

*Martin Haberman  
Linda Post*

---

# Teachers for Multicultural Schools: The Power of Selection

**M**ULTICULTURAL EDUCATION has much to offer our schools, particularly our urban schools, but simply adding a course or two will not bring about the changes that are needed. Likewise, adding multicultural education to the teacher education curriculum will not be sufficient. In this article, we argue that only teachers with a particular set of attributes and ideology can offer a multicultural curriculum. The stated goals of these curricula emphasize students' personal development. The achievement of such critically important but elusive objectives requires outstanding teachers.

We propose here 12 teacher attributes for offering a multicultural program, focusing on specific teacher qualities and ideology. We describe ways in which teachers explain how they learn, and present a profile of such teachers. Our argument proposes "what" (the content to be learned), "how" (the way it is learned), and "who" seems likely to learn it. The basic contention is that in order to perform the sophisticated expectations of multicultural teaching, selecting those predisposed to do it is a necessary precondition. Training, while vital, is only of value to teacher candidates whose ideology and predispositions reflect those of outstanding, practicing teachers. The article is prefaced by a brief analysis of the challenge presented by street values to multicultural initiatives.

---

*Martin Haberman is distinguished professor of curriculum and instruction and Linda Post is associate professor of curriculum and instruction, both at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.*

## The Urban Setting

Urban schools are the battleground of a culture war. Traditional societal values are pitted against street values and are being beaten—badly. Not only are schools unable to contravene street values, they actually adopt and promulgate many of them. Elsewhere we have described 14 values that constitute unemployment training and by which urban schools systematically predispose graduates as well as dropouts to a life of unemployment and nonparticipation (Haberman, 1997).

Street values do not represent the diverse, minority culture groups that comprise urban communities any more than they represent the traditional American values promulgated in public schools. Being a member of a particular culture group is a source of strength and provides a platform for living a life of high self-esteem and self-realization. Living by street values portends a life of poverty, poor health, and antisocial behavior.

Before urban schools can become more multicultural, they must first become effective in resisting street values which, like other viruses, are carried into school each day by infected children. At present, students control the urban school's agenda by making educators spend most of their time and energy reacting to street values rather than proactively implementing the stated curriculum. Responding to street values is the school's primary business because maintaining a safe environment is a prerequisite for learning. But street values ultimately

coalesce into an integrated behavior pattern that “works” for youngsters in urban schools.

For example, one street value is that personal relationships are determined by “who has the power to hurt you.” This supports the tacit but ever-present threat of violence. One way students demonstrate this power value in school is by manifesting a “make me” attitude. This street value, which defines all interactions and relationships on the basis of power, forms the basis for the school game in which it becomes the job of the teachers to force students to learn and the role of the students to resist by functioning as observers rather than participants. Once the game is in progress, school authorities respond with more and more rules and attempts at greater coercion; students respond with noncompliance. This leads to even more complex rules which in turn engender more sophisticated forms of student resistance and detachment. The net effect is that urban students who have assimilated this street value do as little as possible, indeed nothing more than show up, and finesse the schools into legitimizing this “activity” with passing grades. The technical term for this exchange in which students are passed for merely showing up and not being disruptive is “the deal” and has been carefully documented (Payne, 1984).

Enter all those interested in restructuring or reform, including advocates for multicultural curriculum. Unfortunately, making school curriculum more multicultural will not necessarily decrease the power of street values. The communal and face-to-face values that characterize the minority cultures in our cities have been just as ineffective at overcoming the power of street values as the traditional associational values taught in public schools. (The Black Muslim community is a notable exception to this pattern and actually does contravene some street values.) Scenes of distraught family members and ministers sitting in courts, hospitals, and funeral parlors and wondering how they lost their children are just as well documented as those of educators expressing failure at turning their students on to learning or keeping them in school.

### **Street Values and Multiculturalism**

The goal of overcoming street values must be separated from the goal of making schools more multicultural. The former deals with issues such as whether or not schools should use metal detectors;

the latter deals with teaching and learning about self-identity, enhancing community cultures, and functioning effectively in American society. Making the school curriculum more multicultural will not necessarily decrease violence, dropout rates, or gang activity. These are not valid criteria for initiating or judging the effects of multicultural curriculum. Greater multiculturalism in school programs has the potential for providing students with (a) powerful ideas for how to live successfully in the general American society, (b) useful skills for succeeding in the world of work, (c) understanding various culture groups, (d) gaining identity and strength from participating in one’s own culture group, and (e) learning ways to contribute to greater equity and opportunity for all individuals and groups.

Some teachers offer such a curriculum by engaging, motivating, and interesting their students in ways that actively involve them and make them responsible for their learning. This leads to higher achievement in traditional school subjects. More importantly, it also leads students to demonstrate high level skills for solving real life problems—even how to resist street values in some cases. We designate such teachers “stars” using the following criteria: they work in districts serving a majority of students in poverty; their classes surpass the average achievement level of their building; they are identified by other teachers, their principals, students’ parents, outside observers, and themselves as superior or excellent. We estimate that even the most chaotic systems have as many as 8 percent of the teachers who meet these criteria (Haberman, 1995b).

Whether or not having a multicultural curriculum can overcome street values or merely provides a better education for youngsters who would resist street values anyway is a question in need of substantial future study. What we can be sure of is that multicultural curricula focus students on their current lives by studying real world problems rather than preparing them only for living later on in the best of all nonexistent worlds. In a society with the stated goals of equal opportunity and the enhancement of all culture groups, multicultural curriculum becomes a fundamental mission of public education.

Officially approved school-board positions adopting multiculturalism as a top priority are not typically found in small town or suburban school districts. “Can we all learn to live together?” is not

a mission given schools in advantaged communities or in communities in which people expect societal institutions (i.e., government, the criminal justice system, health care, education) to function in their interest and actually meet their needs. Typically, multicultural mission statements are adopted in the 120 major urban districts that serve 7 million students in poverty and in which a majority of students are from diverse minority backgrounds. Consider the following statement of definition:

Multicultural education is a process built on respect and appreciation of cultural diversity. Central to this process is gaining understanding of the cultures of the world and incorporating these insights into all areas of the curriculum and school life with a particular emphasis on those cultures represented in our school community. Growing from these insights is a respect for all cultures and commitment to creating equitable relationships between men and women, among people of different ethnic backgrounds, and for all categories of people. Viewed in this manner multicultural education builds respect, self-esteem, and appreciation of others and provides students with the tools for building a just and equitable society. (Milwaukee Public Schools, 1995)

The statement goes on to spell out an exhaustive list of goals for students that include an extensive understanding of American society derived from anthropological, historical, and economic concepts; sophisticated communication concepts and skills; the willingness and ability to self-reflect and change oneself; the causes and cures of a low self-concept; and in-depth knowledge of the causes of all forms of societal inequity as well as the proclivity and skills for making the world a better place.

### The Knowledge Base

Over the last 40 years we (Haberman and colleagues) have had the opportunity to develop, evaluate, and offer more teacher education programs preparing more teachers than anyone in the history of American teacher education. These programs have been notable failures if we use criteria such as the following: Did these models become institutionalized in universities after external funding was discontinued? Did the graduates remain as teachers in poverty schools longer than 3 years? Within each of these models, however, we have been able to identify program elements that do predict which candidates will be effective with chil-

dren in poverty, who will remain as classroom teachers, what is the ideology of such teachers, and how are they selected and trained. In our current Metropolitan Multicultural Teacher Education Program (which is now replicated in several cities), we have a 7-year record of 97.5 percent retention of a teacher population that is 75 percent minority in the Milwaukee Public Schools.

In considering what we know about our teachers that predisposes them to offer multicultural programs as an integral part of their teaching, we have identified the nature of their knowledge base. Following are some of the essential elements of this knowledge base.

*Self-knowledge*—a thorough understanding of one's own cultural roots and group affiliations. An individual who says, "I'm not a member of any culture group, I'm just an American," is not sufficiently grounded to teach a multicultural curriculum. Teachers encourage students to search for more knowledge about their own and classmates' roots by sharing their own.

*Self-acceptance*—a high level of self-esteem derived from knowing one's roots. Nobodies do not make somebodies. It takes somebodies to make somebodies. Teachers foster self-confidence and pride of group identity by demonstrating a confident acceptance of their own.

*Relationship skills*—the ability to work with diverse children and adults who are different from oneself in ways that these others perceive as respectful and caring. The teacher shows "we can all live together" by treating all groups as equally fine.

*Community knowledge*—a knowledge of the cultural heritages of the children and their families. Teachers who make home visits and have continuing experiences in the community's churches, stores, businesses, and parks are able to offer a multicultural curriculum that derives from the specific life experiences of the children in their classes.

*Empathy*—a deep and abiding sensitivity and appreciation to the ways in which children and their families perceive, understand, and explain their world. The teacher truly understands what parents in particular culture groups may want for their children without lowering standards and expectations.

*Cultural human development*—an understanding of how the local community influences development. The teacher knows more than what is

supposedly universal for all 7-year-olds or all 13-year-olds. What does it mean for a toddler, child, preadolescent, or adolescent who is of a particular language, racial, cultural, or economic group to “grow up” in this community?

*Cultural conflicts*—an understanding of the discrepancies between the values of the local community groups and the traditional American values espoused in schools. The teacher expects, prepares for, and deals with issues that arise from differences in religion, gender roles, and values.

*Relevant curriculum*—a knowledge of connections that can be made between general societal values and those of the culture groups in the community, and the skills needed to implement this knowledge. The teacher connects specific content goals to specific uses in the students’ lives.

*Generating sustained effort*—a knowledge and set of implementation skills that will engage youngsters from this community to persist with schoolwork. The teacher’s daily instruction is organized around and rewards effort rather than perceived ability.

*Coping with violence*—skills for preventing and de-escalating violence and the potential for violence. How do I work in and help students succeed in an environment where violence is a constant fact of life? The teacher demonstrates forms of conflict resolution based on criteria other than power.

*Self-analysis*—a capacity for reflection and change. How can I use my experiences to continue to learn, grow, and change? Teachers engage in systematic self-reflection. They develop and implement plans for professional development that impact on their classrooms.

*Functioning in chaos*—an ability to understand and the skills to cope with a disorganized environment. Urban school systems reflect the unstable, dysfunctional nature of their communities. Teachers who remain effective in such environments know and can implement behaviors that enable them to function effectively in spite of the irrationality of their school bureaucracies.

### **How Do Teachers Learn These Things?**

Teachers who can work with children in poverty in multicultural ways are neither born nor made; they develop as they integrate significant

life experiences. A consideration of the elements of the knowledge base described above reveals that they are not forms of knowledge found in genes or gained in university courses. How then are these forms of knowledge developed and learned?

Star teachers of children in poverty offer some interesting perceptions and beliefs regarding how they got where they are in their development as teachers. Telling their stories, they state some things directly about their own development. In other cases they offer explanations after we ask them to explain things we have observed them doing in their teaching. The discussion that follows describes most, not all, of how they learned to teach. While the content of these learnings has changed, the procedures for learning them has remained fairly constant over the last 4 decades in which we have witnessed instruction and listened to teachers in urban schools across the nation.

Almost everything star teachers do that they regard as important is something they believe they learned on the job after they started teaching. When asked, “Where did you learn that?” about a practice or idea, they almost never attribute their learning to a university course, experience, or faculty. Teachers’ preferred way of learning is to observe colleagues whom they regard as credible because they are successful with similar students in the same school system. Their focus is on craft knowledge. They are the ultimate pragmatists. Their test for knowledge is that they have seen it “work.”

Having a credible teacher mentor actively coach them in their own classroom is the way star teachers prefer to practice and learn more effective procedures and make them their own. “Credible” mentors are teachers observed actually performing what they advise. Being part of an effective teacher team is also a powerful influence on teaching practice. Teaming is so influential that even when the team is functioning negatively it may continue to dominate their thinking and learning. Since teacher teams typically deal with the same students, teachers are especially sensitive to other teachers’ practices that may be generating different student behaviors.

The perceived need to learn more subject matter is an unusual and minor influence on development of teachers. Practicing teachers rarely if ever attribute their students’ lack of interest or

achievement to their "inadequate" content knowledge. They strongly reject the contention that children in poverty are not learning more because their teachers do not know enough.

Developing more knowledge of teaching methods is regarded as an unimportant or easily met need. Teachers do not believe they need more workshops on teaching methods. They do seek more specific ways of making any method meet the particular needs of their students. They seek solutions to their perceived problems, not more subject matter content or teaching methodologies. Teachers regard workshops as useful if they come away with (a) specific strategies they can use to resolve their problems or (b) specific new materials or resources they can use in their classrooms. Again, such workshops must be offered by practicing teachers they regard as credible.

Networking with other teachers trying to resolve similar problems in the same school system seems to further teacher development and combat burnout. Some of the more influential activities frequently relate to methods of coping with system-imposed policies regarding new programs, testing, grade level requirements, recordkeeping, discipline, and school rules. The body of knowledge teachers learn in order to cope with such school mandates and other required conditions of employment constitutes a major portion of the knowledge they develop in the course of their careers. This essential knowledge for functioning in chaotic systems is shared by classroom teachers but is ignored in the professional literature. If it is noted it is deprecated as situation-specific information, or craft know-how, and not considered "professional knowledge."

Teacher practice is not seriously affected by theory or research. Rival explanations of human intelligence or summaries of phonics versus whole language research is not a determinant of how they plan or make instructional decisions. Activities that impact on teacher development in unimportant ways, if at all, include reading reports of research findings; listening to experts who are not regarded as credible because they are not teaching children in poverty; and reading analyses of "hot" topics at particular times, such as bilingual versus English-only instruction, or the pros and cons of tracking.

Substantial teacher development comes from using the lives of children as a rich source of study.

Star teachers are constantly involved in learning more about their children, their families and communities, and what it means to grow up in particular settings. By using children's life experiences as a fundamental part of the classroom program, teachers continually learn more about children and community cultures. Teachers attribute almost all they know about child development to what they have learned about the lives of their students.

Much teacher development comes from the process of sharing their own interests, experiences, and talents with their students. The children, in effect, reward and shape their teachers by accepting and affirming what they share. The teachers, in turn, see the need for children to share their own backgrounds.

A great source of teacher development occurs by serendipity. Urban schools "try" almost everything. While projects are not systematically offered or evaluated, they abound. Inevitably this plethora of projects ("projectitis") has unintended consequences and unforeseen impact. Urban teachers and students who live with these erratic initiatives, reforms, programs, and models have daily encounters with unplanned events. In addition to developing general coping principles (e.g., "Just wait a year and it will go away"), teachers learn much from the specifics of each initiative. Working in chaotic systems—and urban school systems are examples of chaos theory in action—is a powerful learning opportunity. Teachers in large urban settings become experts in discerning what to ignore, what to cope with, and what to learn from.

The most important source of teacher development is their ideology; that is, what they believe about the nature of teaching and learning, the nature of development, and the nature of the setting. They bring this ideology with them, but it is imbedded in a casing of prejudices, biases, preferences, beliefs, values, and perceptions. As they begin and move through their teaching experiences, some resist any new input. Such teachers have one year of experience 30 times. Others seek to reconcile their ideology with their experiences and have 30 years of growth—much of it on a painfully steep learning curve.

But teachers' experiences do not automatically lead to positive growth. We know that many teachers use their teaching experiences to solidify

and rationalize their prejudices (Sleeter, 1992). Other teachers use their direct experiences to become increasingly supportive of children. Teaching is a process in which selective perception enhances what the teacher believes at the start. The ideology with which teachers begin their teaching has been shown to determine whether or not they will use their subsequent teaching experience to become more positive or more negative (Haberman & Post, 1992).

There are, of course, other ways in which teachers learn. Since Haberman started preparing teachers for children in poverty in the late 1950s, what teachers need to know has changed appreciably, but how teachers learn has not. Effective, growing teachers continue to use the same fundamental learning modes as practitioners of other human service crafts.

### **Who Should Prepare for Multicultural Teaching?**

In the programs we offer, we begin with college graduates (from all fields) who have had in-depth experiences with children and youth. They have initial summer experiences teaching children so that we can verify our selection interviews. In effect, how they actually interrelate with children in poverty is their final selection. They are hired as teachers by the Milwaukee Public Schools each September. The process by which they are prepared includes careful mentoring (one full-time mentor for each four teachers) and weekly classes. The mentors are star urban teachers as are the resource people who lead their weekly meetings. The role of university faculty, health and human service professionals, business consultants, parents, computer experts, and community resource people is to supplement the knowledge base of the practitioners who serve as mentors and resource people.

Not surprisingly, the “best and the brightest” teachers of children in poverty who complete this program are not young White females from small towns or suburbs with grades of A in student teaching and high grade point averages (GPAs) who “always wanted to teach.” The profile of the “best and the brightest” for culturally diverse children in urban poverty includes demographic as well as personal attributes such as the following:

- Did not decide to teach until after graduation from college.
- Tried (and succeeded) at several jobs or careers.
- Is between 30 and 50 years of age.
- Attended an urban high school.
- Has raised several children, is a parent, or has had close, in-depth, meaningful relations with children and youth.
- Currently lives in the city and plans to continue to do so.
- Is preparing for a teaching position in an urban school system.
- Doesn’t believe “kids are kids” but comprehends and appreciates how cultural forces impact human development.
- Has had personal and continuing experiences with violence and of living “normally” in a violent community and city.
- Has majored in just about anything at the university.
- May or may not have an above-average grade point average.
- Expects to visit the homes of the children.
- Has some awareness of or personal experience with a range of health and human services available in the urban area.
- Expects that the school bureaucracy will be irrational and intrusive.
- Is likely not to be of Euro-American background but a person of color.
- Is likely to be sensitive to, aware of, and working on one’s own racism, sexism, classism, or other prejudices.

These are some of the attributes that, taken together, provide a thumbnail sketch. Taken singly, each has no predictive validity. They characterize but do not explain teaching success. They are cited here merely to provide the real-world alternative to “the best and the brightest” stereotype that emphasizes high GPA college youth and continues to emanate from blue-ribbon committees, national panels, private foundations, the Office of Education, and other fantasy factories. High GPA has nothing to do with teaching children in poverty effectively or predicting who will remain in teaching. Indeed, we have much evidence that using high GPA to recruit and select will identify quitters and failures (Corwin, 1973).

In our current Milwaukee program (which has been replicated seven times in 7 years), we prepare individuals who share most if not all of the attributes cited above. They also share the experience of living in poverty for substantial periods themselves. Indeed, many of them are currently living in poverty and need not recollect former periods of their lives. In many ways these new teachers are "at risk" themselves because they live in communities characterized by violence. Since they are all carefully selected as having a commitment to the behaviors and ideology that matches those of star urban teachers, we know they will be successful. What we did not anticipate were the effects of their own low economic level on their lives and the stress this creates during their first year.

For example, we have had resident teachers die. They have also experienced the following: the death of a child; critical, life-threatening injuries to members of their immediate family; violence at home (either abuse from a spouse or child abuse); bankruptcy; forced moving, that is, the need to find a new residence for the family; inability to secure an affordable home or car insurance; serious illnesses requiring unforeseen surgery or rehabilitation; chemical or drug dependency; serious and continuing transportation problems; marital problems of all types and severity; child custody problems; lawsuits related to a variety of out-of-school issues for which the teacher could not afford counsel; poor nutrition, exercise, and sleep habits; no preventive medicine for themselves or their families; mental and emotional problems, treated and untreated; and fear of deportation as illegal aliens.

We have been impressed, "floored" would be more accurate, by the ability of our resident teachers to both learn from and overcome their life experiences at the same time they were learning to teach in extremely demanding, urban poverty schools. The lesson we have learned is that carefully selected "best and brightest" (i.e., our definition) are individuals who are themselves frequently in poverty, close to poverty, or grew up in poverty. They are sensitive to what it means for a child to have to sneak to school early to avoid being beaten up by a gang, and why it is important for schools to have unlocked doors and serve breakfast. They not only show great understanding for the children but for the parents or caregivers.

At the same time such teachers follow through and insist upon parents and caregivers performing their responsibilities. While they appreciate and empathize with their students' stressful life conditions, they expect students to work at being successful in school. This profile has not precluded us from finding some teacher candidates from advantaged backgrounds. Our experience has been that one out of ten full-time, undergraduate students under 25 years of age, in full-time preservice teacher education programs, can pass our selection procedures.

One focus of our program is on preparing the interprofessional practitioner. This is no small feat. Anyone who has ever offered a teacher education program for children in poverty knows that it is typical for student teachers, beginning interns, and first-year resident teachers to be fearful: they fixate on the question, "Will I be able to control the children and manage what happens in my class?" To shift the focus off themselves and onto the total wellness of children frequently living in debilitating life conditions, once again, requires careful, appropriate selection of teacher candidates. The assumption that training alone can be sufficiently powerful to transform the immature and fearful into interprofessional practitioners is contrary to our experience. Teachers cannot themselves perform the range of health and human services their children need, but they can learn to identify conditions (such as abuse) and even more, expect and anticipate the needs of their children for services. Teachers can also be taught to help their children's families to make the connections they will need to get services they do not know they need, do not know are available, or do not know who to contact to access them. In poverty schools the client is not only the child but the child's family.

### **Careful Selection as a Necessary Condition**

No school can be better than its teachers. And the surest and best way to improve the schooling for children and youth in poverty is to provide them with better teachers. The strategy for doing this is not mysterious. The premise is simple: Selection is more important than training. We have elsewhere described the attributes that predict success in urban poverty schools and the ones that may be identified in interviews (Haberman, 1995a).

Training is useful only for those with appropriate predispositions. The reason for this is that the functions performed by effective urban teachers are undergirded by a clear ideology derived from life experiences. Such teachers not only perform functions that quitters and burnouts do not, they also know why they do what they do. They have a coherent vision. It is a humane, respectful, caring, and nonviolent form of "gentle teaching" that we have described elsewhere (Haberman, 1994). Our point here is that star teachers' behaviors and the ideology that undergirds their behaviors cannot be unwrapped. They are of a piece.

Nor can this ideology be taught in traditional programs of teacher preparation. Writing a term paper on Piaget's concept of conservation or learning the seven steps in direct instruction will not provide neophytes with the ideology or skills of star teachers. This ideology and craft is open to development only in those predisposed to selectively perceive from their experiences in positive ways. What can be taught are effective teaching behaviors that are built on an already functioning belief system. Like the ideology, the teaching behaviors are not typically learned in coursework or in student teaching but on the job, with mentoring by a star teacher/coach, a support network, and some specific workshops and classes.

Reviews of college student learning and teaching provide overwhelming evidence that what students expect and value will determine what they will derive from their teacher education (Pintrich, 1990). Reviews of the relationship between development and learning indicate that what is learned is determined by the students' developmental stage. They must have attained an adult stage of development to benefit from teacher training (Sprint-hall, Reiman, & Thies-Sprinthall, 1996). But knowing that college students' learning is controlled by their values and whether or not they have reached adulthood still has not changed the way they are selected into traditional programs of teacher education. GPA and written test scores still control the admission of late adolescents into traditional preparation programs (Haberman, 1996).

### **Implications for the Locus of Programs**

We have earlier discussed the ways in which teachers learn most effectively. Each of these ways

is incorporated into an effective training program. Teachers-to-be should be actually engaged in responsible teaching; be able to observe star teachers in action; have a mentor who is a star teacher coaching them; be part of a team; participate in a network coping with a highly bureaucratized system; be students of their communities; and continually be faced with problems that cause them to reshape their ideology. In addition, the training is most effective when it is offered in the worst schools under the worst conditions of work.

Traditional teacher education and state certification agencies make the reverse assumption. They create professional development centers engaged in best practices and then certify graduates universally. The naive assumption is that graduates will be able to function in the worst school situations because they have observed good practices.

We make a more realistic assumption: Carefully selected and well prepared teachers who are educated to function in the worst situations will be able to function in poverty schools and other schools as well. They will not quit if they are "forced" to teach smaller classes, have fewer inclusion students, or receive adequate supplies and materials. Neither will they be shocked if every student has a seat and enough textbooks.

Since states assume license holders can teach all students in all situations, our philosophy of training in and for the worst situations is also the ethical position. In these "worst" training sites we have always found star teachers who can demonstrate that their ideology works (Haberman, 1995b). The fact that star teachers can actually function effectively in such "intolerable" situations has great impact on neophytes. Beginners are much more impressed by greatness operating in the real world than by observing best practices in a situation they will never again find. Our approach is to also work toward zero transfer, that is, learning to teach is most powerful when it is under the actual conditions in which one will serve. This means that ideal preparation would occur in the very school and community where one will remain as a teacher.

### **Conclusion**

We believe that getting better teachers is the best engine for driving school reform in poverty schools. The success of our program over the last

7 years tells us that implementing multicultural programs requires melding an extensive knowledge base with teacher ideology. The knowledge base can be identified in the work of star urban teachers, and neophytes with the ideology can be selected and then trained.

Emphasizing the work of star teachers means that the role of university education faculty with specific expertise must be reconceptualized from that of primary educator to resource person. We argue that the knowledge base is learned best in particular, specific school sites in the worst urban poverty schools and only those predisposed to learn what star teachers already know will accept and internalize the training. We make the issue of transfer of learning moot by preparing teachers to work in the very schools and communities where they will continue to teach after certification. After careful selection, training does have important value, provided such training emphasizes being mentored while on the job as a fully accountable teacher.

Our work has also identified neophytes who are "best and brightest" in ways not recognized by traditional teacher education programs. Successful candidates are over 30 years of age, frequently minorities, and have life experiences in urban areas. We have also shown that some European Americans may also demonstrate the predispositions of star teachers and are able to function effectively in poverty schools.

We hold several undergirding beliefs as guiding principals that need to be developed elsewhere to complement our argument. University faculty should be involved in but not in control of the preparation of teachers for children in poverty. Research and theory in the preparation of urban teachers must complement teacher ideology and the practices of star urban teachers. The university dedicated to accepting any candidate's belief system in a context of academic freedom is not the ideal place for selecting future teachers with an appropriate ideology. The process of mentoring on the job is extremely more powerful training than taking classes or going through traditional forms of

laboratory experiences. Finally, and of greatest importance, is our contention that all teacher education programs for children in poverty must require candidates to demonstrate that the children they teach are actually learning important things (e.g., multicultural concepts) before granting certification.

## References

- Corwin, R. (1973). *Reform and organizational survival: The Teacher Corps as an instrument of educational change*. New York: Wiley.
- Haberman, M. (1994). Gentle teaching in a violent society. *Educational Horizons*, 72(3), 131-136.
- Haberman, M. (1995a). Selecting star teachers for children and youth in urban poverty. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76, 777-781.
- Haberman, M. (1995b). *Star teachers of children in poverty*. West Lafayette, IN: Kappa Delta Pi.
- Haberman, M. (1996). Selecting and preparing culturally competent teachers for urban schools. In J. Sikula (Ed.), *Handbook for research on teacher education* (2nd ed.; pp. 747-760). New York: Macmillan.
- Haberman, M. (1997). Unemployment training: The ideology of nonwork learned in urban schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 78(7), 499-503.
- Haberman, M., & Post, L. (1992). Does direct experience change students' perceptions of low income minority children? *Midwestern Educational Research*, 5(2), 29-31. (Special multicultural issue, University of Akron.)
- Milwaukee Public Schools. (1995, January). *MPS Proposed Definition of Multicultural Education*. Adopted by the Multicultural Curriculum Council of the Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, WI.
- Payne, C.M. (1984). *Getting what we ask for: The ambiguity of success and failure in urban education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing.
- Pintrich, P. (1990). Implications of psychological research on student learning and college teaching for teacher education. In W.R. Houston (Ed.), *Handbook for research on teacher education* (pp. 826-857). New York: Macmillan.
- Sleeter, C.E. (1992). *Keepers of the American dream: A study of staff development and multicultural education*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Sprinthall, N.A., Reiman, A.J., & Thies-Sprinthall, L. (1996). Teacher professional development. In J. Sikula (Ed.), *Handbook for research on teacher education* (2nd ed; pp. 666-703). New York: Macmillan.