for a *program* of preparation: a clear definition of the nature of teaching and learning and the mission of schooling; programmatic themes through which core competencies are repeatedly addressed over time and faculty working with colleagues and students beyond the confines of an individual course. Further, prospective teachers would work together over time in a supportive, persistent learning groups emphasizing diversity as value-added. These attributes are not that dissimilar from the attributes of effective early schooling. That is to say teams of teachers working with the same groups of students for protracted periods of time in a reasonable number of projects. Students engage in fewer courses at any given time but in an in-depth manner with a priority on problem-solving and application in real world settings.

Programs are directly affected by the views of teaching and learning and the mission of public schools in this democratic republic which are embraced. How important, for example, is a view of teaching and learning as advocacy and reform and an understanding of political action for those teaching in under-funded urban schools? It would be great if the playing field was level for all teachers but it isn't. The skills not only to survive but thrive in the midst of constant churn need not only to be addressed but continually supported. A major misconception is that a well-educated college graduate can acquire the skills to do this relatively quickly and easily and that once this novice is assigned to a beginning teaching position, teacher education is largely finished. When and how and with whom aspects of socialization, acculturation and education are assumed are important considerations.

In summary, this paper is intended to generate broader discussion about and inquiry into the distinctive nature of programs preparing teachers to teach successfully and remain in high poverty urban schools. The author sees the need for improved preparation and retention policies and practices as a moral imperative. All youngsters can and should find success in school and literally tens of thousands of them are not at present. While many factors contribute to this tragic condition, it is increasingly clear that competent and caring teachers are the central means to redress this intolerable situation. Having access to such teachers in this great democracy is surely every child's

birthright. The hope is that the ideas shared herein will help move us forward in preparing such teachers and in numbers that guarantee that birthright.

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