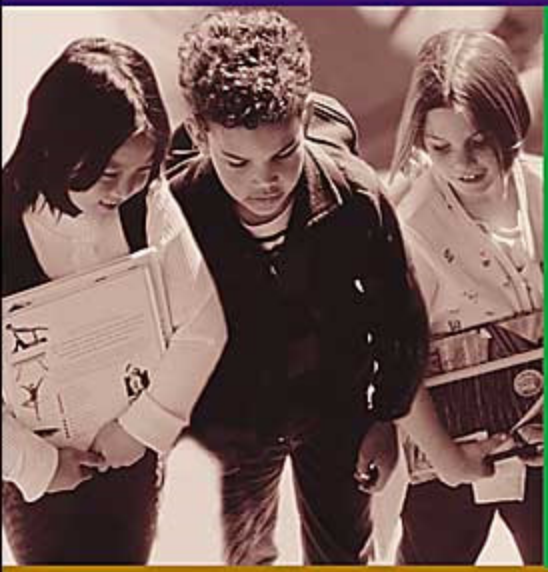
TEACHING ALL THE CHILDREN



Strategies for Developing Literacy in an Urban Setting

Edited by **Diane Lapp, Cathy Collins Block, Eric J. Cooper, James Flood, Nancy Roser, and Josefina Villamil Tinajero**

TEACHING ALL THE CHILDREN

SOLVING PROBLEMS IN THE TEACHING OF LITERACY

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Foreword by Doris Walker-Dalhouse

Epilogue by Richard Long

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Foreword

DORIS WALKER-DALHOUSE

> We have to improve life, not just for those who have the most skills and those who know how to manipulate the system. But also for and with those who often have so much to give but never get the opportunity.
>
> —Dorothy Height (1991, p. 19)

Truer words have never been spoken than those of Dorothy Height, civil rights activist, founder of the National Council of Negro Women, and president of that organization for more than 41 years. Her words are far reaching in articulating the need for educational equity and the need to develop a framework for instruction and assessment of all students. As the demographics in schools reflect greater diversity in economic background, language, ethnicity, and racial composition, the need for direction in responding to the challenges presented by these changes increases.

The reality is that our nation's schools should be providing urban students with the type of instruction and opportunities necessary to improve the quality of their present and future lives. *The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2002* (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2002) released by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in June 2003, reports lower average reading scores for fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade public school versus nonpublic school students. It also reveals lower reading scores for students in central city and rural schools compared with students in urban fringe or large town areas, and for black and Hispanic students compared with European American and Asian/Pacific Islander students (NCES, 2002). These findings suggest clearly that educational changes are warranted.

Teacher quality is essential to any serious discussion of educational change. Breaking the cycle of low achievement in urban schools requires well-qualified teachers and collaborative efforts by teachers, parents, students, and the community. Making a difference in the literacy development of students also requires differentiated instruction guided by principles such as those specified by the International Reading Association (2000). Among these prin-

ciples are the rights of children to appropriate early reading instruction; instruction that builds both the skill and desire to read increasingly complex material; well-prepared teachers who keep their knowledge up to date through effective professional development; access to a variety of books and other reading materials in classroom, school, and community libraries; reading assessment that identifies strengths as well as needs and that involves students in making decisions about their learning; intensive instruction for struggling readers from professionals specifically prepared to teach reading; reading instruction that involves parents and communities; reading instruction that makes meaningful use of first-language skills; equal access to technology used for the improvement of reading instruction; and classrooms that optimize learning opportunities. These are the principles that are reflected in the research and literature on closing the achievement gap for students in urban schools.

An examination of current research and writings about curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the needs and realities of students in urban school settings is essential in formulating educational policy and practices used in working with urban students. Central to the pursuit of educational equity is understanding the out-of-school and in-school factors associated with the performance of students of lower socioeconomic status in urban schools; identifying the best practices for promoting literacy learning for all students in urban classrooms; and sharing best practices for building individual literacy strategies for all students enrolled in urban schools. The challenges are numerous, but the individual and collective rewards have enormous potential for "those who often have so much to give but never get the opportunity" (Height, 1991, p. 19).

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Preface

Can we develop an educational system that better addresses the literacy needs of urban students? Can we provide urban educators with information that can assist them in overcoming the unique challenges that exist in their classrooms? Can we create a book that captures the multifaceted, systemic, and complex context that is urban education? Can such a book present comprehensive data concerning what it means to read and write in urban communities, and how instructional lessons can advance urban students' literacy?

The 48 distinguished urban educators, researchers, administrators, and student authors represented in this book answered these questions with a united "Yes." They vowed to bring their diverse research perspectives and distinct classroom practices to bear on these queries. Their goal was to create a body of knowledge that could bring all educators closer to affecting urban students' literacy lives in positive ways and closing the literacy gap for all urban students.

With this objective in mind, the editors and authors of this book worked to:

- Identify the outside-of-school challenges that affect urban students' literacy.
- Describe the in-school factors that affect urban students' achievement.
- Present research-based best practices that increase urban students' reading and writing competencies.
- Provide research-based classroom lessons that have closed the literacy gap for many urban students.
- Synthesize information so teachers, administrators, teacher educators, and parents can become an educational support system for each other and their students.

Each chapter in this book examines one component of the urban educational milieu. Authors review research concerning the chapter's topic, describe instructional implications, recommend materials, reference selections of highly effective children's literature, and present lessons that have proven to accelerate literacy achievement in urban settings. Individually, the chapters cover more than 25 issues that affect urban students' literacy. Collectively, they provide an in-depth discussion of the research and practices that can inform urban education as a field. Colleagues who read prepublication versions of this book reported that they paused repeatedly to make connections between and among chapters. By

doing so, they integrated the information that they needed to address very specific and complex challenges that existed in their unique urban settings.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS IN URBAN SCHOOLS

The first part of the book describes the demographics of the urban poor, such as shifting population dynamics, immigration patterns, family compositions, welfare reform efforts, and movement into and out of metropolitan fringe areas. These complex realities of urban poverty are further complicated by social class structures and societal biases that cannot be ignored if literacy gains are to occur. Jane Hannaway, Michael Fix, and Jeffrey Passel analyze these synergistic dynamics in Chapter 1. As Hannaway explained at the International Reading Association's 2003 convention: "Whatever the explanation, the evidence is consistent and strong enough to suggest that we will be unable to get a good handle on sorting out the relative contributions of families, neighborhoods, and schools on achievement without a good understand of what happens to urban students outside of school, and how different sources of learning interact to produce academic learning." Eric J. Cooper concurs, and in Chapter 2 he describes social engineering initiatives presently under way that are obtaining equity and excellence in educational opportunities for many urban students.

Equally important are literature access issues. In Chapter 3, Guillermo Montes and Ray Giamartino report compelling data from the National Household Survey that the literacy achievement gap for many urban children begins in the preschool years. These authors, along with Diane Lapp and James Flood (Chapter 6), Josefina Villamil Tinajero and Judith Hope Munter (Chapter 7), Jo Worthy and Nancy Roser (Chapter 14), and Barbara Moss (Chapter 23), describe proven methods by which family participation in literacy activities can be accelerated. Montes and Giamartino point out that the protective parenting factors that are present in suburban settings are not universally applicable to urban centers. For instance, reading aloud to children at home in urban settings does not occur frequently enough to be a protective parental practice that can compensate for multiple, cumulative urban-related risk factors. Instead, telling stories and teaching literacy concepts are easier to accomplish in high-risk urban family settings. These practices have a greater potential for protective efficacy in urban settings.

Similarly, Lapp and Flood (Chapter 6) report data to suggest that preschool literacy issues in urban settings are very difficult to alter. For example, they found that many urban parents do not believe that they have the knowledge or time to engage in preschool literacy experiences with their children.

Another out-of-school variable that influences urban students' literacy is the ramifications that result from adding a Standard English register to a first language. Juel Moore and Precious Jackson, in Chapter 5, vividly describe what occurs when African American Vernacular English (AAVE) interacts with school-based Standard English registers. These authors, who speak AAVE, address how these complex issues impact their professional and personal lives daily. They describe how coming to school with a vernacular distinct from school language lowers teachers', students', and families' expectations; increases misunderstandings; stimulates ridicule of urban students; and produces repeated failures on literacy-related tasks.

In like manner, for a large segment of the urban population, literacy achievement is affected by the disparities between how second-language literacy is promoted at school and children's language experiences and cultural backgrounds at home. Tinajero and Munter

(Chapter 7) present a specific program that strengthens the relationship between language-minority parents and their children while developing literacy in a way that honors their connections to the community, home culture, and language.

Collectively, the chapters in Part I propose several means by which an educational community can counteract the effects of poverty, economic variables, social policies, family sizes, and urban parental challenges on literacy success for urban youth.

IN-SCHOOL FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS IN URBAN SCHOOLS

Richard L. Allington and Rhonda Nowak open the discussion in Part II. In Chapter 8, they pose questions about national policy initiatives and their effects on urban schools. Their data suggest that actions can be taken to increase the positive impact of policy initiatives at individual urban schools. Among the findings they report is that the depth of teachers' competencies and other teacher-quality variables are even *more* important in urban schools than in less risk-filled educational settings. The significance of the teacher's role is obvious in Chapter 4, as Fenice B. Boyd, Elavie Ndura, Cynthia H. Brock, and Juel Moore describe firsthand experiences resulting from the misperceptions directed toward black males in society and in literature.

Jane Fleming, Victoria Chou, Sharon Ransom, Marlynne Nishimura, Kathleen Burke, and 93 Chicago public school teachers agree. In Chapter 9, they document the realities of teaching in urban classrooms. The goal of this chapter is to eliminate the 68% dropout rate of teachers (after 1 year of service) who enter hard-to-staff schools. In Chapter 10, Cathy Collins Block and John N. Mangieri build on the importance of exceptionally high teacher competency in urban settings. They report recent policy initiatives that have taken place through partnership between (and the single initiatives of) the International Reading Association, the National Urban Alliance, UNESCO, the World Bank, the federal government, and other agencies. These institutions have created positive changes for teachers and students in urban schools.

Taken together, these chapters provide numerous support systems that can be drawn upon to assist individual urban schools to counteract the in-school factors that affect individual urban students' literacy achievement.

BEST SCHOOLWIDE PRACTICES THAT INCREASE LITERACY LEARNING FOR STUDENTS IN URBAN CLASSROOMS

Part III of the book presents university–school partnerships, schoolwide initiatives, and single-classroom programs that have been demonstrated to significantly increase the reading and writing abilities of urban students. Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, Diane Lapp, and James Flood (Chapter 11) open this discussion with the description of a highly successful multi-year university–school partnership that was implemented to increase literacy in urban schools. This chapter describes the administrative tools, educational agendas, challenges, and opportunities that such a partnership provides. Through this information, similar initiatives could begin in other urban settings.

To provide comparative and contrastive models, Sharon O'Neal, Sarah Nelson, LaShun Gaines, and Ann Valentino (Chapter 12), Doris Alvarez and Hugh Mehan (Chapter 13), and Jo Worthy and Nancy Roser (Chapter 14) provide in-depth descriptions and examples of

schoolwide practices that have significantly increased literacy achievement in the specific urban schools in which they work. These authors worked diligently to implement visionary programs that produced exceptional growth in students' reading and writing competencies. In Chapters 11-14, they provide specific details so that their models can be replicated, and they specify the exact student gains that were achieved.

Linda B. Gambrell (Chapter 15) and Andrea F. Rosenblatt (Chapter 16) enhance the information presented in Chapters 11–14 by highlighting the motivational and cognitive variables common to each program. In Chapter 15, Gambrell classifies five conditions presented in Chapters 11–14 that enable educators to reach and motivate urban readers. Similarly, in Chapter 16, Rosenblatt describes how these programs provide a "framework for a brain-compatible classroom" (p. 212). She describes how each initiative was based on research concerning (1) brain functions, (2) cognitive learning principles, (3) emotional and social growth, (4) enriched learning environments, (5) assessment and immediate feedback variables, and (6) movement and learning principles.

This part of the book ends with two additional critical components in schoolwide initiatives that have led to increased literacy achievement in urban settings. Diane Lapp, James Flood, and Cathy Collins Block (Chapter 17) extend Rosenthal's description of assessment variables. They describe the special considerations that must be employed when urban students' literacy achievement is assessed. They propose the "next-step portable assessment model" and describe how urban teachers can conduct these assessments daily as they monitor students' silent and oral reading experiences.

Finally, Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher (Chapter 18) tackle the complex variables associated with the disproportionate representation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education programs. They report (1) how extensive overrepresentation is, (2) the outcomes of students with disabilities who are members of diverse cultural or ethnic groups, and (3) factors that contribute to disproportionate representation. They propose several alternatives, grouped into five categories of schoolwide language-arts programmatic actions, that can be taken to overcome this problem.

NEXT STEPS: CLASSROOM PRACTICES THAT INCREASE LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT FOR EVERY STUDENT IN AN URBAN SCHOOL

The last seven chapters of the book open the doors to highly successful, individual urban classrooms in which students from first grade through secondary school work. Taken collectively, more than 30 highly effective literacy lessons are described. Jeanne R. Paratore and Rachel L. McCormack (Chapter 19) present 10 "reading rights" that one first-grade educator uses in "leveling the playing field through excellent teaching" (p. 265). The principles this teacher employs can be modified for use at other grade levels in numerous urban settings. Similarly, the grouping plans and literacy centers described by Kelly Moore, Diane Lapp, and Maureen Begley (Chapter 20) can assist other urban educators to meet the needs of their students, regardless of the grade level at which they teach.

Chapters 21–24 focus on specific domains of literacy instruction that occur in every urban classroom. In Chapter 21, Judith A. Scott introduces eight ideas for scaffolding vocabulary learning so that educational equity can occur in all urban settings. Deborah A. Wooten and Bernice E. Cullinan (Chapter 22) build upon Scott's work. They take us inside a fourth-grade classroom to illustrate how Writing and Sharing Connections "provides ways for urban students to be actively engaged in constructing meaningful learning" (p. 296). Their

procedures and examples can be modified for use at many grade levels and have been demonstrated to produce significant gains in urban students' literacy.

Similarly, Barbara Moss (Chapter 23) presents research-based reasons for the exceptional value of informational trade books are in urban settings. She demonstrates how to use this genre to build students' background knowledge, make predictions, locate literacy devices, and read photographs and charts. Moss, along with Gay Ivey (Chapter 24), proposes that achievement in every content-area classroom can be enriched. Ivey adds to the principles presented by Moss by describing how to address the management issues that are often present in urban content-area classrooms. She describes how to (1) allocate more time to purposeful content-related reading and writing; (2) base instructions on students' interests, strengths, and lifetime needs; (3) connect accessible and appealing trade books to content; and (4) provide individuals with information and advice as they read. Donna Ogle (Chapter 25) provides additional evidence that implementing the research-based practices of Scott, Wooten and Cullinan, Moss, and Ivey can assist more educators to close the vocabulary, reading, writing, and content-area literacy gaps that exist for many urban students.

In closing, our goal is to provide a single book that can assist administrators, teachers, and teacher educators in implementing literacy programs in their unique urban settings. This book was designed to directly address numerous out-of-school, in-school, schoolwide, and classroom needs of urban students. We want to provide research syntheses concerning the complex context in which urban students' literacy develops. We identify proven school district policies, schoolwide initiatives, and individual classroom programs that have significantly increased urban students' literacy achievement. You can use the strategies for developing literacy in urban settings in this book with confidence.

Since this book is about issues that impact children in urban settings, each chapter ends with a presentation of children's literature related to the chapter content. These selections can be shared with children or colleagues in the hope that literature will be one common thread that helps us to better and more fully understand each other.

We hope that these research syntheses, research-based best practices, student-tested and treasured children's literature selections, and preschool through secondary school curriculum ideas can assist you to teach all the children under your care. As you read this book, we welcome you into our network of educators working diligently to achieve excellence in literacy instruction for all children. Together, we can make a difference. That difference will last for millions of lifetimes.

Acknowledgments

We want to thank each of the authors in this book. They spent countless hours refining and synthesizing years of their professional lives into concise chapters, and they did so with a dedication to urban education that is unparalleled. Our respect for them as people and professionals could not have been higher when we began this book, but throughout the process of building it, our admiration became even greater. We are grateful to every person who contributed to this project.

Chris Jennison, senior editor at The Guilford Press, epitomizes the qualities that exemplify urban educators. He supported this project from its initial conception until its completion. We are grateful to you, Chris—for all you did for each of us, for the educator that you are, and for all you invested in this book. We also thank Chris Coughlin, Carolyn Graham, and Craig Thomas of your editorial team, who added the highest level of professionalism throughout the production process.

Wanda Ann Zinke, Kelly Moore, and Linda Lungren devoted countless hours to preparing this book for publication. Their persistence and professionalism are unmatched. We thank them for being the stalwarts who assisted us to present a coherent message.

Last, all our work is for you, the readers of this book. We thank you for investing time in reading it and for your dedication in implementing its ideas. We appreciate all that you do to help educators *teach all the children* and produce equity and excellence in every urban student's literacy life. We invite you to join us in our network of educators who are dedicated to ensuring that no child, parent, or educator is left behind in the mission of providing the best possible education for every student in our care.

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TEACHING ALL THE CHILDREN

PART I

OUT-OF-SCHOOL FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS IN URBAN SCHOOLS

1

The Changing Demography of Urban America

Facts and Implications for Education

JANE HANNAWAY
MICHAEL FIX
JEFFREY PASSEL

This chapter takes a look at the demographic characteristics of urban America and how they are changing. More specifically, it is concerned with the changing dynamics of the student population in urban schools and the implications of these changes for teaching and learning.

Three general observations shape the chapter. First, immigration is the driving force behind much of the demographic shift in urban areas in the United States. Second, defining "urban" is not as straightforward as it once was. Indeed, inner suburbs often look more like core cities than traditional suburbs. And third, generalizing at the national level can be misleading. Variation by region within the country is large and important. These changes and the ways in which they vary present new demands and challenges that are strongly felt, especially in literacy areas and especially in urban schools.

IMMIGRATION: A DRIVING FORCE

The number of immigrants in the United States is at an all-time high. As shown in Figure 1.1, according to the 2000 census, the number of foreign-born people in the United States is over 31 million and has grown at a fast rate. As a percentage of the population, it has more than doubled since 1970, from 4.7% to 11%. Projections for the next decade go even higher, up to 13%—not much below the historical peak of 14.8% in the late 1880s (Fix & Passel, 2003).

Immigrants have significant implications for education and social policy for a number of reasons, not the least of which are that immigrant families tend to be poor and to represent a large number of children. While immigrants comprise about 11% of United States

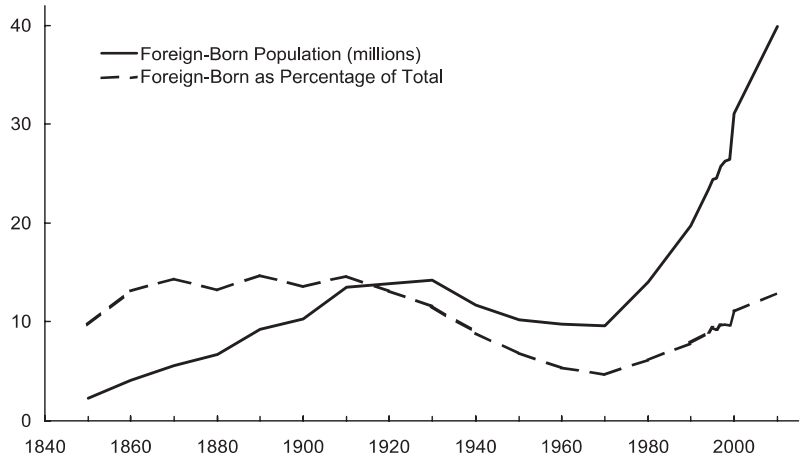

FIGURE 1.1. Immigrant numbers are at peak—percentage is not. From Fix and Passel (2003).

residents, they represent 25% of low-wage workers. More striking is that foreign-born children and children of immigrant parents represent together a full 20% of the children (under 18) in the country and 25% of all low-income children (under 200% of the federal poverty line). Again the rate of increase has been rapid. Figure 1.2 shows that the share of students who are children of immigrants went from 6% in 1970 to 20% in 2000 and is expected to rise to 30% of the school population by 2015 (Van Hook & Fix, 2000; Fix & Passel, 2003).

Not surprisingly, immigrants tend to have only limited English proficiency (LEP), posing another challenge for schools. The LEP population in the United States grew by 52% from 1990 to 2000, from 14.0 million to 21.3 million. The number of children from homes speaking a language other than English also doubled from 5.1 million to 10.6 million, and the largest increases by far were among Spanish speakers (see Figure 1.3). Limited English proficiency poses more than a short-term challenge for individuals and educational institutions because, for many families, limited proficiency persists for more than a generation.

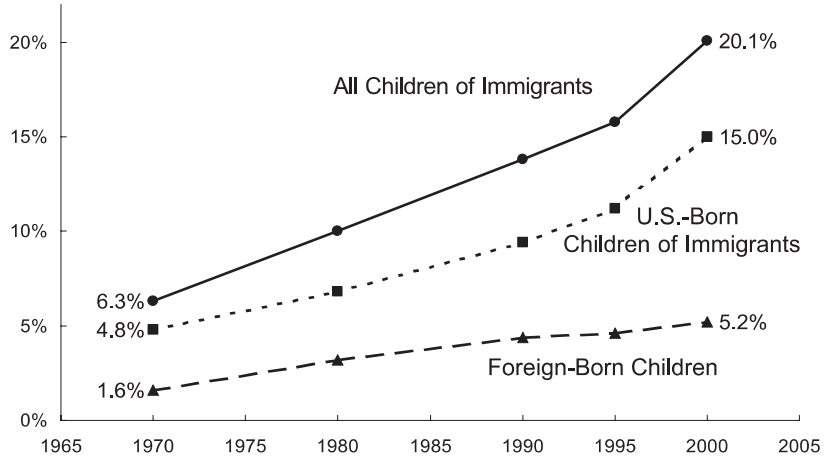

FIGURE 1.2. Immigrant Children are a rising share of students (1 in 5). From Fix and Passel (2003).

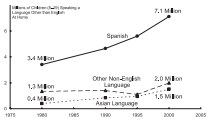

FIGURE 1.3. Spanish increasingly prevalent—sharp increases in 1990s. From Fix and Passel (2003).

What many find surprising, and what poses an especially pressing problem for schools, is that the fastest increases in foreign-born children have been children in upper grades (see Figure 1.4). These children are faced with challenging academic content material while simultaneously trying to learn English. It should be no wonder that the dropout rate among Hispanic youth is high in the United States.

Children of immigrants are heavily concentrated in metropolitan areas. Figure 1.5 shows the percentage of children, of both native and immigrant (first and second generation) parents, living in non-metropolitan areas. About 95% of children of immigrants live in metropolitan areas, compared to about 77% of children of natives.

The flow of immigrants into metropolitan areas has been large enough to shift the underlying proportions of different ethnic groups. While non-Hispanic whites represent about 70% of the population nationally, their proportion in central cities is only about 50%,

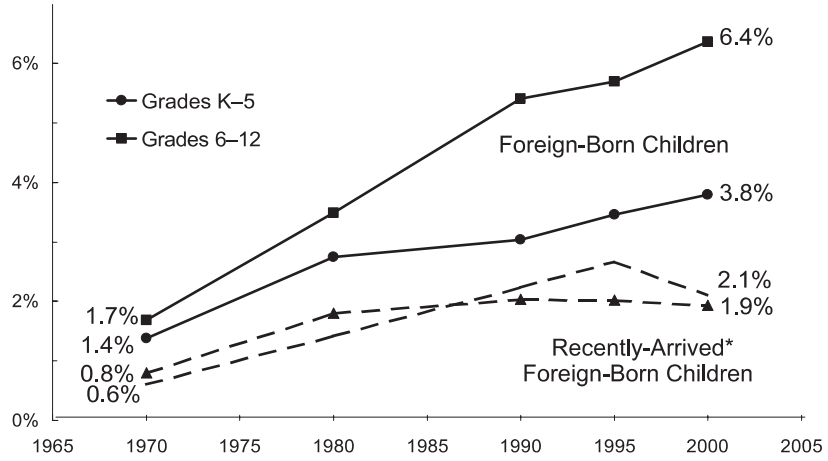

FIGURE 1.4. The number of foreign-born children increases fastest in grades 6–12. From Fix and Passel (2003). *Excludes Puerto Ricans.

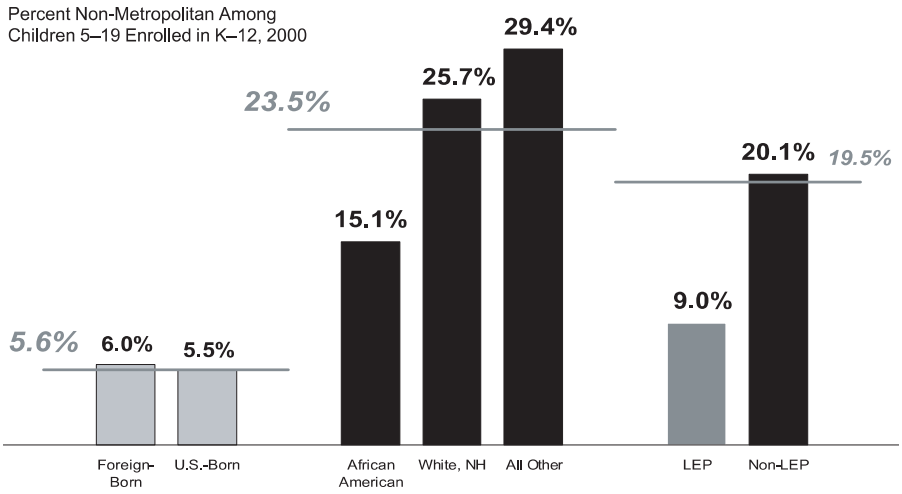

FIGURE 1.5. Children of immigrants (and limited English proficiency) living in non-metropolitan areas as percentages of all children. From Fix and Passel (2003). NH, non-Hispanic; LEP, limited English proficiency.

down nearly 15% since 1990 (see Figure 1.6). When we look only at the largest 100 cities, the non-Hispanic white population fell from about 50% to 44% (Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 2001). Nearly all of the top 100 cities in the United States gained significant Hispanic population in the 1990s (see Figure 1.7).

The figures are more dramatic when we consider students in central cities. Students in districts that are part of the Council of Great City Schools, representing the nation's 60 largest urban school systems, for example, are more likely than students nationally to be minority (76.8% vs. 37.9%), eligible for free lunch subsidy (62.3% vs. 37.5%), and English language learners (18.1% vs. 8.8%) (see Figure 1.8).

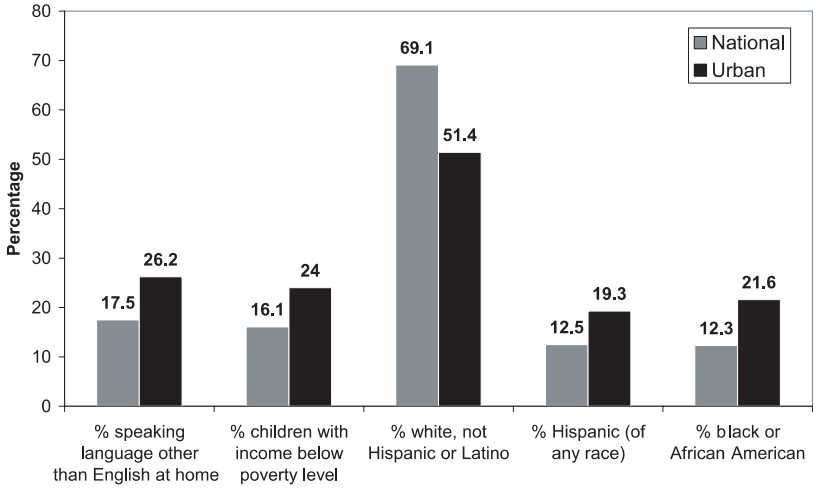

FIGURE 1.6. Demographics: national versus urban, 2000. From U.S. Census Bureau (2000), Summary File 3.

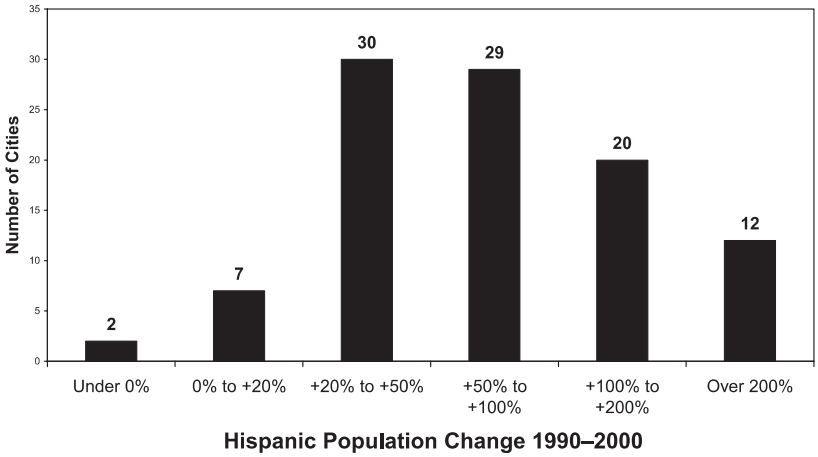

FIGURE 1.7. Nearly all of the top 100 cities gained significant Hispanic population in the 1990s. From Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy (2001). Copyright 2001 by The Brookings Institution. Reprinted by permission.

WHAT IS URBAN?

The use of the term "urban" brings to mind central cities. It also is used as a code word for "poor" and "minority." With this sense of the word in mind, we can argue that many of our suburbs are actually now urban. Many of the statistics cited above are for metropolitan areas that include central cities and their surrounding suburbs.

But it is in the suburbs where we find surprisingly high rates of increase in minority populations. Racial and ethnic minorities now constitute more than 27% of the suburban population, up from 19% in 1990 (Frey, 2001). And almost half (47%) of the minorities in large metropolitan areas live in the suburbs, up from 40% a decade earlier (Frey, 2001) (see Figure 1.9). The trend of settling in suburbs is particularly strong for Hispanics. Prior to the

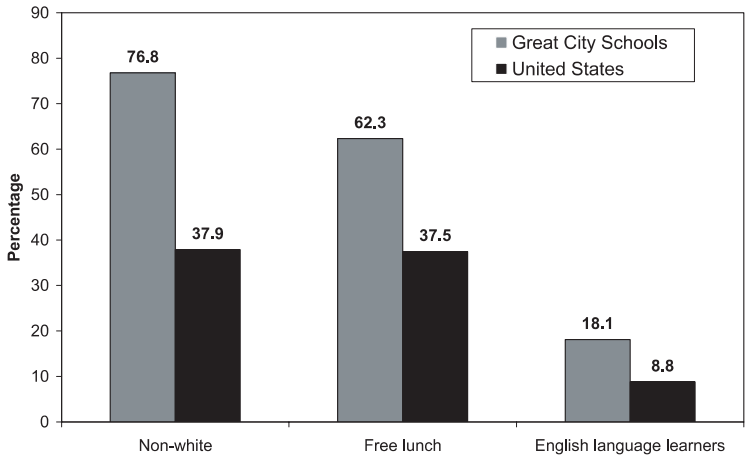

FIGURE 1.8. Student characteristics: Great City Schools versus nationally. From U.S. Census Bureau (2000), Summary File 3.

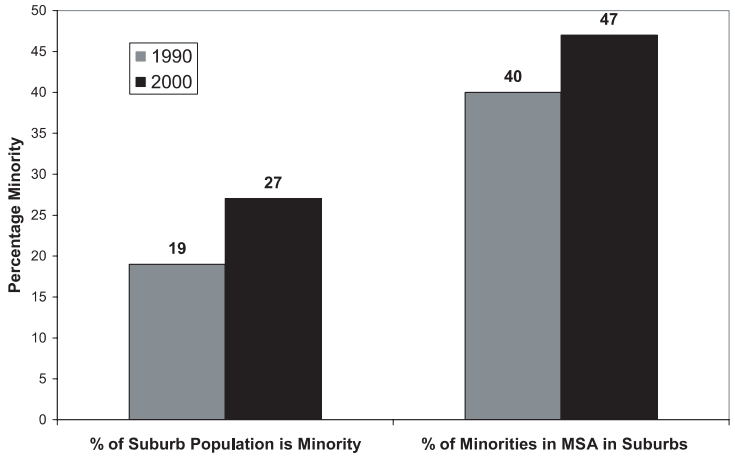

FIGURE 1.9. Racial composition of suburbs. MSA, metropolitan statistical area. From Frey (2001). Copyright 2001 by The Brookings Institution. Reprinted by permission.

1990s, Hispanics were evenly split between suburbs and cities, but by 2000 the clear majority of Hispanics lived in suburbs. Indeed, 61% of the growth in the 1990s in the Hispanic population occurred in the suburbs (Suro & Singer, 2002).

Suburbs have also become home to more poor people. As displayed in Figure 1.10, while the poverty rate in central cities (18.4%) was more than double that in the suburbs (8.3%) in 2000, the poverty gap between cities and suburbs narrowed since 1990. The changes were subtle but noteworthy since suburbs were the only geographical category to see poverty increases over the decade of the 1990s (Berube & Frey, 2002). By 2000, 49% of all poor people lived in suburbs, up from 46% in 1990.

It is important to note that despite increased diversity in the U.S. population,[1] and de-

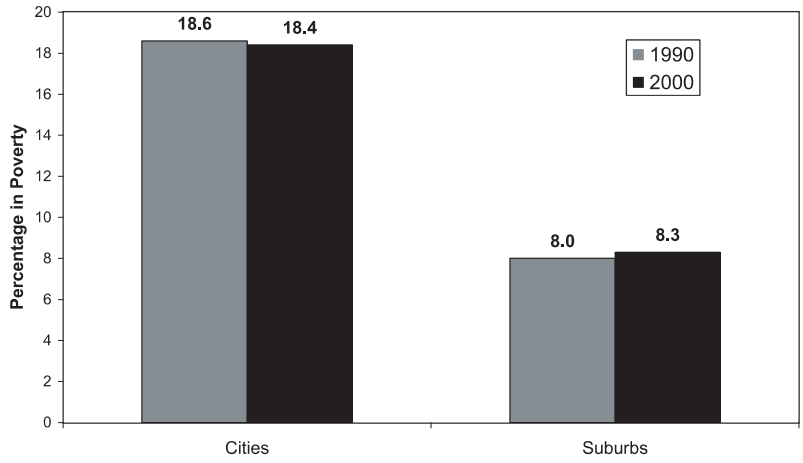

FIGURE 1.10. Changes in poverty in cities and suburbs, 1990–2000, in 102 largest metropolitan areas. From Berube and Frey (2002). Copyright 2002 by The Brookings Institution. Reprinted by permission.

spite the fact that the suburbs have increased their minority population, racial and ethnic neighborhood segregation has increased, especially for children. Minority children are growing up in neighborhoods that represent larger proportions of their own racial group, a situation particularly true for Hispanics.

The patterns just described suggest that we should exercise caution about being overly narrow in defining what we mean by "urban." Many schools and teachers in suburban areas are dealing with the same challenges as those in urban areas. Such challenges may be particularly trying for older, experienced teachers whose daily classroom life has changed dramatically in a short period with the influx of new types of students.

REGIONAL VARIATION

The discussion thus far has been concerned with national patterns. But the United States is a large country with tremendous variation in economic conditions and demographic shifts. The issues that present themselves in one area may not be the same as those in another area.

For example, most of us would expect rates of immigration to differ greatly from region to region. And, indeed, they do in expected ways (see Figure 1.11). Six states were the major destinations for immigrant populations before 1995: California, Texas, Illinois, Florida, New York, and New Jersey. Today roughly two-thirds of the immigrant population remains in these states.

During the 1990s, however, high growth rates of new immigrants showed up in other states. These 22 new growth states had growth rates that exceeded 90%. Figure 1.11 indicates the top ten in terms of rates of immigration. These new growth states are likely to be without the infrastructure required to deal with the needs of new immigrants.

There are also regional differences in terms of economic conditions. As with most de-

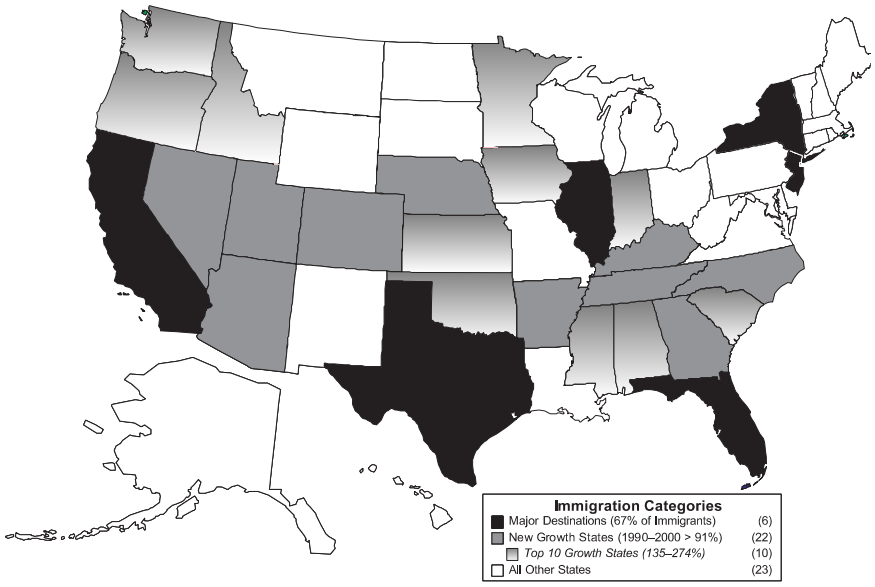

FIGURE 1.11. New immigration growth centers. From Fix and Passel (2003).

mographic trends, national data mask lower level variation. For example, poverty rates in cities are highest in the northeast, and they increased further in the 1990s. Central city poverty rates decreased in the midwest and the south, but increased in the west, where they are the lowest. Suburban rates of poverty decreased in the midwest and south, but increased in the northeast and the west, and are highest in the west. Analyses have tried to sort out the extent to which immigration is driving poverty rates, and while there is some relation, underlying economic factors appear to be the dominant force.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The trends presented in this chapter suggest that immigration patterns, and the characteristics of these immigrants, currently impact schools in urban areas—and are likely to continue to impact them—in significant ways, primarily because immigrants are likely to be poor and to have limited English proficiency which persists at least for a generation.

We must be careful, however, not to forget the suburbs. The older suburbs of cities are becoming more "urban" in terms of their populations. These changes are happening so fast that, most likely, many schools and teachers are unprepared to handle the demands that accompany the rapidly expanding immigrant population.

Similarly, patterns of immigration in recent years are creating new patterns of settlement with high rates of growth in states that have little experience with immigrant populations. Here, too, we might find inadequate community infrastructure, among both schools and other local institutions, for dealing with issues that confront new immigrants.

NOTE

1. The minority population in the United States has increased from 17% to 23% from 1990 to 2000 (Logan, Oakley, Smith, Stowell, & Stults, 2001).

Suggested Titles: Books about Immigration

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Maestro, Betsy	*Coming to America: The Story of Immigration*	1996	Scholastic	40	This beautifully illustrated book celebrates immigration to America. Readers will learn more about different perspectives as they find out about the cruel treatment of Indians and Africans, about immigrants traveling to Ellis Island, and about early life in America.
Auch, Mary Jane	*Ashes of Roses*	2002	Holt	256	This is a story of a 16-year-old girl, Rose, who immigrates to America with her family. Rose faces many obstacles as she begins work in America. We know Rose is ever hopeful to make it in America, and she states, "I was goin' to reach out and grab this new life in America with all my strength because I was brought here for a purpose."

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2

The Pursuit of Equity and Excellence in Educational Opportunity

ERIC J. COOPER

> A belief is not just an idea that you possess; it is an idea that possesses you. Changing your beliefs changes your expectations.
>
> —MAXWELL (2003, p. 29)

NATURE VERSUS NURTURE

Cognitive psychologists have engaged for years in attempts to identify differences in IQ between whites and nonwhites. A case in point is provided by Diamond (1997): "Numerous white American psychologists have been trying for decades to demonstrate that black Americans of African origins are innately less intelligent than white Americans of European origins" (p. 20). Murray (1995, 2003) continues to write, in support of *The Bell Curve* (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994), that America faces an "emerging class society in which the intellectually blessed become ever more rich and powerful and the intellectually deficient find it harder and harder to cope" (1995, p. 1). Right-wing foundations such as Scaife, Smith-Richardson, Olin, Bradley, and The Pioneer Fund have long argued that increased spending on poor children of color is a waste of resources when compared with the positive effects of an increase of resources for white middle- and upper-class students (Dowie, 2001).

The argument of intellectual superiority among racial and ethnic groups has been used by many to explain the academic achievement gap between whites and nonwhites and the futility of using social and government interventions to eliminate it (Jensen, 1980; Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Murray, 1995, 2003). The gap is wide: "By twelfth grade, on average, black students are four years behind those who are white or Asian, and Hispanics do not do much better" (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003, p. 2). Regardless of the achievement gap, it remains perplexing that those who forecast learning potential from IQ results incessantly fail to understand the degree to which social environment and educational opportunities can affect the results. Social science research has taught us that cognitive abilities

are heavily influenced by social environment (Weiss, 2003; Jencks & Phillips, 1998). Many argue that it is nearly impossible, then, to discern any influence of preexisting genetic differences (Diamond, 1997; Ogbu, 2003; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, in press; Gould, 1981; Hilliard, 1991, 1994, 1996; Fuller, 1977; Hodge, Struckmann, & Trost, 1975). Yet regardless of the overwhelming evidence against using IQ as a suitable measure of learning capacity, scholars from William Shockley (coinventor of the transistor) and Arthur Jensen to Herrnstein and Murray in 1994 to Charles Murray in 2003 continue to push the idea of racial superiority of whites over nonwhites, and given the number of articles in the popular press, seemingly to a receptive public.

Sadly, intelligence tests remain as prevalent in American education today as they were in the 1960s, and academic tracking based on IQ is the norm, especially for the placement of nonwhite students in special education (Comer & Poussaint, 1992; Popham, 1993; Grant, 1992; Darling-Hammond, 2000a).

It has been said that Albert Einstein once defined insanity as doing the same thing over again and expecting different results. In the United States, we continue to lament the lack of social progress on seemingly intractable issues such as poverty, inequitable educational opportunity, and a deepening racial life gap, and we continue to revisit and attempt to explain causality while turning to the same interventions over and over. To this day, social and educational interventions do not take into account the 21st-century reality that our schools face (Froning & Cooper, 2003). Nor do a majority of Americans demand that those responsible for policy development and financial support provide sufficient funds and qualified teachers targeted to serve in the lowest performing schools and those attended by increasing numbers of diverse immigrants and low-income students of color (Bracey, 1998; Cremin, 1990). This resistance to face reality is occurring while the mix of America is changing.

The "tipping point" defined by Gladwell (2000) "is the moment of critical mass, the threshold" (p. 12), where sudden change occurs. The tipping point in America's increasing tilt toward diversity may well have been reached (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). In June 2003, it was predicted by the U.S. Census Bureau that 50% of the students in the nation's public schools will be nonwhite by 2030. And by 2050, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Hispanic/Latino American population will increase 300% and will make up 24% of the total population.

THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

As the nation's demographics change, so does the schools' responsibility to meet the needs of this new diverse student body—or an increasingly segregated one, as is the case in many urban and metropolitan areas with primarily poor, black, and brown student populations ("Fighting School Resegregation," 2003). The choices this country makes in terms of funding education and in striving for racial balance in student achievement in our public schools remain central to the continued vitality of our nation. The challenge is a broad one. Martin Haberman (2002) has written: "Schools rather than functioning as the great equalizer, tend to both reflect and replicate social-class structures and societal biases . . . the end result: families in the top 25% of income send 86% of their children to college; while families in bottom 20% send 4% of their children to college" (p. 1).

Numerous reasons are cited in the literature for the achievement gap between African American, nonwhite, and white children. The most prevalent are:

1. The lack of political will by stakeholders to close the gap (Hilliard, 1991).
2. A lack of belief in the capacity of nonwhite children to succeed at the highest levels that has led to a self-fulfilling prophecy for students by which American children may equate poor performance on tests with a lack of ability rather than with a lack of practice and preparation (Delpit, 1995; Bracey, 1998; Kohn, 1998; Singham, 1998; Steele et al., in press).
3. Lack of opportunities for poor children of color to attend "good" preschools (Adams, 1996).
4. A belief that intelligence is innate and fixed and a conclusion that the educational disparity is a fact of nature (Singham, 1998; Herrnstein & Murray, 1994).
5. The belief that the gap is a result of economic disparity (Singham, 1998).
6. The existence of a cultural gap between teachers and children of color which causes missed opportunities for learning (Hilliard, 1996; Delpit, 1995).
7. A media-reinforced focus on relationships between racial identity and academic performance (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003).
8. Application of a negative stereotype threat directed by teachers to women and students of color about their intellectual abilities and the impact of "bad" teaching that may lead to underperformance (Steele et al., in press; Mayshark, 1996; Darling-Hammond, 2000a).
9. Unequal access to high-level courses and challenging curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 1990a, 1990b, 2001).
10. Negative peer pressure exerted by nonwhites on nonwhites about acting "white" or "too smart" (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003; Ogbu, 2003).
11. A difference in child-rearing between black and Hispanic students and their white and Asian American counterparts (Bok, 2003; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003).
12. Lack of parental involvement in bridging the gap between school and home (Paige, 2002).

All but reason 4 make some sense, and, by the nature of the problem cited, they, in turn, suggest courses of action. Sadly, however, the course of action most often proposed to address the achievement gap takes nonwhite students out of the mainstream and into dead-end educational pathways. Levine, Cooper, and Hilliard (2000) reflect on the following:

> The educational and socialization strategies being proposed for African children in the United States reveal a system . . . [which supports a] . . . widespread use of boot camps for the delinquent and violence-prone; direct instruction for low-achieving students [which denies them access to higher thinking and creates an achievement barrier that may condemn them to a lifetime of underperformance] . . . special education for those who act-out and who were not nurtured during their early schooling; compensatory education and minimum competency schools to help the masses meet the basics; vouchers and choice in order to give the affluent a way to take care of their own and to ignore other people's children. (p. 305)

REALISTIC BUILDING BLOCKS

Even though such educational interventions for poor children of color have been shown not to eliminate the gap, we continue to use them over and over again. Some have stated that we continue to do so because we have fallen victim to negative social engineering, that is, we

have been led to believe that those children who are challenged by poverty and who lack European ancestors just do not have the capacity for the level of learning that might lead to "rich and powerful" careers (Murray, 2003; Murray, 1995, Diamond, 1997). The question is then asked, Why raise the poor nonwhite's aspirations through social activist policies only to see them dashed by "innate" cognitive limitations? Murray (1995), as the Bradley Fellow for the American Enterprise Institute (a think tank for conservative causes), has gone so far as to write in the highly influential neoconservative publication, *The Public Interest*: "It is time for policy analysts to stop avoiding the reality of natural inequality, a reality that neither equalization of opportunity nor a freer society will circumvent" (p. 8).

In spite of Murray's (1995) specious arguments, cognitive abilities are heavily influenced by the social environment experienced during childhood, and tests used to assess cognitive abilities tend to measure cultural learning, not pure innate intelligence (Diamond, 1997; Weiss, 2003). The position advocated in this chapter is that many success stories about dramatic achievement for urban and metropolitan children of color have been cited in individual schools throughout this country (Hughes, 1995; Miller & McKinnon, 1995; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Barrett, 1992; Suzuki, 1984; Sizemore, Brossard & Harrigan, 1982; Feuerstein & Jensen, 1980; Fuller, 1977; Freire, 1973). These schools have succeeded without mysterious methods, programs, or equipment. They have done so mainly by exposing the poor and ethnic minorities to the same quality of instruction usually reserved for the more affluent and/or dominant groups in the society (Kozol, 1991; Kohn, 1998). These individuals are not freakish exceptions, but the fulfilling of natural potential that resides in them, as in other populations.

Evidence is also increasing to show that when poor children of color are provided access to successful educational programs, they are enabled to enter an institution of higher education of their choice (Ogbu, 2003, Allington & Cunningham, 1996; Haycock, 1998, Bowen & Bok, 1998; Bok 2003; Jencks & Phillips, 1998). Why does the puzzle of the achievement gap persist in the face of the evidence of dramatic achievement for poor children? An often-cited quote of Ronald Edmonds (1982) provides a partial answer: "We can whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children, whose education is of importance to us." For many who work to accelerate school reform in this nation, it is a matter of will (National Urban Alliance [NUA], 1999). The research of Edmonds (1982) and that cited previously also present the premise that schools can succeed for all students—in spite of a lack of parental participation in the schools that serve families who are deeply challenged by poverty. This point is further bolstered by the achievement variation within school systems and buildings, which may suggest that some individual teachers may not have the prerequisite skills to teach the students.

If we as a nation are to develop the will for change for all students, where do we begin? Obviously, the journey starts with those who serve children during the school day—the teachers. This first step is supported by a large body of research suggesting that the single most important school-based factor in student achievement is the teacher (Sanders & Rivers, 1996, Mayshark, 1996). A broader challenge is how we as a nation can trigger not only academic improvement in the individual school but also success in entire school districts (Butler & Kahle, 1997; Resnick & Hall, 1998). Yet based on a review of the literature, there are only a few instances in which national reports suggest that achievement has been dramatic within a district, for example, District 2 in New York City and the Brazosport School District in Texas (Levine, Cooper, & Hilliard, 2000).

I propose in this chapter to build on common principles of effective school factors that translate consistently across examples of school success and that, when applied, can lead to

theories and applications of sustained change for entire school systems. As noted, this change process begins with the educators who have the most exposure to schoolchildren and allows the translation of best practice into application through consistent, cohesive, and sustained professional development (Allington & Cunningham, 1996; Hilliard, 1997). It continues with applications of those factors identified in research on effective schools (e.g., strong principal leadership, coherent curriculum and instruction, sustained use of student data for instructional purposes, adherence to structural changes relative to classroom and school size, and, when possible, sustained parental involvement). The intent of this chapter is to translate what has been learned through research on effective schools and through cognitive research into systemic application. An example of this application is illustrated by the initiatives of school districts that are working in partnership with the National Urban Alliance for Effective Education. It is offered as one of several examples that may help facilitate school district change. Though the school community engagements that follow are complex in nature, those who seek broad school improvements should consider proven systems for high-performing schools through applied theories of sustained change.

THE NUA EXPERIENCE

> Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that has.
>
> —Mead (cited in Howard, 1984)

The NUA was first formalized in 1989 as an extension of the work of the College Board to improve access to higher education for urban nonwhite students. NUA was first launched at Teachers College, Columbia University, in 1991 as a center in collaboration with the College Board and targeted school districts, for example, Milwaukee; San Francisco; New York City; Prince George's County, Maryland; and Kansas City, Missouri. The mission of the NUA is to advance the members' passionate belief that "all students can be taught to use the higher order processes and engage in the advanced learning tasks demanded by a changing global community, and that race and poverty must not be used to erect insurmountable social barriers to academic success and life-long learning" (NUA, 1999, p. 1). That is, the intention is to increase not only the achievement of nonwhite students but also the capacity of all students. This dual goal is vital because, as Delpit (1995) writes, "Sporadically we hear of 'minorities' scoring higher in basic skills, but on the same newspaper page we're informed of their dismal showing in higher order thinking skills" (p. xiv). Although we applaud the gains made by students in basic skills, we are cognizant of the fact that as this country increases the gap between the haves and have-nots, we do not want children of color to be left behind because they lack the higher order thinking skills now required for success in higher education and the increasingly demanding workplace (Marsick, 1998; Resnick & Hall, 1998; Bracey, 1998; Bok, 2003).

Functioning from 1991 to 2000 as an urban center located in Teachers College at Columbia University, the NUA has engaged in a wide range of varied activities that aim at helping school districts improve their policies and practices with respect to enhancing student performance. Typical support activities include: conducting systemwide instructional assessments, conducting research, advocating for change with policymakers and key stakeholders in communities, producing documentaries and television programs that disseminate best practice, and coordinating symposia and conferences that highlight success. The central activity in most of these collaborations has been to implement the NUA Professional Develop-

ment Model (NUAPDM) for improving students' comprehension, thinking, and literacy at all grade levels and in all content areas.

More recently, the NUA has initiated a partnership with the International Reading Association (IRA) to extend and disseminate NUAPDM and to reinforce a social movement that facilitates social justice for all. The partnership has led to the creation of the Urban Partnership for Literacy (UP). In conjuction with the vast resources provided by IRA's membership, the initiatives of organizations such as the Council of Great City Schools, and the collective leadership of targeted urban districts, UP intends to accelerate learning for urban students so that the achievement gap between white and nonwhite children and youth is eliminated. The NUA and UP focus on the professional development of teachers with the aim of helping them promote high achievement among students for whom expectations have been unfairly low.

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL (NUAPDM)

The NUAPDM is based on the recognition that, if all students are to meet high standards in mastering challenging content and skills, educators must understand the importance of "addressing the prior knowledge, the learning context, the cultural, linguistic and cognitive abilities, and the motivational patterns of all students" and must use the best instructional strategies for developing students' higher order skills and understanding (NUA, 1999, p. 1). Using an instructional assessment (IA), NUA consultants first study how the school and the district focus on instruction and provide engaged academic time for students. Protocols are used to assess not only what happens in the schools but also what processes, procedures, and engagements are at work in the community in support of educational reform. The notion that schools reflect the attitudes and the commitment of the entire community provides the foundation for an objective, authentic, and meaningful evaluation.

The broad-based and targeted IA also establishes the context and rationale for the professional development plan for the district that reflects the NUAPDM, which is designed to improve students' comprehension, cognition, and literacy. Consultants in an NUA initiative meet with groups of teachers to engage them in reflective analyses of their practice and to introduce research-based, classroom-tested, culturally relevant strategies that develop and extend students' thinking and literacy skills. These same consultants go into the teachers' classrooms to demonstrate these strategies in reading, writing, math, science, and other subject areas and then coach faculty members in how to use the strategies and apply them to real-world contexts for students learning such as community projects and service (Freire, 1973). In addition, the consultants help faculty in assessing instructional and organizational arrangements, in developing and implementing plans for improving these arrangements, and in becoming collaborative peer coaches as they continue to improve their practices on their own. The larger professional development framework within which a multischool initiative proceeds usually includes four sets of first-year activities—workshops, on-site demonstration lessons, on-site seminars, and leadership training—that are sequenced and carried out as follows (NUA, 1999).

WORKSHOPS

A minimum of five large, cross-school workshops are held during the school year. NUA recommends that a minimum of one-third of each school's staff attend the workshops to ensure successful team building and schoolwide implementation of the strategies. The workshops

are a vehicle for initial presentation of the strategies and for engaging teachers in the kind of reflective analysis of their work that will increase their capacity. Each strategy is modeled in large- and small-group sessions and is applied to real-life situations and content. Also, the presentations demonstrate how content knowledge is refined and enhanced with a focus on developing reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. All strategies are integrated with implications for teaching and learning, curriculum development, and assessment.

The rationale is given for each strategy introduced, consultants model its use, and participants are given time to practice it during the workshops and/or in their own classrooms. A strong metacognitive and affective component is part of each workshop, especially during the first year of the program. NUA consultants are particularly sensitive to instructional issues related to ethnic and racial bias; gender bias; inclusion and different kinds of learning; differentiated instruction; informal assessment; and attention to multiple intelligences, as well as to those issues related to students who are English-language learners.

THE ON-SITE DEMONSTRATION LESSONS

Consultants visit the participants' schools to demonstrate how to apply the strategies presented at the large-group workshops in classroom instruction using the subject-area content, textbooks, and material that the school is using with their students. Before each lesson, a briefing meeting is held to explain what the lesson is about, the strategies that will be used, the rationale for selecting the strategies, and the principles of learning on which the strategies are based. All on-site demonstration lessons by consultants take place in real classes, address the culture and context of the average urban class, and are conducted in front of a number of observers from the site school and possibly from partner schools. The demonstrations use authentic instructional materials and are related to the existing course of study and curricular demands. Most important, these lessons vividly illustrate the significant differences in advanced-level thinking when correctly selected cognitive strategies are used to accelerate learning for all urban students.

After the lesson, a debriefing session is held for observers to discuss and reflect on what they saw. Observers are encouraged to question or even challenge the NUA consultant if they are unsure or uneasy about the application of the strategy. This debriefing is an important part of the visit, as it allows teachers to engage in conversation regarding principles of learning that were the focus of the demonstration lesson, as well as more routine questions about how to apply the strategy in their own teaching.

A wide range of strategies is demonstrated, ranging from highly focused approaches to teaching specific skills or content to strategies that can be used in many subject areas and many grade levels to increase achievement. Some engage students as a whole group, and others are used to build students' skills as members of small, collaborative groups. The consultant selects strategies to demonstrate primarily so that teachers can see how students can think and learn beyond their teachers' expectations and, in some instances, even beyond their own expectations.

ON-SITE SEMINARS

Some site visits are conducted as seminars to help participants with individual or schoolwide implementation issues and to give participants opportunities to examine their own knowledge, attitudes, and expectations, as well as their own biases, related to culture, gender, race,

ethnicity, and the teaching of higher level thinking. On-site seminar activities may include: (1) review of the school improvement plan; (2) analysis of the school achievement data; (3) problem identification and problem solving with respect to school reform efforts; (4) classroom observation; (5) peer coaching; (6) development of integrated lesson plans; (7) miniworkshops based on specific requests from the teachers, and (8) workshops for parents.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The literature is replete with studies that recognize the impact of support from school principals on instructional change. Recognizing this, the NUA works with participating principals to help them develop their skills as instructional leaders. The administrative development includes such activities as guidance in analyzing achievement data, evaluating curricula, aligning instruction and assessment to district and state standards, and refining abilities at observing, evaluating, and supporting the delivery of effective instruction.

Although true educational reform centers on improved instruction in the classroom, principals and teachers have realized the need for whole-school efforts that involve the intentional, systematic cooperation of faculty and administration. It is for this reason that NUA requires a participating school to have at least one-third of its staff involved in the workshops and site visits and asks that the principal attend both events as often as possible. A group of teachers that participates together with the principal is more likely to use what they have learned than those who attend alone. When principal and teachers participate together, they develop as a team while increasing their capacity as individuals.

School teams are guided to identify problems that may impede instructional reform. Together, the team members analyze the data that reflect on their students' performance and formulate a plan of activities that all agree to follow. Such activities develop a school's capacity to sustain the growth toward excellence that they begin when they are directly involved with NUA. A strong and knowledgeable school team ensures that when the NUA initiative ends, the faculty and administration will continue using the refined skills they have acquired and continue improving their instructional program.

As the initiative progresses and as teachers gain expertise in the use of the strategies, they are invited to enter the NUA apprenticeship/induction program. Apprentices are trained in the mission of NUA, in the use of cognitive strategies to develop students' advanced skills, and in effective workshop delivery of professional development services. Successful apprentices become consultants in their districts and exert their own leadership over the instructional program (NUA, 1999).

The partner district/NUA initiative also includes a variety of related leadership activities involving other administrators and lead teachers and a number of special institutes for school and district staff. Also, after the first year, the focus of the cross-district workshops shifts from specific cognitive strategies to thematic and interdisciplinary instructional design and to a deeper focus on the psychology of learning. At that time, additional and/or alternative teachers from the participating schools begin to attend.

USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Underachievement among urban students is most evident and alarming with respect to comprehension and literacy skills (Allington & Cunningham, 1996; Cooper & Sherk, 1989; Delpit, 1995; Haycock, 1998; Levine & Levine, 1996; Wheelock, 1999; Mahiri, 1999;

Ogbu, 2003; Jackson, in press). The instructional strategies that are at the heart of NUA are widely known and reflect extant research in literacy, yet they are implemented unevenly across urban schools in this country (Ogbu, 2003). These strategies are based on cognitive research on how people learn (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Bruner, 1960; Feuerstein & Jensen, 1980; Newell & Simon, 1972). In addition, they draw on an understanding that children bring different skills and strengths to the learning experience (Bransford et al., 1999; Gardner, 1993a, 1993b). For this reason, the NUA strives to help all teachers master the strategies most appropriate for their teaching situations and use them consistently in their practice.

The instructional strategies used by NUA are described elsewhere (Harris & Cooper, 1985; Cooper & Sherk, 1989; Haberman, 1991; Means & Knapp, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nessel & Baltas, 2000, Mason & Schumm, 2003; Jackson, in press). Whereas the term "strategy" properly refers to a systematic plan for achieving a specific goal or result, the term "skill" has acquired a very elastic set of meanings. These meanings can range from the highly specific, such as eye–hand coordination, to the very complex, such as thinking and study skills, that may be thought of, collectively, as virtually synonymous with strategy. For these reasons, it is helpful to understand "strategy" as "skills in use"; in so doing, the importance of skills—individually and collectively—will not be overlooked. The strategies also become internalized when they are applied to real-world situations, for example, community service. It is important to recognize that this list, or any list for that matter, is only a beginning, a guide that can enable the students to move into deeper cognitive applications.

The strategies which follow provide a framework for how to make learning more meaningful for students. For the most part, they are pedagogical tools which help students learn to read, comprehend, write, compute, think more carefully about vocabulary and concepts, and make connections between what they already know and what they are learning. The strategies support concept formation and attainment in the subject-area and content provided by the teacher. When teachers make use of these strategies consistently, students' comprehension, thinking, and achievement will increase over time.

1. Comprehension
   - Thinking maps
   - Mind maps
   - Key word prediction
   - Read–talk–write
   - Anticipation guides
   - List–group–label
   - Pattern guides
   - Directed reading–thinking activities
   - Readers' theater
   - Semantic mapping
   - Story mapping
   - Strip story
   - Team webbing (Carousel)
   - Think–pair–share
   - Declarative statements for literal, interpretive and applied levels of thinking
   - Concept attainment and formation strategies
   - Concept development strategies

- Facts and inferences
- Read and Think Math
- The Language–Experience Approach

2. Writing for learning and for self-expression
   - One-sentence summarizing
   - Learning logs
   - Reader-response journals
   - Key word notes
   - Possible sentences
   - Writing for Mathematics
   - Cubing
   - Dialogue journals
   - Double-entry journals
   - Read–talk–write
   - Imitation writing
   - Synectics—use of analogies for writing
   - Restating and paraphrasing
   - I-Search reporting
   - Eyewitness (saturation) reporting

3. Speaking for learning and for self-expression
   - Think-aloud
   - Think–pair–share
   - Draw-a-Face
   - Read–talk–write
   - Reciprocal teaching
   - Active listening
   - Socratic seminars
   - Oral interpretation
   - Choral reading
   - Readers' theater
   - Creative drama
   - Question–answer circle
   - Inner–outer circle
   - Panel discussions
   - Role playing

4. Word recognition and word analysis
   - Phonemic awareness activities
   - Highly recurring phonic elements
   - Phonics hopscotch
   - Repeated readings
   - Word sorts
   - Building fluency
   - Choral reading
   - The Language–Experience Approach
   - Hear–see–use vocabulary
   - Morphology and etymology

5. Vocabulary and concept development
   - Concept formation and attainment
   - Vocabulary notebooks
   - Word walls
   - Dancing definitions
   - Analogies
   - Synectics
   - Hear–see–use vocabulary
   - Thinking maps

As noted, the NUAPDM assists teachers in learning about and analyzing the appropriateness of strategies for improving comprehension, thinking, and literacy. The NUA approach is based on the premises that there is no single strategy or approach that is universally effective for all grade levels, subject areas, or classroom situations and that a given strategy may be more suitable for one teacher or student than another; that is, there is not a definitive list of strategies that all teachers learn through association with NUA. Rather, the strategies are used as vehicles for encouraging teachers to think about instruction in more effective ways. NUA finds that teachers appreciate the opportunity to reflect on their practice with the guidance of experienced consultants and to make professional decisions about the particular strategies they will use in their own classrooms. Many participants soon become skilled in making such decisions and in planning and delivering lessons that can improve the comprehension and literacy of all students. Teachers soon come to trust the NUAPDM because they are respected for their prior experience and knowledge and, in connection with this trust, learn that the NUA provides both rigor and degrees of freedom in instruction. Teachers are encouraged to make their own choices about what to do in their classrooms but are also encouraged to think clearly about those choices and to be able to articulate their reasons for making them. It is the firm belief of the NUA that scripted approaches that force a lockstep approach to learning may result in unthinking behavior on the part of teachers and in learning dead-ends for the students, who know that they are being taught mechanically. This is an unnecessary and major cost to student learning that too often stunts higher learning.

NUA DISTINCTIONS

What is different and unique in the preceding? Many instructional change efforts for teachers offer an overwhelming, complex array of "best" instructional practices that focus on teacher behaviors, as opposed to the direct facilitation and mediation of student-centered thinking and learning. Thus the cycle of systemic underachievement may deepen as incremental changes occur through scripted applications. In making selective use of research-based strategies focused on advanced thinking skills (e.g., problem solving and decision making) and tailoring their use in specific contexts, NUAPDM strives to uncover and use the broad principles of learning on which all "best practices" are based so that the learner can transfer these principles to a variety of classroom and real-world applications. Recognizing the unique issues and economic stress that urban students face, the use of cognitive strategies and the delivery of content are always applied with a recognition of the role that culture and language play in learning (Freire,1994; Mahari, 1999; Freire, 1973). Many children of color who are challenged by family circumstances are more dependent on school for

learning than are those students who come from wealthier circumstances. It is for this reason that NUAPDM strives to teach the concept of "school-dependent children" versus the "at-risk" terminology often applied to urban student cohorts.

To this end emphasis is also placed on the use of interdisciplinary and thematic instruction, which allow opportunities for developing reflective, creative, and critical thinking skills. Additionally, using instruction that is focused on advanced thinking skills allows opportunities for students to build a bridge between what they know and what they need to learn (Means & Knapp, 1991; Levine & Cooper, 1991; Cooper & Sherk, 1989; Pearson & Johnson, 1978; Herber, 1978). Students can be taught to comprehend new information by building the prior knowledge necessary for reading comprehension before new concepts are presented, to transfer broad cognitive principles to a variety of instructional circumstances, to ponder and ask questions, and to evaluate best courses of study before they learn the basics.

Although formalized, the approach is not formulaic. Rather than focusing on what may be inadvertently interpreted as a cookie-cutter approach (one that demands that one strategy be applied in a linear fashion along with the content), teachers are guided by NUAPDM to move beyond linear learning to a much richer and more complex approach to teaching and learning. Cognitive research has revealed that student learning does not proceed in a linear fashion and that the responsibility of the teacher/coach is to help students increase the number of learning connections and insights—by which the concepts learned lead to ever increasing connectivity and transference. Effective teachers help students move toward complexity through identifying similarities and differences, engaging in cooperative projects, summarizing, elaborating, utilizing multistep problem solving, and reflecting on their thinking with a range of tools (Hyerle, 2003).

In many urban classrooms, the cycle of systemic underachievement deepens as incremental changes occur. Hyerle (in press) has written that low expectations mixed with negative perceptions of students' cognitive ability persist when learning is perceived as linear with learning gates that students must pass (as in having to learn basic skills before moving to more advanced skills). Students in large urban school systems are caught in a vicious cycle of perception and performance not of their making. All too often, scripted and test-driven approaches lead to an abuse of the drill–test–drill–retest cycle, resulting in students being deadened by the school experience, demoralized by the thought that there is nothing but drills to look forward to, held back because they do not respond with enthusiasm to what they are given, and finally deciding out of boredom that dropping out is preferable to remaining in.

THE WHOLE GREATER THAN THE SUM OF THE PARTS

The experience of NUA informs and reinforces the wisdom of comprehensive and coordinated efforts to engage the many parts of a school, of a school system, and of the surrounding social/political system. This involves fashioning a 10-point approach for high-performing schools in a way that is strong but not static. It binds public action to professional judgment and skill; it connects the requirements for current performance with the continuing value of development; it illuminates the universal elements of urban education and strengthens systematic connections of nation, state, district, school, and classroom. The goal is one of nurturing public conversations in order to frame a collective vision of education: "the idea of public education as meaning not only the education of the public inside schools,

but also the education of the public outside schools" (Eisner, 2002, p. 207). Toward this end, and in partnership with school districts and the community, the NUA takes the following approach:

1. *Advocating for children*. National and local advocacy affirming that all children have the ability and deserve the opportunity to strive for the highest levels of achievement.
2. *Assessing the situation*. An on-location instructional assessment of the schools and district.
3. *Providing an action plan*. An action plan for higher achievement based on the assessment, tailored to each district and school.
4. *Motivating teachers*. Systemic support for a highly qualified, highly motivated teacher in every classroom.
5. *Using proven products and programs*. Focusing on strategies for using proven products and programs to improve student outcomes.
6. *Aligning with standards*. Alignment of instruction with state standards for student achievement.
7. *Engaging the community*. Engagement with principals, teachers and the community to reinforce and animate belief in the potential of each student.
8. *Eliminating achievement gaps*. Modeling of success-oriented instructional strategies to engage culturally diverse students and to accelerate, enrich and sustain student learning.
9. *Succeeding with NCLB*. Practical support for realistic implementation of "No Child Left Behind."
10. *Building local capacity*. Development of local capacities and networks to carry on the course of action.

KEYS TO EFFECTIVENESS

Ultimately, the challenge facing those interested in eliminating the achievement gap requires sustained attention to the four factors most clearly affecting school effectiveness: (1) instructional (high standards in content and pedagogy), (2) structural (school-based procedures determining grouping, tracking, class and school size, administrative and organizational arrangements), (3) professional development that provides teachers access to best practice, and (4) community engagements (including parental and stakeholder involvement). Attention to each is necessary if we are to help students accelerate their learning (Darling-Hammond, 1997, 2000b, 2001).

Sustained and cohesive professional development provides the glue that binds the complex of effective school factors. This task requires that districts rethink what has been identified as a rather dismal track record for conducting in-service training or staff development (Allington & Cunningham, 1996). Traditional staff development approaches by districts—such as one-shot workshops, sporadic in-service training highlighted by a "superintendent's day," workshop-type presentations conducted during stolen moments of a faculty meeting, staff retreats, after-school training, or even the establishment of a district-based professional development center—that often provide an unsystematic way of introducing teachers to "new" ideas have provided little evidence of success.

This chapter illustrates the complexity of implementing successful procedures for

school system change. Each of the research-based processes previously outlined is designed to provide a framework that can incorporate district-based interventions. The categories outlined are broad and meant to offset years of pernicious belief systems about student capacity for learning. They are focused on translating theory into practice and may provide signposts that can fuel renewed and committed leadership by stakeholders. Traditional approaches to professional development and the education change process remaining prevalent today are doomed to continue the treadmill that Einstein notes in his definition of insanity, stated earlier in this chapter. Sustained and compelling educational change begins with, among other things, a dialogue and a careful review of the various reform practices chosen by central and school-based educators. Questions need to be answered regarding what the broad theoretical and pedagogical principles have in common and how change overload for participating schools may be avoided (Levine & Cooper, 1991; Fullan, 1991). All too often NUA representatives have observed educators whom some have called "change junkies," that is, those who utilize a checklist approach to school change and who feel that, as long as they are able to point to reform programs underway in their district or school, they are doing what is necessary for improved academic achievement.

Einstein is purported to have said something else that remains as relevant today as it was 60 years ago: "The problems that exist in the world today cannot be solved by the level of thinking that created them." Education remains the pathway that leads people out of despair and hopelessness. A new process of educational change requires enormous commitment, leadership (both within and outside the school district), adherence to those prerequisites of successful policy and programmatic implementation identified previously (Levine & Cooper, 1991, Jackson, in press; Cremin,1990), and sufficient time for interventions to take hold at the school level and throughout the district.

Contrary to popular belief, and though school systems can witness initial spurts in achievement when a change or new intervention is begun, we are finding in our work that 3 to 5 years is not sufficient for sustained improvements to take hold. Because of student and teacher mobility, social factors such as poverty, frequent change in administrative leadership, policies, and shifting funding cycles, we are finding that 5 to 7 years may be required before institutionalization takes place. Yet with that said, those cities and school systems that embark on systemic reform and show high fidelity to proposals for change management and implementation will see successful indicators that include a sustained upward trend in achievement over the course of the 7 years throughout all of a district's schools ("Hey Governors," 2003).

BRINGING IT ALL, AND US ALL, TOGETHER

> What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children. Any other idea for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy." —Dewey (1900, p. 3)

The story emerging in Indianapolis, Indiana, stands in contrast to what may seem to be a push by some in the popular press toward the establishment of "separate and unequal" school systems. This push represents a retreat from the *Brown v. Board of Education* 1954 Supreme Court ruling that mandated desegregation of the nation's schools to one that insid-

iously revisits *Plessy v. Ferguson* (the doctrine that racial segregation is constitutional as long as the facilities provided for blacks and whites are roughly equal), with a twist:

> If [localities] want to diminish the exodus from the cities into the countryside right away, it needs only to establish in the cities and inner suburbs a separate system of schools that cannot be overwhelmed by neglected kids and the remedial education they require—schools where admission and promotion from grade to grade are determined by regular testing of performance at grade level. (Powell, 2003, p. A13)

What may not be understood by those who argue for separate education for students who differ in socioeconomic status is that America's poor children of color are like all children and youth in this country. They start life wanting to be happy, to be people they themselves respect, to be loved by their families and cared about in their communities. They want to prosper as much as anyone. They want to be viewed by the world as good and aspiring people. But in the underdeveloped areas of our country, in our rundown neighborhoods, in the shadows of poverty, the distance from aspiration to achievement is strewn with social policies and obstacles whose number, intensity, and complexity is disheartening. Children of color who live in poverty, like all children, want to read and learn good stories. Given that America is founded on fairness and tolerance, can't we as a nation write them more promising life stories? If the American community develops the political will, the answer is a resounding yes! But if America does not, then we may continue to witness increasing numbers of urban students who drop out of school; remain out of work, out of hope, or incarcerated; and, as a consequence, develop nihilistic behaviors: "Many of [America's] young black males believe that manhood is defined by the ability to injure or damage another man, rather than helping another man" (Herbert, 2003, p. A27).

If we are to see the elimination of the achievement gap and a pervasive institutionalization of American fairness for all, nothing less than long-term and total commitment to this goal by all stakeholders in school communities, state departments of education, and the federal government will suffice. Additionally, American education must come to terms with the conflicts between what parents want for their own children and what they want for American children in general. Given the shifting demographics cited earlier, this country will increasingly have to rely on the academic success of other people's nonwhite children. If we are to continue to succeed as a nation, we can no longer continue to place the personal interests of one ethnic/racial group above the common interests of Americans. Somehow the politics of education and social change have to be minimized so that the primary focus of educational reform is driven by what is best for all the children and what evidence supports the interventions. Implemented with sufficient financial assistance and taking into account the socioeconomic circumstances of diverse students, effective school and cognitive research can support the goal of educational reform. Students in this country and worldwide, for that matter, deserve nothing less.

Suggested Titles: Books Promoting Knowledge of and Respect for Each Other

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Coles, Robert	*The Story of Ruby Bridges*	1995	Scholastic	26	Ruby Bridges must walk past belligerent white adults every day on her way to an all-white elementary school. Determined to get her fair share of education, brave Ruby does everything possible to lead us "nearer to knowing each other, the white folks and the black folks."
Polacco, Patricia	*Mr. Lincoln's Way*	2001	Penguin Putnam Books	40	When a boy at school calls another child a racist name, the principal Mr. Lincoln intervenes . . . after all, he is the coolest principal ever! Mr. Lincoln helps "Mean Gene" understand diversity and that differences between people are what make them special.
Ringgold, Faith	*If a Bus Could Talk*	1999	Aladdin	32	Like every other day, Marcie, an African American girl, gets on her usual school bus. But this day, something unusual happens. A voice on the bus tells Marcie the story of Rosa Parks and the day she refused to give up her seat. Marcie is in for the ride of her life as she sits back and listens to the story of the mother of the Civil Rights movement.

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3

Context Specificity of Family Activities That Foster Early Literacy

Evidence from the National Household Education Survey 1999

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The purpose of this chapter is to determine whether activities that can foster literacy acquisition in the context of sociodemographic risk factors have similar protective effects for children who have different numbers of risks. Using data from the National Household Education Survey 1999, we measured the impact of multiple risks on both literacy outcomes and the frequency of protective activities and investigated the association between protective activity and outcomes by number of risks. Because the majority of the sample is urban (64%), and because children living in urban areas constitute 73% of the children who have multiple sociodemographic risk factors, the conclusions of the chapter have great relevance for urban educators.

FAMILIAL ACTIVITIES THAT FOSTER EARLY LITERACY

The Bush administration's "Good Start, Grow Smart" initiative addresses three major areas: strengthening Head Start, partnering with states to improve early childhood education, and providing information to teachers, caregivers, and parents on how best to promote their children's early literacy development ("Good Start," 2003). As in previous efforts (National Education Goals Panel, 1997a, 1997b), family literacy is likely to be a key strategy of any effort designed to improve children's early literacy skills.

Indeed, children who interact in healthy ways with their parents become better prepared to face the academic and social challenges of the school-age period. Children whose parents read to them become better readers and perform better in school (Snow, Burns, &

Griffin, 1998; Saracho, 1997; Moss & Fawcett, 1995). Children whose parents tell them stories or sing songs have better literacy skills (National Education Goals Panel, 1997b; Sonnenschein, Brody, & Munsterman, 1996). The frequency and quality of these parent–child interactions is critical to the positive effect on the child's emergent literacy (Bus, 2002).

Although there is extensive literature on school-related parent involvement for parents of older children (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1999), a review of the literature shows a dearth of studies on why some parents are more involved in their children's lives *before* school starts than other parents. Research indicates that parents with more years of schooling read more to their children and watch less television than parents with lower educational attainment (Wright et al., 1994, Kagan & Neuman, 1997). Similarly, Teale (1986) found that low-income parents read less to their children than middle- and high-income parents. The relationship between familial activities and the working status of the mother is far from well understood. Although some research (Zaslow, Pedersen, Suwalsky, Cain, & Fivel, 1985) shows homemakers as being less interactive with their children than mothers employed in the labor market, more recent research shows that homemakers spend more time actively playing, reading, or interacting with their children (Kagan & Neuman, 1997).

Nord, Lennon, Liu, and Chandler (2000) have provided evidence regarding how parent–child home literacy activities vary by the presence of household risk factors using the National Household Education Survey (NHES) 1999 and 1993 Parent Interviews. They reported that families with more risks are less likely to create a stimulating home literacy environment.

Research supports the ways individual risk factors such as poverty, a home language other than English, socioeconomic status, and cultural differences can influence early literacy outcomes (see Snow et al., 1998, Ch. 4, for a review), but few studies have systematically studied the ways risk affects both the outcome and the home literacy environment simultaneously. In addition, there are no studies that systematically investigate the efficacy of different home literacy activities on early literacy outcomes by accumulation of family-based risk factors in urban settings.

HOW FAMILY LITERACY IS FOSTERED IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY FOR URBAN CHILDREN

A better understanding of why some parents are actively involved in their children's lives whereas others are more aloof is likely to have important policy ramifications. The United States has a widespread constellation of parent support programs, parent education programs, and two-generation programs designed in part or in totality to modify parental behaviors, especially for caregivers in urban settings.

Even Start programs, with their focus on family literacy, adult literacy, parent–child interaction, and literacy skill acquisition on the part of young children, could benefit from a better understanding of the risk and protective factors of parent–child interactions. In spite of national and local evaluations (St. Pierre, Ricciuti, & Creps, 2000), little is known about what activities are most easily implemented by families with a differential pattern of risk factors.

Similarly, Head Start has strong parent–child components that are likely to modify parenting behavior and has had an explicit family literacy component for years. Many preschool programs are adding components designed to transform the parent–child relationship that are inspired by the findings of the original Perry High/Scope model (Weikart & Schweinhart, 1997). For example, in New York State, the LADDER legislation that funded

universal prekindergarten services for 4-year-olds mandated a strong programmatic component to target parents.

Parent support groups, which are spread around the country faster than expected, have transcended the programs that originated them. They have set for themselves the goal of becoming normative primary prevention programs that are available to all parents, "so enmeshed in the social fabric of this nation that it would not be regarded as treatment or intervention, but as a condition of life" (Kagan & Neuman, 1997, p. 72).

Although considerable literature supports each one of these intervention approaches in isolation, there is considerably less evidence about what concrete strategies will work best for specific families, especially those in urban settings. Many of these programs operate as though one solution, typically reading to the child, is the best familial activity to foster the acquisition of literacy among low-income preschoolers. Because, as Albee and Gullotta (1997) repeat so often, the promise of primary prevention is in bringing about widespread social change, it is important that the social change so promoted reflects current knowledge on how to best encourage reading for young children.

LESSONS FROM DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

One way to conceptualize activities that families can do to enhance urban children's acquisition of literacy, particularly in the presence of familial and community risk factors, is to regard these activities as protective factors. By doing so, we acknowledge some lessons from the history of developmental psychology. The literature on developmental psychology initially regarded protective factors as stable traits that some families had and other families did not. This emphasis on traits was consistent with the approach of the time (e.g., research on parenting styles [Baumrind, 1971] and on attachment [Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth et al., 1978]). By the 1980s, research on risks and protective factors had abandoned the initial assumption that both risk and protective factors could have universal applicability. Accumulated evidence suggested that adding risk factors often has a multiplicative rather than an additive effect, leading some researchers to conclude that the number of risk factors was a more powerful predictor of adverse outcomes than the types of risks (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992). In addition, evidence suggested that some activities are protective only for children who have some risk factors, thus emphasizing the notion that there are a myriad of qualitatively different developmental paths (Cicchetti & Rogosh, 1996). The notion that protective factors may or may not protect children depending on the context of risk factors is known as context specificity. The term "context" is defined broadly as a set of external interpersonal conditions that are interpreted and shaped by the individual child (Boyce et al., 1998). Modern approaches in developmental psychology focus on identifying the fit between protective factors and contexts to better understand developmental outcomes (Wyman, 2003, Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000).

In summary, protection from risk does not necessarily depend on stable traits that only some families have but also on evolving contexts that can be manipulated to foster literacy acquisition. Yet context specificity suggests that activities that work for some children may fail to aid other children who have different risk profiles. Context specificity suggests a number of testable hypotheses regarding the role of familial activities that promote literacy in young children, particularly those in urban settings and with multiple risks. If these activities are conceptualized as protective factors, a modern understanding of risk and protection would study their effect *assuming context specificity.* A research agenda based on the mod-

ern literature on context specificity would first investigate the effect of risk accumulation on literacy outcomes. The second step would be to study how the accumulation of risk is associated with the presence and frequency of protective-factor activities. Finally, context specificity would be directly analyzed by determining whether the relationship between protective factor and outcome is different for children who have different accumulations of risks (i.e., different contexts).

Using a nationally representative data set, we carried out this agenda and tested the following hypotheses: (1) accumulation of risk factors will have a nonlinear negative effect (nonlinear accumulation effect), (2) frequency or intensity of protective factors will decrease with accumulation of risk factors (impact of risks on protection), and (3) the correlation of protective factors with outcomes will depend on the accumulation of risk factors (context specificity).

METHODS

In this study, we used the parent interviews from the National Household Education Survey 1999 for parents of 4-year-old nondisabled children. The sample contained 1,350 complete records. Sixty-four percent of the sample lived in urban ZIP codes, 10% in suburban ZIP codes, and 26% in rural ZIP codes. For a definition of the variables used as outcomes, risk factors, and protective factors, see Note 1.[1]

RESULTS

Urban children were more likely to have multiple risk factors. Indeed, of the children who had multiple risk factors, 73% were urban children, 9% suburban, and 18% rural.

Figure 3.1 displays the outcome variables by the number of risk factors. Note that the reading scale is on a 6-point scale, the letter index is on a 4-point scale, and the counting index is on a 5-point scale, so that comparisons across outcomes must be done carefully.

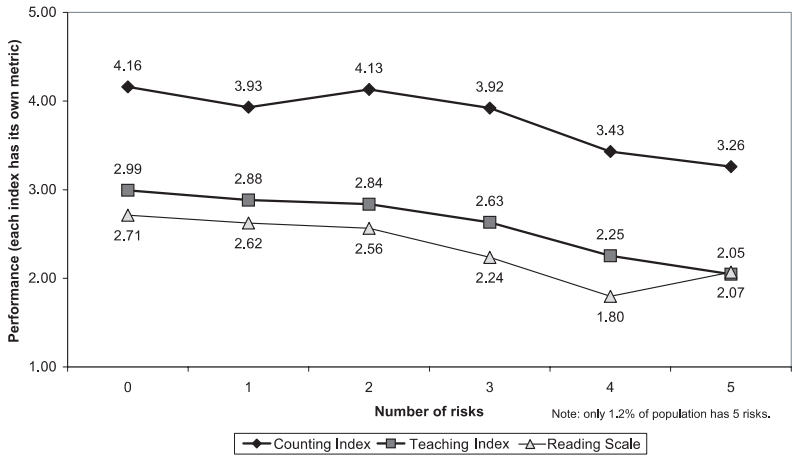

FIGURE 3.1. Literacy outcomes by accumulation of risks.

However, the information regarding how each outcome variable changes with the accumulation of risk factors is straightforward to interpret. All outcomes decline with accumulation of risk factors in a linear fashion for children in families ranging from no risk to two risk factors. Children in families with three or more risk factors suffer a more pronounced decline, although because of the small number of participants with five risk factors the variability of the last data point is substantial. Therefore, there is moderate evidence that the accumulation of risk factors has a linear trend at the beginning but that, as the number of risk factors accumulates, their impact becomes more pronounced. Given that most children with multiple risk factors lived in urban settings, children in urban settings had lower outcomes in all variables.

Figure 3.2 displays the intensity of each protective factor by the accumulated risk profile. Two patterns are evident: (1) reading to children declines steadily from the accumulation of the first risk factor, with the decline becoming more pronounced for children living in families with two or more risk factors; and (2) teaching and telling stories are activities that are resilient to the accumulation of risk factors in the zero to three risk factors range. Children living in families with four or more risk factors, however, experience a decline in the frequency of telling stories and teaching. Although families with higher numbers of risk factors have lower frequencies of all protective factors, reading to children is particularly sensitive to the number of risk factors. This finding is particularly important for urban children, because they represent almost three-fourths of all children with multiple risk factors.

Based on the evidence from the previous two figures, it was natural to classify families into three groups based on their risk factors: those without risks, those with one or two risks, and those with three or more risks. Figure 3.3 shows the correlation coefficients between the protective factors and the counting index for each type of risk profile.

Three patterns are evident: (1) the association between teaching and performance on the counting index becomes stronger as the number of risk factors increases; (2) the association between reading to the child and performance on the counting index weakens as the number of risk factors increases; (3) no clear pattern is discernible for telling stories.

Figure 3.4 displays the correlation coefficients between the protective factors and performance on the reading scale. As in the previous figure, the association between reading to

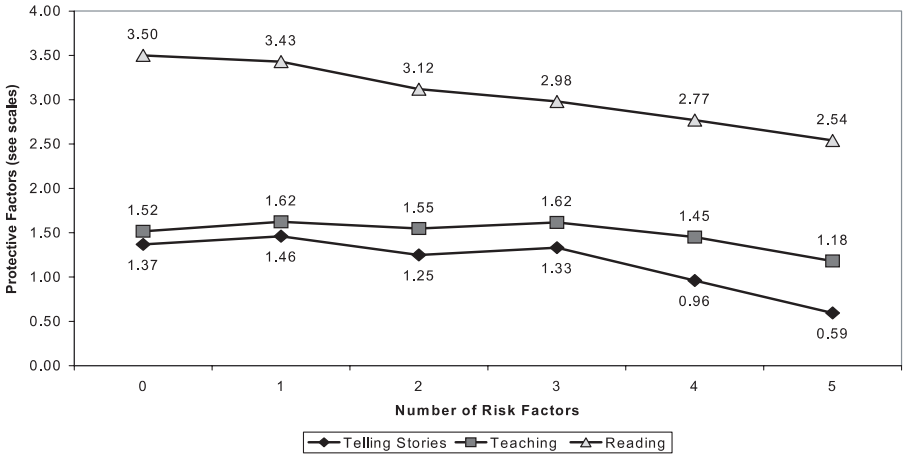

FIGURE 3.2. Frequency of protective activities by accumulation of risks.

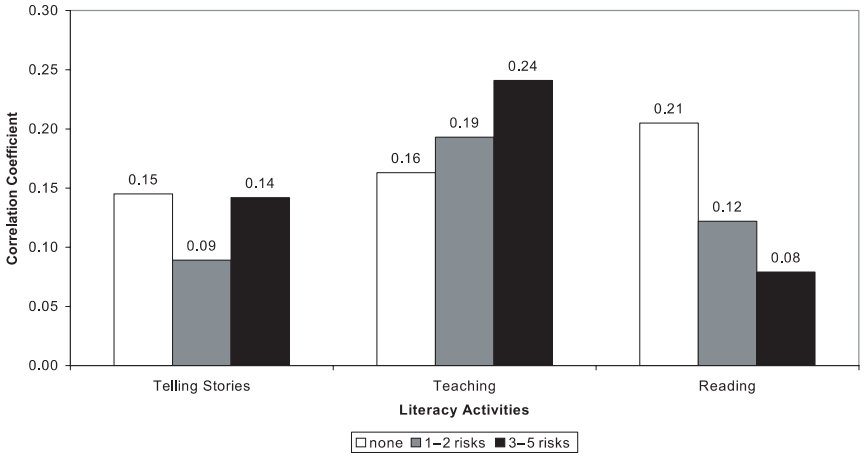

FIGURE 3.3. Correlations between protective factors and counting index by risk profile.

the child and performance on the reading scale is weaker for families with more risks. In this case, the association between reading scale scores and both telling stories and teaching becomes stronger for families with more risks.

Figure 3.5 displays the associations between the letter index and the protective factors. Once again, the association between performance on the letter index and telling stories or teaching becomes stronger as the number of risk factors increases. In contrast to the previous two outcomes, reading to children has a stronger association with the letter index for children living in high-risk families.

To quantify the differential impact of protective factors on literacy outcomes depending on cumulative risk, we formulated the no-risk–to–multiple-risk associative ratio. A score of 1 indicates that the protective factor has the same correlation coefficient between protective factor and outcome for no-risk and high-risk families. A score above 1 indicates the protective factor has a stronger association with the outcome for children in high-risk families

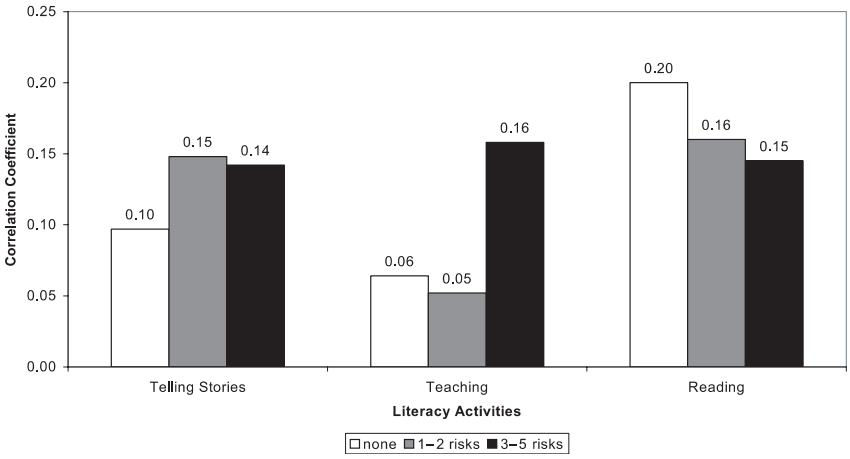

FIGURE 3.4. Correlations between protective factors and reading scale scores by risk profile.

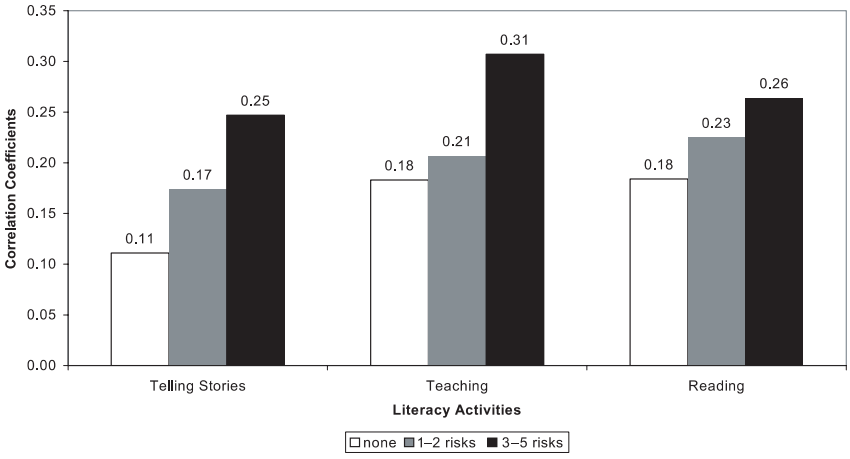

FIGURE 3.5. Correlations between protective factors and letter index by risk profile.

than for children living in families who have no risks. A score below 1 indicates that the protective factor had a weaker association with the literacy outcome for children living in high-risk families than for children living in families who have no risks.

Figure 3.6 displays the differential impact of protective factors on literacy outcomes. Notice that teaching has a correlation with performance on the reading scale that is 250% stronger for children living in high-risk families than for children living in families with no risks. Similarly, telling stories has an association with performance on the letter index for children in high-risk families that doubles the association for children in families with no risks. Note also that, for counting and reading but not letter recognition, reading to the child is a weaker protective factor for children living in high-risk families.

In summary, we found evidence that the accumulation of risk factors is associated with declines in all three outcome measures. These declines become much more pronounced when the accumulation of risk factors is greater than three, confirming the nonlinear accu-

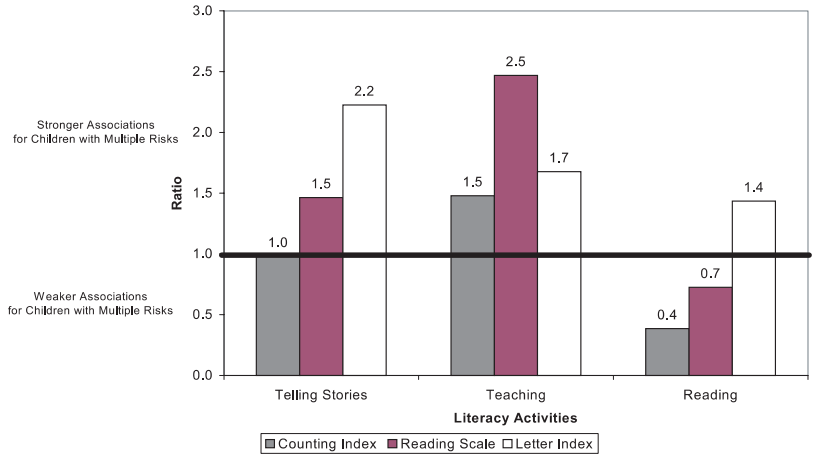

FIGURE 3.6. Multiple-risk to no-risk association ratios.

mulation effect hypothesis. As suspected, the frequency of protective factors decreases with the accumulation of risks, but, interestingly, reading to the child was especially sensitive to the accumulation of risks, whereas telling stories and teaching children literacy-related concepts decreased only when the accumulation of risks became severe (four or more). Most important, we found that the strength of the association between the protective activity and the outcome displayed context specificity based on the number of risks. In particular, reading to children seems to have a stronger protective effect for children living with few environmental risks, whereas telling stories and teaching had stronger protective effects for children living in families with many risk factors. This result sheds light on related research that the efficacy of book reading varies among culturally divergent groups (Bus, Leseman, & Keultjes, 2000).

These are not small differences: Reading to children had a 30–60% weaker association with outcomes for high-risk children, whereas telling stories and teaching activities had a 140–250% stronger association with literacy outcomes for high-risk children.

Although the reasons for these findings merit further research, one can speculate that in an environment with many risks, such as occurs in urban settings, reading is not done often enough or well enough to have the protective effect it has for other children less exposed to risks. Telling stories and teaching, however, are easier to do in high-risk families, and they have increased protective efficacy perhaps because of the very explicitness of the teaching. Speculation aside, this study has demonstrated that protective factors for literacy for nondisabled 4-year-olds have different rates of prevalence and different strengths of association depending on the number of risk factors. In other words, protective activities are context specific based on risk profile.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This research recognizes that not all literacy activities are equally easy for all families to do, nor do they have the same protective effect. Therefore, it is important for practitioners not to narrowly encourage families to do a single type of activity when other activities may be easier to sustain in a high-risk environment and may well be more beneficial for the child. This research supports storytelling and teaching as viable avenues for increasing literacy-related successes for preschool-age children whose families may not necessarily have the skill set to read, whether because of lack of access to and availability of traditional literacy-related resources and materials or the fact that family members of some of the students simply do not know how to read. High-risk families can protect their children and must be encouraged to responsibly do so. Educators must understand and respect that high-risk families in urban settings may have to choose different protective paths than those of families with fewer risks.

At the same time, research is needed to ascertain whether reading to children is intrinsically less beneficial for children in high-risk families or whether the more likely hypothesis that reading to children is more difficult to sustain and implement in the context of high risk explains its decreased efficacy for high-risk families.

Children's literacy can also be improved by systematic screening for familial risk factors at entrance into the school system (prekindergarten or kindergarten). Because urban children are more likely to have multiple risks and because children living in families with multiple risks are less likely to acquire literacy skills early and are also less likely to be exposed to protective familial activities, urban schools have a particular responsibility to adequately

screen and address the literacy needs of these children *before* adverse literacy outcomes occur in the school setting. The data on the accumulation of risks from this study and many others suggest that a preventive intervention for children living with four or more risk factors is indicated. In effect, just as children with hearing problems can reliably benefit from early intervention and a well-designed and implemented IEP to prevent reading failure, children living in high-risk families (four or more risks) need a similar early response. Such early response is needed because we know that children in families with four or more risk factors are demonstrably less likely to acquire literacy skills and that their families are able to protect them only partially from the effects of the risks.

Educators can also foster the frequency of familial protective activities by including materials sent home (literacy bags) and parent in-services specifically designed to show how risk factors affect student success rates, as well as schoolwide events that focus on fostering both traditional and nontraditional literacy-related activities.

NOTE

1. *Sample*: The National Household Education Survey 1999 (NHES, 1999) was a random-digital-dial (RDD) telephone survey of the noninstitutionalized U.S. population covering the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Interviews were conducted over a 3-month period using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) technology. Sample weights have been used in an effort to make inferences about the entire civilian noninstitutionalized population, as well as to ensure that the survey was representative of the population of interest. In this study, we used the parent interviews from the National Household Education Survey 1999 for parents of 4-year-old nondisabled children. The sample had 1,350 complete records.

   Outcome variables: The *reading scale* was constructed using the answers to three interrelated questions in the NHES interview (PE 5-8). Parents were asked if their children read. If parents answered that their children read, they were asked whether the child actually read words, pretended to read, or did both. If the parent reported that the child pretended to read, parents were asked whether the child pretended to read by telling what the pictures were or by telling a connected story consistently or only sometimes. These questions and their respective answers were classified into a 6-point Likert scale: Does not pretend to read; Pretends to read by telling what pictures are; Pretends by telling connected story sometimes; Pretends to read by consistently forming a connected story; Pretends and reads words; Reads words consistently.

   The letter index (PE 2) consisted of a 4-point Likert scale that measured whether the parents reported their child knew none of the letters, some of them, most of them, or all of them.

   The counting index (PE 3) consisted of a 5-point Likert scale that measured whether parents reported their child did not know how to count, counted up to 5, to 20, to 50, or to 100 or more.

   Risk factors: Following Nord et al. (2000), we used five risk factors: household income below $25,000; race/ethnicity other than white/non-Hispanic; education level of the parent less than high school; household with less than two parents; one or more parents not fluent in English.

   Protective factors: Three potential protective factors were investigated. Frequency of reading to the child during the previous week (PS 1) measured in a 4-point Likert scale (not at all; once or twice; three or more times; every day). Telling stories to the child during the last week (PS 3a) measured in a 3-point Likert scale (none; once or twice; three or more times). Teaching letters, numbers, or words (PS 3b) during the previous week, measured with the same metric as telling stories.

Suggested Titles: Books for Talking Over—Parents and (All Ages of) Children Together

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the Book
Bunting, Eve Illus. By David Diaz	*Smoky Night*	1994	Harcourt	36	During the Los Angeles riots, with their apartment in flames, a Daniel and his mother escape to discover that differences among people (and cats) may be because they "didn't know each other before." Diaz's bold acrylic paintings are set against mixed-media backgrounds, and are worth returning to again and again. Winner of the Caldecott Medal.
Myers, Christopher	*Black Cat*	1999	Scholastic	40	In and out of stark urban landscapes magnificently rendered in vibrant collage, the black cat leads. From fire escape to basketball court to skyscraper, the scenes of the city are home to the cat.
Weatherford, Carole Boston	*Sidewalk Chalk: Poems of the City*	2001	Boyds Mills Press	32	Poems about the laundromat, the shoeshine man, jumprope on the street, the city market and the barbershop—with a feeling that the city is a special place to go.

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4

Exploring (Missed) Perceptions of African Americans

Implications for Literacy Instruction and Learning

FENICE B. BOYD
ELAVIE NDURA
CYNTHIA H. BROCK
JUEL MOORE

Dear Readers,

The first two authors of this chapter, Fenice and Elavie, are the single mothers of black males named Jamaal and Star, respectively. You will soon read about them. Like many Americans, we authors are concerned about the lives and education of black males, and all students of color in America. A central focus of our work is to explore the storied lives of African American children and their families in both literature and life. After this introductory letter, Jamaal and Star share their personal stories about unjust treatment by people in authority who accused them of crimes but had no evidence against them other than the fact that they are black and males. What might these stories from the lives of our own sons have to do with education in general and with literacy education in particular? Everything. Eisner (1998) argues that education must be concerned with "enhancement of life" (p. 13). In order to enhance life, educators must know and understand the lives of their students. Reading, writing, talking, and listening to one another can be some of the most powerful ways to explore and enhance life experiences (Florio-Ruane, Raphael, Glazier, McVee, & Wallace, 1997).

Not only are real-life portrayals of African Americans—especially African American males—disconcerting to us, but also the ways in which African Americans have been portrayed in literature is problematic. Thus in this chapter we also explore ways that African Americans have been portrayed in children's literature. Opportunities to explore life experiences through literature and literacy are

important for all students, but they are particularly important for children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, because these children have long been misunderstood and marginalized in public school settings (Nieto, 1992; Rist, 1970).

A final goal of this chapter is to talk about what teachers can do in their classroom literacy instruction to provide support, encouragement, and positive educational experiences for our sons and other students from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We discuss what we, as educators, might do to reexamine and recraft the contexts of the stories we present in this chapter (from life and literature) so that African Americans might "become full emotional and civic owners" in American society. In doing so, we share our thoughts about how teachers can structure classrooms to provide meaningful literacy instruction for all children in America, particularly in high-risk settings such as urban schools.

Sincerely,

Fenice (Jamaal's Mom) and Elavie (Star's Mom)

THE REAL-LIFE STORIES OF JAMAAL AND STAR

We use a story chart format to introduce you to the major components of Jamaal's and Star's stories. Then we present Jamaal's and Star's stories in their own words.

Jamaal's story	**Star's story**
Setting: British Petroleum (BP) convenience store in Athens, Georgia	*Setting*: McQueen High School in Reno, Nevada
Characters: Seventh grader, black male	*Characters:* 12th grader, black male
Problem: Accused of stealing candy and bubble gum at a convenience store	*Problem*: Accused of stealing from gym lockers; handcuffed, removed from school, and taken to jail
Resolution: No proof; intimidation tactics used; racial profiling	*Resolution*: No proof; not convicted

Jamaal's Story: An Incident at BP Convenience Store (as told by Jamaal B. Parker, edited by Fenice Boyd)

In June 1997, I was accused of stealing merchandise from a local convenience store after I paid for my purchase. I was walking home from an orthodontist appointment at the time when I decided to stop at a convenience store to buy something to drink. Before I left the office, the orthodontist had given me a case for my retainer and a couple of molds of my teeth. Since I had no bag or backpack to carry these things, I stuffed them in my pockets, which created somewhat of a bulge. As I entered the convenience store, none of the clerks paid any attention to me. So I proceeded to the coolers to select something to drink and I picked up a bag of chips on my way to the cash register. As I put my things on the counter, I noticed the clerk in the background giving me a funny look. I didn't pay much attention to the man, and I handed the lady at the cash register the money to pay for my items. I walked out of the store. When I had gotten no more than three steps out of the door I heard the lady at the cash register, the lady I had just paid, yelling for me to come back. "Come back in here right

now!" Thinking that perhaps I left a little change on the counter, I turned around and went back into the store as she had directed me to. As I reentered the store, my eyes were fixed on the counter because I was still thinking that I left something behind. The clerk shouted at me saying "Empty your pockets right now!" As I looked at the cashier, I saw nothing but hatred for me in her eyes. Immediately, I realized that I was being accused of taking something from the store. I immediately accommodated the clerk by turning the inside of my pockets out, and I placed the contents, my retainer and molds on the counter. Once she saw that it was nothing more than a retainer and a couple of molds, she continued to try to accuse me of theft. "You think that we can't see you? Cameras are everywhere! Don't do that again!" she said. "What did I do?" I asked. "We're watching you, don't do that again!" I repeated my question; "What did I do?" "You may go now" the lady said, without answering my question, or more specifically, telling me what I had done wrong. I just smiled and said, "Well since it's obvious that I have done nothing wrong, I'm just going to leave now" as I picked up my belongings from the counter, and walked out the store. I never looked back and I never spent any more of my money in that convenience store again. What are my feelings about this incident? During my walk home, which took approximately thirty minutes give or take a few, I thought about the incident. I was angry, and I couldn't wait to get home to tell my Mom what had happened to me. I felt that my rights as a human being and a citizen had been violated. I paid for my purchases, and I had never, even to this day, stolen anything from anyone. I still feel, even to this day, that the cashier owes me an apology. That is the least that she could have said. "I'm sorry"; just two small words would have made such a big difference.

Star's Story: An Incident at McQueen High School (as told by Star Shahuri, edited by Elavie Ndura)

During football season at McQueen in the year 2002 there was a stealing incident. I had sustained a knee injury in the first game of the season during which I tore my mcl /acl (medial collateral ligament/anterior cruciate ligament). The injury put me out of practice and of course out of subsequent games. In order to take care of my injured knee, I had to go down to my trainer's room to ice and warm up my knee during practice. Then, after all the icing and heating I would walk to the team room, put on my jersey and cleats, and go up to the practice field where I watch and help out where I could.

Well, on certain instances, as I would walk through the locker room, I would see and hear people "popping lockers." Popping lockers is when you do what you can to try and take the lock off of someone's locker without using the code. I noticed that they were going through bags and lockers. However, because they were my teammates who were doing that, I did not think much of it. So, I went on my own way up to the practice field. I saw this on a few occasions and then I didn't see anything again because I came back and played after the doctor gave me a knee brace to wear.

Surprisingly, after a few weeks of playing football, during my sixth period class which had me working as an aide, the assistant principal pulled me into her office. I could already tell that it was not just to see how I was doing because the assistant principal, the athletic director, and one of the school police were in the room. They started off by asking me how I was and then they laid it on me. "We've got word from 'several' people that say that you have been stealing from the locker room," they announced. I told them my story, and explained that I had nothing to do with the stealing. I told them what I had seen. I told them whom I was with. However, they insisted that several people had turned me in. They pro-

ceeded to interrogate me for the length of two to three hours. But, as time passed on, it ended up winding down from several people turning me in to three people. After responding to all of their questions, the officer basically told me that she did not believe me, and that I was guilty of a felony. She then searched my backpack, my locker, and me for any stolen items, but found nothing. Then, she proceeded to read me my rights and put handcuffs on me and handed me over to another officer who was to take me to Parr Boulevard [jail]. I got there and had to go through booking procedures like fingerprinting and more interrogating. I was released on my own recognizance four or five hours later. I was required to appear in court on Thursday, October 17, 2002, at 9:30 A.M. *After seeing several lawyers, my mother and I were ready for our court date. However, the lawyer could not trace my case, so he told us not to bother going to court. But, my mother went anyway. My name was never called. After more than two long months of confusing suspense, I got a call from someone who I guess was my probation officer. She told me that the case had been dropped because of lack of evidence.*

But, what I figured out was that they only dropped the charges against me because there had never been three people that turned me in. In fact, it was just one student who had simply mentioned that I was in the locker room when the other suspects were popping lockers. I found out about this detail through one student who went to his hearing; they read the police reports to him, and these stated that only one person had given my name. Thus, I concluded that the McQueen High School administrators and the police officer were trying to get me to confess to a crime that I had not committed. How do I feel about this unfortunate incident? I felt very much worried during this whole ordeal especially because of the way the football coaches, the teachers, and my friends would look at me. But, mostly, I was pissed because I missed practice and I couldn't start the first week I came back from my injury because of the head football coach's rule that if you miss one practice you don't start, and if you miss two practices you don't play.

CONSIDERATIONS

After reading the stories that Jamaal and Star lived, one might argue convincingly that they are victims of racial profiling, which is in fact institutionalized racism. These incidents in which they were victimized are not unlike stories that you have read about in the newspapers and seen on television and in the movies. Newspapers flourish with headlines revealing drugs, poverty, crime, and unemployment among black males. The media also depict African American males as participants and instigators in situations such as those just described by Jamaal and Star. To add insult to injury, research studies are conducted to justify racial profiling in our society, regardless of proof of wrongdoing and due process of the law.

One such study, conducted by Taylor and Whitney (2002), attempts to give credibility to racial profiling by using statistical empirical data. However, it is evident from the study that such a biased perspective does not take into consideration the social ramifications (e.g., socioeconomic status, familial backgrounds, etc.) of racial profiling in civil crimes. Taylor and Whitney (2002), in challenging both the academic and mass media interest in criminality, present statistics from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) and Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) arguing that there are more black-on-white crimes than black-on-black crimes; that there are inherent problems in defining hate crimes; and that the rates of white hate crimes are inflated by Hispanic whites—to review a few of the findings (Taylor & Whitney, 2002, pp. 291–309). These authors conclude that the "wisdom" of empirical data

on criminality is rationalized and that racial profiling is justified. This study reflects the perpetuation of racism in law enforcement, and *justification for unjust treatment of people from diverse backgrounds*. However, such studies reveal nothing about the gross unjust treatment of young black males such as Star and Jamaal.

Negative portrayals of black male athletes are especially rampant. Researchers such as Lapchick (2000), however, strive to dispel some of the stereotypes and myths of black athletes as depicted by mass media and uncritically accepted by the general public, with the hope that athletes would play an important role in reshaping their stereotypical, negative public images. Presented along with concrete stories and statistics, Lapchick (2000) discusses four factors: sport-specific problems, academic issues in college sports, drugs and alcohol in sports, and violence. Through comparisons and contrasts made to distinguish facts from popular perceptions, Lapchick argues that positive images of black athletes should be modeled in affirming the "richness of spirit that comes with being part of a real team," which is free of racist stereotypes (Lapchick, 2000, p. 20). It is important for researchers such as Lapchick to conduct studies that show alternative perspectives. Likewise, it is important for scholars such as we to disseminate positive, accurate, and correct information and stories about our own children.

Unfortunately, Jamaal's and Star's stories are real and true. Fortunately, Jamaal and Star are not "bad boys," their single mothers are very involved in their lives, they are not involved in drugs or crime, they come from homes with educated parents, and they are pursuing higher education so that they might become contributing members of society. Jamaal is now a student at Michigan State University and a member of the University Scholars Program. He was nominated to become a member of Phi Sigma Theta National Honor Society. Jamaal is studying political science and business and aspires to be closely and visibly involved in national politics. His future goals are clearly planned: to graduate with honors from Michigan State University and to go to law school at the University of Michigan.

Even though the racist incident at McQueen High School affected Star's self-confidence, he is still moving forward. He remains focused on his education and is doing well in all of his classes. Many other black males do not have a strong enough foundation to overcome such life-altering events. However, even Star asked for his mom's permission to drop his advanced placement (AP) biology and French courses shortly after the incident because he wanted to concentrate on his AP statistics class. Star had been disillusioned with the promises of the "American Dream" and even asked his mother if they could return to Africa to live permanently. Even though Star knows that he would not have the same educational opportunities in his home country, he wonders about his opportunities in the United States. Nevertheless, Star has been admitted into the College of Engineering at the University of Nevada, Reno. He plans to study engineering and pursue a minor in business. Star plans to become financially secure. Clearly, Jamaal and Star have dreams and plans for their lives. They are preparing to make something of themselves and become valuable contributing members of society. After reading about other dimensions of Jamaal's and Star's lives and who they are as people, one should ask, "Why would these two fine young black men ruin their lives and do something as stupid as what they were accused of doing?" They are more than just one black male customer in a store and one black high school athlete. They are human beings with family, friends, and plans for their futures. They are citizens of the world.

Unfortunately, stereotyping and mistreatment of African Americans is and has been pervasive in American society. Educators must also understand that unfair stereotyping

and judging have also been pervasive in the very literature that we use in our classrooms to teach students to read the world and the word (Freire & Macedo, 1987). In the following section, we present several actual examples of stereotyping in literature. In addition, we provide ideas that teachers should consider when they are striving to avoid using literature that perpetuates stereotyping and racist misrepresentations of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

ADDRESSING PORTRAYALS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN LITERATURE

African Americans have been portrayed in children's literature since the early 1890s (Harris, 1993). According to Harris (1993), Mrs. A. E. Johnson authored two novels, *Clarence and Corinne* (1890) and *The Hazelby Family* (1894), which are considered the first examples of African American children's literature. She also wrote a periodical, *The Joy*, which circulated for 2 years in the 1880s. Similarly, Paul Laurence Dunbar's *Little Brown Baby* (1895), a book of poetry written in black dialect, conveys images of African Americans that support negative attitudes and stereotypes (Harris, 1993). Brown (1933) asserts that depictions of African Americans in literature were consciously negative and presented in stereotypical ways, including images of the happy slave, the miserable freedman, the comic Negro (e. g., white performers in blackface), the brute Negro, the sad mulatto, the local-color Negro, and the exotic primitive (cited in Harris, 1993). In other words, African Americans in literature were practically nonexistent before the late 19th century, and when African Americans were written into children's literature, as well as adult literature, representations were stereotypical and inauthentic.

One example of a condescending and degrading stereotype of black people in children's literature is *Little Black Sambo* (Bannerman, 1899). *Little Black Sambo* is a book about a little black boy who is dressed in clothes so colorful that tigers take them as a trade-off for not eating him up. Sambo is very clever, and in the end he is able to change the tigers into tiger butter that he enjoys on breakfast pancakes. So, what is wrong with this image? We draw on the ideas of Toni Morrison to address this question.

Nobel laureate and Pulitzer Prize–winning author Toni Morrison (1992) writes that critics should notice that writers use several strategies to depict blacks in books. These are described as economy of stereotype, metonymic displacement, metaphysical condensation, fetishization, and dehistoricizing allegory:

- *Economy of stereotype* means that the writer describes the characters so briefly that it is almost as if they are nonexistent in the story. Characters may also be presented to appear all the same, with no distinction made of their diversity.
- *Metonymic displacement* occurs when a single word or action is used to describe the whole group. This may have been the image seen by teachers who chose the one and only African American in his second grade class to represent Little Black Sambo in Reader's Theater, for example.
- *Metaphysical condensation* allows a writer to transform individual differences into universal ones. For example, if one black character in the story grunts, this might indicate that no other black characters are capable of communicating in "standard" ways.
- *Fetishization* is a focus on an image that may cause fear or erotic desires. Showing

gang members in drive-by shootings is one example of this portrayal of black characters.

- *Dehistoricizing allegory* describes a person or group in ways in which they would have been unlikely to have appeared in that setting in that particular way and time. In *Moby Dick,* for example, a black man talks back to the captain of the ship.

Therefore, in a book such as *Little Black Sambo* (Bannerman, 1899), pervasive stereotypes exist (Harris, 1990). Additionally, such books acquire capital gains, as well as entertainment, and are used by businesses to sell products on television and in the movies. The Sambo image is so entrenched in American society that just to mention the name, for example, brings that image of any given black person to the minds of many. Thus some readers might easily see Morrison's concept of metonymic displacement in the silliness and flamboyance of Sambo and forget to recognize and acknowledge his cleverness and wit.

As African American students see themselves in young adult and children's literature, and as they interact with texts, they can make more connections and become more motivated to read. We contend, however, that it is important not only for African American students to see themselves in positive and nonstereotypical ways but also for *all* students and teachers to see black people positively portrayed in literature, regardless of the ethnic and cultural makeup of students and teachers.

Many artists and illustrators of children's literature portray positive and authentic images of children of color in their work. Some illustrators and artists not only provide the visual images but also write the positive stories for students and teachers. For example, Faith Ringgold, a professor of art, wrote and illustrated *Tar Beach* (1991). Ringgold collaborated with her mother and was inspired by her to use quilts as a medium for her paintings after hearing her mother's stories of her slave ancestors who made quilts as part of their responsibilities on the plantation. The title of the book, *Tar Beach*, is based on Ringgold's quilt painting of the same name. *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* (1987), written and illustrated by John Steptoe, details the monuments of an ancient city in Zimbabwe. The illustrations depict the flora and fauna of the Great Zimbabwe Monuments and its region. We think that it is great to have these positive examples for readers to attend to.

Satchmo's Blues (Schroeder, 1996), illustrated by Floyd Cooper, is a fictional re-creation of the youth of trumpeter Louis Armstrong, who grew up in New Orleans. Award-winning American artist Jacob Lawrence tells the story of *The Great Migration* (1992) through his paintings. Jacob's family was a part of the great migration of black Southeners that occurred during the early years of the 20th century. *The Great Migration* is a heroic journey displayed through art, history, and the American experience. The story also includes a poem in appreciation written by Walter Dean Myers, titled *Migration*.

Walter Dean Myers is a prolific author. One of his numerous stories is titled *Harlem* (1997). The illustrations in *Harlem* were painted by Christopher Myers, the son of Walter Dean Myers. Both father and son have positive perceptions of Harlem, different from what is commonly portrayed in the media. Their perceptions of Harlem connect readers of all ages to the spirit of Harlem in its music, arts, literature, and everyday life. Walter Dean and Christopher Myers enable readers to understand how Harlem has helped shape the African American experience. *Uncle Jed's Barbershop* (1993), written by Margaree King Mitchell and illustrated by James Ransome, tells the story of Uncle Jed, who was the only black barber in the county. He had a kind heart and a friendly warm smile. Uncle Jed also had a dream he pursued. Ransome's richly colored paintings are brimming with life. Ransome has

illustrated several books for children, including *Do Like Kyla*, which won the *Parenting Magazine*'s Reading Magic award, and *Aunt Flossie's Hats*, which received the Parent's Choice Foundation's annual award and the *Reading Teacher* award. The children's literature described here represents a few of many stories that portray black people in rich, positive, and authentic ways.

ADDRESSING LITERATURE AND LIFE: SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGING (MISSED) PERCEPTIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE AND STUDENTS

Several scholars argue that multicultural literature has the power to serve as a catalyst for social action, helps make this society a more equitable one, assists students to recognize their differences but also their similarities, and increases students' cultural awareness and sensitivity (e. g., Bishop, 1993; Ford, Tyson, Howard, & Harris, 2000; Willis, 1997). Sensitivity and empathy—a primary goal of multicultural literature—could be approached through effective questioning and role playing. In addition, giving students opportunities to raise questions regarding generalizations, to identify stereotypes, and to critically examine and analyze what they read is a way to address critical thinking skills. A concrete example of how these suggestions might be implemented in a classroom is provided below.

In Laura Pardo's fifth-grade classroom, students read the book *Mississippi Bridge* (Taylor, 1990). *Mississippi Bridge* is a story of tragedy within an overarching theme of institutionalized racism. The narrator, Jeremy Simms, watches from the porch of the general store as the weekly bus from the town of Jackson comes through his hometown. Jeremy's neighbors, the Logan children, are at the general store to see their grandmother off on a trip. Jeremy's friend, Josias Williams, is taking the bus to a new job. Josias and the Logans are black, and in Mississippi in the 1930s, black people cannot ride the bus if there are not enough seats for white people to ride. Several white passengers arrive at the last minute, and therefore, Josias and the Logan children's grandmother must get off the bus. There had been serious storms in the area, and the river that went through the town was at an all-time high. As the bus left the station and made its way across the bridge over the tumultuous river, the bridge gave way, and the bus with all of the passengers was washed into the river. The townspeople—black and white—unite to try to save the passengers on the bus. Laura Pardo's students discuss the tragic story of *Mississippi Bridge* and make intertextual links to instances of racism they have read about and faced. In the following transcript, notice how Laura encourages one student, an African American male named Patrick, to share a time when he experienced an instance of racism:

LAURA: I want to start with Patrick because he was telling me a story. Is it okay? Do you still want to share it?

PATRICK: Yeah.

LAURA: He was telling me a story about a time [in his writing] when he was experiencing prejudice firsthand. And I thought that was really interesting because maybe some of us in here haven't felt the same kind of prejudice that Josias is feeling or that Patrick feels. So do you want to tell us about that?

PATRICK: We were playing basketball, and the ball ran off the court. And these white kids had brought a knife to school and picked up our ball and put a hole in it where it flatted and my friend, they grabbed my friend like this by his neck and they took a knife

and hold it to his neck and like saying don't move or they was going to kill him. And the watch lady was right there. Um, she didn't say nothing, she was just sitting there watching everything that was happening and she didn't do nothing. . . .

LAURA: Okay, and my question to him earlier was, how did he know that there was prejudice there? How did he feel that those kids were racist and were against him and his friend because they were black? Was there more to it? How did you know?

PATRICK: Well, the kids that were doing it they was like they was saying that they hated us and they wanted us to get out of the schools for some reason. I don't know why.

LAURA: All right, so there's some things that are the same. Probably the same things that Josias was feeling you guys were feeling because they were being mean to you and didn't like you because you were black, not because of anything you did or said the first time when you were on the playground, and that's kind of what Josias was feeling, wasn't it?

In merging the worlds of literature and life as exemplified in this example, teachers can allow students, parents, and guardians who come from diverse backgrounds to become teachers, too. There is always a lot to learn about the everyday lives of people that will establish a better rapport and lines of communication. Laura took time to highlight a teachable moment. In it, she provides an opportunity to merge the stories of Josias from *Mississippi Bridge* and of her student Patrick to bridge literature and life. As Patrick recounts his story to the whole class, he sorts out and through a troubling incident in his own life. He enhances the learning opportunity of his peers to better see the nexus between literature and life. Moreover, both Patrick and his teacher offer the rest of the class an opportunity to learn about a classmate directly as a person and as an individual. Without such connections through literature, people often unintentionally make gross generalizations and assumptions about individuals, which transfer into misperceptions of a whole race and culture. Patrick's story is one that would give his classmates a chance to know him for who he is as an individual in order to refrain from making inappropriate generalizations about him as an African American male.

To merge such literature and life experiences requires purposeful and conscious literature selections. Teachers may select literature that portrays characters as individuals without stereotyping and literature that conveys realistic life experiences. For example, the fact that African Americans had to give up their seats on public transportation in the 1930s through the 1960s is a true historical fact of institutionalized racism that is conveyed in the story of *Mississippi Bridge*. Patrick and Laura, his teacher, were able in the class discussion to show how racism endures and presently exists as Patrick shared his story. In asking Patrick to talk about the incident in which he was a victim of a racist act, Laura took a risk as a teacher, and in so doing, encouraged Patrick to take a risk as a student. Laura had enough confidence in Patrick and herself to bridge scenarios between literature and life. As educators we must always have such courage and high expectations of ourselves and of students who come from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. High expectations emerge only through looking at students for who they are as individuals first and getting to know them as people. The people who contributed to victimizing Jamaal and Star did not know them as individuals. Before Jamaal and Star were given the opportunity to show that they had done nothing wrong, it was assumed that they were guilty before any due process of the law was carried out. The people who victimized Jamaal and Star had exceptionally low expectations of them because they did not know these two responsible young black males.

CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of this chapter, we suggested that educators must know and understand the lives of their students as individuals in order to enhance their literacy learning opportunities. We shared stories about the lives of Fenice's and Elavie's sons as a way to reveal how stereotypes are often made about black males, especially those who live in urban settings. In addition, we also examined the stereotypes in literature written about African Americans. We discussed ways that teachers can support positive images of black people in literacy instruction by offering examples of titles of books and renowned illustrators and artists who work in ways that defy stereotyping characters, thus offering literature that is rich and authentic.

If our readers take to heart the message we deliver in this chapter, not only will they have tools and strategies to provide meaningful literacy instruction for all children in classrooms, but, likewise, teachers will have tools and strategies for looking at black males through new, revised, and positive lenses.

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Suggested Titles: Books with a Positive View of African American Boys and Families

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Cameron, Ann; illustrated by Ann Strugnell	*More Stories Julian Tells*	1989	Random House	96	The second volume of stories centering on Julian, an African American 7-year-old who falls into trouble and climbs back out again. The stories are warm and funny and will be read both aloud and alone.
Adoff, Arnold	*I Am the Darker Brother: An Anthology of Modern Poems by African Americans*	1997 (rev. ed).	Simon Pulse	192	For young adults, this classic collection of poetry by 40 black Americans includes works by Langston Hughes, Nikki Giovanni, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Paul Laurence Dunbar. It's a volume teachers should own.
Steptoe, Javaka	*In Daddy's Arms, I Am Tall: African Americans Celebrating Fathers*	2001	Lee & Low	32	A collection of poems to celebrate all the ways fathers give strength and substance and love. Each is accompanied by collages that make the book beautiful as well as important.
Medina, Tony; illustrated by Gregory Christie	*DeShawn Days*	2001	Lee & Low	32	Ten-year-old DeShawn is a boy from the 'hood, and his first-person free verse tells what that means: "People walkin' everywhere/ broken bottles in the stairs . . . " Even so, DeShawn is loved and strengthened by family members. Those images are as palpable as those of life in the projects.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUNG ADULT AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Curtis, C. P. (1995). *The Watsons go to Birmingham—1963*. New York: Delacorte Press.
Curtis, C. P. (1999). *Bud, not Buddy.* New York: Delacorte Press.
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5

Black English

Two Speakers Separated by 40 Years Have the Same Language Experience

JUEL MOORE
PRECIOUS JACKSON

"That fellow is making it pretty hot for you, my young friend. What had you done to him?" asked the preacher. "Nothin'," replied the other. "I was jes' dancin' 'long an' not thinkin' 'bout him, when all of a sudden he hollered dat I had his gal an' commenced hittin' me. . . . I wasn't a-pesterin' Sam, but I tell you, he pesterin' me mighty."
—DUNBAR (1897)

"What seems to be the problem, Shane?" asked the principal. "Um gon' git him 'cauz he jumped me lass night," said Shane. "I'm surprised to see you here, Shane. Your teacher tells me that you have been making good choices," said the principal. "I been doin' okay but I 'ont like nobody tryin' to jump me on sly," said Shane.
—PRINCIPAL AND SHANE, FIFTH GRADER, San Diego City Schools (1997)

People who understand black English know that the speech patterns are very similar between the Paul Lawrence Dunbar character and Shane, in spite of a 100-year time difference. In his book, *Folks from Dixie* (1897), Dunbar showed that his characters used different dimensions of language in their speech, yet they understood each other. Shane and the principal understood each other, as well, even though their lexicons were different. Unfortunately, however, when many black children bring to school a home language that is different from school language communication, problems can occur that can lead to low expectations by teachers, poor communication with peers, and even school failure (Cummins, 1981; Delpit, 1995; Goodman, 1965; Hall & Guthrie, 1990; Hewitt, 1986; Shade, 1987; Shuy, 1969). To compound the problem, poor perceptions of speakers of the African American language can occur in the workplace as well.

In this chapter, we show that, in spite of a 40-year time difference, early language experiences were very similar for Juel, now a retired educator, and Precious, still a college student. We also show how both came to the realization that the wider the speaker's language registers, the wider his or her opportunity for effective communication. However, when they used a register that more closely resembled mainstream English, they experienced more success in school and in the workplace.

UNDERSTANDING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED LANGUAGE AND LEARNING FOR JUEL

I grew up in a rural Georgia town in the early 1940s. Of course, the school I attended (Grades 1–12) housed all black students. My sister, one of the first black persons from this town who went to college, was my role model, and the community members believed I would be the next successful college graduate. But I did not receive a scholarship as my sister [had] so I went to live with her in Michigan where I attended Flint Junior College.

How surprising and embarrassing when I went to my first class at Flint Junior College, where I was the only black in political science! How embarrassing when all the students laughed when the professor asked where I was from and I said, "Um from Pickens County Training School in Tate, Georgia." How embarrassing when he said, "You sure sound like it, too." I became a silent one and did not perform as well as others who were more competent in speaking the language of the professor. I had no previous clue that my way of talking was so different. I now wonder about the expectations of the professor who either deliberately ridiculed my way of speaking or was totally ignorant of the impact his remarks had on my life.

I often reflect on the experiences I had as I grew up in the segregated South. I think about my family and friends and the way we interacted with each other. My language and learning at school in Pickens County, Georgia, were not questioned. During my youth, I did not realize any real distinctions made among "classes" of black people. Other than black teachers and ministers at church, everybody seemed to be within the same socioeconomic structure, "poor." Therefore, I was totally unaware that my way of speaking was any different from others in my group.

I did notice that whites spoke with an intonation and dialect different from that of black people who lived in the same area. In fact, as a teenager, my friends and I mimicked the way whites talked in Georgia. We thought their nasal "twang" was funny. If blacks talked that way, we ridiculed them. I have since determined that the speech differences between blacks and whites who lived in the same vicinity are phenomenal considering that dialect refers to the local characteristics of speech patterns in a given region (Dandy, 1991; Dillard, 1972; Heath, 1983). During my youth, however, I was unaware of research purporting linguistic differences.

After the speech experience at Flint Junior College I became very aware of my talk. Although there was a common understanding during communication with other African Americans from Michigan, I became a victim of ridicule because of my slow Georgia "drawl," but not because of my grammar. I also noticed that Michigan-born blacks used a language register that I now know was African American and much different from Michigan-born whites. I noticed that some other blacks I met who had relocated in Flint from the South used malapropisms, at times, in trying to adjust to the talk of the mainstream. Since I have studied language registers in recent years, I know that while black English has been widely discussed in the literature since the 1960s, there is little empirical research which investigates this very personal communication.

Like all languages, black English varies from speaker to speaker. For example, Smitherman (1977, 1994) suggested an inner compulsion by some blacks to use black speech, and Baugh (1983) showed that blacks tend to use black English in social situations with other blacks. Interestingly, Shaklee (1980) discussed that different registers may be based on region, social class, and the "intimacy" (p. 34) of the situation. My experiences tell me that all of the above are true statements. The question then is how have similar black language experiences affected the speakers of the language over a forty-year time difference? Topical clarity begins to emerge by studying a definition of black English.

WHAT IS BLACK ENGLISH?

Black English has been referred to as Ebonics, nonstandard English, black dialect, black vernacular, African American English, and Africanized English. In the media recently, Ebonics became the term of choice. In 1996, Oakland California Unified School District decided to consider it an official language. In this chapter, we refer to black English as the language spoken and understood by many black people who are United States natives, no matter in what part of the country they reside.

Some of the phonological structures of black English include the use of */d/* for */th/* at the beginning of words and the omission of the final consonants in such words as */test/* and */desk/*. Other features may include syntactical characteristics such as subject expression (*John live* rather than *John lives*) and verb agreement (He *be* running rather than He *is* running).

One expert in black English is Smitherman (1977), who discussed examples of semantic characteristics of this language, such as linguistic reversals, religious linguistics, and music world semantics. The "gang slang" unique to the current generation of young African Americans is well worth mentioning, as it seems to be the most significant difference that occurred over the 40-year span, as explained by Precious in the following story.

LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES AND GANG SLANG FOR PRECIOUS

I grew up in the inner city of southeast San Diego. Not only was education far from a priority in the home and in the community, but also language was defined by what you knew and how you communicated it. The community I grew up in was a high-gang-populated region of the city; therefore, my language variations included gang slang. Over the years I learned to talk just like them. I only used the slang when I was in their presence. I did it because I wanted to understand them and I wanted them to feel comfortable with me; I wanted them to know that I could talk their talk, too. And of course, as a young girl, I thought it was cool to do it because everyone identified with a different gang.

I did not learn until my sophomore year in college that I spoke one language, because I have several speech communities. I just always referred to my language as English slang.

I grew up speaking slang. I spoke a lot in grade school, but most of the time, I was speaking to my classmates and not my teachers. After I took linguistics as a college course, I learned that I had four speech registers and four speech communities. I spoke one way with my family, two ways with my friends, and one way in school or in my workplace. Initially, I thought the way I spoke with my family and friends was the correct way to talk. I had a choice to either speak the way I was taught, or pretend I was "white" and talk "proper"

like them. I now know that it is through culture that concepts and ways of speaking are formed.

Gang slang may include the switching of /b/ for words beginning with /c/ or /k/ letters or sounds. For example, *crazy* would become *brazy.* Instead of saying *comedy* for a funny act, a member of the "Bloods" would say *bomedy.* Other phrases a Blood may use are *What's brackin*, meaning, *What's up? Shoot the blangums* means *Swing your fists and fight*. Although Bloods may use slang such as *What's brackin, blood?* when talking to other gang members, the phrase would sometimes be used with non–gang members who were considered friends and associates. The registers then become mixed with African American language.

Unfortunately, today there is still the misconception that the language of many black people is "slang" or a deficient language. Notwithstanding the long history behind the language and the lack of attention it has received, the belief remains that for blacks who are native to this country, their exposure to mainstream culture should be sufficient enough for them to be "more proficient" in speaking "standard" English and that they should not use black "slang." However, we recognize that language is more than a vernacular or dialect; language is a systematic, rule-governed way of thinking, speaking, and acting that transmits historical, social, and symbolic values. In the case of black people, the African origin of their way of speaking has never been acknowledged, in spite of the fact that it still is an influence in today's generation of black people, as Precious indicated.

SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS THAT AFFECT LANGUAGE

Language is a part of the history of the people made up of words with shades of meanings that may not be readily understood by those outside the culture or socioeconomic group. Behavior and perception of the world depend on the language we understand. According to the controversial Whorf (1956), different language experiences shape our reality. This theory of linguistic relativity can be one way to explain the "gang slang" that is a part of the black language experiences of some of today's black youths.

Looking further at the use of language and how it is used in different situations revealed that some blacks may consciously or unconsciously use different registers (Bernstein, 1971; Baugh, 1983, 1995; Dillard, 1972). They learn the requirements of the situation and adapt their language accordingly. Labov postulated in his 1972 Harlem studies of language that there is a relationship between language and social environment when he showed that the "Jets," a gang-like group, valued verbal skills used with peers rather than those of the school. The "Lames," on the other hand, did not fit into the street culture and were better students. This could be another example of the gang-slang register used by some African Americans. The concern, however, is not the variance within the segment of the register range but whether this is the only segment of the range. Gang slang, as the only register, would limit communication choices, especially if the speakers are unaware of other registers.

Cultural influences may be very strong in determining how African Americans respond in different situations. The movie *Amistad* created media frenzy over the role culture plays in communication. Was Steven Spielberg a genius and an expert in the language and culture of African people when he ensured that the language of the Mende people was perceived as gibberish that did not deserve subtitles or on-screen translations? When it is perceived that there is a resistance by black people to adopting the codes of the mainstream, cultural clashes can and do occur. Did Spielberg perceive that the language

of African slaves was not valued and that, therefore, its status needed to be presented in this way to send a message to the viewers? Is this still happening in classrooms and in the workplace today?

Precious:

In grade school, my teachers would correct me when I spoke "broken English," but when I went home it was far from enforced because of the talk in my home and with my friends and therefore I disregarded the corrections and teachers had to correct me again every day.

The home culture provides the very first language learning. Heath (1983), in her studies of language and culture in the Carolinas, was thorough in presenting the fact that ways of eating, sleeping, worshipping, and using time and space all influenced language. Although she focused her ethnographic study on both black and white families, Heath maintained that the way children learn a language is dependent on the family and the community that shape their lives. With more experiences, language codes are broadened. The selection of which code to use depends on the choices of the speaker and the listener, according to Bernstein (1971).

Precious:

Something very interesting to me about language is people's ability to code switch. Prior to being exposed to the term "code switching," I didn't know what to call talking differently in front of different people. In fact, it was defined as a bad thing, or being fake and two-faced. People would make comments about how I talk one way in the workplace and another in school. Those who could not distinguish between different settings found my behavior inappropriate. I think I have two language variations and four speech communities. It is interesting for me because I am learning so much being able to balance such differences.

CODE SWITCHING

Young children are aware of different language registers, according to Delpit (1990). She cited her own experience as a first-grade teacher when a young child noticed that she was talking "white" (p. 247) when she spoke to them on the first day of school. Delpit indicated that a 6-year-old might not be able to reproduce different codes or understand the social implications, yet they can identify ranges of registers.

Moore (1998), in her study that examined the language registers of black elementary school fifth graders, reported that most of the black students used a different register on the playground than in the classroom. The students were unaware of the switch until they heard themselves on tape. Taylor (1987) inferred that students unaware of their language differences could be at a disadvantage in becoming successful communicators. Conversely, knowing when to make language choices is what all successful speakers do when they encounter communication situations outside their home territory.

COASTING INTO THE MAINSTREAM

The mainstream English register is essential for success in school and in the workplace. Dowdy (2002) wrote of the mental conflict that occurs when more value must be given to

what she called the "master discourse" (p. 12). Writers such as Epstein (1978) and Blake-Jones (1987) shared their views about this great necessity for proficiency in English when they indicated that one's status in life is dependent on the ability to speak Standard English. We both realized that communicating in different registers was an asset but that knowing when to choose the appropriate register required cognition.

Juel:

During my years at Flint Junior College, I went to classes and was able to take my examinations to pass classes, but I did not talk at all. I loved my psychology classes, and Dr. Rodgers, my professor, approached me one day and said he had noticed that I did great on my written work but I never talked or looked at people. I did not tell him about the embarrassment I suffered in the political science class. I really do not remember what I actually said to him. But he took my face and said, "You have something to say! Don't ever look down. Let people know what you know." Dr. Rodgers was a black man, and I shall never forget those words and what they meant to me.

I transferred from Flint Junior College to Fisk University, a historically black college, in Nashville, Tennessee. I graduated with departmental honors. However, I became more and more aware that no matter how much I accomplished, my home language was very much a part of my entire being. I still think in black English and must translate my thoughts into mainstream English. No classes were offered in any school to help me know how to do this; it took the experiences throughout my life and the observations I have made in my interactions with others that enabled me to accomplish this task.

Throughout much of my career, I spent an inordinate amount of my time in research and study of the language and culture of African American people. Even as a race/human relations facilitator, I experienced that language is second only to skin color in the discrimination against black people.

There is a paucity of empirical data available in this area, especially relating the African American language to the history and culture of Africa. Certainly there are few if any arguments for the acceptance of it as a formal language.

My business card shows a little girl looking up at a slow-moving locomotive as she thinks about the fast-moving bullet train that needs to "coast" her from the black English register to the mainstream English register in order for her to become upwardly mobile in school and work.

Precious:

As far as language variation, I learned to speak a certain way to colleagues, professionals, classmates, and professors that is different from the way I speak to my family (I am the first to attend college) and close friends. I can say the same thing to all of them, but it comes out in two variations. For example, there are certain terms I use in my professional arena that I will not use with friends and family because most of the time they will not understand. I say things as simply as possible to my friends and family in familiar ways. And, I summarize instead of explaining certain things in detail.

My speech communities have some things in common, yet there are distinct differences, and I have to code switch within each one. The first is my family speech community. This is my native community, the community in which I was born. I always understand what is said and meant in this community. We have a way of saying things to each other, just amongst the family.

The next community consists of friends with whom I socialize and share a special bond. This speech community is close to my family community, but things are said and interpreted differently. In my speech community of friends, I don't use as much professional speech when I talk with them. But, if I happen to use professional speech, I do not talk as if they can't understand or they will make jokes about me and say I am talking proper and using big words.

Another community is my professional and educational world. There are many terms, phrases, and words that I use in my other communities that I will never use in this community. I am very professional in my interactions with people in my professional and educational community. However, I do not completely act as if my real existence and my native speech communities do not exist, but I know how to regulate my speech so that it is acceptable. Interestingly enough, I have met some people in the professional and educational arena who have similar background and we may code switch with one another in this educational or professional setting.

It is amazing how someone can go from one community to the next and identify with what is being said. I think most people have at least two speech communities unless they grew up isolated and did everything with the same people. I am glad to have all my speech communities. I learn something from participating in each one.

HAUNTING CONCERNS

The question that continues to haunt us is how to provide all African American children equal access to school and work English, considering that this fluency may be a compounding influence on their later success in life. We ourselves were able to become metacognitive without much help from outside forces. This may not happen with the critical masses of African American students. Therefore, differences must be made in classrooms and society.

First, teachers must support the home language. They must acknowledge it as valid yet use strategies that provide mainstream experiences. This can be done in literacy discussion groups, through oral-language presentations, by videotaping contrived events, and through contrastive analysis in literature and writing, discussing culture, and participating in cultural events. Children and adults can look at and listen to dual language/dual dialects in books, then participate in speaking, vocabulary building, and meaning-making exercises.

Further, learning about different communities and how behavior is influenced by customs in the communities can allay assumptions about people. Community excursions can be helpful and can provide valuable resources in classrooms and workplaces.

The dynamic Raymond Winbush developed a guide, *The Warrior Method* (2001), which can help both parents and teachers understand behavior and utilize community resources. It gives examples of the importance of learning about community. Winbush described both destructive and constructive behavior of African American males, but his examples can also apply to females and families. The descriptions follow:

Destructive Behavior

Super slaves are so disconnected from the African American culture that they forget the oppression that existed in the past, as well as in the present. In fact, they work against racial equality.

Hip-hop hustlers practice violence and self-destruction and see no obligation or connection between their behavior and the black community.

The wanna-nevah-bees are middle-class African Americans who are confused about their own identity.

Constructive Behavior

Warriors value justice and speak out against all injustice. They are the community activists, but they may be considered troublemakers when they seek justice and equity.

Strategists are committed to improving the achievement of the African American people. They take risks at the expense of their own positions to accommodate the needs of others.

The griots are the storytellers, who are viewed as elders or wise people. They tell true stories of who African Americans really are and tell the stories with care and love.

The healers are the ones who equip the people with knowledge. Teachers are among the healers. They focus on individual needs and decide on how to meet the needs.

Among strategies and community resources, Winbush (2001) recommends organizing churches to build educational facilities and financial institutions, sponsoring summer programs and travel grants to visit Africa, and creating political action groups to educate African Americans about the role of politics in their lives.

In additional to the guide by Winbush (2001), helpful techniques for working with speakers of the African American language are also presented by Manley and O'Neill (1997), Opitz (1998), and Monroe (1997). A myriad of books and strategies can be found by checking out different African American language and culture Web sites on the Internet.

Cognitive factors such as experiences and social interactions can sometimes be taken for granted. It is important to get to know people and to value them personally and learn how their language and dialect work. For example, during oral language or "sharing time," teachers may need to notice that many African Americans are not linear in their oral presentations and that they may need to relate every colorful detail of their stories. This may be different from how white children present or share. When reading for meaning, teachers must ask questions to ensure that students are making meaning of the text. (If a child has never seen an *alligator* he or she may call it an *elevator.*) If an African American child places her head on a desk without answering a question, this may *not* be defiance; it may just be an embarrassing moment when the child may not know the answer to the question that was asked.

Researchers must take the risk of studying black English, using empirical methods, then making results and understandings known to the public. They must be involved in legislative changes that can give the language of African American people the attention it needs.

At the onset of this chapter, we showed that speech patterns and language were similar for speakers of black English in spite of speakers' being separated by 40 or 100 years. We also showed that speakers are more successful when they had a wide range of registers and when they realized the advantage of being able to communicate in various situations. Language patterns may develop because of social exposure and experiences as was seen in the use of "gang slang" by Precious. It is unfortunate but true that success in life may be related to the close approximation of one's language to the language in classrooms and in the workplace.

Although we ourselves were able to circumvent the mainstream system to find some measure of success, many African Americans have not been as lucky, because schools do not offer programs that include strategies and techniques for African American children whose registers do not include mainstream English. Therefore, mainstream programs presented to school districts by publishers for classroom use must be carefully examined to ensure that contents include strategies that meet the needs of black English speakers. Teachers and researchers must believe that, even though black students are native to this country, their experiences and language exposures in the mainstream culture may not be sufficient enough for success without interventions.

The status of one's language may affect one's performance at school and at work. There is a real need for attention to this matter.

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Suggested Titles: Books That Highlight Issues of Cultural and Language Segregation and Struggles for Equality

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
McKissack, Patricia	*Flossie and the Fox*	1986	Dial Books for Young Readers	32	McKissack recalls this story, rich with black language of the rural South, told to her by her grandfather. Flossie, a young African American girl, sets out to deliver a basket of eggs to a neighbor. Along the way, she meets a slick-talking fox who tries to prove he is a fox before Flossie will be afraid of him.
Woodson, Jacqueline	*The Other Side*	2001	Putnam	32	Separated literally by a fence, two girls learn a lesson about segregation and racial inequity. Clover and Annie come to understand the racial divide in their town and hope that "someday somebody's going to come along and knock this old fence down."
Hopkinson, Deborah	*Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*	1993	Random House	40	Clara, a creative and determined black slave, uses a quilt made of scraps of information to lead others to freedom. This story, based on a true event, will help readers to understand the struggles and history of the underground railroad.

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6

No Parent Left Behind

DIANE LAPP
JAMES FLOOD

Reports about the success of parent education programs, which instruct parents on ways to support their children's literacy development, abound in the literature on family literacy and parent programs (International Reading Association [IRA], 2002; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Purcell-Gates, 1993, 1995, 2000; Yaden & Paratore, 2003; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; Teale, 1978; Yaden, Rowe, & MacGillvray, 2000). Many of these programs have been implemented by school districts, and their recommendations have been adopted in classrooms around the world.

Activities such as those in the primary grades, in which books are sent home for children to read to family members, and triangulated journal writing in the upper grades, in which parents, teachers, and students discuss their experiences with one another, have been demonstrated over and over again to provide critical links between families and teachers. The bonds established through these linkages often serve as the foundation for children's future literacy success.

Teachers and parents who share these mutually supportive experiences with one another are very fortunate because they can depend on one other as they take on the arduous and rewarding task of teaching a child to read. Their collaboration in the process of literacy learning lightens the burden for both, and each is fulfilled when the task is successfully completed. As the child blossoms into a fully literate person, the teacher knows she has done her job at school, and the parents know they have done their job at home. Their teamwork, collaboration, and mutual trust and respect for one another produce a harmonious partnership that has been well documented as a necessary ingredient in studies that examined the effects of parental involvement on school achievement (Yaden & Paratore, 2003).

But in some situations parents and teachers do not connect with one another, and the research suggests that these missed connections frequently result in situations in which children do not succeed in literacy. These missed connections, which may occur however well intentioned teachers and parents may be, need careful analysis to determine the root of the

problem. These problems stem from myriad sources, ranging from primal biases toward one another to knowledge gaps that parents have about literacy to ineptness on the part of one or the other, the parent or the teacher.

In this chapter, we do not discuss all of the sources of missed connections; rather, we focus on one broad area of the problem: parents' perceptions of their roles in the literacy education of their children. We further narrow our scope to parents who live below the poverty level.

In a recent study, Lapp, Fisher, Flood, and Moore (2002) found significant differences between the perceptions of parents who were poor and of those who were "very" poor in a survey about their roles in their children's early literacy development. We found that not every parent is aware that children who learn the functional uses of literacy through daily family life experiences are well on their way to succeeding in literacy (Flood, 1975; Goodman, 1986; Heath, 1983; Morrow, 1993; Taylor, 1997), and we also found that many families may have a very positive attitude about school and learning but do not have the skills, knowledge, or means to develop their children's early literacy awareness.

This reality compelled us to examine issues within families who do not participate in school-sponsored literacy programs. We were extremely interested in these issues because we have found from our experiences that many families consist of one-parent households in which parents are so busy with the day-to-day responsibilities of feeding, housing, loving, and caring for their children that they have little time to support school-related literacy activities at home. They believe that they are supporting their children's educational development and fulfilling their parental responsibility by sending them to school, where effective teachers can instruct their children in literacy.

Recent findings from several education reports, including the National Association of Educational Progress (1998), suggest that the number of children in poverty whose families do not have the resources to support their literacy development has reached epic proportions (Hannaway, in press; Honig, 1997; Lee, 2002). These and other studies suggest that 20% of fourth graders and 70–80% of intermediate children in inner-city urban schools are dysfunctional readers and that 30% of intermediate children in suburban schools are not able to read and comprehend grade-level texts (Gunning, 1998; Slavin, Karweit, & Wasik, 1994).

Based on these data, it seems obvious that, in addition to providing appropriate school instruction for every child, educators must identify a way to create "effective partnerships" with parents that match the reality of many households. In our work, we have found that teachers sometimes expect families to provide early literacy experiences at home that the families do not perceive as their responsibility or do not have the competence to provide. We have also found resentment when these experiences are not provided. Resentment does not lead to "effective partnerships"; we need to find better ways to build partnerships that will help children. Some of the ways to help children may not be traditional partnerships that require help at home.

Although the importance of the family in children's early literacy experiences is well documented, the purpose of our study was to determine whether all families actually perceived early literacy preparation as their responsibility. We specifically looked at families living in poverty who did not participate in formal family literacy programs. Many of the families we worked with are often described as "invisible" to teachers and educational researchers because they are not seen in schools and literacy-related environments in which literacy activities take place. We knew we had to go the environments where these families

lived if we wanted to collect credible data from *all* of the parents in our schools. In the next section we explain how we were able to collect information from as many different parents as possible.

HOW DID WE CONDUCT OUR STUDY?

How Did We Find the Parents?

We selected 72 teachers who worked with our field-based preservice teachers in six schools in geographically, culturally, and economically diverse areas of San Diego for the study. We then randomly selected six kindergarten and six first-grade teachers from a stratified sample. Almost half of the children (42%) were from two-parent families, and the remainder lived with one parent, with aunts and uncles, or with a parent and grandparent. More than two-thirds (70%) of the children received free or reduced-price lunches and lived in subsidized (Section 8) housing. The ethnicity of the children represented the schools populations: 45% were African American, 21% were Latino, 18% were Asian-Pacific Islander, and 16% were European American. In addition, 24 family members were randomly selected and invited to participate in interviews. All 24 family members agreed to participate. Although most of the parents were contacted directly through the schools, we realized that we were not reaching all of the parents; many of the "invisible" parents were not returning the surveys. So we contacted community leaders who helped us find the parents who were not returning the surveys. These leaders became our community cultural brokers, who read the survey orally to parents inside and outside of community centers, churches, and neighborhood meeting places.

How Did We Survey Parents?

We developed an instrument that contained 20 questions. The questions corresponded to two separate areas of parents' perceptions regarding: (1) a definition of literacy and (2) their role in developing the literacy of their young children. Although most of the questions were Likert-scale items, three questions were open-ended in an attempt to allow participants to use their own words to describe their role in literacy development.

How Did We Interview the Parents?

Interviews with family members were conducted at locations convenient for the parents, for example, in their homes, at the community center, and on the sidewalk outside the school building before or after school. During the interviews, parents and interviewers conversed about their responses to the survey. Participants were asked to expand and detail their responses whenever possible.

WHAT DID WE FIND?

Results from the 174 surveys and 24 interviews were combined into three areas related to families' perceptions about their role in their children's literacy development. These areas included (1) defining literacy, (2) home and school responsibilities for literacy development, and (3) differences in perceived responsibilities by income level.

How Did the Parents Define Literacy?

Almost all of the parents (94%, or 163 of 174) defined literacy as "reading" or "reading and writing." The remaining 6% gave responses such as "being able to make it in colleague [*sic*]" or "skills to get a good job." During the interviews, family members were asked to define literacy and to expand their definitions if possible. Although parents consistently reported that reading and writing were the center of their understanding of literacy, half of the parents interviewed agreed that listening and speaking were also important when they were asked about oral language skills by the interviewer. The other half of the parents who were interviewed did not agree that listening and speaking should be considered part of literacy. As one of the mothers suggested, "She talk more better than me. More talk. Why you wanna do that? She need to read."

How Did Parents Respond to the Questions about Home or School's Responsibilities for Teaching Literacy?

Parents maintained that they held greater responsibility than the school did for teaching their children to tie their shoes, to say their ABCs, to ride a bike, to brush their teeth, and to jump rope. They thought the following were shared responsibilities: reading stories to children, having conversations, teaching children to be polite and to write their names, and to color with their children. Items that were clearly judged by them to be the school's responsibility included teaching reading, writing numbers, counting to 100, and writing the alphabet, as well as visiting the library.

During the interviews, the parents explained their perceptions. One parent said, "I don't want to teach him wrong. I know the teacher can do it right. We have a good teacher, and I'm happy about that." When we asked about homework, the parents consistently reported that their school offered a 6-to-6 (after-school) program during which their children completed homework assignments and received extra tutoring in math and reading. Several parents reported satisfaction with these programs and noted that, when the child came home, they could "spend time as a family" and not "be forced to do all that work that the teacher wants. I'm not sure I get it all right in English anyway. I don't want to teach it wrong." Another parent stated, "With nine kids and two adults livin' together in a house with two bedrooms, we don't have space or time for all the kids to do homework."

When asked about reading stories to children, every parent indicated that the teacher regularly read stories aloud to children during the school day. Of the 24 families interviewed, 22 families reported that their child's teacher had provided books for the home and had requested that the family regularly read aloud together. As one of the parents said, "James is my first baby. We didn't have no books at home. Teacher gave James little paper books to read. She told me to read them books with him every day."

Teaching children how to read was overwhelmingly perceived as a school responsibility—90% indicated that this was the responsibility of the school. Parents consistently reported that they were unsure about the teaching of reading but that they knew it was very important. They also reported that it was "very hard to teach someone to read. Do you see all those commercials? Lots of kids never learn how to read. I want Erik to learn to read. His teacher is the best one to teach him." Similarly, several of the parents reported that they were "unsure" readers themselves and did not feel qualified to teach their children to read. As one of the parents said, "I can get by, but I'm not a great reader. I don't like it. I don't want Ricardo to know that, so I don't try to teach him. I let the teacher do it."

What Were the Differences among Parents in Perceived Responsibilities Based on Income?

Although 70% of the students in this study attended schools in which 70% of the student population received free or reduced-price lunches, 30% of the students attended schools in which less than 20% of the students received free or reduced-price lunches. In an attempt to understand the role that poverty may play in explaining the family's perceptions of its responsibility in literacy development, we identified differences in beliefs between the poor and the very poor. The very poor families differed in their opinions of responsibilities in several areas. For example, saying and writing the alphabet were more often perceived to be the responsibility of families in higher income schools. This trend was fairly consistent across academic tasks, with two notable exceptions—teaching reading and writing numbers. In both of these cases, the responsibility was clearly seen as the school's.

During the interviews, parents suggested that the more academic the task, the greater the school's responsibility. Two families also suggested that their children were not ready to read before they started school. One parent said, "My daughter wasn't ready to read when she was with me full time. I mean, you can't expect a 4-year-old to read, now, can you? Now that she is in first grade, I expect the teacher to teach her to read."

What Were the Implications of the Study?

Although family members believed that they had responsibilities related to the literacy development of their children, they did not see teaching their children to read as their responsibility because they had little to offer in the area of literacy. Families clearly placed the responsibility for teaching their children to read with the teachers. Several family members reported that they felt unprepared for the challenge of teaching reading and did not have confidence in their own literacy skills. They did not want to cause harm to their children. Many parents expressed their insecurities about their past school performances. When asked why they did not regularly attend teacher–parent conferences, one parent laughingly said, "I don't like to talk to the teacher because she might think Precious ain't no smarter than me."

The majority of the families in this study were very willing to be involved in their children's literacy development. Unfortunately, they were often unsure about what they should do as literacy supporters. Although the majority of respondents acknowledged the importance of reading, they believed that learning to read begins in first grade with the teacher. They did not have an understanding of the importance of early literacy (birth to first grade) events. Many families in poverty have minimal connections with school and are, therefore, unsure of what early literacy experiences should be presented to their children.

What Did the Teachers Think about the Perceptions and Intentions of Parents?

The teachers, in general, perceived parents as their natural partners. They made positive assumptions about their willingness and ability to help in the process of educating their children in literacy. For example, teachers expected parents to read to their children at home; they expected them to help their children to remember to bring their books to school; they expected parents to help their children with homework; and most teachers expected parents to be supportive of their literacy instructional efforts in the classroom.

However, when these assumptions did not result in home practices, teachers became bewildered and frequently misjudged the parent's motivation. Rather than criticize the parent, we argue that teachers need to reexamine their assumptions. Our data clearly demonstrate

that some parents do not perceive the literacy education of their children as their responsibility. They do *not* think it is their job to read to their children at home or to supervise their children's homework. Although we need to work toward a mutual understanding that children's literacy is improved when parents and teachers work together, we must also listen to what the parents in our survey told us.

For example, we relearned the importance of "knowing" the lives of our children. It is critical for teachers to visit the homes of their students and to attend community events at which their students and family members will be. We simply cannot wait for every child's family to present themselves to us in our classrooms; we have to find them (in every sense of the word "find"). Complaining about parents' absence from school activities will not make them suddenly appear. We need to constantly remember that when parents are not attending school-sponsored functions, they are somewhere. We need to find them, to understand their hopes, dreams, frustrations, and anxieties.

WHAT ARE OUR RECOMMENDATIONS?

Our data strongly support the following recommendation: (1) the creation of publicly funded universal preschools for all children, (2) the creation and refinement of before- and after-school programs, and (3) a reassessment of homework policies in public schools.

Universal Preschool

Hannaway (in press) synthesized the data on the school performance of urban students who are living in poverty and found that children who participate in preschool programs significantly outperform their counterparts who do not participate in preschool programs. Even with the success of Head Start, which now serves more than 1 million preschoolers from low-income homes, the participation of middle-class children in preschool programs still overwhelmingly exceeds the numbers of children from low-income homes. Universal preschool, which has been proposed by many government officials, has yet to be enacted because of political and fiscal bottlenecks that have substantively eroded the chances of children from low-income families to participate fully in the American public school experience.

As the parents told us in our survey, they did not perceive the early literacy education of their children as their responsibility. They cited their belief that trained teachers could do the job far better than they could at home, and they expressed their concerns that their children were being left behind because they didn't feel capable of teaching their children "in a correct manner." Thus the parents did not provide early literacy education during the formative years in which middle-class children were acquiring requisite skills for reading and writing. The lack of publicly supported preschools further restricts the opportunities of children of poverty.

The parents in our study stated that they believed that the early literacy of their children could be best delivered by teachers. They seemed eager to send their children to competent teachers who could provide the skills that their children need. They are eagerly awaiting the availability of publicly funded preschools. Head Start programs are simply unable to serve the vast numbers of preschool-age children who are living in poverty in the United States. Although Head Start has been an effective program for the children it serves, far too many children are being left behind. It seems unnecessary to state that low-income parents cannot afford to send their children to preschools that are not publicly funded.

Both the International Reading Association (IRA, 2002) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2000) have developed position papers endorsing the creation of universal preschool. In the past year, IRA has created a commission on early childhood education to study ways in which policymakers and educators can come together to design a national, federally funded program for all preschool-age children.

Before/After-School Programs

The data on the effectiveness of increased instructional time on the literacy development of children of low-income families strongly suggest that time in literacy activities significantly affects performance. A variety of programs have shown strong effects when the instruction meets the needs of the child. The most successful before/after-school programs occur in settings in which children receive their instruction in one-to-one tutorials. When teachers follow a model in which they assess and diagnose each child's need and then teach to the specific needs of the child, children increase their literacy skills rapidly. Conversely, when before/after-school programs become "dumping grounds" for large numbers of students with one teacher, the results are understandably less impressive.

In our study, the parents understood the impact of more time in literacy tasks and requested more before/after-school programs, as well as summer school programs and programs that occur during intersessions. It came as no surprise to them, nor does it come as a surprise to us, that time matters. Many children from low-income families start school far behind their middle-class peers. The solution to the gap between the two groups clearly resides in the domain of time—it requires more time in literacy instruction with competent teachers in small-group settings. Ideally, the best situation for children of low-income families would be to have individual tutorials that expedited their learning of literacy.

Homework Policies

Homework has been a controversial issue throughout the history of education. The proponents of homework argue that it provides practice in skills that require a great deal of time to master. Proponents further argue that homework builds positive attitudes toward learning and creates a mind-set in the student that learning is an "ongoing process." The opponents of homework argue that many of the assignments are "busy work" that do not particularly improve prerequisite skills and that homework can become so burdensome that it has the negative effect of alienating children from learning. They argue that homework frequently intrudes into family life and creates disharmony in the home among all members of the family, especially between parent and child.

In our study, low-income parents were especially vocal on the subject of homework. They offered insights on what occurs in their homes, and their insights offer us a window into the stress that homework can cause in a family. Many parents pleaded for homework to be done at school, either within the classroom or in homework study clubs after school. They explained that their homes were often not conducive to doing homework because of large numbers of people in a small environment. They simply did not have the resources to provide a quiet place for their children to perform the tasks that the homework required. Furthermore, they stated that they did not feel equipped to help their children with the homework that the teacher required. Many of them did not speak English.

In our experience, we have found that teachers sometimes require homework that necessitates significant sums of money and resources that simply do not exist within the homes

of the parents whom we surveyed—for instance, access to the Internet, access to reference books at home (encyclopedias, dictionaries, almanacs, magazines), computers, e-mail, art supplies, and photographs. We have also found that teachers sometimes inadvertently require reading from books that are not available in many of the homes of the children. We found that many of the parents were fearful of checking out books from the library because they were concerned the books would be lost and they would be fined. They asked for frequent visitations to the library, but they hoped that these visits could be done during school time or as a part of the before/after-school program.

As an alternative to traditional homework activities, we propose that homework consist of extensive reading of books that are sent home from the school. There is overwhelming evidence that good readers read more than poor readers and that frequent and wide independent reading improves comprehension and other literacy skills (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2003). When teachers establish the habit of reading at home (i.e., as homework), they are establishing a skill that children will be able to use for the rest of their lives. There are many ways in which teachers can demand accountability for this type of homework (e.g., class discussions of books, book clubs, and book reading diaries that are completed in school).

CONCLUSIONS

Just as no child should be left behind, so, too, no parent should be left behind in the American educational enterprise. Although most parents are fully participating in the education of their children, some are not. The reasons for nonparental participation are legion—disenfranchisement, fear, lack of time, lack of confidence in themselves or in the school establishment, cross-language and cross-cultural interferences, and personal animosities. However, this list fails to include parents who are perfectly supportive of the schools but who are unaware of the responsibilities that many educators have assumed to be theirs. It is time for us to make sure that they are not left behind in discussions about their children.

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Suggested Titles:
Stories with Parents Who Are Learning as They Are Parenting/Guiding

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Rahaman, Vashanti; illustrated by Lori McElrath Eslick	*Read for Me, Mama*	1997	Boyds Mills	32	When a child repeatedly asks his mother to read to him, Mama evades until she must finally, heartbreakingly, admit that she cannot read. Although there is a satisfying ending, the issue of parents' own struggles with reading may sensitize teachers who make particular kinds of assignments.
Lachtman, Ofelia Dumas; illustrated by Alex Pardo Delange	*Pepita Talks Twice/Pepita Habla Dos Veces*	1995	Arte Publico	32	Pepita must talk twice—once in English and once in Spanish in order to translate for her monolingual neighbors, family, and classmates. What a bother! But her decision to stop speaking Spanish means she can no longer talk with her grandmother (or her dog)! Bilingual children think the book is great fun; young teachers will gain insight.
Woodson, Jacqueline; illustrated by James E. Ransome	*Visiting Day*	2002	Scholastic	32	A little girl tells the story of her monthly visit to see her daddy on "visiting day." Children who suffer from enforced separation from a parent will be treated gently by this sensitive story of a loved daddy "doing a little time."

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7

The Role of Native Language and Parental Involvement

Developing Literacy Skills for All Children

JOSEFINA VILLAMIL TINAJERO
JUDITH HOPE MUNTER

> I can still taste the sweet, dark chocolate all over my fingers. It is squishing through my slippery, small hands. What fun this is as I make funny designs on my white paper! I look and see his smile. "*Que dibujaste?* [what did you draw?]" my daddy asks. I was in Head Start, four years old, and I can vividly remember all the games we played on "Parent Night." Ever since I can remember, my parents were always involved in my life. They didn't speak much English, had only a limited education themselves, [yet] I ponder now, as an adult, where would I be if it had not been for their devotion to me and to my education?
>
> —El Paso bilingual preservice teacher (2001)

Numerous social scientists have analyzed and described the rapid and widespread growth of the Latino population in the United States over the last several years (e.g., Berube, 2001; Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2003). The increasing flow of immigration from non-English-speaking regions of the world to urban communities throughout the nation has resulted in social, economic, and cultural changes with profound implications for schools and school personnel, as well as for public policymakers in every arena. As we enter the 21st century, American public schools must confront the imperative of providing excellent and equitable educational opportunities for an increasingly culturally/linguistically diverse student population (Jones & Fuller, 2003).

In coming to this country and adjusting to American schools, immigrant students and their families travel very long distances. These distances are physical, emotional, and psychological. For many of these individuals, the journey from their original homes to becom-

ing "North American" will take a very long time indeed. What has become increasingly clear in recent years, however, is that newly arrived immigrants from non-English-speaking countries encounter serious problems within our educational system.

One of the first experiences of Hispanic children who enter the United States is the clash between their primary cultures and the norms of their new home. Research and practice (Igoa, 1995; Tinajero & Ada, 1993) show that individuals entering a second culture experience a wide range of responses, from euphoria (i.e., the honeymoon phase, when the customs, foods, and sights are fascinating) to culture shock, as the newcomer becomes increasingly aware of being the "other" and is disoriented by cultural cues that result in frustration. In the classroom, some students may show these (and other) varied responses to cross-cultural experiences in the form of behavioral symptoms such as withdrawal or depression. Mental fatigue may result from continually straining to comprehend the new culture. Individuals may need extra time to process personal and emotional, as well as academic, experiences. This is particularly true in the case of children who have immigrated recently after having lived through a series of possibly traumatic events. In U.S. schools, numerous studies (e.g., Delpit, 1996; Garcia, 2000; Irvine, 2001; Nieto, 2003) have examined some of the outcomes of assimilationist educational policies that devalue students' home culture and native language; the lack of congruence between mainstream and minority cultures has lasting effects on students.

These studies build on decades of educational research (e.g., Ogbu, 1987; Valdes, 1996; Vernez & Abrahamse, 1996), pointing out that there have always been institutional factors within communities, schools, and classrooms that operate against minority children's adjustment and academic performance. The disconnect that often results for these children has not been resolved successfully through subtractive programs of study and classes that disregard the rich backgrounds and languages that these youngsters bring with them. Critical educators (e.g., Delpit, 2002; Nieto, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999) have written extensively about the ways in which racial/ethnic/linguistic differences are socially constructed and the long-term effects of school experiences that formally and informally fracture students' cultural and ethnic identities.

The foregoing is true even in schools that are integrated so that minority and mainstream children have available to them the same staff, facilities, curriculum, and services. The primary cultural differences of the new immigrants may lead to dissonance, both in socialization processes and in academic teaching and learning. For example, minority children may come to school with different assumptions about getting ahead or about interpersonal/intergroup relations. The children may also bring to school a style of learning that is quite different from the one emphasized by American public schools.

Many skills and characteristics associated with being raised in a particular cultural context have important implications for instruction and daily routines in school. The culture of most public schools in America today tends to exemplify middle-class Eurocentric backgrounds based on European culture, history, traditions, and values. Thus children from different cultural backgrounds are often at a distinct social and academic disadvantage in most American schools (Cummins, 2000; Diaz, 2001; Gay, 2000; Swisher & Schoorman, 2001). Immigrant children come to the United States with mixed educational backgrounds, with varying languages and cultures, and with emotional burdens unknown to most American youths. Many of these children, for example, have survived wars, political oppression, and economic deprivation. Often they find that their problems are not over when they enter U.S. public schools.

THE DEBATE ABOUT LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

The dilemma facing public schools that serve these children is a difficult one, and there is some ambiguity in the public mind about how immigrant students from non-English-speaking countries can best bridge the gap between cultures, with all that entails. Linguistic diversity in U.S. public schools has provoked bitter political debate throughout the nation's history. Anti-immigration groups have used it as a target for their attacks, arguing that bilingual education impedes assimilation into American society, prevents immigrants from learning English, and represents a threat to the ideals of America.

The bilingual-education debate is framed by two positions that reflect distinct views on assimilation: the mainstream conformity model and the cultural pluralist model. Mainstream conformists contend that it is the schools' responsibility to teach English and to promote assimilation by substitution of new cultural and normative values; cultural pluralists, in contrast, counter that schools should strive to recognize that to maintain a strong nation, bilingual programs that protect the language and culture of immigrant groups should be supported and expanded. Pluralists view quality bilingual programs as a way to promote the pluralistic nature of the United States and as a way to encourage all children to become global citizens, fully prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Bilingual education, at its best, provides children with the opportunity to strengthen and develop their native language(s) while moving ahead to learn the dominant language (i.e., English), resulting in fluency in at least two languages. Bilingualism, from this perspective, is seen as an asset, an intellectual accomplishment and a national treasure.

There is no question that students who arrive as immigrants in this country must learn English. They cannot fully benefit from the schools until they are able to profit from instruction conducted primarily in this language. At the same time, a growing body of evidence points to the vital role of native-language literacy (e.g., Ada, 1993b; Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000; Macedo, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999; Thomas & Collier, 1997-1998) in educating the whole child, enabling him or her to express all the creativity and wide range of skills, talents, and prior knowledge that he or she brings to the classroom door.

EDUCATING HISPANIC CHILDREN ON THE UNITED STATES–MEXICO BORDER

Much of the research on Hispanic youth in U.S. schools today points to the persistent educational underachievement outcomes for this large and growing group of K–12 students (Brice, 2002; Garcia, 2001; Scribner, 1999). Many Hispanic students read two or more grade levels below grade placement, and comparatively few score at advanced levels on standardized tests. Among all groups in the United States, Hispanic students have been found to have the lowest rate of participation in early childhood development programs, the highest high school dropout rate, the highest rates of suspension and expulsion, and the lowest college graduation rate (Fry, 2002). Forty percent of all Hispanics leave school before graduation, and more than one-third (35%) are retained at least once while in school. Except for Native Americans, Latinos are more likely than other minority groups to be retained one, two, or more grades and to drop out before completing high school (Hernandez, 1997).

Educational achievement of minorities in Texas mirrors that of the nation, but the rapidly changing demographics of the United States/Mexico border region further magnify the serious implications of the issue. Based on the 2000 decennial census, El Paso County has

88.8% more families living in poverty than the U.S. average, and 54.2% more than the state of Texas. Teachers and school officials in this border community have substantial practical experience and theoretical expertise on many of the sociopolitical issues that educators in most U.S. communities are only beginning to confront.

El Paso's professional educators understand, for example, that Hispanic students battle many of the problems that other minority students do—inadequate preparation from schools, as well as additional barriers of language and culture. However, educators in this border community know very well that poverty does not in and of itself impair learning. Using research-based intervention strategies (e.g., Bennett et al., 1992; Raywid, 1992; Reyes, Scribner & Scribner, 1999; Slavin, 1998) from the findings of successful school reform programs, El Paso's schools have made notable progress during the past decade, including a decrease in the number of low-performing schools in the three largest local school districts and an increase in the number of El Paso schools recognized as exemplary by the Texas Education Agency. Although a number of critical elements have contributed to school reform in El Paso's schools, effective native-language literacy instruction and parental involvement in the schools have been central and vital components.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND LITERACY LEARNING

> Practice in reading is possible only if children are willing to sit down and read, which is not likely if they are expected to read in a language they do not yet understand, or if they have to read material much below the level that interests them because of limitations on their language proficiency.
>
> —Snow (1990, p. 69)

Cognitive and Academic Considerations

Language is intimately linked both to conceptual development and to social experience (Cummins, 1996; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). It is therefore an important tool for processing information about one's surroundings and for organizing personal perceptions of self in relation to these surroundings (Vygotsky, 1962). It reflects how humans view and interact with their world—why they say what they say and why they think in certain ways. In other words, language is the filter through which all sociocultural experiences and understandings must pass (Gonzalez & Schallert, 1993).

Our discussion here highlights the association between language background and literacy learning. In particular it underscores the importance of the native language in teaching children to become competent readers, not only of words and phrases, but also of experience. Like others (e.g., Dechant, 1991; Lyons, 2003; Paratore, 2001), we argue that reading is an interactive process directed toward the sharing of meaning. To engage in this process effectively, readers must be able to comprehend a writer's text by drawing on their own literacy and sociocultural knowledge to reconstruct another's message. In other words, reading is intimately tied to comprehension, and comprehension is directly related to what the reader already knows. Children cannot become proficient readers of written text if their own background has not equipped them with the cognitive, linguistic, and social tools that are relevant to the information communicated in print.

Heath (1986) explains that children's academic success depends less on the specific lan-

guage they know than on the ways of using language in specific social and cultural contexts. In this chapter, we contend that for Spanish-speaking elementary school students, literacy instruction in the native language is the most pedagogically sound way of learning about the relationships between meaning and print in both Spanish and English. Empirical evidence has shown that Spanish-dominant youngsters acquire English when they have attained literacy proficiency in their mother tongue (Krashen, 2000; Krashen & Biber, 1988; Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997). In keeping with this finding, we contend that instruction in Spanish reading helps limited or non-English speakers appreciate their linguistic heritage, develop positive literacy experiences, and attain competence in both academic Spanish and English. In contrast, excluding the native language from a student's instructional program or minimizing its use in classroom pedagogy may seriously reduce the learning options for Spanish-dominant children as compared with those of their English-dominant peers.

Natural Language Learning and Literacy Competence

Goodman and Goodman's groundbreaking research (1979) strengthened the knowledge base on reading processes, demonstrating clearly that literacy acquisition is an extension of natural language learning. This process occurs when youngsters draw on the lexicon and grammar of their mother tongue to organize their thinking and communicate their thoughts and needs to people who understand their cultural experience. We have already noted that culture and language are closely intertwined—language serves to re-create or interpret the accumulated experiences of a social group (Gonzalez, 1989). Consequently, effective literacy practices must be tied to the norms, values, belief systems, and behaviors of a community of speakers. When literacy learning is not tied to familiar information, it will be at odds with children's natural learning processes, "will neutralize or blunt the force of their language learning strength, and may (even) become counterproductive" (Goodman & Goodman, 1979, p. 138).

The role of "natural learning" is central to our argument concerning reading instruction for Spanish-speaking students in the elementary grades. We contend that for Hispanic youngsters with minimal proficiency in English, the native language is the most appropriate vehicle for learning about the complexities of the relationship between speech and print. Reading proficiency requires that people match their linguistic and sociocultural knowledge to a text (Goodman, 1967), and is a process of building "a representation of text by relating what is on the page to one's own fund of experiences" (Dechant, 1991, p. 6).

Literacy learning is most effective, subsequently, when it is a natural outgrowth of the lived experiences that students bring with them from their home environment to school. Heath (1983) observes that each community has its own rules for socializing children through language and that ways of making meaning through print differ across communities. Therefore, when the literacy instruction of children who are limited in English proficiency helps them to derive meaning from their own reservoir of linguistic experiences, the school is not only establishing continuity between the home and the school but is also validating the linguistic and cultural identity of these students. Moreover, in terms of achievement, scholars have argued strongly that positive self-identification affects educational success (Lambert, 1987; Padilla, 1995). For this reason, using the language of the home as a tool for linguistic empowerment is the most authentic way of cultivating the self-worth and intellectual potential that children with limited English proficiency often abandon when they enter the culture of the school.

Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Literacy Learning

When beginning readers explore print in their mother tongue, they are learning about the lexical, grammatical, and semantic possibilities of a language that they already are able to use in purposeful speech. In effect, they have acquired a sociolinguistic perspective on how to explain, orient, prohibit, negate, mandate, and express emotions so that individuals in their speech community will think, feel, behave, or react in certain ways.

Given the multifaceted nature of the reading process, we propose that when Spanish-dominant youngsters attain a level of reading proficiency in their first language (L1) that enables them to do more than decode simple prose, they are learning a great deal about the complexities of linguistic communication. Specifically, they are gaining an analytical knowledge of the rhetorical potential of language. For this reason, providing Spanish-dominant children with sufficient literacy instruction in their native language furnishes them with an understanding of the expressive possibilities in their second language.

The *linguistic interdependence principle* (i.e., the transfer of language knowledge from an individual's native language to his or her second language), is a useful tool in understanding why young native Spanish speakers tend to attain higher achievement levels in English after they have attained literacy proficiency in their mother tongue (Gonzalez, 1989; Krashen & Biber, 1988; Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991). When these youngsters learn about the intricacies of print relationships through materials that highlight their own language and social reality, the linguistic interdependence principle predicts that they will be able to extend their repertoire of literacy expertise to a range of language and social contexts in their new language. In fact, research shows that students with high levels of literacy proficiency in their native language perform better in tasks of academic English than do students with low levels of literacy proficiency in Spanish (Fischer & Cabello, 1981; Lindholm & Zierlein, 1991; Medina & Escamilla, 1992; Medina & de la Garza, 1989; Ovando & Collier, 1998; Snow, 1990; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Numerous researchers (e.g., Ferdman, 1991; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981; Slavin, Karweit, Wasik, Madden, & Dolan, 1994; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 1998; Tinajero, Hurley, & Lozano, 1998) affirm that the mother tongue is the primary vehicle for helping individuals establish their personal and social identities. It is the instrument that enables them to organize their thinking and the multitude of interactions, activities, and events in their surroundings. For this reason, if children from diverse backgrounds are to become competent readers, they must be able to share linguistic and cultural information with an author. Literacy instruction in their native language clearly helps learners draw on their own prior knowledge to relate to texts in a meaningful way. When dominant speakers of Spanish learn to speak, read, and write proficiently in their primary language, they are building on a firm foundation of linguistic, conceptual, and experiential information that paves the way for a high level of involvement with print. Snow (1990) underscores the need for schools to show sensitivity to and appreciation of the language and cultural norms that young Spanish speakers bring with them to the classroom. Arguing this point on pedagogical grounds, she explains that by so doing, schools can maximize the self-esteem of students and that students with high self-esteem "work harder, learn better, and achieve more" (p. 64).

While further research on this timely topic is yet to be conducted, these findings provide strong preliminary evidence that academic literacy skills acquired in the mother tongue will transfer positively to English if they are sufficiently developed in the native language. Data from the studies cited here also suggest that primary language instruction in literacy may be the most pedagogically sound method for helping Spanish-speaking children with limited English proficiency learn about the academic use of school English.

The Role of Parental Involvement

> Parents are our partners in education; we cannot do the best job we are capable of doing without the support of the students' parents. We need to try and get into the minds of parents as much as possible. . . . In this community, and many others like it in the border region, parents are afraid or intimidated to speak with teachers. . . .
>
> —El paso bilingual elementary educator (2003)

Although the educational achievement of children from minority groups depends in part on what schools do to help them, it is also clear that schools alone cannot win this battle. The most effective schools and educational programs recognize the vital roles of families' and communities' perceptions and responses to the cultural and language differences facing them and have developed effective and creative approaches to bridging the gaps through celebrating families' roles in the education process. These new initiatives reflect advances in the educational community's understanding that family units are diverse, that all families are important, and that their roles in children's intellectual and social development are invaluable. Earlier efforts to understand parent involvement were largely unsystematic, with frameworks focused mainly on the families' deficits (i.e., the roles that parents needed to play) and not on the work that schools needed to do to organize strong programs to involve all families in their children's education (Epstein, 2001).

Educators concerned with multicultural education (e.g., Banks, 2001; Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 1997; Nieto, 1996; Oakes, 1985) and the academic achievement of diverse students have advanced the following recommendations for school personnel to implement in their schools, particularly when working with recent immigrants:

- Schools should provide academic opportunities for after-school tutoring and mentoring programs.
- Schools need to nurture a supportive environment, with participation by staff in collaboration with families and community members, that express the belief that immigrant students can succeed and attend college.
- Parents need to become actively engaged in their children's education and discuss college options with them (Giles, 1998; Gonzalez, Huerta-Macias, & Tinajero, 1998; Romo & Falbo, 1996).

These findings point out clearly the need for a stronger support from home–school–community networks. Parents and community groups need to be encouraged to help participate actively in schools as "learning communities." This notion views school improvement as a collaborative initiative, characterized by a shared mission, vision, and values; by collective inquiry and collaborative teams; by an orientation toward action; by commitment to continuous improvement; and by a focus on results (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). The most effective schools are highly dependent on parents and community members who are willing to support change. Linking school programs and curricula, for example, with the lived experience of students' families and their own unique history transforms and renews the classroom.

Parent involvement in decision making about education is key to an overall home–school–community supportive partnership and to increasing low-achieving students' chances for success in school and postsecondary education (Epstein, 2001; Munter, 2002; Thorkildsen & Stein, 1998). Yet, typically, "parent involvement" as a topic in academic research

limits the meaning of participation by ignoring the broader meaning of involvement, which transcends attendance at special events and isolated activities that occur over the short term. Parent involvement, viewed through a new set of lenses, includes fuller family–school engagement, spanning the life of the student throughout the child's personal, social, and cognitive development.

The manner in which parents learn to relate to the school and to support their children is often discussed solely within the context of the school-driven program, rather than opening a two-way communication process. Yet the voiceless in our communities (such as immigrant families) have much to contribute to our schools and our society. Mexican and Latin American immigrants, for example, bring with them their intensive hard labor and intelligence; their modest pride and optimism; their rich language, music, and dance; and their love of family, children, and community. They possess a high degree of group cooperation and manage to maintain high levels of personal integrity, family unity, and community loyalty. In this respect, the diverse immigrant community has something meaningful to teach us as we try to recapture and reinstitute many of these values in American mainstream society today.

For many Hispanic parents, lack of involvement in their children's education has mistakenly been seen as lack of interest. Research, however, refutes the notion that poor, minority, and immigrant families do not value or support literacy development (e.g., Heath, 1983; Hyslop, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2001). In fact, quite the opposite seems to be the case. Those families most marginalized frequently see literacy and schooling as the key to mobility, to changing their status and preventing their children from struggling as they did. For some, the desire to get a better education for their children is the central reason for coming to the United States.

IN OUR OWN VOICES: EDUCATING ALL CHILDREN ON THE UNITED STATES–MEXICO BORDER

Researchers who support educational reforms for a democratic society (e.g., Aronowitz, 2000; Banks, 2001) contend that we can fully understand the complex dimensions of American culture only by learning to look at society from many different perspectives. Various ethnic and cultural groups are often influenced by events differently and respond to and perceive them differently. Our work in bilingual/binational communities on the United States–Mexico border, in the southeast United States, and in Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil for more than 20 years have provided us with many opportunities for observation and active participation in the lives of some of those who are least likely to acquire a full elementary and secondary education (Munter, 2000; Tinajero & DeVillar, 2000).

Rethinking the Goals for Education in Today's Rapidly Changing Society

It is our contention that a goal of education today should be to critically examine the basic assumptions about what being "American" means and to provide opportunities for students to learn about new ways of viewing and interpreting American society (Barer-Stein, 1990). In relation to immigrant families, this approach to schooling is a corollary of the multicultural experience, in that basic human rights for all (i.e., access to better education, better health care, and ultimately a higher socioeconomic status) are all reasons for quality education for all members of society in the United States.

Teaching is about caring relationships (Irvine, 2001; Pang, 2001). In today's understaffed schools, teachers often find it impossible to meet the demands of their large classes

and to know their students as individuals with specific talents and gifts. Family members have become increasingly busy, and parent–child time and communication have been changed in fundamental ways by new media and technologies that emerge almost daily. Schooling in the 21st century must be different than it has been in recent decades. Teachers must see their work as educating the whole student, not just transmitting facts and bits of information. Thus connecting effectively with parents and families is one way to effectively bridge the gap between school and home.

This is the lens through which we view our work with preservice and inservice teachers today in communities in and around El Paso, Texas, on the United States–Mexico border. In our view, traditional teaching has long emphasized a one-way communication from the teacher to the students, with little opportunity for students to ask questions, contribute alternative answers, or help the teacher by giving feedback. Because there is considerable pressure on the teacher to cover specific segments of the curriculum in certain amounts of time, he or she has to proceed at a predictable pace, regardless of how many students connect with the topics of study. Furthermore, the teacher feels obligated to follow the curriculum format in such a way that the content is presented outside of specific cultural contexts and without details that might aid understanding.

Preparing New Teachers for 21st-Century Schools

In our interviews and observations in schools and communities, we have found that a large number of teachers have gone through the years of their training only to face the shock of first-year teaching. They may confess that they feel uncertain and unprepared in striving to meet the demands of the new millennium. As we enter the 21st century, the complex needs of children and the demands of high-stakes testing have created new contexts for teaching and learning. Rapid changes in student demographics in recent decades have created an even greater impetus for rethinking the process of teaching. With increasing emphasis on accountability and high-stakes testing, there is a growing need for teachers to redesign and renew their methods and approaches.

As multicultural educators, we support the assertion of researchers and practitioners (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002; Johnson & Johnson, 2002; McCaleb, 1997) who point to the need to reframe the role of teachers in the classroom and their collective role in society. The family environment and home language, in important and sometimes intangible ways, are keys to unlocking pathways to enhanced student achievement. The seeming unpreparedness of children out of the mainstream for mainstream schooling may be no more than a measure of the rigidity of our school system, which creates a handicap out of social and cultural differences.

THE FAMILY BOOK PROJECT: A CASE STUDY

> If we believe that children need the support of their parents and family, if we believe that it is important that they be aware of and cherish their family history, if we believe that it is important that they communicate and discuss values and ideas with their families, we need to reexamine what we as educators are doing to acknowledge and validate the home and family. What are we, as educators, doing to ensure that there is indeed a vibrant interaction between parents and children, between families and young people?
>
> —Ada (1993a, p. 8)

Research has shown that one of the keys to successful teaching and learning is creating personal connections with students' lives and their prior experiences inside and outside of school. In relation to language development, this view is called "emergent literacy," emphasizing that learning to read and write is a gradual process that develops over time (Clay, 2001; Flood, Lapp, Tinajero, & Hurley, 1997; Ormrod, 1999; Peregoy & Boyle, 2000). Numerous educators (e.g., Cummins, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Kohn, 1999) criticize much of the school effectiveness research for its overemphasis on the development of discrete skills that are easily quantifiable and its lack of attention to the multifaceted processes of teaching and learning. In schools that fail to take into account the social context of teaching and learning, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds are too often deprived of opportunities for developing the connections that form early on in the developmental process, impeding their later understanding of complex, abstract concepts and critical thinking skills.

In many language-minority homes, the storehouses of knowledge are the elders of the community (i.e., extended family members), and knowledge is transmitted orally. One way to help children integrate the two worlds of home and school is by having the children and parents write books together, featuring themselves and their families as the main protagonists.

> We ask them [the parents] to get together pictures, all kinds of pictures. [We say,] "Talk to your kids. Tell them about your family—tell them where you came from. Tell them where your parents came from. And create it!" (El Paso bilingual teacher, January 2003)

Figure 7.1 shows one such book.

Guidelines for the Family Book Project Process

There is not a single formula or format for the creation of the family books. However, this section presents a set of general guidelines for helping parents and children to come up with their own creative work.

1. *Teachers need to communicate with parents concerning the values and the objectives of the project, providing some examples when needed.* Immigrant parents experience uncertainty about their role in U.S. public schools. For example, some low-income Hispanic parents view the school system as a bureaucracy governed by authorities whom they have no right to question. Hesitation and uncertainty about their own capability to carry out educational activities of value (such as helping with homework, reading in English, and establishing routines) may prevent parents from undertaking home teaching activities. Communication problems result when parents sense that the school personnel are establishing a distance between them by using unfamiliar educational jargon in their communications. The Family Book Project's goal is, in large part, to create a new set of lenses through which parents view themselves as a vital component of a collaborative team.

2. *The goal is for parents and children to be equally involved in the process, engaging in conversation with each other about significant events in their lives. Family photographs and/or other artifacts may be useful in generating these dialogues.* Writing a book together allows parents and children to learn about each other's worlds. It provides an opportunity for children to develop a greater sense of their own identity through self-reflection and sharing their hopes and fears, insights and creative ideas, with their parents. The coauthoring ex-

FIGURE 7.1. Family book demonstrating photos of unique life histories.

perience also provides excellent opportunities for parents to share their family history and childhood experiences with their own children. Moments of mutual understanding and personal growth often occur through the process of coauthoring a book that parents and children might not otherwise experience. Figure 7.2 shows one of the books created by a child and her mother.

3. *There are many possible formats for both the product and the process of book creation. Family members are encouraged to share their creative skills and knowledge with one another by designing a book that reflects their unique history and experience*. Figure 7.3 is a book that integrates the unique history and experience of a family that participates in the Family Book Project.

Educators who work with immigrant parents and families have long recognized that the logistical barriers that these families face in their everyday lives create enormous obsta-

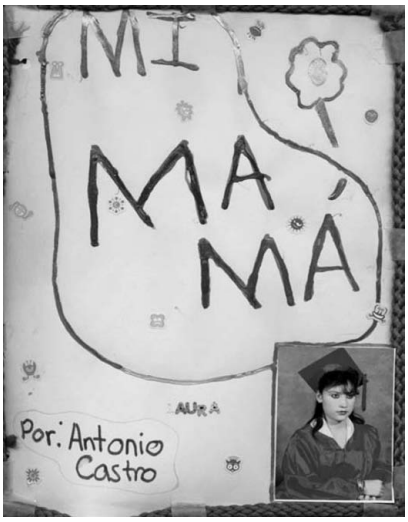

FIGURE 7.2. Family book demonstrating mother–daughter relationship.

cles that make it very difficult for them to participate in schools. These barriers include concerns about: (1) *time*—parents often work, and in the case of immigrant/migrant families, the work may be a considerable distance from school; (2) *money*—parents who work very hard to provide the bare essentials for their families may find that their children's schooling reduces daily income, actually compounding the problem of the family's extreme poverty level; (3) *safety*—migrant/immigrant families often have much to fear, and they are not always welcome in the communities on whose behalf they labor; some locations are especially dangerous at night, when school activities for parents are usually staged; and (4) *child care*—making child care arrangements becomes more difficult for migrant families and recent immigrants when they no longer have an extended family to support them through free baby-sitting services.

FIGURE 7.3. Family book demonstrating connections with history and experience.

Furthermore, the schools themselves may unknowingly create additional barriers for families when, for example, their programs and curricula are segmented; when different programs target varying populations, it becomes increasingly difficult to accomplish familywide learning (i.e., the young child's pre-K class is on one campus, and the mother's English as a Second Language classes are housed in another location, often far away). Families and children working together on book creation are helping to build a creative bridge between teachers and families, schools and homes.

4. *The teacher needs to be engaged as a reflective practitioner throughout the project. His or her understanding and knowledge of the families will be deepened through this process, empowering him or her to work more effectively with the diverse children in the school.* Some of the reflective questions that teachers should ask to enable them and their schools to benefit from this project include: What have I learned about the parents' life experiences that have contributed to their knowledge and to their children's social, emotional, and intellectual development? How can I use this knowledge to more effectively partner with the parents in educating their children? How can I tap into the skills and talents of parents to engage them in the school in creative ways?

5. *Parents need to be equally engaged in reflection on the project and its implications for their role in supporting the literacy development of their own children. Projects should end with a celebration during which families come together to share and reflect on their work*. The immigrant experience has been the focus of harsh press in the United States relative to the expense of education, health care, and other public and social welfare services. Immigrant parents may view schooling with suspicion and ambivalence when it pressures them to conform to the dominant culture and to reject the values and beliefs of their own cultures. Public schools traditionally have made few efforts to help new immigrants adjust to their new homes in the United States and become involved in the educational processes.

For many immigrant adults, formal schooling recalls feelings of powerlessness, personal isolation, and lack of control over the events affecting their school lives. Many who have immigrated from low-income rural communities have a common perception of negative schooling experiences, based on memories of traditional classes with little or no relevance to their personal lives and experiences.

The processes of collaborative planning, implementation, and celebration of the Family Book Project are as important as the product itself. The product that is created, however, has great value. It contributes to the overall project goals; caring relationships link children to the world that they are learning to identify with in a wide variety of ways. Learning to value their own native language and family history brings families, schools, and community members together and helps families see their place as vital links in the education of their children, empowering them as they gain a real sense of history and of purpose. Figure 7.4 shows a book written by a proud child and her mother.

The effects of this project have many implications for educators working in multilingual, multicultural communities in the 21st century. Our findings indicate that the effects of the project stay with the children and their families over the long term and hold great promise for future research and study. Following is an anecdote from one of El Paso's bilingual teachers who has used this technique in her classrooms:

> One of the parents in my kindergarten class created a beautiful book with her son. She even went so far as to put in sonograms of her child. Unfortunately, soon after the class project she became very sick and she passed away later that same year. I still have that little boy in my class today (one year later). He looped up and he's now in my first grade class. He still has the book and he

FIGURE 7.4. Family book demonstrating role of native language in attaining literacy.

still carries it with him to school every day. I've asked him, "Why do you always carry it?" He says, "This is what my mom made, remember? She made it for me." He'll always have that book. To me, that was just a project we did in class, but now, for that little boy, it's what he'll have forever.

Finally, we close with the words of Doña Tere, an immigrant mother in Texas who has supported the Family Book Project and has been involved in creating books with her daughters over the last 2 years.

"He visto, algunos niños que van solos a la escuela. Hay veces que la maestro ni conoce a los padres de familia. Pobrecitos, verdad? Porque es triste que ellos tienen que abrir el camino por si solos." ["I've seen some children who go to school all alone. Sometimes the teacher doesn't even know the students' parents. It's sad, isn't it?"]

We invite the reader to consider the potential for projects like this one to help make the difference so that all children will know that they are not alone. The Family Book Project shows children that teachers, parents, and communities are there for them and with them on their journey to learn and develop their skills and talents.

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Suggested Titles: Family Stories

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Garza, Carmen Lomas	*In My Family/ En Mi Familia*	1996	Children's Book Press	32	Alongside the vibrant paintings that showcase day-to-day family experiences, Lomas Garza's narrative descriptions in both English and Spanish are like the intimate talk of an old friend sitting beside you as you examine a family album together. See also her *Family Pictures/Cuadros de Familia*
Dorros, Arthur; illustrated by Elisa Klevin	*Abuela*	1995	Dutton	40	Could there be a better way to spend a day than with a beloved grandmother "flying," hand-in-hand, imaginatively, over New York City? It's the perfect way to awaken Abuela's memories and hear her stories.
Alarcón, Francico X.; illustrated by May Christina Gonzalez	*Laughing Tomatoes and Other Spring Poems/Jitomates Risueños y Otros Poemas de Primavera*	1997	Children's Book Press	32	What fun! Family experiences that bounce from the page, aswirl in color. The simple verses will invite all ages to write their own. The double-page spreads offer English and Spanish.
Soto, Gary; illustrated by Stephanie Garcia	*Snapshots from the Weddings*	1997	Putnam	np	Little Maya, the bridesmaid, captures this Mexican American wedding with its color and behind-the-scenes fun. The illustrations are in clay and may inspire young chroniclers to use both photography and art in their own family stories.

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PART II

IN-SCHOOL FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS IN URBAN SCHOOLS

8

"Proven Programs" and Other Unscientific Ideas

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In this chapter we provide, first, a historical account of the notion of "proven programs," tracking the emergence of the idea that "scientific" commercial reading programs can be developed and the hypothesis that, with their development and adoption, reading instruction will improve and reading achievement will rise. Next we focus on recent policymaking that promotes the notion of "proven programs" and "scientifically based" reading instruction. We suggest that policymakers have routinely overestimated the effectiveness of "proven programs" for improving instruction and reading achievement, especially in high-poverty urban and rural schools. We conclude that the research provides consistent evidence that "proven programs" do not typically enhance reading achievement, if only because these efforts rarely develop the capacity of classroom teachers to teach reading more expertly.

A CENTURY OF PROMOTION OF AN UNSUPPORTED NOTION

The notion that commercial reading programs can provide the solution to the "reading crisis" is at least a century old. Huey (1908) produced what is generally considered the first substantial "scientific" summary of effective reading instruction. Although Huey did not argue so much for the importance of commercial reading programs, he did argue for a more "scientific" approach to teaching children to read. William S. Gray (1919) also argued for a "scientific" solution to improving reading instruction. However, his argument included the notion that creating more extensive teacher's guides to accompany basal readers (most commercial series had provided only minimal guidance and advice to that point) was the most cost-effective solution for putting "scientific" teaching methods into classrooms.

In other words, teachers of the time were viewed as having limited capacity to offer high-quality reading instruction. Teachers' manuals that would accompany the readers would be the source of scientific advice. Gray also advocated for the application of "scientific"

evidence in the design of children's readers; thus followed the creation of the much-vilified *Dick and Jane* reading series, with its emphasis on a scientific approach to teaching word recognition and the development of texts that were both developmentally appropriate topically and designed to eliminate problems derived from children's limited prior knowledge (Luke, 1988). Of course, Gray profited handsomely, both financially and reputationally, when the nation's schools took his advice and made his "scientific" reading series the most popular commercial series on the market.

By midcentury the "reading" problem had been redefined from one of "limited teacher capacity" to one of "wrong program." Rudolph Flesch (1955) championed phonics instruction and argued that Gray (and others) had relied on "bad science" in constructing their "scientific" reading series. This marked the modern resurrection of the "reading methods" war (this debate did not begin in 1955). The debate became so raucous that reading researchers, in partnership with the federal government, initiated what may be the largest scientific field study in the history of U.S. educational research (Bond & Dykstra, 1967). Teams of scientists at 27 research sites around the country compared the success of different beginning-reading programs. The programs studied represented the full range of beginning-reading methods available at that time. The findings, in short, were that no program or method was consistently superior. Every program worked better in some sites than in others. None worked well in all sites at which it was tested.

The lack of any clear and consistent pattern of success led Bond and Dykstra to conclude that "future research might well center on teacher and learning situation characteristics rather than methods and materials" (Bond & Dykstra, 1967, p. 123). In other words, programs were viewed as typically impotent factors in the development of reading proficiencies. The finding that teachers were more influential than programs would stimulate a different sort of research over the next 40 years.

But the issue of the effectiveness of programs did not simply go away. The federal government, in partnership with teams of commercial curriculum developers, initiated a second large-scale study comparing different early education programs. This longitudinal study became known as Project FollowThrough. But an independent evaluation of the outcomes, after all the time and effort expended by the FollowThrough entrepreneurs, found that the reading achievement of poor children in control schools in both urban and rural settings (those with no FollowThrough project) was no different from that of the children participating in FollowThrough programs (House, Glass, McLean, & Walker, 1978).

To quote the independent evaluation report: "Participation in FollowThrough classes has not been shown to be either superior or inferior to schooling normally provided by the schools" (House et al., 1978, p. 130) Further, "If the concentrated effort of highly competent and well-funded sponsors with a few sites cannot produce uniform results from locality to locality, it seems doubtful that any model program could" (House et al., p. 154). In other words, use of the FollowThrough curriculum models (including direct instruction) produced mixed results. Every FollowThrough model seemed to work somewhere, but no model had consistently good results everywhere.

Finally, in an effort to better understand why "proven" programs did not reliably improve student outcomes, the federal education agency funded the Rand Corporation to conduct a long-term evaluation of federal educational reform initiatives. That study (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; McLaughlin, 1991), known as the Change Agent study, concluded that there was little evidence of substantive improvement in the participating schools and even less evidence of sustainability of federal initiatives. In other words, federal initiatives came and went, leaving few traces of change in schools:

> A general finding of the Change Agent Study that has become almost a truism is that it is exceedingly difficult for policy to change practice. . . . Policy can't mandate what really matters. What matters most to policy outcomes are local capacity and will. (McLaughlin, 1991, p. 147)

In other words, school reform and improvement require that school systems have lots of curricular and instructional expertise and funding (capacity) in order to provide coherent organizational support to develop teacher expertise. In all schools it is the teacher in the classroom who ultimately "delivers the program" of instruction. In urban neighborhoods in which both educational and community literacy resources are in short supply (Neumann & Celano, 2001), the role of classroom instruction is even more critical. If teachers are not very expert about developing children's literacy, and especially if they are both not very expert and not very well supported, change simply does not occur (or occurs in only a few surface-level features of instruction). But the very schools most in need of reform have the least stable district leadership, the least funding, and the largest numbers of inexperienced and uncredentialed teachers. The neediest schools typically had the least capacity to improve, and federal programs, initiatives, and mandates have done little to promote development of that capacity (Elmore, 2002).

The findings of the aforementioned studies seemed to put a damper on efforts to identify the "best" reading program scientifically. Instead, the literacy research community focused on trying to better understand good teaching, especially good teaching of reading and writing. The larger educational research community focused on the characteristics of effective schools and effective teachers. But the role of commercial reading programs was minimized in most scientific conceptualizations of "effective" teaching of reading across several decades of research. As the evidence of their impotence accumulated, the role of commercial reading series seemed to be declining in U.S. classrooms as well. The research available indicated that some schools and many teachers moved, scientifically, away from a reliance on a single commercial reading series as the primary source of the reading curriculum (Johnston, Allington, Guice, & Brooks, 1998).

But as wave after wave of educational reforms failed to produce the sort of achievement gains that had been optimistically hoped for, the notion of systemic reform emerged. At the core, systemic reform attempted to alter the whole system, usually from the top down, as opposed to smaller reforms targeted at, say, changing reading instruction alone. Once again, the federal policymakers went to work and initiated a large-scale reform initiative. This time the focus was on standards, accountability, and alignment of curricular goals and outcome assessments. Goals 2000 was intended to bring more coherence to the national educational scene (McGill-Franzen, 2000). Although the idea of national tests was tossed about, that idea ultimately died, and developing challenging curriculum standards became the reform *du jour*. Professional educational associations created content standards for each core discipline. But as soon as these standards were developed, the criticisms rolled over them and buried them in the political sands.

States then went to work developing their versions of curriculum standards (supposedly so teachers would know what to teach). The state standards that were developed differed substantially in their specificity and complexity. States also developed high-stakes assessments, usually testing children once in elementary, middle, and high school. These testing schemes differed in their specificity and complexity and in their links to state standards. Everywhere, though, the performance of students was made public, and schools were ranked, rated, and rewarded. Unfortunately, high-poverty urban schools were the most likely to receive the lowest rankings and the smallest rewards.

But creating curriculum standards and mandating state assessments, even when coupled with public disclosure of school performance, did little to improve outcomes. There was that local capacity problem again (that and the shifting mandates that accompanied every change in the governorship or legislative majority). Because education had moved to the top of the public agenda, it also moved to the top of the political agenda. And once again federal policymakers ignorant of, or simply ignoring, the scientific evidence on federally mandated reforms began the process of crafting the latest round of new, new, same old, same old educational reforms (Allington, 2002).

RECENT FEDERAL POLICYMAKING: NAS, CSRD, REA, AND NCLB

A National Academy of Education report (Elmore & Rothman, 1999) developed a "theory of action of standards-based reform" that undergirded federal attempts to initiate systemic reform. Standards and standards-linked assessments were to provide clear expectations for academic learning goals for schools, teachers, and students; the accountability measures would provide the motivation for working harder; and the result would be improved student learning. This approach seemed to assume that a lack of clarity about academic goals, along with a lack of vigorous instructional effort, could be blamed for lower than desired levels of achievement. It was assumed that, given clear goals and linked assessments, teachers would deliver improved instruction and that the accountability measures would stimulate greater work effort by teachers and more instructional support of teachers by schools, districts, and states. The federal stance assumed that everyone largely knew how to improve student achievement but needed a stimulus to work harder and smarter. Developing enhanced expertise or improved opportunities to learn (for teachers and students) seemed largely neglected as reform packages were created.

The New American Schools Competition

The epitome of systemic school reform was the New American School (NAS) design competition sponsored by the federal government beginning in the early 1990s, when design teams were selected to compete in schools across the nation to see which comprehensive reform programs would produce improved student outcomes.

> The core premise of NAS was that all high-quality schools possess a unifying design that allows all staff members to perform to the best of their abilities and that integrate research-based best practices into a coherent and mutually reinforcing set of effective approaches to teaching and learning for the entire school. (Berends, Bodilly, & Kirby, 2002, p. 168)

In other words, policymakers were convinced, largely by entrepreneurs, that the new, new solution was to export "systemic reform," in the form of commercial curriculum packages, to underperforming (largely urban) schools. But policymakers had seemingly paid little attention to the research and given little thought to just why a "proven program" model of reform would work any better this time around:

> The theory of action was quite simple and undeveloped: designs would be developed, schools would adopt them in some unspecified manner, and this adoption would result in improved student outcomes. (Berends et al., 2002, p. 169)

However, after the first phase of implementation of the NAS "proven program" models, this theory necessarily evolved to include the idea that schools needed assistance to implement models successfully, the local capacity issue again. In other words, entrepreneurs were unable to create independently implementable programs and, instead, the implementation required enormous support from the developers. What worked for McDonald's in fast-food preparation just didn't work in schools, perhaps because teaching children is a bit more complicated than frying all-beef patties and fries.

So NAS modified the theory of action to include the notion that district and school environments had to provide a supportive structure, including autonomy, resources, and professional development. Imagine that, policymakers and entrepreneurs were beginning to acquire a sense of the complexity of school and schooling! Thus the national plan shifted to targeting just 10 large school districts for NAS partnerships—districts that agreed to implement NAS programs in 30% of their schools. Under this plan, NAS models were implemented into more than 500 schools by 1995. At this point, seven NAS designs were being implemented, including "Roots and Wings," "Modern Red Schoolhouse," "America's Choice," and others.

Still, researchers concluded that the NAS theory of action was "underdeveloped" and could not explain implementation efforts and outcomes. The causal chain of events that would lead to implementation fidelity seems far more complex than policymakers expected, and important factors were situated outside the control and influence of design teams:

> Achieving high levels of implementation within these schools and across all teachers proved to be a challenge . . . two years into implementation, approximately half of the sample sites were implementing at a level consistent with the expectations of the NAS and the design team. The other half were below this level. . . . That there was greater variation within schools than between schools suggested that the designs had failed to become "schoolwide." (Berends et al., 2002, p. 171)

And, like the several earlier studies of federal efforts at school reform, the NAS studies found little evidence that these various federal efforts actually improved educational outcomes. The most important conclusion reached by the evaluators was that "the initial hypothesis, that by adopting a whole-school design a school could improve its performance, was largely unproved" (Berends et al., 2002, p. 173).

Comprehensive School Reform

However, given the early promising reports from the NAS developers, the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program (CSRD; Public Law 105-78) was passed in 1997 to expand the implementation of research-based systemic reforms. CSRD specifically sought to improve schooling through reorganization of entire schools rather than through traditional, piecemeal initiatives or pull-out remedial programs.

CSRD guidelines called for schools to submit plans that addressed a number of components of school reform, with an emphasis on research-based documentation and measurable student achievement. Again, the language used in the federal legislation suggests that all struggling schools need to do is select a "proven" reform model off the shelf and implement the program with strict fidelity.

Alas, such simplistic rhetoric belies the fact that not one reform model was found to be

effective in all schools in which it was implemented. One set of researchers concluded that what was important was the fact that:

> across the yearly achievement assessments, virtually every design had a successful school and an unsuccessful school, often located in the same neighborhoods. Thus, the impacts of particular designs seemed less noticeable or identifiable than the influences of site-based variables such as teacher buy-in, principal leadership and stability, and degree of implementation. (Ross, Tabachnick, & Sterbinsky, 2002, p. 31)

Once again, that messy little factor, local capacity, intervened to muddy the simple plan for improving schools. Nonetheless, the failure of "proven programs" to consistently improve instruction or achievement failed to temper the enthusiasm of either the entrepreneurial proponents or the federal policymakers.

Reading Excellence Act (REA)

The Reading Excellence Act (Public Law 105-277) became law in the fall of 1998. Marking the federal government's most direct involvement in literacy education up to that time (Boyd & Mitchell, 2001), REA explicitly supported early literacy instruction with phonics-based reading programs (although the phonics emphasis was now cast as "scientifically based reading instruction"). Once again, it seems, the problem was being recast as a problem of the wrong program or method of teaching reading. The REA emphasized early literacy intervention and the use of reading programs vetted through "scientifically based research," a term that was liberally sprinkled throughout the bill.

REA heralded a new era in federal intrusion in reading education. The authoritative language used in federal policy belied rampant disagreement within the educational community regarding reliability of evidence that was used to advocate particular kinds of literacy instruction and professional development approaches (Allington, 2001a; Coles, 2000; Cunningham, 2001; Garan, 2002). But, as Boyd and Mitchell (2001) note:

> When the federal government adopts a policy urging reading programs to be based on "reliable, replicable research" and accompanies that legislation with a declaration that testimony before the adopting committee indicates that there have been "scientific breakthroughs" in our knowledge that support direct phonics instruction, the result is a powerful legitimation of phonics-based instruction, quite independent of the extent to which this body of research is complete, accurate, or unchallenged. (pp. 331–332)

Indeed, what seems to have occurred is the first federal legislative endorsement of a particular reading curriculum. Although earlier administrations might have ascended the "bully pulpit" to advocate for particular approaches, never had the federal government attempted to legislate instructional method. In addition, the provisions under REA seemed to be designed more to exclude certain kinds of research and reading instruction than to advocate what policymakers claimed was a more balanced approach to literacy teaching. It extended restrictions on local educational decision making by setting narrowly focused criteria for literacy instruction that would be supported by federal funds and by establishing a federal review panel to oversee which instructional programs would be funded (Allington, 2002).

Of all the provisions for reading instruction and teacher professional development established under REA, the call to use scientifically based reading research to shape literacy teaching

and learning is the one that features most prominently in current federal policy. REA expanded on earlier research-based guidelines set forth in the CSRD program by providing even greater specificity about what research could be used to validate the effects of a particular reading method, material, or program. In turn, it acted as a forerunner to increasingly tighter governmental control over sanctioned literacy instruction and professional development under the latest reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law 107-110). And as so often happens with federal education programs, the REA effort was replaced before all states had received their REA funding and well before any evaluation of the REA emphasis on "scientific" research could be completed.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

The No Child Left Behind Act was signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002. The act was advertised as exemplifying the new administration's even stronger emphasis on teachers' use of "proven" instructional methods. The centerpiece of NCLB is the Reading First plan (Title 1, Part B, Subpart 1). Reading First funds are distributed through competitive grants to states that submit plans to implement programs using "scientifically" proven ways of teaching children to read. State grant applications undergo federal evaluation from an "expert review panel." (Interestingly, the current bill abandoned the term "peer review panel" that appeared in REA legislation.)

Clearly, the NCLB extends even further the national bipartisan education agenda that began with *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and continued through the enactment of the NAS, CSRD, and REA legislation. The NCLB ushers in a new era of federalization of U.S. reading instruction (Allington, 2002; Finn, 2002). It also continues the federal faith in commercial curriculum packages (proven programs) as the way to improve reading instruction and thereby improve the reading proficiency of U.S. students. But as we have attempted to demonstrate, it takes a lot of faith to hold onto the notion that such programs are the solution because the evidence, 50 years of scientific evidence, so clearly documents the impotence of packaged programs. It takes a lot of faith to believe that federal intrusion is the appropriate solution. We are not alone in this assessment.

Richard Elmore (2002) writes about the past and current federal educational policy making:

> The history of federal involvement is at best mixed and at worst a failure. The current law repeats all of the strategic errors of the previous ESEA reauthorization, only this time at a higher level of federal intervention. The prognosis is not good.

Even the conservative Fordham Foundation questions the current federal efforts. Their report, *Can Failing Schools Be Fixed?* (Brady, 2003), echoes the findings of the earlier Change Agent study:

- Some turnaround efforts have improved some schools, but success is not the norm.
- No particular intervention appears more successful than any other.
- Interventions are uneven in their implementation and always hard to sustain.

The report concludes that even though the NCLB is rife with "prescriptive" mandates, "surprisingly little is known about what kinds of interventions are most likely to turn faltering schools into successful educational institutions" (Brady, 2003, p. iii).

Nonetheless, policymakers of all political persuasions seemed to have been convinced by the simple logic of test-based accountability and mandates that the solution for low-achieving schools is to implement "proven programs." In other words, policymakers seem not to pay much attention to "what the research says" even while mandating "evidence-based" interventions (Allington, 2001b).

SUMMARY

There are few things as unscientific as a "proven program." Fifty years of studies that consistently point this out should be enough to convince any rational policymaker that investing in programs as a strategy for improving teaching or learning is simply bad policy.

As Elmore (2002) argued:

> The work of turning a school around entails improving the knowledge and skills of teachers—changing their knowledge of content and how to teach it—and helping them to understand where their students are in their academic development. Low-performing schools, and the people who work in them, don't know what to do. If they did, they would be doing it already. You can't improve a school's performance, or the performance of any teacher or student in it, without increasing the investment in teachers' knowledge, pedagogical skills, and understanding of students.

Nancy Jennings (1996) wrote, "The worth of a policy is in what teachers learn from it" (p. 108). What might teachers learn from federal "proven program" mandates? Will following a scripted teaching manual and lesson-pacing schedule work to develop the sort of instructional expertise that teachers need to teach expertly and effectively?

Linda McNeil (2000) studied teaching in the Houston school system:

> They tried to teacher-proof the curriculum with a checklist for teaching behaviors and the student minimum competence skills tests. By doing so, they have made schools exceedingly comfortable for mediocre teachers who like doing routine lessons according to a standard sequence and format, who like working as de-skilled laborers not having to think about their work. (p. 187)

Linda Darling-Hammond (1997) argued eloquently against one-size-fits-all instructional solutions when she noted:

> Standardized practice is malpractice when viewed from a perspective of professional accountability. Professional teachers should be allowed to focus on doing the right things rather than on doing things right. (p. 6)

Nevertheless, it is prepackaged, standardized programs that continue to capture the attention of policymakers. It is difficult for educational researchers to understand the antiscientific fascination of policymakers with mandating programs, packages, and procedures for teaching children to read.

We cannot explain it but are somewhat cheered by the possibility that influential people are beginning to question the "mandate model" that typifies current federal education policy. Chester Finn (2002), the conservative educational analyst, wrote recently that it is time to "consider the possibility that we already have too much state and federal education legislation and most of it isn't working." Although he does not call for whole-scale deregulation of education, Finn does argue, like Elmore, that mandate-a-program policies have not

worked and may actually have impaired the process of school improvement, especially in troubled urban schools. We wholeheartedly agree with that final sentiment.

Too much of the recent policy making targeted to improve schools has been misguided, at best. Even with the accumulated evidence that mandates do not achieve their intended goals, federal and state policymakers rain more and more mandates down on schools and teachers, mandates that seem to have little potential for enhancing the expertise of teachers. Educational policymakers must understand that it is only the capacity of individual teachers to provide high-quality reading instruction that really matters (Berliner, 2002). They must understand that no one can create a packaged reading instructional program that will meet the needs of all students. They must understand that teachers, expert teachers, routinely and constantly adapt the instruction they offer based on the responses of the children in front of them (Pressley et al., 2001). Until policymakers acknowledge the dismal findings of research on "proven programs," it is unlikely that we will get policies that work to foster the development of teacher expertise and actually improve the teaching and learning of reading. In the meantime, "proven program" entrepreneurs will continue to trumpet their "success," lobby for the continuation of recent mandates, and sweep the damning research on their programs under the proverbial rug.

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Suggested Titles: Inside Classrooms

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Grant, Jim and Richardson, Irv	*What Teachers Do When No One Is Looking*	1997	Crystal Springs Books	12	It's the "extra things" teachers do to make a difference for children. This book highlights one of many unselfish teachers as readers learn about all that goes into being a passionate, effective teacher.
Krulik, Nancy	*No Messin' with My Lesson*	2004	Grosset & Dunlap	75	Katie's teacher, Mrs. Derkman, is a finalist for the Teacher of the Year award. However, Mrs. Derkman's chances don't look so hopeful as Katie and her classmates act a bit unruly when the interview panelist comes to pay a visit.
Bagert, Brod	*Rainbows, Head Lice, and Pea-Green Tile: Poems in the Voice of the Classroom Teacher*	1999	Maupin House	64	This collection of poems humorously tells the truth about schools in all its glory. Readers will learn about the faculty restrooms, the custodian, the cafeteria, and different teachers' personalities. You're sure to laugh while you read these funny but true poems.

Flesch, R. (1955). *Why Johnny can't read and what you can do about it*. New York: Harper & Row.

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9

Putting Literacy Learning in Context

What Practicing Teachers Say about the Realities of Teaching in Urban Schools

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The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 mandates a highly qualified teacher in every classroom by 2005. Yet despite national reports that the overall supply of teachers to our nation's schools is sufficient, many districts in the nation continue to face significant teacher shortages (Council of Great City Schools, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ingersoll, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers for work in urban school districts is especially difficult, with the greatest need faced by schools that serve children of color from highly segregated, poor communities (Donahue, Finnegan, Lutkus, Allen, & Campbell, 2001; Howey & Zimpher, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Murrell, 2001; National Task Force on Minority Achievement, 1999; Zeichner, 2003). Indeed, as reported in the *Condition of Education 2003* (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003a), schools serving the highest percentages of children of color and children from low-income families were more likely to employ teachers with three or fewer years of teaching experience than were those with the lowest percentages of such students. For those who do choose to teach in urban settings, the attrition rate for beginning teachers is alarming. Various sources estimate teacher attrition at nearly 25% within the first 2 years and up to 50% within the first 5 years (Claycomb, 2000; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003).

Children who attend hard-to-staff city schools often have vastly unequal opportunities to develop literacy and other academic skills (Markow, Fauth, & Gravitch, 2001; Orfield, 2001). Reading achievement data from the 2002 *Nation's Report Card* indicated that 55%

of fourth-grade children living in central city locations performed at or above a basic level in reading compared with 64% of fourth graders nationwide. These differences are even more striking among poor children and children of color. In 2002, only 46% of fourth graders from low-income families were reading at or above a basic level, compared with 77% of fourth graders who were not poor. Only 16% of low-income fourth graders were considered proficient readers. Less than half of African American and Hispanic children demonstrated even partial mastery of knowledge and skills needed for proficient work in fourth grade (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003b). Reading failure among poor children of color attending urban schools remains at crisis proportions.

As a result, the role of teacher education programs in preparing new teachers for our nation's schools has been under increasing scrutiny. With the current emphasis on the professionalization of teacher education, professional teaching standards such as those established by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) are presumed to set the bar for what constitutes good teaching. More recently, the National Commission on Excellence in Elementary Teacher Preparation for Reading Instruction engaged in a nationwide survey of programs in order to identify a set of critical features of teacher preparation programs that prepare graduates who are highly effective reading teachers (International Reading Association, 2003). The commission highlighted the pressing need for colleges and universities to prepare high-quality teachers for low-performing schools serving children in poverty, in order to reverse the "disturbing trend" of the widening achievement gap between children from lower income families and their more affluent peers (International Reading Association, 2003, p. 1). The commission issued guidelines outlining the knowledge and skills beginning teachers need to be excellent teachers of reading and emphasized providing opportunities for teacher candidates to engage in extensive field-based practice in order to hone these skills in authentic teaching situations. In order to encourage teachers to accept positions in "the most challenging schools," the commission stressed the need to ensure that teachers understand how to help struggling readers and know how to promote the literacy learning of students who are still learning English (International Reading Association, 2003, p. 7).

It is in these "most challenging" schools that we have a particular interest. Although the National Commission on Excellence in Elementary Teacher Preparation for Reading Instruction aimed, in general, to provide guidelines for the preparation of high-quality reading teachers for *every* school, we were interested in further specifying what it might take to prepare excellent reading teachers for our nation's hardest-to-staff schools. In particular, we asked, what are the kinds of knowledge and skills needed by beginning teachers working in highly challenging urban school settings? How do the commission's guidelines and other standards for the preparation of high-quality reading teachers "translate" in the context of hard-to-staff urban schools?

Like many urban universities, the University of Illinois at Chicago has an institutional commitment to improve the quality of teaching and learning in its local district, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the third largest school district in the nation. As the university is our district's largest supplier of new teachers, we are increasingly focused on finding ways to supply more high-quality teachers to the CPS schools where they are needed most. In the past 5 years, we have directed our programming to CPS schools designated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 as "high need" (Section 2102) schools; many of these are located in Chicago's predominantly African American west side communities. Related to our increased involvement in supporting teacher success in Chicago's highest need schools, our research has been focused on trying to better understand the kinds of experiences our teacher candi-

dates need in order to choose to teach—and choose to stay—in schools that many teachers find too challenging. As part of this effort, we asked new and veteran teachers working in highest need schools how to best prepare beginning teachers for urban classrooms.

TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

Preservice and inservice teachers currently working in Chicago public schools were invited to participate in small group discussions about urban teacher preparation. Ninety-three CPS teachers participated in focus group meetings between April 2002 and March 2003. We recruited participants via targeted invitations through our university's teacher preparation programs, as well as through university-related professional development initiatives. We purposefully recruited participants of varying experience levels, ranging from first-year through veteran teachers

For the purposes of this chapter, we narrow our focus to a subset of 19 practicing teachers recruited from some of Chicago's hardest-to-staff west side elementary schools. Schools from which this particular group of teachers were recruited served predominantly African American students (M = 93%) and children from low-income families (M = 94%). On average, approximately 25% of students in these teachers' schools met or exceeded grade-level standards on state assessments. These schools were characterized by high student mobility (M = 30%) and had greater numbers of teachers working on provisional or emergency certificates (M=8%) compared with other schools in state (M = 2%).

All but 2 participants were women; all but two were African American. Participants had been teaching, on average, for approximately 11 years, with an average of 8 years at their current schools. Nearly 70% had taught for 10 or more years, and 4 teachers had taught for more than 20 years. Fifty-eight percent of participating teachers were themselves graduates of Chicago public schools.

FOCUS GROUP PROCESS

We grouped teachers by experience level (1–4 years, 5–9 years, 10+ years) and provided them with a short set of guiding questions on a number of themes, presented later. We worded questions to solicit participants' personal experiences rather than encouraging broad, generalized statements. Discussion of each question began with a "write-down" exercise (Greenbaum, 2000), in which the facilitator read the question aloud and encouraged participants to reflect on their experiences and to jot down notes before group discussion began. These reflective opportunities allowed participants to focus their ideas and gave each person a place to start as we began talking. We audiotaped and made notes of focus group sessions. Over the course of about an hour, participants were asked to engage in discussion about the particular kinds of knowledge and skills teachers need to be successful in schools like theirs, as well as to provide the university with advice about how best to prepare beginning teachers for the "real world" of Chicago public schools. Focus group discussions were centered around the following topics and questions:

1. *Challenges faced by beginning teachers*: What aspects of their work do beginning teachers at your school find most challenging?
2. *Knowledge for urban teaching:* What particular kinds of experience does the univer-

sity need to provide teacher candidates in order to help them become successful teachers at an *urban* school like yours?

3. *Literacy teaching and learning*: What have been your greatest challenges and successes in teaching reading and writing? What particular kinds of knowledge do our university graduates need to most effectively support the literacy learning of children in Chicago public schools?

Audiotapes of completed focus group discussions were transcribed and were reviewed independently by five researchers. Each reviewer compiled a set of important issues raised by teachers during these discussions concerning the challenges beginning teachers face and the skills and experience they need to be successful in urban schools. The issues identified by each of the researchers were then compared and categorized into prevailing themes.

EMERGING THEMES

Most of the greatest challenges to teaching in city schools noted by practicing teachers had less to do with the adequacy of their preparation for teaching reading and writing than with understanding and adapting to the urban contexts in which they were working and recognizing the impact of the urban context on teaching and learning in the classroom. Participants talked in large part about the unexpected challenges of teaching in high-poverty urban schools. We discuss these challenges in relation to three categories of themes: (1) unexpected student concerns; (2) unexpected school conditions; and (3) unexpected instructional scenarios.

Unexpected Student Concerns

One set of unexpected challenges centered around understandings about children and their families. From the teachers' perspectives, these "unexpected student concerns" were related to a knowledge base not typically covered in preservice teacher preparation programs but that led to significant on-the-job challenges. We categorized these unexpected student-related concerns across three themes: (1) the need for deep-level cultural understandings; (2) negotiating the impact of poverty on teaching and learning; and (3) working with children with adult responsibilities.

Need for Deep-Level Cultural Understandings

In many areas of the country, new teachers are frequently asked to teach students who may come from backgrounds and life experiences different from their own. Not surprisingly, focus group participants highlighted the importance of getting to know students and their families in order to be effective teachers. As one teacher expressed it: "In a city like Chicago, the teacher has to go in prepared to understand the background of their students. If not, they just see the child like a number or just someone that's filling up a seat." At the same time, they often acknowledged challenges in working with children whose backgrounds were very different from their own, "because you draw on your own life experiences [in teaching], and my own life experiences are not the life experiences of my students."

Despite having covered topics related to cultural and ethnic diversity in teacher education course work, several teachers described this coverage as rather surface level in nature.

"I thought I understood my students pretty well, and I'm realizing there's just so much I don't get. In all the course work that I took, we talked about culture and language, but it was very superficial." Several teachers suggested the need for course work that breaks down topics related to race and ethnicity into much more specific discussions and experiences to help students better understand the nuances of particular cultures and school communities.

Frequently, participants related a lack of understanding of students' lives to difficulties with management and discipline in the classroom. Particularly among more experienced teachers, comments about beginning teachers struggling with classroom management were read as a lack of cultural competence. One teacher with more than 10 years of experience working in a predominantly African American school noted, "discipline seems to be a big problem for beginning teachers. They have no classroom management skills, *especially in the urban areas*. If they're from a different ethnic group, they sometimes don't know how to relate to *our children*" [italics added]. Another teacher in the same discussion group countered, "I wouldn't say they didn't have *any* behavior management skills. I would say that they are lacking in how to address some of the discipline problems, *because of their backgrounds*" [italics added]. Several teachers also expressed concern that this lack of familiarity could have negative effects on children in the classroom, noting that sometimes "there is a level of a teacher's frustration that can be unfair to a child or children." Many young teachers, in their view, tended to react very personally to children's acting out, as if children were trying to hurt or embarrass them, failing to consider how the broader social and cultural context might have an effect on student behavior. "They have to realize that these children are lashing out at a myriad of other things, rather than just on that teacher."

Negotiating the Impact of Poverty on Teaching and Learning

Among this "myriad of other things" children react to are the social and environmental conditions of living in poverty. Many teachers reported finding themselves faced with the realities of poverty on a daily basis, oftentimes in ways for which they felt extremely underprepared. For example, teachers readily acknowledged the negative impact that living in poverty had on many children's readiness for schoolwork each day. "We're asking children to learn, but many of them don't have enough food, don't have a heater at home . . . they have mice keeping them up at night. So many things." Although poor environmental conditions were a fact of life for many families living in poverty, most beginning teachers in hard-to-staff schools felt they had received little to no exposure to these specific issues in their teacher preparation programs. In some cases, teachers were concerned that a lack of understanding of the circumstances of some children's lives led to what they viewed as inappropriate responses on the part of new teachers. One experienced teacher described getting into a disagreement with a beginning teacher at her school over the way in which that teacher was choosing to discipline a child who had misbehaved in the lunchroom.

> "She didn't want him to [be able to] eat his lunch . . . [but] I told her, 'You may not realize this, but that's his only meal of the day. When he leaves here, he won't get to eat again until he comes to school tomorrow.' So I went and I got him another lunch . . . and that's where we got into a disagreement."

Working with children living in poverty had implications for literacy learning in the classroom as well. Despite often describing their training programs as providing adequate or even excellent preparation for teaching reading, participants felt less prepared for what they

described as "issues" they had to work through with children before they could ever get to the teaching:

> "Kids are coming in [to school] with a thousand social issues—violence in their lives, the number of foster children, gangs, drugs, alcohol. . . . And that's overwhelming when you have to teach reading also."

One beginning teacher described the unexpected challenge of assuming multiple roles in the classroom. "It's like I have to become the mom in the classroom. I have to become a nurse. I have to become a janitor, a social worker. So many different roles than just being a teacher."

Often, these roles included helping children work through grief and sadness in their lives. As one first-year teacher described, "There were a lot of tears in my room this year." Whereas many mainstream teachers may find themselves helping a child deal with the loss of a family member or friend from time to time, the frequency of tragedy in the lives of children living in poverty was shocking to some beginning teachers. "I have kids coming in putting their heads on their desks and crying. I have kids talking about funerals. Some kids are so numb they just brush it off." One young teacher described his lack of experience with loss in his own life, noting that all of his own grandparents were still alive. "Having to be there for a 13- or 14-year-old going through this is not something I was prepared for. We need some kind of training in how to deal with this."

Teachers most frequently related these stories from a perspective of care and concern, wanting to be able to help but feeling they lacked the skills. Beginning teachers, in particular, often expressed a desire to do anything they could for their students. For some, the instinct to assume the role of caretaker was often in conflict with their need to maintain their role as teacher. One teacher described a typical morning of trying to care for children's physical needs while also starting a new lesson:

> "Sometimes I have to comb hair. I bring lotion. I'm trying to pass out worksheets—and lotion, and get out the comb and braid hair . . . I try to keep a first aid kit, Band-aids, you know. That's a part of the day."

This teacher's comments and those of others make clear the challenge of *balance*—how one attempts to address children's physical and emotional needs while also getting to the task of teaching and learning. This was clearly an unexpected challenge for beginning teachers, many of whom expressed concerns about the amount of literacy instruction they were able to accomplish on a typical day. In general, teachers were extremely empathetic toward the children and wanted to prioritize their need to connect and discuss their concerns. "They have a lot to say, and they want to tell you about their lives. . . . You wouldn't believe the things that they're dealing with everyday." Still, teachers acknowledged that working through social and emotional concerns often took a big bite out of instructional time:

> "[We] get so caught up in trying to pull them back [to the lesson]. . . . I found myself some days for like 20 minutes [saying], 'Okay, class, I know that happened over [name of a student]'s house last night, but we really need to get this lesson on,' and such-and-such. And I'm like, 'God, it took all of that just for me to get them back on track . . . and we're supposed to be on [a certain] number in reading.' . . . It's hard. We spend a lot of time."

Working with Children with Adult Responsibilities

Adding additional complexity to the challenge of working in high-poverty schools is the fact that it is not only the teachers but also the students who are working to manage these dual identities. One frequently raised, yet unanticipated, theme to emerge from the focus group data was the challenge of working with children who, in various aspects of their lives, are assuming adult roles. Although younger teachers sometimes characterized these children as "playing tough" or "acting out," more experienced teachers seemed to recognize the conflicts inherent in being viewed by teachers as "children" during the school day but as "grown" during much of their outside-of-school lives. As one teacher put it, "When you come into the urban situation, you have to realize that these kids are not kids. They're only kids from 8:30 to 2:30, and when they leave at 2:35, they're adults." Experienced teachers understood that many of their students, even elementary school-age children, had caretaking responsibilities, watching younger siblings or relatives when parents or other family members were working or not at home. One teacher described her students as "little mothers and little fathers" who were used to making adult-like decisions in their own lives. "If we have a three-day weekend, they have a three-day grown weekend. And now we're asking them to be a kid on Tuesday, when they've been grown Friday through Monday." This situation often conflicted with beginning teachers' views of their students as children, as well as with teachers' understandings of compliance and respect for authority. "Young teachers are not prepared for kids that are adults . . . I'm coming in here, and I want to be the one in charge, when [the kids are] used to being in charge. You're not prepared for that." For young teachers working to assert their own authority, children taking on adult roles often presented unexpected challenges. As one teacher put it, "How do you deal with a kid who just flat-out says 'No'?"

Mismatched Contexts: Higher Education versus Real-World Teaching

A number of participants attributed beginning teachers' struggles with these unexpected student challenges to a mismatch between teacher education curricula and the real world of teaching in hard-to-staff public schools. In one teacher's opinion, "A lot of the books [used in teacher education classes] are written based on some . . . idealistic schooling." When asked to give advice to those who teach these classes, participants urged teacher educators to get with the times. "Sometimes we have to learn that the textbook gives us good methods [and] good theories, but Piaget is dead. Freud is dead. . . . These are kids of the 21st century."

Unfortunately, due to what often amounts to a lack of shared life experiences with one's students, compounded by gaps in culturally relevant teacher preparation, beginning teachers may not be aware of the cultural funds of knowledge children bring to school or of strategies for using that knowledge to scaffold instruction. Focus group participants noted that beginning teachers may not recognize potential mismatches between standard curricula typically covered in teacher preparation programs and urban children's experience and knowledge:

> "The background [for literacy instruction] is really critical. A lot of times, if we have a child that's in an isolated environment, you can talk about farm animals and different habitats or . . . botany, you know, those kinds of things, but [many times] the child has

not been exposed. In the city, they're around buildings and parking lots with glass and different things like that."

In addition to outdated or mismatched curricula, participants cited lack of exposure to the most challenging schools and classrooms during student teaching and fieldwork as further steepening the learning curve for beginning teachers in urban schools. Several teachers noted the trend for teacher preparation programs to seek out "ideal" field sites, presumably where their teacher candidates can learn to teach in graduated steps in orderly classrooms. "When someone does student teaching or observing in the classroom, they always go into a good classroom," commented one teacher. "When I student taught . . . they made sure we got the cream-of-the-crop teachers." Although many teacher educators view this as best practice, focus group participants questioned whether this was, indeed, the best preparation for teacher candidates who were likely to find their first teaching jobs in hard-to-staff city schools. On the whole, focus group participants viewed the practice of placing teacher candidates in top classrooms as "a big problem" that sets teacher candidates up with unrealistic expectations and, in the long run, did them a great "disservice":

"We give them a fantasy. [In the most challenging classrooms] the kids are not gonna sit there like this. They're not gonna be, 'Okay, whatever you say.' No. You're gonna get 'Shut-up,' sometimes. You're gonna get 'No.' I mean, it's reality, and I think that's the problem. They need to see reality, what urban teachers really go through."

Unexpected School Conditions

In addition to unexpected student concerns, the focus group data revealed a second set of challenges related to school conditions. Among the most prominent were those related to (1) lack of resources and (2) instability in the student and teacher population.

Lack of Resources

Perhaps not surprising is the frequency with which teachers in urban schools note lack of resources as a significant school-related challenge. Many beginning teachers, particularly those who themselves may have attended school in more affluent communities, were not used to having to make do with so little. "I think that one of the biggest [challenges] when I started is that there were no books, no paper, [no] supplies, buildings without copiers—things you'd just expect would be in a school." Lack of adequate building conditions was also noted as presenting significant challenges to providing quality instruction in reading and writing.

"The environmental part is a big issue, also, in literacy. Your environment has to be welcoming and warm . . . [and] you're in a place that you have sanitation issues. . . . If you're not in a clean and safe, lighted environment, you can't learn."

Spending personal resources on supplies for the classroom was a frequent theme, as it is for many teachers in school districts across the country. Several teachers described purchasing cases of notebook paper and pencils with their own money and felt it was an important fact for beginning teachers to understand when taking jobs in underresourced schools. "You get to the point where your check is not . . . it's not yours. So, accept that. When you're starting

out, without anything, your first few paychecks are going into that classroom." Interestingly, many teachers did not come across as resentful of this fact so much as disappointed in their lack of preparation by their programs for this reality. "When I was graduating, I wish I knew I was going to have to buy so much stuff for my classroom, [so I could have] set money aside." Several other beginning teachers also commented that the expectation that they would have to purchase many materials for their classrooms was something that they "didn't understand" fully coming in as a beginning teacher.

In addition to being underresourced, the hardest-to-staff schools often are situated in impoverished communities. Middle-class teachers may need to relinquish the notion that families might regularly help defray the cost of instructional materials or field trip expenses. Even more unexpected than the purchase of instructional supplies for the classroom was what teachers viewed as a frequent need to provide their students with basic necessities:

> "I don't know how many shirts and gloves, and this and that [I've purchased]. You just have to . . . I feel that's part of my job. I don't want one of my students coming to school with the same shirt day in and day out."

Along these lines, the more experienced teachers stressed the importance of developing a sensitivity to children and families without extra resources. "You have to learn . . . compassion," as one teacher put it, and try not to single out students and families in greatest need. For some teachers, this meant establishing systems of understandings with students in their classrooms about issues of money:

> "When it came time for the ribbon pinning, and the luncheon, and the [eighth grade] graduation, I didn't ask any questions about who has their money. When it starts getting to be later and later, and I wasn't getting money, I made the general statement: 'For somebody here that might be having a little financial problem, write me a little note, sit it on the desk, drop it in my book bag.' "

For many teachers, who themselves were working to make ends meet, these added expenses often placed an undue burden and additional stress on themselves and their families. "I'll get home, [and] I have five or six notes. I'll tell my husband, 'We need to get together and figure out how we're gonna come up with this money.' " Lack of resources, coupled with unexpected student concerns, sometimes led teachers to consider seeking positions in better equipped schools in more advantaged communities.

Instability in Student and Teacher Population

The revolving door for teachers in hard-to-staff urban schools presents another set of unexpected challenges related to the continuity and quality of instruction children receive from year to year or, in some cases, from month to month. Although education programs prepare teachers with some general understandings about the level of prerequisite reading and writing skills students can be expected to have at different grades, teachers in the hardest-to-staff schools often reported finding their developmental assumptions, as well as their teaching skills, challenged. "It was a shock when I came into the third-grade classroom and they couldn't read. . . . I was completely awed." Several teachers recognized this immediately as the likely result of instability in the teaching population:

> "I've had first graders who have gone through three, four, five teachers, and I've had some of those children come through my [second grade] class missing lots [of reading-related skills]. Not for lack of ability, but because they weren't given good instruction."

The quality and continuity of instruction for these children may be further eroded by the fact that many of their interim teachers are likely to be undercredentialed, hired on temporary certificates or as permanent substitutes. Rather than voicing frustration at the challenge presented to them as they "inherited" these classes, most teachers expressed a high level of concern and empathy for the children most affected by these undesirable school conditions. "Some of my kids had something like ten teachers last year [because of turnover]. How are they expected to learn anything?"

Mobility in the student population further exacerbates this lack of continuity in instruction. Although some might be quick to place blame on students or their families for a lack of progress in literacy learning, experienced teachers emphasize the need for teachers in urban schools to understand the broader social conditions contributing to underachievement. As one teacher pointed out, social institutions, such as the foster care system, can have unintended consequences that urban teachers ought to understand:

> "A lot of these kids . . . belong to DCFS [social services], and they've been bounced around. And I used to think, 'Oh my God, you're in second grade! What do you mean you can't read? What is wrong?' But when you look at it, and they've been transferred six times in one school year, it's not their fault. We have to look at what the system is producing."

Unexpected Instructional Scenarios

A third category of challenges identified in the focus group data was related to the unexpected instructional scenarios that new teachers encounter in hard-to-staff urban schools. Specifically, teachers' discussions centered around two prominent themes: (1) the challenges of working with children with a wide range of literacy skills and (2) the lack of intervention services for students with special needs.

Working with a Wide Range of Readers

When discussing teaching reading and writing in urban schools, focus group participants stressed the need for all teachers to be trained to teach reading, regardless of their subject area expertise or grade level. "We have to prepare the teachers with a myriad of strategies, not just one or two or three, for teaching reading. And not just at the primary level, but at the primary, intermediate, and upper [grades]." They discussed the importance of phonics instruction, the need for explicit instruction of comprehension strategies, and the impact of language and dialect difference on literacy learning. Understanding children and their families continued to be a prevailing undercurrent in conversations:

> "[Teacher candidates] need to understand that many children aren't coming from a background of literacy. [The children] are not coming from a similar background to [the teachers] where you would have books available for your children to read. Their parents don't all read to them frequently . . . and there's a whole different vocabulary [with their home dialect]."

Much of the discussion related to teaching reading and writing centered around the themes of working with children with a range of literacy skills. Although teachers acknowledged that all classrooms may include some children who excel and others who struggle, they believed that their classrooms presented some particular challenges. "You need to prepare teachers for the *range* of children in the classroom." Several teachers pointed out how the sheer numbers of students underachieving in reading was daunting, especially considering the limited access many teachers had to a range of texts and other reading-level-appropriate resources. "I've got 34 kids, and 27 are under the 35th percentile [in reading]. You know, what do you do?" Moreover, many of these students were not what teachers would characterize as just "a little behind." Some teachers found themselves faced with whole classes of children who in other settings might be considered exceptional:

> "[In] my class this year, I had 19 boys. And I don't mean 19 [typical] eighth-grade boys. I mean . . . 19 eighth-grade boys who have failed more than once, more than twice, and they're above age. They're almost as grown-looking as me."

The challenge of working in classrooms with large numbers of students underachieving in reading was often complicated by the presence of several students who were excellent readers, further widening the gap between the most skilled and least skilled readers. Although much of the discussion focused on the challenges of working with underachieving readers, several teachers warned against neglecting students who were excelling. "You can't hold the aspiring achievers back . . . the kids who are above average. There's a small group of them. And, boy, they get lost." Attempting to adapt literacy instruction for so many children—those struggling and those excelling—particularly in light of the limited resources available to teachers, made teaching in high-need urban schools that much more challenging for beginning teachers and experienced teachers alike.

Lack of Intervention Services for Children with Special Needs

Discussions got heated at times, especially when the conversation turned to children's need for special services. Many teachers were surprised and frustrated by the numbers of students placed in their classrooms who had special education needs. "You [may] have 19 children . . . and six [are] Special Ed children." Others were particularly upset about what they perceived as a lack of intervention and support services early on for children who struggled in school. "Most of [my sixth-grade struggling readers] were repeat third graders. What was going on [in the earlier grades]? These kids never got what they needed." Despite the fact that most teachers intended to do as much as they could to help their struggling readers improve, most were cautiously realistic about what they would be able to accomplish on their own:

> "I had [eighth graders] that were on maybe a third-grade reading level. I knew I was going to try to pull them along, but in the end, these children were not going to be reading at grade level, or even a sixth-grade level. These children had never been staffed or tested or supported in other ways. We need to look at this [in] pre-K, not when they get to eighth grade."

As in other aspects of the focus group discussions, teachers were careful not to place blame on the children with whom they worked but rather expressed sincere disappointment and frustration with a system that could allow so many children to fall through the cracks.

> "There's no intervention or support for struggling readers or slower learners who don't get diagnosed with disabilities. Because of social issues or other reasons, kids maybe couldn't focus, and now they're behind in reading, but they don't get any extra support if they aren't at the extreme. Those kids are the ones who get lost."

According to participants, this lack of early intervention services had a serious impact on their ability to provide appropriate literacy instruction to all of their children. The extreme range of readers and significant proportion of students with special needs made individualized instruction necessary but extremely difficult to accomplish, particularly in the absence of much support. "Adapting lessons for kids at various reading levels is challenging and time consuming. There's not much support with this. We need real ways we can modify lessons for more kids."

To some, this was not a question of making accommodations for a struggling student or two, but rather a matter of altogether rethinking the organization and delivery of the curriculum. Most teacher preparation programs include coverage of adaptations and accommodations to help a range of learners gain access to the curriculum, yet this content is often presented as the "exception" in the "regular" classroom, rather than in relation to working with a substantial concentration of students for whom the designated curriculum may not be most appropriate. What teachers seem to be reporting in these focus group discussions is that working with large numbers of struggling readers and children with special needs is *regular* in urban schools. This is the context of urban teaching for which teacher candidates need to be better, and perhaps differently, prepared.

ADVICE FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS

There is a long-held truism that a good teacher is a good teacher, anywhere and anytime. Yet the results of our focus group research with teachers in hard-to-staff Chicago elementary schools suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach to teacher education will not help fill the need for high-quality teachers in our nation's most challenging schools. Although INTASC standards and International Reading Association guidelines for developing excellent reading teachers provide good research-based cornerstones for teacher education, they may not go far enough in specifying how to prepare teachers for work in schools that many find too challenging. Practicing teachers in hard-to-staff urban schools are urging teacher educators to prepare new teacher candidates much more realistically and specifically for teaching in high-poverty urban communities so they can anticipate and work through the "unexpected" challenges that contribute so frequently to beginning teacher attrition in the highest need schools. Toward this end, our results suggest some specific directions for teacher preparation.

Gear Teacher Education Curricula Specifically for Teaching in Hard-to-Staff Urban Schools

Participants' advice was in line with that of other scholars in urban teacher preparation who urge teacher educators to move beyond generic, traditional approaches to teacher preparation and begin to truly "urbanize" teacher education curricula (e.g., Haberman, 1996; Murrell, 2001; Zeichner, 2003). In our participant teachers' views, general education classes are not "going to cut it" if teacher educators are serious about improving teacher effectiveness and reducing teacher attrition in hard-to-staff urban schools. "The curriculum needs to

be more specific . . . to what's going on in cities today." Some teachers noted what they perceived as a neglect of input from K–12 educators in the design of university curricula and insisted that the universities work on developing closer connections with local school districts in order to begin to develop more urban-specific or even district-specific course work.

These suggestions are consistent with Peter Murrell's (2001) "radical" idea of developing a new kind of community teacher who can implement standards-based instruction but who also understands the complexities of urban communities that affect children's learning and development (p. 32). Typically, teacher preparation programs have responded to this call by adding a course or two on multicultural, bilingual, or urban education to their curricula (Zeichner, 2003) rather than giving their programs an urban overhaul. To have the greatest effect, urban education programs ought to include series of courses in education and human development that are taught from an urban perspective (e.g., MacPhee, Kreutzer, & Fritz, 1994), including the effects of poverty on cognitive and social development, health, and family functioning. Student outbursts, acting out, and withdrawal are often viewed by teachers as problematic or even pathological, but they may actually be reasonable reactions to undesirable social conditions (Fine, 2002; Haberman, 1996). Similarly, mental drain, distraction, and physical exhaustion are considered normal reactions to traumatic events in one's life (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002) or may be attributable to stress and anxiety due to increased family responsibilities (Kurtz, 2002; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002). In addition to student concerns, the structural and academic conditions of the school can contribute to problem behavior. Environmental stressors such as overcrowding, noise, and heat can affect students' ability to concentrate and complete work (Lackney, 1999) and may create contexts in which acting out or disengagement become routine (Fine, 2002).

Other factors affecting the school environment, such as high rates of teacher turnover and student mobility, can further hinder the development of a sense of community and erode the social cohesion that is associated with positive social and academic benefits (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). For the many children in foster care in urban districts, for example, frequent transfers of schools, coupled with regular court appearances and other appointments, can cause children to miss school and make it difficult for them to keep up with their work (Kelleher, 2002). Student instability in classrooms tends to increase the need to review materials, which slows down the curricular pace and can depress the academic achievement of all children in a classroom, not only those who have changed schools (Kerbow, 1996).

Teachers unaware of or not sensitive to the effects on children of stressful life circumstances, responsibilities to their families, poor environmental conditions, or involvement with social services may make ill-informed assumptions about students, their investment in school, the quality of parenting they receive, and their overall learning capabilities. Unfortunately, coverage of these issues may be missing from urban teacher education curricula, despite their implications for teachers in high-poverty schools. Incorporating this content into teacher preparation programs may require looking to fields outside of education for support. As noted above, detailed information about the physical and psychological effects of stress is well documented in the mental health literature. Similarly, concerns about children with adult responsibilities have been explored in the fields of social work and youth and family law, particularly as the result of investigations of the consequences of welfare reform legislation (Kurtz, 2002; Morris, Huston, Duncan, Crosby, & Bos, 2001).

In addition to incorporating urban-specific content from a broad range of related fields, context-specific teaching strategies for addressing the particular circumstances of many children in urban poor settings ought to be included as an integral part of urban teacher prepa-

ration programs. For instance, research has revealed patterns in times of the school year when students are most likely to move and has illuminated strategies for working with mobile students (Kelleher, 2002; Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990; Williams, 1996). Although focus group participants expressed concern about deviating too far from planned lessons, some research has shown that taking time to talk with children about the social realities of their lives, including issues such as poverty, foster care, homelessness, and racism, can actually enhance instruction if teachers find ways to connect students' lives to the curriculum (Lippman, 2000; McIntyre, 2000).

Finding culturally appropriate texts, particularly for children living in central city communities, however, is not always easy. Despite calls to engage children with culturally relevant literacy materials (e.g., North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2000; Strickland, 1998), authentically "urban" children's literature is generally in short supply. Although much has been published in the way of multicultural children's literature, identifying picture books and other texts for beginning readers that reflect central city living, immigrant life, language and dialect variation, and even urban ecology or architecture (as opposed to the ever-popular farm animal stories) can be a challenge [see Appendix for suggestions].

Access the Full Range of University- and Community-Based Resources in Teacher Preparation

Developing teacher candidates who are knowledgeable and resourceful urban practitioners requires the same qualities among teacher educators. The problem is that most teacher educators do not themselves have experience teaching in the hardest-to-staff urban schools—if they have urban teaching experience at all. Focus group participants have described ways in which teaching in high-poverty, hard-to-staff schools involves a knowledge base that goes beyond what typical standards for teacher preparation cover. Challenges such as working with children with adult responsibilities may not be things the average teacher education faculty member has ever even considered.

As noted previously, many of the urban-specific challenges raised by focus group participants have been explored in the literature of other fields, such as social work, mental health, and family law. Including this knowledge base in teacher education programs suggests a need to expand beyond the boundaries of Colleges of Education and Colleges of Arts and Sciences. Seeking out expertise from other university-based partners, including those in social work, nursing, medicine, counseling, linguistics, and urban planning, to name a few, as well as inviting community-based partners, such as those from local social service agencies, community centers, and neighborhood revitalization efforts to the teacher education table is key. In order to accomplish this, teacher educators must first acknowledge that, despite being relative "experts" in our fields, we don't possess all the knowledge our teacher candidates are likely to need. True success in urban teacher preparation will require what Pang, Anderson, and Martuza (1997) refer to as "removing the mask of academia," however humbling or threatening admitting a lack of urban expertise may be for some teacher educators. For teacher candidates who might be inclined to try to "be everything" for their students—social worker, nurse, caretaker, and teacher—seeing their instructors model the practice of accessing resources inside and outside the university may even set a powerful precedent for their own work in city schools.

In addition, teacher educators should seek opportunities to spend more time on site at schools in order to deepen their own understandings about teaching and learning in hard-to-staff urban settings. Working in true partnership with K–12 educators who likely possess

more of the local, community-situated knowledge needed by beginning teachers requires a "humility of practice" among teacher educators—an acknowledgement that they have much to learn from those in the school community and that all partners can contribute from multiple levels of expertise (Murrell, 2001). Moving the "center of gravity" (Zeichner, 2003) of teacher education out of the university and into schools and communities will help teacher educators get away from more "sterile," detached approaches to preservice teacher education in the form of isolated university-based activities, case studies, and vignettes (Ewing, 1995). Immersion in school and communities will accelerate the development of teachers and teacher educators with deep levels of authentic knowledge about the local culture and with a more genuine appreciation for the valuable funds of knowledge and experiences children bring to school.

Expand Notions of "Good" Clinical Experience and Student Teaching Placements

Putting urban teacher preparation at the center of school communities, particularly when that center means a highly challenging school setting, requires overcoming faculty resistance about clinical placements in what some would consider "weak" schools. Our experience is that a major contributing cause of teachers' early departures from challenging classrooms lies in teacher preparation programs that do not prepare teacher candidates to teach students in challenging classrooms. Teacher educators often take great pains to avoid what they perceive as overly challenging classrooms and try to find nurturing mentor teachers and supportive classroom environments in "good" schools. Ironically, teacher candidates frequently find themselves offered positions in the very hard-to-staff schools that their professors avoided placing them in during their teacher candidacy years. Lack of familiarity with the urban environment and the challenges particular to hard-to-staff schools results in a sort of "culture shock" for many beginning teachers (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999) and contributes significantly to early attrition from the very schools that most need them to stay.

Echoed regularly throughout focus group discussions was what Haberman (1996) describes as the need for urban teacher education programs to "prepare teachers *in* the real world *for* the real world." Participants insisted that, if we expect beginning teachers to seek jobs—and remain committed to staying—in hard-to-staff schools, we need to do a better job providing teacher candidates with a range of opportunities to engage in field experiences and student teaching in highest need schools:

> "They need to go to a school that's going to a remediation plan. They do. They need to go to schools on probation. They need to go to overcrowded schools. They need the worst possible situation, because if they do [experience it], in the future, they can handle it. They can."

Instead of thinking in terms of finding "good" field placements, teacher educators might do better to think in terms of how to better ensure that *every* field experience is a good one for our teacher candidates. Participants suggested that teacher educators make an effort to identify excellent mentor teachers in hard-to-staff schools, such as those that Haberman (1996) describes as demonstrating successful teaching and cultural competence with youth in poverty. Many teachers commented on the fact that their schools almost never got requests to host student observers and student teachers. Teacher educators, they insisted, ought to "go to an inner, inner, inner city school, and ask for their best." Some teachers suggested that

identifying strong mentors in challenging schools would take some trust on the part of university personnel in working with school leadership. "Ask the principal, [and] he'll tell you really easily, 'This is who I can count on.' " Participants also suggested that teacher educators should keep their eyes out for potential mentors among those teachers who continually "show up" to do the work. "Mentors are the ones who come to these meetings," noted one participant, referring to teachers who had volunteered to participate in the after-school focus group sessions.

Facilitating excellent field experiences and success as beginning teachers in hard-to-staff urban schools requires that teacher preparation programs provide teacher candidates with (1) deeper understandings of the complex issues faced by poor urban children and their families; (2) expectations of the ways in which the effects of poverty may affect teaching and learning in their classrooms; (3) preparation for the challenges facing underresourced schools; (4) specific teaching strategies for meeting the needs of the range of literacy learners in urban classrooms; and (5) strategies and support systems for maintaining resilience in challenging contexts. We need to stop thinking in terms of "business-as-usual" and commit ourselves to preparing high-quality teachers specifically for the hardest-to-staff schools. Only in this way can we break the cycle of teachers departing challenging schools and begin to equalize literacy learning opportunities for all children.

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Suggested Titles: Books New Teachers May Choose to Read

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Codell, Esme Raji	*Sahara Special*	2003	Hyperion	177	By the author of *Educating Esme*, a book which teachers find on their own, this children's novel focuses on a new fifth-grade teacher, Miss Pointy, who weaves a model through her classroom challenges very much like Esme's own classroom!
Clark, Ron	*The Essential 55: An Award-Winning Educator's Rules for Discovering the Successful Student in Every Child*	2003	Hyperion	224	In a nutshell, Clark offers the rules and guidelines for a civil classroom complete with interested learners. Why not dip in and see what makes sense?
Myers, Walter Dean	*Bad Boy: A Memoir*	2001	HarperCollins	214	For students becoming teachers, the author's memories of his Harlem school and teachers—and of books—will be powerful.

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APPENDIX 9.1. Examples of Urban-Specific Children's Literature: Picture Books with Urban Themes And Illustrations

Barbara Bash, *Urban Roosts: Where Birds Nest in the City.* New York: Sierra Club/Little Brown, 1990.

Craig Brown, *City Sounds*. New York: Greenwillow, 1992.

Bryan Collier, *Uptown*. New York: Henry Holt, 2000.

Richard Egielski, *The Gingerbread Boy.* New York: Laura Geringer Books, 1997.

Ethan Herberman, *City Kid's Field Guide*. New York: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1989.

Karen Hesse, *Come On, Rain!* New York: Scholastic Press, 1999.

Nette Hilton, *In My Backyard*. South Melbourne, Australia: Lothian Books, 2001.

Carole Huelbig, *City Kids and City Critters!* New York: Learning Triangle Press, 1996.

Rachel Isadora, *Sights and Sounds: Listen to the City.* New York: Putnam, 2000.

Steven Johnson, *Alphabet City.* New York: Viking, 1995; *City By Numbers*. New York: Viking, 1998.

Ezra Jack Keats, *The Snowy Day.* New York: Viking, 1978; *Whistle for Willie*. New York: Puffin Books, 1977; and others

Christine Loomis, *Rush Hour.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, l997.

William Low, *Chinatown*. New York: Henry Holt, 1997.

Heather Macleod, *City Birds*. New York: Children's Press, 1995.

Mercer Mayer, *Just Me and My Mom*. Racine, WI: Western, 1990.

Adria Meserve, *Smog, The City Dog*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002.

Christopher Meyers, *Black Cat*. New York: Scholastic Press, 1999.

Margaret King Mitchell, *Uncle Jed's Barbershop*. New York: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1993.

Andrea Davis Pinkney, *Pretty Brown Face*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace, 1997; *Shake, Shake, Shake*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace, 1997; *Watch Me Dance*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace, 1997.

Idalia Rosario, *Idalia's Project ABC = Projecto ABC: An Urban Alphabet Book*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1981.

Roni Schotter, *Nothing Ever Happens on 90th Street*. New York: Orchard Books, 1997.

Uri Shulevitz, *One Monday Morning*. New York: Scribner, 1967.

Eileen Spinelli, *Night Shift Daddy.* Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 2000.

Natasha Tarpley, *Bippity Bop Barbershop*. Boston: Little Brown, 2000; *I Love My Hair.* Boston: Little Brown, 1997.

Rebecca Treays, *My Town*. London: Usbourne, 1998.

Vera B. Williams, *A Chair for My Mother.* New York: Greenwillow Books, 1994; *Cherries and Cherry Pits*. New York: Mulberry Books, 1991; and others.

Jacqueline Woodson, *Visiting Day.* New York: Scholastic Press, 2001.

Sharon Dennis Wyeth, *Something Beautiful*. New York: Doubleday Books for Young Readers, 1998.

10

What Are the Implications of Recent Policy Initiatives for the Classroom

Innovations for Instruction in Urban Settings

CATHY COLLINS BLOCK
JOHN N. MANGIERI

As educators in the 21st century, it is important that we acknowledge the ever-increasing need to accelerate the literacy ability of urban youth—a rapidly increasing student subpopulation. In this chapter we report policy initiatives that have advanced the literacy abilities of these students, and describe three instructional goals that have significantly increased their reading abilities.

POLICY INITIATIVES AT THE NATIONAL, STATE, AND SCHOOL DISTRICT LEVEL

In the past 10 years, many policy initiatives have been taken to reduce the achievement gap that exists between urban students and their rural and suburban counterparts. Among the most widely cited are the actions reported in *Foundations for Success: Case Studies of How Urban Schools Systems Improve Student Achievement* (Council of Great City Schools, 2002b). This study identified common policies that helped five large urban school districts to achieve significant gains in their students' literacy achievement. The most important differences in the educational initiatives of these districts, compared with less effective large city schools, are the following:

- These school districts focused on achievement of their students as their major goal.
- They set specific objectives and scheduled definite consequences for schools and students who knew what success on these objectives looked like and what actions would be taken for those who were unable to meet these achievement standards.

- Before the school year began, they aligned their curriculum to match the state standards that students were expected to meet.
- They focused on lowest performing schools.
- They translated state standards into districtwide instructional practices.
- Each instructional practice was also supported with curricula.
- Before any teacher taught the districtwide curriculum, he or she participated in an intensive, districtwide professional development program.
- All districts stated that they worked very hard day in and day out to improve urban children's lives.

A second recent national policy directive is titled *Critical Trends in Urban Education: Fifth Biennial Survey of America's Great City Schools* (Council of Great City Schools, 2002a). This report found that superintendents in the 85 major great city schools were more optimistic in 2001 that progress has been made in closing the educational achievement gap of urban students than they were in 1995. The three greatest concerns facing urban schools today, from the perspective of these superintendents, are (1) meeting the professional needs of their teachers, (2) increasing public confidence, and (3) developing strong principal leadership in all of their schools.

A third national initiative began when President George W. Bush established a national commission to study Hispanic education. This commission is of great importance to urban youths because one-third of all students in the urban setting are of Hispanic heritage (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003). As this commission works, the U.S. Department of Education also has partnered with the National Urban League to educate families about reading and literacy development. This partnership has been funded with one-half million dollars to help urban families overcome illiteracy and aliteracy.

At the state level, the biggest policy issues facing urban school districts are the lack of a stable teaching staff in their urban centers and the high rate of teacher turnover. Within the past 6 months, these two concerns have been addressed in an aggressive manner. The most innovative method (being employed in more than 36 states in the United States) is to provide incentives to people who are teaching in the urban setting. Among these incentives are higher pay, housing allowances, and relocation compensation. Moreover, in many districts those educators who have been demonstrated to be the most capable of increasing students' literacy achievement are being transferred from suburban to urban schools.

Why is it important that states establish such policies that address the literacy difficulties that presently exist in their urban settings? In 1992, more than one thousand students per day from foreign countries entered urban schools in the United States for the first time (Brown, 2002). Equally important, the dropout rate among urban youth today is significantly higher than the rate of suburban youth. The former rate is nearly one in every four students (Brown, 2002). These two factors are complicated by the fact that urban schoolteachers are less likely to have an adequate supply of textbooks than do their peers in rural or suburban schools. For example, Lipman (2002) studied the political climate in one major school district to determine the most important policy step that could be taken to eradicate the negative conditions facing that urban school setting. Her finding was that political officials and educational leaders must begin to be held accountable for advocating for and ensuring that necessary resources are available to overcome present and past discrimination against students in urban settings.

Other studies have found that educators must also identify and eliminate subtle discriminatory perceptions and actions on the part of parents, teachers, policymakers, and students if

the achievement differences that presently exist between urban and suburban schools are to be eradicated (Wagner, 2003). For instance, researchers have found that urban students, when given equal resources with suburban students, can overcome their achievement difficulties (Minority Student Achievement Network Survey on Student Attitudes Towards School, 2003). Other researchers have found that even when resources are available, some students disengage because of cultural factors that have not been addressed in the school (Ogbu, 2002). Of equal importance, many educators assume that urban students possess background knowledge that in fact they do not. For this reason, numerous times curricula that are introduced in those settings contain several subtle assumptions of knowledge that go unchecked. Therefore, in addition to advocating for the elimination of inadequate resources and teaching staff, we must begin to advocate, on behalf of curriculum writers, for many supplemental resources to be made available to urban teachers so that gaps in students' background knowledge can be eliminated before they are asked to read selected curricula.

In addition to the policy initiatives that have been taken on the national and state levels, specific, targeted studies have been conducted about factors that impact urban students' literacy success. In these studies, students have been asked which teachers in classroom settings have and have not enabled them to increase their literacy achievement. The following statements are representative of those that students have made across the country.

- "My teachers respect me; their respect means more than all of the visible rewards that they could muster" (Block & Mangieri, 2003).
- "I don't feel like I am being tested or punished when my teacher helps me to read. I don't want to read in Spanish, don't know what topics I want to read about, or how to select books that I can enjoy" (Monzo & Rueda, 2002).
- "We don't get much support from teachers; they just hand out the work and expect us to do it and learn without doing much teaching" (Block & Mangieri, 2003).
- "We are not numbers that anyone should add up. That is why young people get discouraged over racism and world issues and so they have their mind set that they can't achieve and they believe it. Well I'm not going to let it go on!" (Taylor, 2002/2003).
- "Our teachers teach so good that we don't have to leave anyone behind. They have taught us how to be kinder and fairer also" (Block & Mangieri, 2003; Corbett & Wilson, 2002).

Professional organizations have also been consulted as to what can be done to reduce the literacy achievement gap. The International Reading Association (IRA) is among the most active and has established urban leadership academies (for additional information contact *irawash@reading.org*). The organization also published a book of research reports, which appeared in the fall of 2003 (Mason & Schramm, 2003). Another initiative is the development of an urban dean's network through which deans across the country can begin to unite in their efforts to address the needs of teacher training for urban settings and of principal leadership development, as well as student literacy achievement. IRA has also established an urban diversity commission, which has representatives from many urban settings. They are developing new partnerships with the National Urban Alliance and the Council of Great City Schools.

The research base upon which these policy initiatives have been built also informs the teaching actions and instructional goals that can be enacted in individual classrooms where the needs of urban students are being effectively addressed. The following teaching behaviors have been demonstrated to advance urban students' achievement. Primary among them

is to keep abreast of current literature so that the lives children lead in the urban setting are reflected in the literature that they read. Some of the books that we recommend are cited in Table 10.1.

In addition to sharing the books in Table 10.1, teachers in urban settings can do the following:

- Push students to complete their assignments.
- Maintain classroom order.
- Be willing to help explain until children clearly understand all steps in literacy processes.
- Vary instructional activities.
- Try to understand each student as an individual.

Urban teachers can also frequently visit two important Web sites: *www.urbanteacher.com* and *www.ed.gov/pubs/urbanhope/index.html*. These two sites contain many books and lessons that can be implemented in the urban setting; they also are among the first to report new research. For example, two of their latest publications are titled "An Idea Book on Planning: Implementing Schoolwide Programs" (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), and "Hope for Urban Education: A Study of Nine High-Performing, High-Poverty Urban Elementary Schools" (Urban Teacher, 2002).

Recent research has also identified three important instructional goals that can be met to address specific literacy needs of urban students.

INSTRUCTIONAL GOAL 1: PROVIDE URBAN STUDENTS WITH THE INDIVIDUALIZED COMPREHENSION INSTRUCTION THAT THEY NEED

As we enter a new era in which urban students are bombarded continuously with visual images on television, on the Internet, and on video games, it is important for educators to honor the broad range of reading comprehension skills that individual urban students bring to the classroom. Two new methods have been created to help teachers individualize comprehension instruction so that they can meet all urban students' needs in the 21st century.

The first is titled "discovery discussions." Discovery discussions are a new form of one-to-one conferences in which urban students are allowed to have equal say as to the next direction their instruction will take. Conferences are begun by either a teacher or a student. At any time during the conference, either the teacher or the student explains something that he or she has now learned about that student's reading abilities or asks a specific question to gain more information about the individual student's literacy abilities. It is important for educators to hold no more than three discovery discussions a week. This is an important procedural direction, because discovery discussions command an intense amount of a teacher's energy and focused concentration. A discovery discussion contains four steps. After a student has asked any questions that he or she has about reading, the educator:

1. Asks "What do you need *me* to do to help you comprehend better?"
2. Asks "What have you learned about comprehension since we last met?"
3. Asks "What do you want to learn next to comprehend better?"
4. Establishes a plan of action with that student to individualize his or her comprehension instruction, to be reviewed at the end of the month.

TABLE 10.1. Two Dozen Favorite, Recently Published Nonfiction and Fiction Books for Children and Young Adults

Who Will Tell My Brother? by Marlene Carvell. New York: Hyperion, 2002. IRA 2003 Children's Book Award. Story of Native American brothers' courage in face of peer pressure.

Coolies by Yin. New York: Philomel Books, 2002. IRA 2002 Children's Book Award. April 4th or 5th Supreme Light Celebration, a day to honor the dead with burnt paper money to make ancestors rich in the spirit world forever.

Silver Seeds by Paul Paolilli and Dan Brewer. New York: Viking, 2001. IRA 2002 Children's Book Award. Poetry as a new way to teach vocabulary.

A Year Down Yonder by Richard Peck. New York: Penguin, 2001. 2001 Newbery Award. Love of grandmother in all cultures and the importance of families.

The Stray Dogs by Marc Simont. New York: Harper, 2002. 2002 Caldecott Honor Book. Teaches kindness to K–12 children.

Tuesday by David Wiesner. New York: Clarion, 1992. 1992 Caldecott winner. Teaches inference. Grades K–2.

A Single Shard by Linda Sue Park. New York: Clarion, 2002. 2002 Newbery Award. Teaches kindness and selflessness to grade 3–5 students.

Carver: A Life in Poems by Marilyn Nelson. Ashville, NC: Front Street, 2002. 2002 Newbery Honor Book. Teaches many values an inspires students to want to read more poetry, autobiographies, and African American histories.

Bud, Not Buddy by Christopher Paul Curtis. New York: Yearling Books, 2001. 2001 Newbery Award. A 10-year-old African American motherless boy seeks his father. Readers will find truth, vision, and hope.

Golem by David Wisniewski. New York: Clarion, 1997. 1997 Caldecott winner. Jewish folktale and history of the persecution of the Jewish race; how humans must remain humble in times of victory and defeat.

Martin's Big Words by Doreen Rappaport. New York, Hyperion Books, 2002. 2002 Caldecott Honor Book. Outstanding book to introduce K–3 students to biographies and the power of fighting with words and not fists. Also includes a lifeline timeline. Additional book references and Web site references at the end.

Courage by Bernard Waber. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. Thirty-two different ways students demonstrate their courage.

The Teddy Bear by David McPhail. New York: Holt, 2002. The 21st-century version of *The Velveteen Rabbit*.

Baloney (Henry P.) by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith. New York: Viking, 2001. Teaches the importance of imagination when students face difficulties and demonstrates what it is like to learn to read. Contains words from 19 languages other than English. Written by the same author (Scieszka) who wrote *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*.

Enemy Pie by Derek Munson. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2000. Describes how to turn enemies into friends by taking the time to get to know them.

Modem Manners for Little Monsters by Wilson Rogers. New York: Smithmark, 1998. Demonstrates how to take the pieces out of a pop-up book so that parents and teachers can assist children to use their imaginations and role-play situations in which they can use their manners to be kinder, fairer, and more gracious.

Tough Cookie by David Wisniewski. New York: Lothrop, Lees & Shepard, 1999. Compare the content of this story with the next on the list. The Cookie Monster (circa 1978) can also be compared with Dick and Jane's mother, baking cookies when Dick and Jane come home from school. They sat down to eat cookies and milk and talk to their mother each day (circa 1948). They were revived in 2003 in a 16-month calendar, on sale at Borders Bookstore.

Baker, Baker, Cookie Maker by Linda Hayward. New York: Children's Television Networks, 1978. Sesame Street's Cookie Monster is the baker. Compare this book with *Tough Cookie* and the *Dick and Jane* series to see beginning reading for the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X, and Generation Y.

Dear America—The Winter of Red Snow (The Revolutionary War Diary of Abigail Jane Stewart) by Kristiana Gregory. New York: Scholastic, 1996. Explains war from a woman s perspective and introduces historical fiction and diary writing to students.

TABLE 10.1. *continued*

Milo and the Magical Stones by Marcus Pfister. New York: North-South Books, 1997. Demonstrates new format for publishing students books; has two different endings so that students can choose which one they want to read.

Mice and Beans by Pam Munoz Ryan. New York: Scholastic, 2001. Depicts values that are traditional in many Hispanic homes.

One Leaf Rides the Wind by Celeste Davidson Mannis. New York: Viking, 2003. IRA 2003 Children's Book Award. Counting book that describes culture in Japan on each page. Also demonstrates how many books cannot be classified as only fiction or nonfiction. For ages 4–8.

The Aesop for Children. Barnes & Noble, 1993. 146 fables that can be read in only a few minutes to fill spare moments in the classroom and that are excellent for teaching inferencing by asking students to guess the morals. Students can also write their own contemporary fables about values they want all people to follow in our modern society. Originally published in 1919.

Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan. New York: Scholastic, 2000. Jane Addams Peach Association 2001 Children's Book Award. Teaches many values of Native American cultures.

Holiday Books, Inc. 2000 Series. Eight outstanding books that develop phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary fluency, and comprehension through activities that are described with books. To receive more information, e-mail John N. Mangieri, *jmangieri@rr.carolina.com*

Note. Compiled, reviewed, and copyrighted by Cathy Collins Block and John Mangieri. For additional information, contact Dr. Block at *c.block@tcu.edu* or Dr. Mangieri at *jmangieri@rr.carolina.com*.

A discovery discussion is important for several reasons. The new, younger generation no longer tries to please their teachers nor seeks to be told what to do as often as prior generations did. Urban students know the level of drive that they want to commit to reading, and they will work hard when they are internally motivated to do so. Also, discovery discussions enable urban students to learn how to become more active and independent comprehenders when they are reading silently. This independence is important in our new era of human history because urban students are having to read and receive more information at the same time as adults do, without having it filtered through an adult's interpretation, than has occurred for all prior generations. As you conduct these discovery discussions, you will also learn about many of the individual needs of your students that you can draw on when you plan small-group discussions.

Another action that addresses the needs of urban students through classroom conversations is to follow the checklist that appears in Table 10.2. This checklist will enable you to ensure that all children's voices become an integral part of all literacy lessons, so that children's specific needs are met daily.

Another instructional method that individualizes comprehension instruction is a "midyear survey." A midyear survey is conducted at the end of the first half of the year, right before students leave for winter vacation. It is composed of three questions that each student in grade 2 and above responds to in writing. In preschool to grade 2, these questions can be asked individually of urban students, and the students respond orally. Also, for the younger grades, the results are more valid if someone other than the teacher, such as an adult volunteer or an older classmate from grades 5 or 6, asks the questions. The reason is that the answers that urban students give to their teacher may be more positive than those they would give to someone who is outside of the classroom.

The three survey questions are the following:

1. "What activity did we do so far this year that has caused you to learn the most and why?"

TABLE 10.2. Checklist of Proactive Phonics, Concrete-Referent Vocabulary, and Student-Initiated Comprehension Process Methods for Urban Classrooms

_____	Ask a child, "What do you want me to do to help you?"
_____	Active modeling of phonics generalizations
_____	Open-up letter writing (describing what you are feeling)
_____	Painting [adjectives], doing [verbs], and naming [nouns] (words are highlighted in different colors as students read printed paragraphs)
_____	Buddy reading checklists (tutor writes and assesses while tutee reads)
_____	One–two–three word sorts by me (students sort 20–50 words three different times, using new categories of similarities between words for every sort)
_____	Reading-alone strategy checklists
_____	Can you think of the rhyme before I call time? (game whereby six rhyming words are said and/or read to find rhyming patterns rapidly)
_____	Whisper reading in guided reading groups
_____	Vocabulary-building strategies and word-learning principles (two vocabulary building principles taught together)
_____	Five new Dolch words or essential words displays at door each week (students say them each day as they leave)
_____	Three types of words/comprehension challenge walls (high-level question challenges are posted on charts in the room)
_____	The power of three (giving three examples before students work independently)
_____	Color-coded project folders
_____	Post-it note reading (students write their purposes, inferences, authors' main ideas, and conclusions they draw on Post-it notes inserted in pages in a book)
_____	Read two pages and then ask a student or the class to set a purpose
_____	Discovery discussions
_____	Teach the benefits of reading nonfiction
_____	Use children's literature published since 1993
_____	Demonstration of parent involvement in reading through material mailed home, Catch-Me-Reading Nights, and Parent Partners (reading with students in the classroom)
_____	"Scamper and scan until you choose to stop and savor": New method of reading nonfiction ("which section of this nonfiction book do you want to read first and why?")
_____	What question do you want to ask? After we've read this, what do you think I will ask? Why?

2. "If we were to include this activity more in the last half of the year, what do you recommend that we eliminate so that we will have time to do so? Why?"
3. "What activities have we not done so far this year that you would like to have us do when we come back from winter vacation? How would each of the ones that you list help you to learn?"

INSTRUCTIONAL GOAL 2: TEACHING URBAN STUDENTS HOW TO READ NONFICTION

For many reasons, it is important for us to teach the new, younger generation how to read nonfiction better than prior generations did. First, the majority of items on all standardized literacy tests written after 1998 contain nonfiction selections. For urban students to demonstrate how well they read, they have to know how to comprehend many forms of expository texts. A second reason that is important for us to teach urban students how to read nonfic-

tion is that we need to start teaching it differently from the way we teach children how to read fiction. Research has demonstrated that, when we do so, children have greater affective and cognitive responses not only to nonfiction but also to fiction (Block & Pressley, 2002; Block & Dellamura, 2001; Block, 2002; Block & Mangieri, 1995, 1996a, 1996b). The reason this holds true is that children who read everything using the same thought processes do not learn to appreciate the subtle format clues that authors provide when they write nonfiction, poetry, autobiographies, or fiction. When urban students are taught these subtle format features and characteristics of the writing style within different genres, they learn to appreciate the wide breadth of printed materials that are available to them to increase their knowledge and pleasure from reading.

A third reason that it is important to teach children to read nonfiction is that our world is becoming increasingly more rapid-paced, with greater and greater amounts of information being created daily. Because of this, urban students may lose a sense of stability and security about the role that they play in their own world or in the world of others. By reading nonfiction, they began to understand that no matter how often events seem chaotic, rapidly paced, or out of their control, they can nevertheless depend on certain rules of nature and laws within the physical and human world with which we interact. This sense of stability and security is growing increasingly more important to the new Generation Y. It cannot be gained by reading fiction alone. In fiction, literary characters experience difficulty after difficulty after difficulty. Some children have commented that reading about other people's difficulties increases their anxiety about their own problems (Block & Mangieri, 2003).

A final reason that it is important for us to began to teach nonfiction is that it increases children's appreciation of the breadth and depth of their literary and cultural heritage. These lineages need to be passed down to urban students so that a historical perspective can be maintained by the new generation.

Teachers can use five methods to increase students' ability to fall in love with nonfiction. The first is to stay abreast of the most recently published children's literature. This is important because children's authors lead the field in helping teachers to meet the newest needs that are emerging in children's lives. We recommend that you keep up with the most recently published literature by putting one person on your holiday shopping list to whom you will give a book. Because you do this, you will walk into a bookstore every year and purchase a book for someone you love. At the same time, make yourself a promise that you will go to the children's section of that bookstore and ask the children's book clerk to pull off the shelves all the nonfiction books that have been written since the prior December. In this way, you can skim and scan through those books to begin to understand what is attracting children to quality literature this year.

The second method rests on the research on which this chapter is based. It found that children want a friend beside them as they read nonfiction. This will be a rather easy instructional modification to make that will assist children to fall in love with nonfiction. Essentially, the teacher ensures that anytime the class reads a nonfiction selection, even if it is a chapter from a textbook, two students will be allowed to read side by side from the same book—silently, orally, or doing a form of assisted or repeated readings together. Children like this method because they want someone beside them to which they can say "wow" whenever they read something that they think is interesting. They also need their partners' help on words and concepts that are difficult for them to understand alone.

A third method to help children learn to love nonfiction is to teach them how to read nonfiction differently than they read fiction. We label this method "scamper and scan until I choose to stop and savor." The most successful method of teaching children to read nonfic-

tion is to allow them to skim and scan a book until they find something of great interest that they want to stop and learn about; then they read the material more slowly than they might read a fictional book. In this way, they do not feel that they have to read every single word in a nonfiction selection and that they can read some sections with great pausing and reflection, based on their individual interest. When you teach urban students the "scamper and scan until I choose to stop and savor" method, you are demonstrating how you as an adult read nonfiction. There are few nonfiction selections that you read word for word, cover to cover (e.g., reading the newspaper, a menu in a restaurant, instructions, or a magazine).

The next strategy is titled "two books at once." This means that a teacher will have two trade books on the same subject to be shared with children. The first can be read with the "scamper and scan until I choose to stop and savor" method; with the second, students can be asked what sections they want to read as the teacher slowly turns page by page. This strategy teaches children how to practice reading nonfiction in a format that is enjoyable and is done in a different manner from that in which they read fiction. To implement the two-books-at-once method, the teacher would allow children to select two books of their choice on the same topic. They could then meet with a partner, read those books as demonstrated, and write a report on what they have learned. They will then know that they do not have to read from cover to cover.

The fifth instructional method that enables urban students to learn to love nonfiction is to teach them to recognize authors' writing patterns. Nonfiction writers usually put their main idea as the first or last sentence of each paragraph, then use the remaining sentences in each of their paragraphs to describe details. Usually the details refer to the main sentence and answer the questions *how*, *what*, *where*, *when*, or *why*. By teaching urban students the pattern that an author follows, you can increase their comprehension, as authors usually follow this same pattern throughout the entire book. For example, in the book *Tree Frogs* (Weir, 2002), this is the pattern the author follows:

1. First sentence: Main ideas.
2. Second sentence: Detail about main idea; new vocabulary word highlighted.
3. Third sentence: Detail about main idea; new vocabulary word highlighted.
4. Fourth sentence: Detail about main idea.

GOAL 3: TEACHING URBAN STUDENTS TO TRANSFER COMPREHENSION PROCESSES INDEPENDENTLY

The last goal of this chapter is to describe developing, ongoing research on helping urban students to become better comprehenders when they read silently. It is important that we learn how to better build independent comprehension abilities because children are going to be forced to read silently, without teacher prompting, using comprehension processes throughout the rest of their lives. We briefly discuss three methods that we are exploring in present research studies that have assisted urban students to begin to comprehend without our prompting (Block, Rodgers, & Johnson, 2004). The first is called "comprehension process motions." A comprehension process motion is a hand signal students use to demonstrate the process that the mind is going through in comprehending a particular selection. There are 15 different motions that signal summarizing, clarifying, drawing conclusions, making predictions, inferring, and so forth. These motions are initiated by students while they are reading silently or while the teacher is reading orally to the total group, so that stu-

dents can show that they have initiated and engaged a comprehension process that improved their comprehension of what they were hearing or reading by themselves. Teachers who are using this method in our research study are keeping a checklist to ensure that all urban students are able to initiate each of the 15 comprehension processes without teacher prompting.

Another newly developed method is called "teacher reader groups." In teacher reader groups, urban students teach a comprehension process the day after or the next few minutes after the teacher has taught that process. The student becomes the leader of a group and actually reteaches what the teacher just taught, using either the same book or a different book. This lesson frees the teacher to go around and hear what children are saying about the comprehension process. The value of teacher reader groups is that the teacher learns how much the children have understood from her instructions and what needs to be taught again the next day. It also assists urban students' internalization of the comprehension process because they have to (1) verbalize the steps in the comprehension process, (2) answer questions, and (3) begin to put the process in their own words. All three of these actions have been demonstrated to improve children's comprehension (Block, Rodgers, & Johnson, 2004).

The last method that we are exploring to increase student's independent use of comprehension processes is called "Post-it note prompts." The teacher writes a particular strategy on a Post-it note and sticks it in an appropriate point in a book. Then children are to write how they used that comprehension process at that particular point in the book to reach full comprehension. For example, the teacher would write, "Set your own purpose for reading this book" on a Post-it note and post that note after about page 3. When students are reading that book by themselves and reach that Post-it note, they write the purpose they have for reading that book on the note. At about page 10, the teacher would write the word *infer*, and children would write down an inference they made after reading the first 10 pages of the book. On the next-to-last page of the book, the teacher would write, "Draw conclusions," and students would write their conclusions about how the book will end on that note. The teacher would then collect every child's book and grade what they wrote on each of these three notes to determine whether they used these three comprehension processes properly.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter is to report on national, state, and districtwide policies that have advanced urban students literacy, and to describe three goals for improving urban student's comprehension ability. The first goal is to individualize your instruction through discovery discussions and midyear surveys. The second goal is to teach children how to read nonfiction more effectively by staying current with children's literature, by allowing students to have a friend beside them as they read, by introducing two texts on the same subject together, and by teaching the "scamper and scan until you choose to stop and savor" method. The third goal is to teach children to read and to comprehend independently by using comprehension process motions, teacher reader groups, and Post-it notes.

In closing, we wish you every success as you teach for the rest of this and future school years. Our desire is that the information in this chapter will have assisted you to experience the joy of truly meeting the individual literacy needs of our new generation of vibrant and energetic readers who live in urban settings.

Suggested Titles: Pulling Books Together—Nonfiction with Fiction ("Two Books at Once")

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Bial, Raymond, illustrated with photos by the author	*Tenement: Immigrant Life on the Lower East Side*	2002	Houghton	48	With compelling clarity and insight, Bial documents the environments of immigrants, using photos taken at the Lower East Side, Manhattan, Tenement Museum. These illustrations, and the language that accompanies them, seem ideal to place beside immigrant/displacement stories, balancing the despair of poverty with the captured photographic details of home (and, often, hope).
Elya, Susan Middleton, illustrated by Felipe Davalos	*Home at Last*	2002	Lee & Low	32	The gentle story follows a family from Mexico to their new home in the United States—finding work, making adjustments, and learning a new language.
Herrera, Juan Felipe, illustrated by Elizabeth Gómez	*The Upside Down Boy/El Niño de Cabeza*	2000	Children's Press	48	As an 8-year-old, Juan Felipe Herrera felt like an "upside-down boy" when his migrant family settled in the city. In both English and Spanish, Juan's experiences are chronicled in this poetic Spanish and English text.

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PART III

BEST SCHOOLWIDE PRACTICES THAT INCREASE LITERACY LEARNING FOR STUDENTS IN URBAN CLASSROOMS

11

Improving Literacy Achievement and Professional Development through a K–12 Urban Partnership

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Beginning with the inception of normal schools in the 1830s and the development of land grant colleges in the 1860s, teacher education has been viewed as a professional field with a body of knowledge and skills to be mastered. Since they were first established in 1839 in Massachusetts, teacher education programs have included a field experience in a school, referred to as "practice teaching" (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2003). Thus teacher preparation programs and public schools share a historical relationship through the mutual goal of preparing teachers who can promote learning for every child. Unfortunately, this relationship has experienced tensions when the means of accomplishing the goal have differed (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

Recently, in an effort to ease these tensions and meet the increasingly complex needs of K–12 public schools and university teacher preparation programs, professional development schools (PDS) have been formed. These school–university partnerships promote joint planning and ongoing conversation among shareholders. They revolve around three major principles: (1) raising student achievement; (2) preparing teacher candidates; and (3) providing professional development for practitioners through inquiry (Abdal-Haaq, 1998).

By 2003, the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) estimated that 600 PDS currently exist (AACTE, 2003), although their functions and level of involvement vary from site to site. The majority of these partnerships were formed to effect collaborative school reform (usually in the K–12 system). Less commonly, some partnerships have also resulted in reforms at the university level when the evolving needs of the school require a college to alter its ways of work (Clark, 1999). These more comprehensive and sophisticated partnerships that acknowledge the need for changes in both K–12 and

higher education are likely to become more numerous, especially with the dissemination of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education's *Standards for Professional Development Schools* (2001). Recognizing the "poor articulation between professional preparation and the real world of school reform," NCATE argues that a PDS must "seek to develop the linkages that allow universities and schools to benefit from the relationship between them" (NCATE, 2001, p. 2).

It is difficult to generalize the documented benefits of school–university partnerships across settings. Each PDS progresses in its own way as it shapes itself to the special goals and needs of its members. Given that caveat, the research on these collaborative relationships has been positive. Its first purpose, student achievement, has been demonstrated through the development of innovative literacy programs (Barksdale-Ladd & Nedeff, 1997; Brown & Thomas, 1999), including tutoring for students struggling to read (Abdul-Haaq, 1998; Frey, 2003). PDS programs have also documented student growth in other subject areas, including writing and math (Knight, Wiseman, & Cooner, 2000). However, school–university partnerships may not always be apparent to students. In one study, elementary students attending a PDS were unaware of the partnership after one year of being in the school (King, 1996), suggesting that the enthusiasm of teachers for the collaboration had not been shared with their students.

The second mission of a PDS, preparation of teacher candidates, has been more thoroughly documented. Secondary-level student teachers in a PDS were found to be more effective classroom managers than their peers in non-PDS settings (Neubert & Binko, 1998). Administrators describe PDS candidates as being more competent at instruction than candidates in a traditional program (Reynolds, Ross, & Rakow, 2002; Wait & Warren, 2002) and better equipped to address diversity issues such as inclusive practices (Menchaca & Battle, 1997; Rademacher, Wilhelm, Hildreth, Bridges, & Cowart, 1998). Teachers prepared in PDS models were found to assume leadership roles more rapidly in their first years of teaching than those from traditional programs did (Snow-Gerono, Dana, & Silva, 2001) and more often viewed themselves as change agents (Cobb, 2001).

Finally, positive effects for practitioners have been recognized. Teacher accountability and effectiveness are positively affected (Anderson, 1997); teachers are more self-efficacious; and they engage in a practice of inquiry (Mills, Jennings, & Donnelly, 2001). A PDS partnership resulted in more effective collaboration in literacy instruction between general and special educators at an elementary school (Bos, Mather, Silver-Pacuilla, & Narr, 2000). Teachers in a middle school PDS reported that the benefits outweighed the challenges inherent in their new partnership (Mebane & Galassi, 2000). In addition, the PDS collaboration offers opportunities for emerging teacher leadership (Gonzales & Lambert, 2001; Lecos et al., 2000).

Based on these findings, the need for school–university partnerships is unquestioned. The remainder of this chapter focuses on the development and operation of a school–university partnership in an urban community that has resulted in significant gains in literacy achievement for students and in a supportive professional development program for teachers.

THE CITY HEIGHTS COLLABORATIVE: AN URBAN SCHOOL–UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

Who Is Involved?

The City Heights Educational Collaborative is a collaborative partnership between Price Charities, San Diego State University (SDSU), the San Diego Unified School District, and the San Diego Educators Association. The partnership is supported with grants and contracts

that have been competitively awarded, as well as a gift from Price Charities. It is important to note that studies of other PDS projects have shown that, beyond initial start-up costs, the continuing costs of maintaining the relationship are within the expected allocation of fiscal resources for both the school and the university (Pritchard & Ancess, 1999).

City Heights is one mile from SDSU and has an estimated population of 68,000 to 78,000 people who reside within 5 square miles, thus making it the most densely populated area of San Diego (6% of the total population of San Diego lives in City Heights). The three schools that make up the City Heights Educational Collaborative—Rosa Parks Elementary School (1,500 students), Monroe Clark Middle School (1,650 students), and Hoover High School (2,100 students)—educate a total of 5,200 ethnically diverse urban students. There are 39 languages spoken in the schools, and 76% of the students are English-language learners. These schools are located in an area of San Diego in which the average income of the families is under $16,000. Ninety-nine percent of these urban students receive free or reduced lunches. The ethnic composition of the schools is: 61% Latino(a), 19% African or African American, 15% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 5% European American.

Hoover High was the first school to join into a partnership with SDSU. In 1994, a program was begun that involved SDSU faculty as coaches working with Hoover teachers who were interested in implementing content-area reading strategies. Identified strategies were presented to a group of Hoover faculty by the SDSU coaches, who then worked individually in the teachers' classrooms, modeling and assisting with implementation as long as the teacher requested their support. Teachers were given graduate credit for their participation. This increased the number of teachers who were interested in pursuing graduate degrees. Teachers also applied and were selected to receive 6-week minisabbaticals so that they could study a topic that they felt would further enhance their teaching. Examples of topics that teachers chose to study were reciprocal teaching, book clubs, multicultural literature, second-language strategies, technology support, questioning strategies, and integrated literacy–content-area reading curricula. Test scores began to rise, and Hoover was given the National Title I Achieving and California Achieving School awards in 1995 and 1996 for raising test scores. Despite this significant progress, Hoover was still identified as the lowest performing high school in the county.

The needs and promise of this community have served as a point of intersection in the missions of each of the partnering organizations. In particular, the schools and the university have developed an innovative structure to improve student achievement through teacher development and diagnostic instruction. This willingness to continually invest in educators in order to reach students has evolved into a multidimensional collaboration. However, establishing and cultivating this partnership has meant that it is constantly being evaluated and redefined.

How Has Student Achievement Been Affected?

Over the past 5 years of the partnership, the literacy achievement of these 5,200 students has been drastically improved. In California, each school is given a numerical rating called an Academic Performance Index (API). At Rosa Parks elementary school, the API has increased by nearly 200 points over 4 years. No other school in the district or county reached this level of success. By 2002, 41% of second graders read at grade level, compared with only 18% in 1998. Similarly, in 2000, 78% of students at Monroe Clark Middle School scored in the lowest category on the state writing assessment. In 2002, only 18% of these students scored in the lowest category on this same assessment. At the high school level, Hoover teachers have agreed on schoolwide instructional strategies, schoolwide independ-

ent reading time, and administrative accountability systems. Together, these efforts have finally raised Hoover out of "last place," and the California statewide accountability targets have finally been met. In addition, the average Gates–MacGinitie reading scores for the students at Hoover increased from a schoolwide average of 4.7 to 7.0.

We were participants in this partnership, and we believe that several teacher development initiatives explained in the remainder of this chapter have resulted in these achievement changes. These major features are exportable and transferable ideas. Each is explained in greater detail.

WHAT DOES AN URBAN TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL–UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM INCLUDE?

The major components of professional development in the City Heights Educational Collaborative include (1) schoolwide literacy teams; (2) professional development and peer coaching; (3) student teachers and induction support; (4) on-site graduate programs; and (5) student mentoring and tutoring (see Figure 11.1).

Schoolwide Literacy Teams

When the partnership was first formed, each school elected a literacy leadership team (LLT) composed of teachers, staff, faculty from the department of teacher education at SDSU, ad-

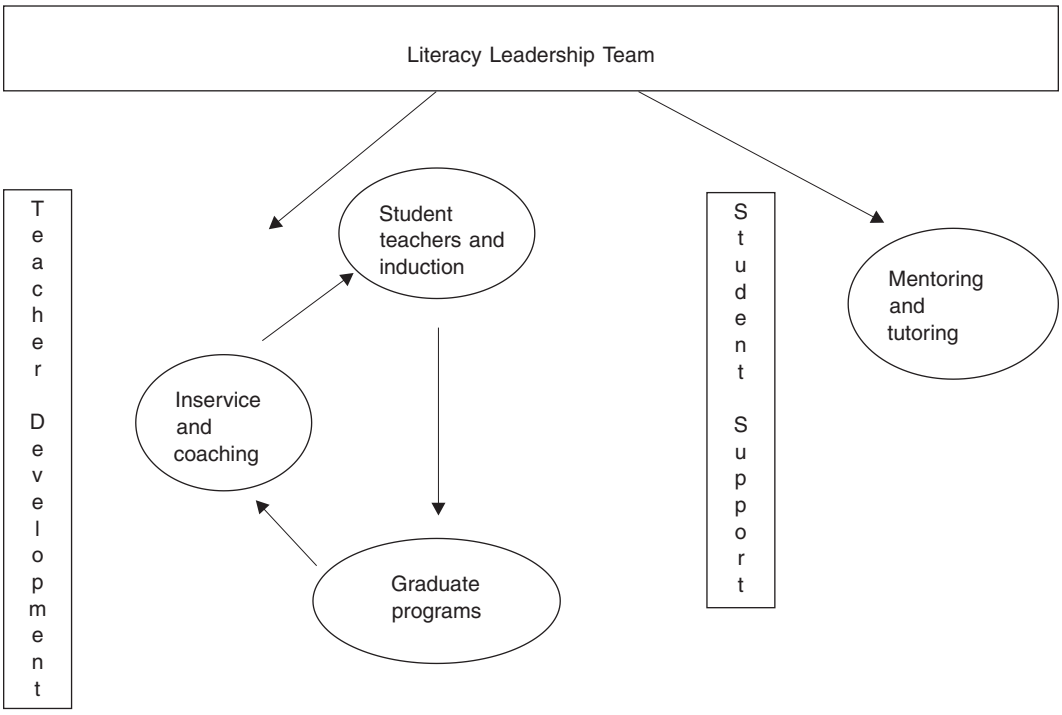

FIGURE 11.1. Overview of literacy improvement plan.

ministrators, and family members. The charge to this elected body was to develop a schoolwide literacy plan—one at the elementary school, one at the middle school, and one at the high school. Each site-based team wrote a draft of the literacy plan, submitted it to the school governance team for approval, and then presented it to the whole staff for ratification. The overall goal for the partnership was to ensure that each student in City Heights gained 1 year's literacy growth for each year in school. In light of the historical records for students in City Heights and the general understanding of literacy achievement in urban communities to be approximately one-half years' growth for each year in school (meaning that the average eighth grader read at only the fourth-grade level), this goal was momentous. In addition, each LLT was encouraged to develop site-based literacy achievement goals. For example, the Rosa Parks literacy leadership team adopted the goal of "1,000 days to be a reader," based on the work of Wheaton and Kay (1999), in which the school "guaranteed" that every student who attended their school for 1,000 days would be a reader.

During the first year of the partnership, extensive planning occurred. Each elected LLT met on at least a monthly basis, read professional books together (see Table 11.1 for a sample of the books read), and developed agreements, professional development plans, and implementation schedules.

For example, at Hoover High School, the LLT identified specific instructional strategies that could be implemented in every content area, such as read-alouds, graphic organizers, anticipatory activities, and vocabulary instruction (see Fisher, 2001). In addition to these specific strategies, the Hoover team also developed an implementation plan that included professional development for teachers. The team scheduled monthly staff development sessions during teachers' prep periods to provide everyone on the faculty with information, modeling, and supported practice to help them implement content-area instructional strategies.

The student population at this school includes many English-language learners, and LLT also noted that there were a number of students who read significantly below grade

TABLE 11.1. Professional Book Club Titles

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., Hamilton, L., & Kucan, L. (1997). *Questioning the author: An approach for enhancing student engagement with text*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Buss, K., & Karnowski, L. (2000). *Reading and writing literary genres*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Dahl, K., & Farnan, N. (1998). *Children's writing: Perspectives from research*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Good, T. L., & Brophy, J. E. (1997). *Looking in classrooms* (7th ed.). New York: Longman.

Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (1995). *Student achievement through staff development: Fundamentals of school renewal* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development. (Now in its third edition)

Mooney, J., & Cole, D. (2000). *Learning outside the lines*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Morrow, L. M., Gambrell, L. B., & Pressley, M. (Eds.). (2003). *Best practices in literacy instruction* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Wepner, S. B., Feeley, J. T., Strickland, D. S., & Cassidy, J. (Eds.). (1995). *The administration and supervision of reading programs* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press. (Now in its third edition)

Wood, K., Lapp, D., & Flood, J. (1992). *Guiding readers through text: A review of study guides*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

level. To address these student needs, they designed a one-on-one reading intervention program for those students (explained in greater detail later in this chapter). Also, the LLT created a schoolwide "silent sustained reading" period during which the entire school stopped to read for 20 minutes daily. Consistent with research on silent sustained reading (e.g., Pilgreen, 2000), students, teachers, staff, and administrators were provided time each day to read texts of their choice.

At the middle school level (Monroe Clark Middle School), the literacy leadership team focused on restructuring the English classes by creating a literacy block for all students at the school. The course was reformed to focus on genre studies, in which students experience shared reading lessons with focused comprehension instruction, independent reading time, word study activities, and writing workshops (e.g., Allen, 2001; Worthy, Broaddus, & Ivey, 2001). Other ventures included infusing content literacy strategies into all other classes and creating a schoolwide writing initiative. Each of these areas focused on ensuring that each middle school student gained at least 1 year of literacy achievement for each year in school. In addition, the literacy leadership team at Clark developed a one-on-one reading intervention program that was directed by a reading resource teacher (specialist) as a way of closing the literacy achievement gap for the most struggling readers.

At the elementary school level (Rosa Parks Elementary School), the focus of instruction centered on interactive writing at the primary grade levels (McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 1999), guided reading at all grade levels (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996), and content literacy instruction in the upper grades (e.g., Lapp, Flood, & Farnan, 1995). In addition, the team created a comprehensive professional development plan that provided teachers with two professional development events each month that focused on the instructional strategies agreed to in the plan. The university faculty and literacy coaches were available to work with individual teachers as they implemented these strategies and other targeted areas identified by the teacher. In addition, the LLT recommended hiring Reading Recovery teachers for struggling first-grade students and reviewed the language arts standards with each grade level to ensure that all teachers understood the development of literacy skills.

The collaboration among the literacy leadership teams at each school has resulted in a cross-fertilization of ideas across school settings. It has become more common to see members of another school's LLT working in classrooms with teachers and observing practices not commonly viewed at their own school. For example, members of the high school team spent many hours observing guided reading instruction and engaging in conversations with elementary classroom teachers in order to more fully understand reading development and small-group guided instruction. The high school team later shared this information with secondary English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers to develop assessment and instruction practices appropriate for their learners. More recently, the elementary and middle school literacy leadership teams have gone to the high school to participate in informational sessions on the newly instituted High School Exit Exam now required for all California graduates. As one elementary team member remarked, "It's given me a much clearer sense of what the kids need to be prepared to face."

Professional Development and Peer Coaching

Once the literacy leadership teams at each school had identified their core initiatives, professional development activities began. Each school delivered professional development in different ways, ranging from early-release Wednesdays for the elementary school to prep period sessions at the high school. The common factor in each of these, however, was the

partnerships in presentations. At each professional development event, teachers from the school and SDSU faculty planned and delivered the information. Thus no sessions were dominated by either professors doing all of the talking or teachers doing all of the sharing.

Each school created year-long professional development calendars (see Table 11.2 for a sample calendar). These sessions focused on specific components of the plans that were developed by the literacy leadership teams. The focus outlined by the original LLTs was continued for several years, with only slight modifications. This consistency in professional development was an important factor in the project's collective success. Plans did not change monthly or yearly, as has been the experience of too many teachers (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Shifting professional development plans can send the message that "this too shall pass" and that the expectations are not real.

The LLTs also knew that simply providing informational sessions was not sufficient to affect teaching practices. As a result, each school identified a peer coach—a teacher who was released from daily classroom responsibilities and who could provide teachers with demonstration lessons, additional resources, and reflective conversations (see Lapp, Fisher, Flood, & Frey, 2003). These release-time teachers were paid for with a combination of Title 1, grant, and site-based instructional funds. Peer coach positions were posted for the schools and were hired by an elected search committee.

Over time, these peer coaches at each of these urban schools facilitated peer-to-peer coaching during which teachers were released from their classrooms to visit other teachers and have conversations about teaching and learning. By visiting each other's classrooms, teachers extended their instructional repertoires. As a result, peer accountability that was

TABLE 11.2. Sample Professional Development Calendar

Date and time	Presenter(s)	Topic
August 29, 8–2:30	Harry Wong	Classroom management
September 19, prep periods	Staff Development Committee and Nancy Frey	Anticipatory activities
October 24, prep periods	Staff Development Committee and Rita ElWardi	Vocabulary instruction
November 9, 8–2:30	Doug Fisher, Doug Williams, Vernon Moore	Curriculum alignment and instructional strategies
November 21, prep periods	Staff Development Committee and mentor teachers	Graphic organizers
December 19, prep periods	Staff Development Committee and Doug Fisher	Shared reading and read alouds
January 16, prep periods	Staff Development Committee and Christine Johnson	Writing to learn
February 13, 8–2:30	Anita Archer	Motivating students and inclusive participation
February 20, prep periods	Staff Development Committee and Lee Mongrue	Note taking
March 20, prep periods	Staff Development Committee and Doug Fisher	Test-taking skills
April 10, prep periods	Staff Development Committee and Tom Fehrenbacher	Reciprocal teaching
May 22, prep periods	Sheri Sevenberger	Silent sustained reading policy and implementation

not connected to the teacher evaluation system became a significant motivator and change force. Peer support and coaching was much more powerful in validating and extending teaching practices (Gottesman, 2000). University faculty were also field based at the school sites as a part of either their regular or overload work responsibilities. This was a significant factor because it indicated a willingness to support teacher development and also that university faculty could teach in and learn from public school classrooms. We believe this professional authenticity is important to the success of a PDS. It says that university faculty are not just "the sage on the stage." Many teachers stated that they were more open to university faculty suggestions once they were convinced that "these professors could really teach" (comment from a first-grade teacher). Just as important, university faculty members were able to experience pedagogy in "real time" by observing the evolution of student learning as it is affected by the many mitigating factors of daily school life.

One of the important components (and a well-received one) is the book club. Teachers in all three schools were invited by the LLT to join various book discussion groups, and some teachers participated in more than one book club. Some of the book clubs shared professional books, such as *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction* (Morrow, Gambrell, & Pressley, 2003). This group, composed of teachers from all three schools who wanted to improve their literacy instruction, met for an entire semester to discuss selected chapters. Responsibility for leading each session was rotated among the group's membership. After they completed the book club, they presented ideas from the book to their grade-level team or department.

A second book club group, composed of teachers and administrators at Rosa Parks Elementary, was provided with copies of *Because of Winn-Dixie* (DiCamillo, 2000). They all read the book and discussed it in small groups. Then a whole-school discussion of the themes and implications of the book was facilitated by Miriam Martinez from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Book clubs, which are ongoing within and across school faculties, can be initiated by anyone in the PDS. One example is the middle school's principal's book club that read *The Skin I'm In* (Flake, 1998). This book club of volunteer teachers and their administrator focused much of their discussion on the book's implications for teaching, as well as strategies to use to teach the book to young adolescents.

At Hoover High School, the librarian regularly shares books immediately following prep period staff development sessions. Teachers sign up for books, which are provided by the school, and meet in small groups to discuss the books. The agreement is that the teacher will share the book with his or her class as a "book talk" during the silent sustained reading period and then add the book to the classroom library. Titles have ranged from *Seabiscuit: An American Legend* (Hillenbrand, 2001) to *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2001) to *Quilting the Black-Eyed Pea: Poems and Not Quite Poems* (Giovanni, 2002). At all the schools, the librarian and literacy leadership team attempt to identify books that appeal to both teachers and high school students. In this way, they create substantial literary conversations between and among teachers and teachers, teachers and students, and students and students throughout all three schools. Of course, these conversations are all focused on reading and learning about the world through books.

Recently, book conversations have expanded to include every faculty member of the three schools simultaneously. In 2003, all staff met on a planning day before the start of the school year to meet one of the authors of *Learning Outside the Lines* (Mooney & Cole, 2000). Each participant received a copy of the book that day, and many informal book clubs were formed in subsequent weeks to discuss the book. The first part of the book recounts the school experiences of the two authors, both with learning disabilities, as they struggled

with an educational system that was not as responsive as it should have been to their individual needs. The remainder of the book contains useful advice for students who have similar learning needs, including study and organizational skills, self-advocacy, and managing reading and writing assignments. More recently, the book has crossed over to the high school students who have been introduced to the book through silent sustained reading book introductions led by their teachers.

Teachers report that learning about quality literacy instruction and the rationale for that instruction, models for implementing quality instruction, peer coaching and support, and professional book clubs has resulted in extending and validating their teaching skills. They often note that sharing books in a book club setting is a most helpful approach to their professional development. As one of the elementary teachers said, "They feed my teaching soul. I get information, peer support, a chance to read and discuss information with colleagues, and a chance to improve myself regularly. What else could I ask for—and all this makes me a better teacher!" This focus on continued personalized teacher development is supported by the position statement of the International Reading Association (IRA, 2003) that "Better teachers who are competent to teach reading are essential if national and state goals for closing the achievement gap (e.g., differences in reading achievement between African American, Hispanic, and Native American students and their white counterparts) are to be realized."

Student Teachers and Induction Support

Preservice Teacher Education

In addition to professional development for inservice teachers, the LLTs also identified teacher turnover as a concern. Teacher turnover fractures the schoolwide nature of the professional development and implementation plans. When a school has significant numbers of new teachers, more resources are focused on teacher induction rather than continued professional development for tenured teachers.

To address this issue, the LLTs implemented two strategies: (1) expanding on-site field placements for credential and induction programs and (2) introducing on-site graduate programs. In terms of the on-site credential program, the three City Heights schools increased the number of student teachers who were field based at one of the three schools from approximately 10 to 70 per year. Not only does this result in increased student-to-teacher ratios (e.g., Fisher, Frey, & Farnan, in press), but it also allows the schools in partnership with the university to "grow their own" new teachers (Frey, 2002).

As noted by one of the members of the literacy leadership team, "the student teachers become enculturated in our school. They understand our literacy plan and our professional development efforts. We test them out and they get to test us out. So we really have first-year teachers who are more like veterans."

Student teachers are one of the resources that a university has to offer urban schools. One of the founding principles of the City Heights Educational Collaborative was the creation of the "educational equivalent of a teaching hospital." Acknowledging the problems with the medical model, members from Price Charities believed that new teachers had to learn to teach in urban schools if urban schools were ever going to change. The SDSU faculty believed that hiring student teachers would reduce school turnover because these new teachers would have had experience in urban schools, would understand the culture of the schools, and would subsequently choose to work there.

During the credential year, the student teachers in the credential programs based in City Heights were introduced to a wide range of literature that encouraged them to examine their beliefs regarding a range of human experience. A variation of a book club was created for the credential students. In these book clubs, an SDSU faculty member selects the readings and facilitates the discussions. In addition to teaching student teachers how to operate book clubs in their future classrooms, the goal of this experience was to ensure that student teachers had examined their biases and understood that people have different values and cultural traditions. In many cases, these values and traditions differ between the student teachers, who are mostly white females, and the children and their families in urban schools. The selections they read ranged from *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* (Lord, 1984) to *Am I Blue* (Bauer, 1994) to *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990). For a complete list of recent student-teacher book club titles, see Table 11.3.

Interestingly, many of the student teachers discussed their book club books with their cooperating or supervising teachers, indirectly influencing the tenured teachers. One of the student teachers reported that a second-grade student had told the class that he lived with his two moms. The student teacher recalled some of the books that she was introduced to in book club, including *All Kinds of Families* (Simon, 1987) and *Families Are Different* (Pellegrini, 1991). She talked with her cooperating teacher about celebrating the diversity of families during an upcoming social studies unit and was pleased to be asked to take the lead in teaching the unit.

Beginning Teacher Support

As in many urban schools, the staff at the partnership schools is composed of many new teachers. Some have come directly from the PDS credential program, whereas others have joined the schools from other universities. Regardless of where they received their preparation, all novice teachers benefit from an induction period of at least 2 years that is supportive, productive, and positive. In order to accomplish this, the City Heights Educational Collaborative hired a full-time teacher-induction coordinator who could provide training and support to mentor-peer teachers, thus ensuring that new teachers' induction was successful.

New teachers share the book *First Day Jitters* (Danneberg, 2000) at their first induction program meeting. Exploring the fears that the teacher depicted in the text has about starting the school year opens an honest conversation among the new teachers about the fears they have as they begin their careers. This provides an opportunity to share ideas about getting the class off to a good start, letting them know that sharing parts of themselves with their students builds trust and that being honest with students creates respect. Also discussed is the establishment of procedures and rules that will guide the classroom and prevent problem behaviors from occurring. Each new teacher is provided with a copy of *First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher* (Wong & Wong, 2001) and with a mentor-peer teacher who meets with the new teacher monthly to provide support. All the literacy team members from the three schools serve as mentor-peer teachers to induction-program teachers. This ensures a seamless support model for the new teacher because the mentor is always available to offer demonstration lessons, provide guidance in planning, and troubleshoot unexpected problems that arise.

During the first semester of the induction program, the new teachers often become concerned about the statewide testing program. They are provided with the standard test-readiness materials from the district, as well as information on the testing guidelines from the administrators. They also are provided a copy of the book *Testing Miss Malarkey* (Finchler,

TABLE 11.3. Book Club Titles from the Credential Program

Author	Title
Ada, Alma Flor	*My Name Is Maria Isabel*
Coere, Eleanor	*Sadako and the Thousand Cranes*
Kerr, M. E.	*Deliver Us from Evie*
Lord, Bette Bao	*In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson*
Lowry, Lois	*Number the Stars*
Lowry, Lois	*Giver*
Mcalachan, Patricia	*Sarah, Plain and Tall*
Pitt, Paul	*Racing the Sun*
Shyer, Marlene	*Welcome Home, Jellybean*
Soto, Gary	*Baseball in April and Other Stories*
Taylor, Mildred	*Friendship and the Gold Cadillac*
Taylor, Mildred	*Mississippi Bridge*
Whelan, Gloria	*Hannah*

2000). This book provides a humorous look at test stress from the teacher's perspective. One of the mentor teachers reads this book aloud, laughing all the way, and then provides each new teacher with a copy to share with his or her class.

Over the course of their induction years, new teachers in City Heights are supported and encouraged to develop as professional educators. One recently tenured teacher noted, "It seems like I've been learning to teach for several years now. My credential program was great, and it was extended right though my tenure. I know that I can ask for help or ideas and not be shamed for it. I also know that there are people who are more than willing to share their ideas and resources with me. I can't imagine that I will stop learning now. The master's program is my next step, then who knows what."

Graduate Programs

As previously noted, on-site graduate programs was another need identified by the LLTs. Graduate programs were believed to be one of the ways to stop the turnover in these urban schools. Continuous education was also believed to be a way to ensure that all teachers within the schools had current information about literacy instruction. The data to date suggest that both goals were accomplished.

In terms of teacher turnover, the rate of 40% prior to the formation of the partnership has been reduced to 10%. In other words, 4 of 10 teachers used to leave the schools each year, whereas today only 1 of 10 does. Some turnover is expected and good—teachers retire, are promoted to administrative or district-level positions, have children, or move out of the area. Some turnover allows administrators to hire the newest student teachers and continue the exchange of ideas and techniques.

In terms of professional education, before the partnership began the percentage of teachers who held graduate degrees was well below the county average of 36%. In 2002, 70% of the teachers in City Heights held graduate degrees, significantly more than in any other area of the city.

In terms of replication, it is important to note that teachers were provided access to graduate school at no cost. These degree programs were paid for by SDSU, reducing the cost

of tuition through a cooperative agreement and a competitively awarded grant for professional development. It is also important to note that no "payback" was required from the participants. Contrary to the recommendations of some of the team members, teachers were not asked to sign agreements that they would continue to work in City Heights after receiving their degrees. A conscious decision not to create indentured servants of teachers who did not want to be part of the City Heights environment was made by the administrators.

In terms of the curriculum, the classes were focused on literacy—reading and writing—appropriate to the grade levels that teachers taught. The courses focused on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The first class included an action research project, and the final class required participants to conduct an action research study in their classrooms and to write the results. In addition, during the first class, teachers were introduced to the book *Through the Cracks* (Sollman, Emmons, & Paolini, 1994). This book supported a discussion of how to engage all students and not let any of them "fall through the cracks." The courses they completed to ensure that this did not happen included:

- Writing Instruction and Assessment, K–12
- English Language Development—Theory and Practice
- Content Area Reading and Learning
- Advanced Issues in Instruction: Problem-based Learning
- Children's and Adolescents' Literature
- Technology, Teaching, and Learning
- Leadership and Communication Skills
- Seminar in Reading Education

Regardless of the class, teachers were introduced to both theory and practice. They were also provided access to books and materials that could be used in their classrooms. A key feature of these classes was that they were cotaught by a faculty member from SDSU and at least one teacher from City Heights. For example, the children's and adolescents' literature class was cotaught by the elementary and middle school librarians and a professor from SDSU. As one of the teachers reported, "My master's program really tore down the walls between the university and the school. I saw my colleagues and professors work together to provide us the best class they could. I learned so much every week that I could use in my classroom."

Mentoring and Tutoring: One-on-One Instruction

The initiatives presented to date focused on long-term student achievement changes. In addition to these investments in the future, we made a decision to address the more immediate needs of struggling readers. After reviewing several research studies (e.g., Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, & Moody, 2000; Vellutino & Scanlon, 2001; Wasik & Slavin, 1993), we decided that our most struggling readers required one-on-one instruction. The LLT at each school developed the criteria for selecting students who would receive tutoring, identified a lead person responsible for the tutoring program, briefed teachers about the additional tutors who would be working in their classrooms, and recruited and trained the tutors.

The tutors came from a variety of sources, including student teachers who had completed their credentials but who had not yet been hired, undergraduate college students enrolled in community service classes, employees who volunteered as part of their business partnership with the school, or paraprofessionals who worked at the school. They were pro-

vided training on individualized instruction and the use of a 30-minute lesson plan (Frey, 2003).

Each of the tutors participated in a weekly seminar on teaching reading that was taught by SDSU faculty and school reading specialists. The content of these weekly seminars focused on linking instruction with assessment, implementing one-on-one instruction, miscue analysis, and text selections. In addition to providing formal training to the intervention tutors about reading instruction, we wanted them to value the students they tutored. Past experience has taught us that tutors can sometimes develop feelings of pity for students who struggle to read. We wanted the tutors in City Heights to celebrate achievements and focus on positive interactions with the students they tutored. Thus we read and discussed the book *Thank You, Mr. Falker* (Polacco, 1998) with each of them before they began their work. The tutoring coordinator personally inscribed a copy of the book for each tutor, with a note that suggested that the tutor could be the one who connected with the student and was remembered years later. During the weekly seminars, the tutors also read and discussed books such as *Onion John* (Krumgold, 1959) and *Bud, Not Buddy* (Curtis, 1999).

The discussions the tutors had about the resilience of students as a result of the book discussions were an important component of the success of the intervention. The site-based instructional leaders and SDSU faculty members facilitated these conversations. Thus the tutors understood both their instructional role *and* their role in mentoring young people. As one of the tutors reported, "I feel like I'm Jarrod's lifeline to literacy. He sees me every day for about 30 minutes and we work on his reading. He's opened up to me, expresses his goals for reading, and works hard to improve." One of the teachers commented during a staff meeting that "the progress students are making is amazing. I've never seen so much growth in my 18 years of teaching!"

CONCLUSION

Although public school student achievement is an important goal in a school–university partnership, it is not the only goal. Breaking the cycle of dependency and exploitation that befalls inner-city residents requires a comprehensive approach to educate and empower citizens at their doorsteps. The City Heights Educational Collaborative embodies such an approach. Beyond the student literacy achievement presented in the beginning of this chapter, SDSU has already seen measurable gains from this holistic approach that include increased inner-city representation and diversity in freshman classes, higher SAT and GPA admittance scores, and elimination of remedial programs. At the same time, SDSU research and professional development programs are more focused and responsive to the challenges and opportunities that exist in diverse urban communities and their schools. We offer this model as one way to foster student achievement and ongoing professional development of teachers in urban schools.

Suggested Titles: Knowing Who Shows Up to Learn

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Hartinger, Brent	*Geography Club*	2003	HarperTempest	226	The Geography Club is a code name for a school gay club, deliberately named to discourage other kids from joining. *The Horn Book* review calls it the most "artful and authentic depiction of a gay teen since M. E. Kerr" (*Horn Book*, 2003, p. 210).
Na, An	*A Step from Heaven*	2001	Front Street	156	Although Korean immigrant Young Ju anticipates her new life in America as "a step from heaven," the realities of poverty and a strange culture strain family relationship and unity.
Woodson, Jacqueline	*Miracle's Boys*	2000	Putnam's	131	Orphaned and struggling to survive together, three brothers, ages 13 to 22, make their precarious way in a rundown urban neighborhood. Woodson offers themes worth talking over—sacrifice, blame, temptation, regret, and hope. Winner of the Coretta Scott King Award.
Martinez, Victor	*Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida*	1998	HarperTrophy	224	Manny Hernandez, 14, with a dad who rages, a mother who scrubs, and a brother who can't keep a job, considers his options for gaining respect—and they point toward joining a gang. Winner of the ALA Pura Belpre Award and the National Book Award for Young People's Literature.

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12

Literacy Learning for Every Child in an Urban Classroom

Can We Raise Scores and Scholars?

SHARON O'NEAL
SARAH NELSON
LASHUN GAINES
ANN VALENTINO

It is 7:45 A.M. at Houston Elementary School in Austin, Texas. Twenty-six university students are interning in 15 classrooms in this urban elementary school, often recognized for its outstanding programs and test performance. In one classroom, the university student assists the teacher as she provides practice for the upcoming Texas Assessment of Knowledge Skills (TAKS). This test, given in the spring to third, fourth, and fifth graders at every school in Texas, is a high-stakes accountability measure created by the state.

As of the 2002–2003 school year, the third-grade test determines who moves to fourth grade and who stays behind. Although the entire morning in this classroom is devoted to teaching students the format of the TAKS, it has not been that way all year. Ms. Ann Valentino has carefully selected worksheets that represent the brief 600- to 900-word passages found on the TAKS. She shares with students test-taking tips and ways to look for answers found in the text. She warns students about answers that sound correct but that are not stated in the passages. Her students bear with her and work their way though the worksheets that they know may determine their future in public schools.

Those same students also know that this afternoon, they will meet in small groups (literature circles) to discuss their latest book, *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan. During this time they will read, write, and talk about the book and listen to each other as each describes his or her insights and understandings about Esperanza and her family. Later, they will also take time to visit the science lab, where their careful observations of hands-on science experiments are logged into a journal, and where scholarly arguments can erupt over how and why an event occurred. Next, they will go to the library, where Ms. Murray, the li-

brarian, might be found on a sofa, children at her side and at her feet as she reads her favorite book, *Holes* by Louis Sacher. The students notice that Ms. Murray is reading from her treasured copy, signed by Sacher with a personal note to her. Students will know they are welcome to join the intimate group or to browse for new titles.

On their way to the library, students will pass student artwork at every turn. African masks and murals of animals greet the eye. Quotations from famous artists line the hallways. Pablo Picasso reminds students and teachers that "Painting is just another way of keeping a diary." Jackson Pollock's words tell us that "Every good painter paints what he is." August Rodin advises us that "Nothing is a waste of time if you use the experience wisely." Such quotes remind students, teachers, and guests at this school not only to treasure the visual arts but also to consider the important connections between the arts and our scholarly lives in all content areas. Houston Elementary students are constantly reminded of what it means to be a scholar.

At a nearby school, one would also find students practicing for the upcoming TAKS text. Again, teachers like Ann have searched and carefully selected a repertoire of texts that represent what they think their students will find on the test. Students practice reading and math items for most of the day. Often the practice preempts the teacher's reading aloud of a favorite text after lunch. Hands-on science and social studies tasks are virtually nonexistent and have been replaced by science and social studies texts presented in a test-preparation format. Students are well behaved and work hard because they understand the importance of both their individual performance and their school's performance on this high-stakes test.

Traditionally, both of these schools have done well on the Texas tests. Both schools are interested in ensuring that disenfranchised student populations perform well on the given test day. Both schools raise scores. One school raises scores and scholars. We submit that the latter is what we as teachers, administrators, and university professors are obligated to do.

WILL WE LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND?

Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), originally coined the phrase "leave no child behind" as the primary mission statement of her organization. The Children's Defense Fund, through lobbying efforts both in Washington, DC, and throughout the country, works to protect the best interest of children. In particular, the CDF addresses the physical and emotional health needs, as well as the educational needs, of poor and minority children and those with disabilities. Edelman's phrase has been borrowed by the current president's administration to address the narrower concern of children's academic needs in the area of literacy. The Department of Education speaks of growth in literacy as measured by tests, often constructed solely of multiple-choice items. With a national philosophy of "leave no child behind," educators are anxious to do all they can to raise the achievement of children at risk for failing. However, at Houston Elementary School, teachers such as Ann Valentino and others are trying their best to prepare students not only to perform well on our state tests but also to develop a love, a hunger, and a need for literacy learning.

Creating a love of literacy learning in the age of "leave no child behind" is a formidable task. Under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, all states must create "standards for what students should know and learn." By 2005, each state must create a comprehensive testing program that measures the progress of every student in grades 3–8 (*www.nclb.gov/next/overview/index.html*). In this NCLB accountability system, success is measured almost exclusively by test scores, and failure results in high-stakes consequences.

Research on existing high-stakes accountability systems, such as the one followed in Texas, suggest that valuing test scores above all else encourages teachers to narrow the curriculum to include only what is on the test (Linn, 1998; McNeil, 2000; Shepard, 1995) and to teach skills in formats that mimic the test (Corbett & Wilson, 1991; Haney, 2000; Heubert & Hauser, 1999; Kohn, 2000; McNeil, 2000; McNeil & Valenzuela, 1998). This test-prep approach leaves little room for developing a love of literacy learning. As a result, students become aliterate. That is, they may learn *how* to read, but they *choose not* to read.

As educators in the state of Texas, the teachers at Houston Elementary have lived with high-stakes accountability for many years. They know that test scores are important and that they have an obligation to ensure that their students meet the state standards. In the Texas system, failure to meet the standards has negative consequences for both students and educators. Students who fail state tests are routinely relegated to remedial instruction (McNeil, 2000; McNeil & Valenzuela, 2001). Educators who fail to raise test scores may be removed from their positions (McNeil, 2000) and are, at the very least, limited in their ability to criticize the assessment system (Nelson, 2002).

In spite of these potential negative consequences, the teachers at Houston Elementary actively resist a narrow, test-driven curriculum. They do so because they believe all students deserve a full, literature-rich program. They know from their experiences that through such comprehensive instruction it is possible to raise both scores and scholars.

THE TENETS OF LITERACY INSTRUCTION AT HOUSTON ELEMENTARY

But how do these urban teachers at Houston Elementary accomplish this lofty goal of raising urban scores and urban scholars? Teachers at Houston seem to base their successful work with students on five tenets. First, these teachers know who they are. Second, they know their urban students. Third, they know good literature. Fourth, they know the importance of responding to literature for urban youth and of sharing those responses with peers and teachers. Fifth, they are exceptionally knowledgeable about the reading and writing processes. In the remainder of this chapter, we describe how these five tenets distinguish Houston Elementary educators from peers who may improve the test scores of students at their urban schools but who are less successful in raising scholars.

Houston Teachers Know Who They Are

If you walked into LaShun Gaines's second-grade classroom at the beginning of the year, you would find a wall covered with photographs and memorabilia that describe her devotion to her work and her family. Without ever speaking to her, you would know that she has a loving extended family that includes three young children and a husband who is a coach at a nearby middle school. You would know that she is a poet and that some of her poems have been published. You would know she has a passion for teaching, for students, and for good books. During the course of that first day, she talks about these artifacts that describe her life and invites children to bring in artifacts that might describe theirs. She takes the advice of renowned author Lucy Calkins and shares Cynthia Rylant's memoir of her grandparents, *When I Was Young in the Mountains*. Students leave that first day of school knowing about their teacher's life outside of school, as well as her scholarly passions (poetry and books). The next day, many students come carrying an artifact to discuss with the class.

Houston Teachers Know Their Students

Ms. Gaines also embraces the second tenet that guides her instruction: to know her students. As students begin to bring their treasured objects to school, she makes a plan to display these artifacts and celebrate each child on a special day. Such deep knowledge of children is also seen every day in the hallway conversations between teachers and students. It is noticed in the late hours after school as teachers are leaving and as the middle school bus is dropping off students from previous years. It is not unusual to see Ms. Gaines and other teachers stopped at their cars, probably eager to return to their own families, but taking the time to quietly listen as a middle school student tells them about his or her life beyond Houston Elementary. These teachers know their students. Knowing themselves and their students provides the knowledge base for selecting books for their classrooms. Those urban teachers are committed to making a wide variety of high-quality books both available and unavoidable in all classrooms.

Houston Teachers Know Good Books

Classrooms such as Ms. Gaines's and Ms. Valentino's display memoirs, true stories, fiction, and articles from magazines. Students know Doreen Rappaport's *Martin's Big Words* and Lesa Cline-Ransom's *Satchel Paige*. They know Louis Sacher's *Holes* and Katherine Paterson's *Jacob Have I Loved*. Award-winning texts, such as Faith Ringgold's *Tar Beach* and Jerry Spinelli's *Maniac Magee*, line the shelves. As a result, students know such authors as Betsy Byars, Beverly Clearly, E. B. White, Virginia Hamilton, Cynthia Voigt, Kate DiCamillo, Gary Soto, and Walter Dean Myers. Nonfiction pieces also abound in their classrooms. One day students are reading about the secret codes slaves created in quilts to show others how to escape to freedom. The next day they are reading Deborah Hopkinson's *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* and drawing comparisons between the fiction and the nonfiction pieces. However, just being exposed to good literature is not enough. Teachers at Houston also understand the importance of responding to reading and sharing those responses with peers and teachers.

Houston Teachers Know Reader Response

Louise Rosenblatt (1938/1983, 1978) taught us that there is a difference between reading for information and connecting with literature on a personal level. Both types of reading (i.e., efferent and aesthetic) rely on a reader's experiences prior to coming to the page of text. Whereas our high-stakes tests in Texas ask our students for the literal gist of a piece of text, with as little emphasis as possible on more aesthetic responses, Houston teachers ask students to know and understand literature in more personal ways. These teachers contend that students who connect to literature on a personal level are better readers than those who do not respond in these ways. In LaShun's second-grade class, for instance, a simple read-aloud such as *Satchel Paige* by Lesa Cline-Ransome takes over a week. Second graders want to know why an athlete as gifted as Paige was relegated to a Negro league. Ms. Gaines extends the conversation by discussing the word *determination* and sends students off to research the baseball leagues of the 1940s. She is careful not to impose her adult ideas of what this text and other texts mean. Instead, her students are guided and nourished to discover on their own how and why Paige became a legend. As Purves noted in 1975, "it takes two to

read a book." Responses to text must be active and talked about with others for the reading experience to be valued (Squire, 1994).

Houston Teachers Know Reading

As these skilled teachers guide students through texts and invite exploration and response, students are learning important reading skills. For example, prior to reading the first chapter of *Esperanza Rising,* an entire class period was spent discussing how some people (both real and fictionalized) triumphed over adversity. Fifth-grade students discussed family heroes and heroines, athletes, and favorite book characters who were able to manage when their lives were exceptionally difficult. Names such as Wilma Rudolph, Martin Luther King, César Chávez, and Helen Keller emerged. During this book discussion, one fifth-grade student, Prisma, who had recently lost her sight, admitted that she was overcoming adverse conditions in her own life and that it wasn't always easy. These fifth graders nodded in agreement as Prisma gave us a glimpse of her struggles as a blind person.

Such personal connections underscore the importance of inviting children into literature as active participants. Such students understand the importance of connecting what they know to what they are about to read. As these students are growing in their understanding of how to connect to literature, they are also growing in their understanding of what it means to be human. These Houston Elementary School urban students excel both at the tests they are required to take and as emerging scholars.

Houston Teachers Reflect

As Houston teachers embrace these tenets, they also reflect on how best to continue their work. Just as the students see themselves as emerging scholars, the teachers view themselves as emerging teachers of literature. The journey is not always an easy one. LaShun Gaines likens her work to that of nurturing young plants. Sometimes she knows all of the right ingredients and conditions that will produce the perfect young seedling, and at other times she wonders where the formula she studied so carefully went wrong.

To illustrate, when she first learned of literature circles, she raced back to her classroom, prepared to implement a perfect series of lessons. She was successful at setting the purpose, time, and tone. She hoped this would become part of their learning twice a week and that at this time they would talk about books. She gathered texts, such as Marc Brown's *Arthur* books, Paul Galdone's *Henny Penny*, and other familiar books. Students chose the story they would like to read and joined that designated literature circle. To assist with the reading, due to the wide range of reading levels, she invited reading buddies down from the upper grades to read to the groups. The tone was set, and now she expected the children to engage in a grand conversation about their book choice. Because books were being read aloud to the students with no activation of prior knowledge or previous experience with the text, no questions or interacting during the reading occurred. It was also a struggle just to keep up with the pace of the very fluent readers. When conversation time came, there was no in-depth knowledge shared. Some students had no response at all, and there was a significant amount of off-task behaviors. "What did I do wrong?" Ms. Gaines asked herself. She reported that it was as if she had plugged in the perfect formula and her results were not coming out right.

To her disappointment, her literature circles needed something more to grow. She felt she had not been a good seed planter, but she was determined to make this work. As a re-

sult, she reflected on what went well and what did not go so well. Acknowledging her downfall allowed her to rethink the plan with new eyes. Being reflective allowed her to grow through the interdependent relationship she built with her students. La Shun knew she had to go back and show them, or model, how to do what was expected of them. "Give us some practice before you send us out," these students seemed to say.

LaShun Gaines admitted that lessons learned, such as the one just described, are ones that come from the courage to reflect. She revisited her approach and began again with a Kevin Henkes text set. This time, she modeled whole-group discussions so she could guide the baby seeds into independence. She began by introducing the author and then reading several books by him. Book choices such as *Chrysanthemum, A Weekend with Wendell*, and *Sheila Rae the Brave* yielded excellent conversations and allowed students at this level to connect with the themes of the texts. The students became excited, taking pride in their ideas. Later, they moved on to more mature texts, such as *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo. With plenty of scaffolding, second graders were able to grasp the mature themes presented. Ms. Gaines's willingness to reflect had brought success.

One seed whose reading growth had been stunted by focusing on decoding to the point of frustration thrived in these new literature circles. George rose to the top and became a leader, voluntarily accepting the role of discussion director. He expressed himself critically about literature during class book talks. The focus shifted from the mechanics of reading to comprehending rich meaningful text on a personal level and engaging in conversations about literature. George felt confident and safe in expressing his ideas, and he led others into rich conversations about books. Not only was he willing to share his wealth of information, but George also scaffolded others' questions, guiding them to respond in an appropriate way. George was reading below level at the beginning and middle of the school year. After beginning literature circles, he skyrocketed eight levels by the end of the school year. This is clear evidence that careful reflection about our journey as teachers can and does pay off.

CONCLUSION

Squire (1994) and others contend that how we teach literature and reading permanently affects our students' responses to literature, and thus their love of reading, for a lifetime. Anyone who has ever seen a child poring over a book that was once a teacher read-aloud knows about the powerful influence of models. The teachers of Houston Elementary School have been successful at raising urban students' scores on high-stakes tests, and they have taken responsibility for raising scholars, as well.

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Suggested Titles: Children's Books with Assessment Themes (That Teachers Like to Use in Workshops)

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Finchler, Judy; illustrated by Kevin O'Malley	*Testing Miss Malarkey*	2000	Walker	32	Test frenzy on the part of the whole school (parents and children, too) leads to frenetic preparation and ends with stellar school performance. Teachers can talk about what might have been sacrificed.
Seuss, Dr., and Prelutsky, Jack; illustrated by Lane Smith	*Hooray for Diffendoofer Day!*	1998	Random House	56	Again, more a book for teachers than children, the text was drawn together by Prelutsky and Smith after Theodore Geisel's death. The message is open for debate: Can the gifted creative teacher, Mr. Bonkers, REALLY produce scores and scholars? Dr. Seuss says yes.
Creech, Sharon; illustrated by Harry Bliss	*A Fine, Fine School*	2001	HarperCollins	32	If school is a good thing, wouldn't a lot more school be a better thing? So thinks Principal Keene of his fine, fine school. It's up to Tillie to show that there are other important things as well.

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Shepard, L. (1995). *An analysis of parent opinions and changes in opinions regarding standardized tests, teacher's information, and performance assessments* (CSE Technical Report 397). Los Angeles: University of California, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.

Squire, J. (1994). Research in reader response. In R. Ruddell, M. Rapp Ruddell & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4th ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

RECOMMENDED CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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13

Providing Educational Opportunities for Underrepresented Students

The Role of Academic Scaffolds and Lesson Study at The Preuss School, UCSD

DORIS ALVAREZ
HUGH MEHAN

The Preuss School, a public charter school on the campus of the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), was created in 1998 in response to the elimination of affirmative action in University of California (UC) admissions. Its goal is to prepare "disadvantaged" and "underrepresented" students to compete for admission to the UC system without benefit of "racial preferences" during the admission process to either the school or the university. Students are selected by lottery after their low-income status is ascertained.

The school was created after a contentious public debate, in which not only the concept of the charter school but also tacit definitions of community, equality, and the university itself became the object of contest and struggle. In 1997, a coalition of university administrators, faculty, and individuals representing San Diego's African American and Latino communities proposed the creation of a charter public high school on the university campus. The proposal generated both considerable support and tremendous controversy. It was rejected, however, when it failed to garner the full support of either the faculty of UCSD or its new chancellor, Robert Dynes. Fueled by a public outcry, negative publicity, and pressure from the University of California Board of Regents, a more comprehensive plan—which created the Center for Research on Educational Equity and Teaching Excellence (CREATE) to serve as an umbrella organization over a newly configured charter school at UCSD, partnerships with public schools, and a unit to evaluate the university's multifaceted "outreach" activities—was later approved by the chancellor and the faculty (see Rosen & Mehan, 2003, for an analysis of the debate over the formation of The Preuss School).

In this chapter, we place the formation of The Preuss School in its historical context—especially that of concerns over the underrepresentation of minority students in higher education and debates over the merits of a single rigorous curriculum rather than tracking systems for the education of underrepresented students. Then we describe the organization of the academic and social scaffolds that support the learning of Preuss School students, concentrating attention on "lesson study" as a tool for teachers to begin to think about changing literacy practices in their classrooms and schools.

THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF DISENFRANCHISED STUDENTS

Students from historically disenfranchised groups do poorly in school by comparison with their well-to-do contemporaries. They drop out at a higher rate. They score lower on tests. Their grades are lower. And, most important for the topic of this chapter, they do not attend college as often.

These same students are expected to compose an increasing percentage of the United States population through the early years of the 21st century (Pelavin & Kane, 1990; Carter & Wilson, 1991). At the same time, jobs that require higher education are expected to increase in number (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 1990). The current census data, however, show that students from historically disenfranchised backgrounds are not enrolling in college in sufficient numbers to qualify for the increasing number of jobs that will require baccalaureate degrees.

The problem of underrepresentation is evident at the University of California. Students from low-income, African American, and Latino backgrounds are underrepresented in our classrooms. In 1997, the year before the regents' decision and Proposition 209 eliminated the use of race, ethnicity, and gender in admissions decisions, 18.8% of the incoming freshmen on the eight UC campuses were from underrepresented minority groups. In the fall of 1999, this percentage dipped to 16.9%. By the fall of 2001, this figure had increased to 18.6% and by 2002 to 19.1%. To some, this recent increase indicated that the university's new school-based approach to outreach was succeeding. However, underrepresented minority students are not evenly distributed throughout the system. In the fall of 2002, 17.5% of incoming freshmen at the Berkeley campus, 17.9% at the Los Angeles campus, and 14.4% at UCSD—the three most competitive campuses—are from underrepresented minority groups, whereas 26.1% of incoming freshmen at the Riverside campus and 18.2% at the Santa Cruz campus—the two least competitive campuses—are from underrepresented minority groups.

Ensuring a high-quality education for students from African American and Latino backgrounds is critical for the future of California. California is rapidly becoming the most populated, as well as the most racially and ethnically diverse, state in the union. As a result, in large part, the future economic growth and social stability of the state will be directly related to how well all segments of the population are educated. The continued absence of historically disenfranchised populations from the University of California means that there will be fewer African American doctors and scientists, as well as fewer lawyers and teachers, whose recent ancestry is rooted in the Mexican American communities of California. If it continues uninterrupted, this pattern will produce an apartheid condition within California in which the numerically largest cultural populations are governed, taught, and administered by an ever shrinking minority elite.

Recent policy decisions exacerbate the dilemma facing each University of California

campus striving to meet the challenge of the California Master Plan to educate all segments of the California population. Because of the regents' decision in 1995 to eliminate race and ethnicity from admissions criteria, UC has experienced a reduction in the admission and enrollment of underrepresented and low-income students and an increase in the enrollment of upper-income Asian and white students.

The challenge with respect to the future of African American and Latino students is not how many will *choose* to attend the University of California but how many will be *eligible* to attend the University of California. To increase the enrollment and graduation of African American, Latino, and low-income students, we must significantly raise their high school academic performance and UC eligibility.

In sum, if the enrollment of students from underrepresented backgrounds at UCSD and the University of California does not increase, and if these same students do not attain college, graduate, and professional degrees, then the state and the nation will not have achieved the educational, economic, and social equity it has long sought. Neither will we have the skilled work force we need to ensure a healthy and competitive economy, nor the well-educated and thoughtful citizenry we need for a vibrant and energetic democracy. Indeed, if the current college enrollment trends continue, then the economic disparities that exist between ethnic and income groups in the United States will widen, not close.

A PROPOSED SOLUTION TO UNDERREPRESENTATION: THE PREUSS SCHOOL ON THE UCSD CAMPUS

The University of California and UCSD have a vested interest in the education of high school students. We at the university cannot wait for historically disenfranchised students to knock on our doors. As Marian Wright Edelman said at UCSD in 1993, "we must *cause* change as did Justice Thurgood Marshall, and not just witness it. In order to increase the academic achievement and college eligibility of students from underrepresented groups, we must take an active interest in the education of high school students."

To this end, the faculty and administration established CREATE and The Preuss School on the UCSD campus in order to improve the college eligibility of historically disenfranchised students. This action is consistent with the university's mission as a land grant college. As part of the university's obligations to the public, The Preuss School is analogous to the agricultural field stations in relation to the future economic development in the State of California. The Preuss School is an "urban field station" (Duster et al., 1990), aiding the development of youngsters with potential that has not been realized because of their difficult socioeconomic circumstances.

The Preuss School is also consistent with commitments made by the university in 1983 when UC President David Gardner drew the nation's attention to the grave state of urban education. The report of the national commission he chaired, *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Education and the Economy, 1983), became the catalyst for the public school reform movement. In response, the University established the Linguistic Minority Research Institute that has funded research on the acquisition of first and second languages, effective instructional strategies and educational policy matters related to language minority students, the Task Force on Latino Student Eligibility, and the Task Force on Black Student Eligibility. The Task Force on Black Student Eligibility (Duster, et al. 1990) and its operational arm, the Urban Community–School Collaborative Program (Underwood & Frye, 1995), recommended that the university develop school improvement collaborations of the sort we are proposing here.

The Preuss School at UCSD is both a model and a remedy. More than 100 universities throughout the country have sponsored elementary and/or secondary schools. Most, however, such as those at the University of Chicago and Hunter College, are "lab schools" for elite students. Our approach is decidedly not elitist. By contrast, The Preuss School identifies a diverse pool of low-income students who have not lived up to their high academic potential and provides them with a rigorous academic course of study, accompanied by significant academic and social supports, so that they can achieve a level of academic success that will make them eligible to enter and succeed at any institution of higher learning. The establishment of The Preuss School on the UCSD campus brings to bear on this selected student population the power of our research capabilities, the culture of our learning environment, and the academic leadership of one of America's top universities.

THE PREUSS SCHOOL WITHIN CURRENT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND POLICY

The principles of The Preuss School are derived from current thinking about cognitive development and the social organization of schooling. The idea of providing one academically rigorous form of curriculum and instruction to all students, accompanied by a system of social and academic supports, is better understood if placed against the background of the history of educational policy in the United States.

Educational Tracking Is All Too Often Prevailing Educational Policy

Historically, educators in the United States have responded to differences among individuals and groups by separating students and altering the content of the curriculum to which they are exposed. Since the 1920s, most high schools have offered a "tracked" curriculum—sequences of academic classes that range from slow-paced remedial courses to rigorous academic ones.

Tracking starts as early as elementary school. Students who have similar skills are placed in small working groups, often called "ability groups," for the purposes of instruction. Students who have less measured ability are placed in low-ability groups. Students with greater amounts of measured ability are placed into high-ability groups. The curriculum in low-ability groups is often reduced in scope, content, and pace relative to high-ability group classes. Often an informal arrangement in elementary school, tracking becomes institutionalized in middle schools and high schools. Students who have been assigned to the "college prep" track receive a distinct curriculum and are separated from students who have been assigned to the "vocational" track.

Tracking rests on assumptions about the nature of the occupational structure and the role of schooling in an industrial society. Tracking was justified at the height of industrialization because it supported a long-standing belief in the United States and Great Britain that a crucial function of schools is to prepare students for jobs (Davis & Moore, 1945). The Industrial Revolution divided labor into jobs and occupations that require different kinds of skills. As a result, workers who have different kinds of knowledge were needed to fill those different kinds of jobs. The function of the school was to serve as a rational sorting device, matching students' talents to the demands of the workplace (Turner, 1960). Thus rigorous academic classes could prepare students heading into jobs that require college degrees, whereas vocational programs could prepare students for less skilled jobs or for technical training after high school.

Tracking students for different work lives was thought to be fair because students were thought to possess different intellectual abilities, motivations, and aspirations and because jobs demanded different skills and talents. Thus a tracked curriculum with its ability-grouped classes was viewed as both functional and democratic. Tracking was said to be functional because it matched students to the appropriate slots in the work force, thereby providing the nation with the range of workers it needs. Tracking was said to be democratic because schools sorted students based on their talent, effort, and hard work, thereby providing students with the education that best meets their abilities (Davis & Moore, 1945; Parsons, 1959; Turner, 1960).

Educational Tracking Is Neither Democratic Nor Functional

Recent research and public commentary have shown that the schools' practice of tracking does not fulfill either its democratic or its occupational promises. It neither provides students with equal educational opportunities nor serves the needs of employers for a well-educated work force. Students from low-income and ethnic or linguistic minority backgrounds are disproportionately represented in low-track classes, and they seldom move up to high-track classes. Students placed in low-track classes seldom receive the educational resources that are equivalent to those of students who are placed in high-track classes (Cicourel & Mehan, 1983; Oakes, 1986; Mehan, 1992; Oakes, Gamoran, & Page, 1992). They often suffer the stigmatizing consequences of negative labeling (Mercer, 1974; Mehan et al., 1986). They are not well prepared for the workplace.

Recent research in cognitive development suggests a radically different conception of human capacity, which, in turn, supports a different form of school organization. The "universal development" thesis suggests that all normally functioning humans have the capacity to reason sufficiently well to finish schooling and enter the work force (Cicourel & Mehan, 1983; Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, 1983; Bruner, 1986; Meier, 1995). Furthermore, the standardized tests used to segregate students measure only a limited range of human abilities and reward only a narrow knowledge base. They do not measure students' higher order thinking skills, how well they solve new and complex problems, how well they transfer knowledge gained in one situation to another situation, or how well they communicate ideas. The implication of the universal development thesis is that schools should not segregate students into high and low tracks. Indeed, all students will benefit from a rigorous academic curriculum.

This modern conception of cognitive potential is supported by sociological critiques of tracking. The negative effects of tracking students described comprehensively by Oakes et al. (1992) are summarized briefly here. The distribution of students to high-, middle-, and low-ability groups or academic and general tracks correlates with ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Children from low-income or one-parent households, or from families with an unemployed worker, or from linguistic and ethnic minority groups are more likely to be assigned to low-ability groups or tracks. Furthermore, ethnic- and linguistic-minority students are consistently underrepresented in programs for the "gifted and talented."

In secondary schools, low-track classes consistently offer exposure to less demanding topics, whereas high-track classes typically include more complex material. Lower track students also take fewer math and science courses, and the courses they do take are less demanding. Students in non-college-preparatory curricula take fewer honors or advanced courses. Students in the academic track take three to five times as many advanced courses in

math and science. Students in nonacademic tracks take more courses in the arts and vocational subjects because they have more room in their schedules for elective courses.

Teachers set different goals for students in different groups and tracks. High-group, high-track teachers more often state that they want their students to be competent and autonomous thinkers. In contrast, teachers of low-track classes more often emphasize basic literacy and computation skills and present topics commonly associated with everyday life and work.

Perhaps the most damaging criticism of tracking is that it takes on a caste-like character. Once students are placed into low-ability groups, they seldom are promoted to high groups. Ability-group membership in elementary school carries into track membership in high school. Students placed in low-ability groups in elementary school are more likely to be placed in general and vocational tracks in high school, whereas students placed in high-ability groups in elementary school are more likely to be placed in college prep tracks in high school. Placement in vocational and nonacademic classes can trap ethnic- and linguistic-minority students despite their good achievement in school.

In a word, then, tracking is undemocratic. Although originally justified because schools presumably sorted students on the basis of achievement and not ascription, tracking has carried a racial, ethnic, and social class bias from its inception. At the turn of the previous century, low-level academics and vocational training were thought to be more appropriate for immigrant, low-income, and minority youths, whereas rigorous academic preparation was seen as better meeting the needs of more affluent whites.

At the turn of *this* century, proponents say that tracking is necessary because many students, especially those from low-income linguistic- and ethnic-minority backgrounds, come to school ill prepared for rigorous academic work and would be better served by a program that prepared them for jobs as soon as they finish high school. But when students are tracked on the basis of class, race, and ethnicity and not on the basis of individual effort and achievement, then students in tracked schools are denied equal access to educational and occupational opportunity.

Not only is tracking undemocratic, it is also not functional. It has not accomplished its job of matching the talent of the students with the demands of the workplace. Starting with the critique of American schools contained in *A Nation at Risk*, a steady stream of employers, policymakers, national opinion leaders, and educators have expressed dissatisfaction with students' knowledge, skills and attitudes. The following comments are typical of the complaints that have been lodged against America's public schools by business leaders and policymakers since the 1980s:

> We have created an economy that seeks literate, technically trained and committed workers, while simultaneously we produce many young men and women who are semi-literate or functionally illiterate, unable to think critically and untrained in technical skills. (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989, p. 1)

> More than half of our young people leave school without the knowledge or foundation to find and hold a good job. (U. S. Department of Labor, Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1992, p. 1)

> Telephone sales jobs are going begging in Boston because MCI cannot find qualified workers; textile workers are no longer able to operate their computerized machines; and aircraft manufacturers in California have teamed up out of necessity to train employees. Companies such as New York Telephone report hiring frustrations of epic proportions—57,000 applicants had to be tested to find 2,100 who were qualified to find entry level technical jobs.

> The cry from America's boardrooms, education think tanks and government officials is two-fold: America's workers are ill-equipped to meet employers' current needs and ill-prepared for the rapidly approaching high technology, service oriented future. (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 1990, p. 23)

As the comments from these commission reports show, changes in the nature of work itself contribute to employers' dissatisfaction with the present tracking system. As the organization of work shifts from manufacturing and industrial to service and skilled technology, workers increasingly must think their way through unfamiliar problems, be more literate, and be able to use sophisticated computers and other technologies. Literacy in skilled technology jobs means something different than it does in industrial and manufacturing jobs. Whereas assembly-line workers needed only enough literacy skills to sign their paychecks, workers in skilled technology jobs must interpret, compare, and analyze all manner of printed information, including graphs, charts, and tables.

THE COGNITIVE AND SOCIOLOGICAL RATIONALE FOR THE PREUSS SCHOOL

Recognizing that tracked schools are both inequitable and ineffective, educators have been exploring alternatives to tracking practices since the 1980s. Some of the reform efforts focus on restructuring the manner in which decisions about personnel, curriculum, and instruction are made at the school site level, whereas others focus more sharply on replacing the tracking system (Levin, 1986, 1987; Comer, 1980, 1988; Sizer, 1984, 1992; see also *http://www.avidonline.org/*).

Untracking policy attacks the problem of students with varying educational experiences in a fundamentally different way than tracking policy does. Untracking does not segregate students of varying background into separate courses of study. It replaces the watered-down curricula associated with low-track classes (often offered to low-income and minority students) with a uniform, highly rigorous curriculum, while increasing the amount of institutional support that students receive.

We are attracted to the idea of untracking students because of its commitment to rigorous academic preparation for underrepresented students. Blending students heterogeneously is a necessary ingredient, but we also need to intensify the academic and social systems supporting untracked students in order to increase the opportunities that disadvantaged students have to be eligible for college and university enrollment (Mehan, Villaneuva, Hubbard, & Lintz, 1996).

This is where The Preuss School enters the picture. Like the AVID untracking program (*http://www.avidonline.org/*), we select low-income students with high potential but underdeveloped skills in the sixth grade and then enroll them in college prep classes starting as early as eighth grade. Like AVID, we have a special "advisory" class in which students receive tutoring, study skills, test-taking strategies, and conflict resolution strategies.

The Preuss School provides additional academic and social scaffolds:

- The school operates on the UCSD campus to integrate students into the culture of learning associated with the university campus.
- The school's maximum enrollment is 750 students.
- Classes are limited to an average of 25–27 students.

- UCSD students serving as tutors work with Preuss School students in an advisory capacity, as well as in their academic classes.
- Courses are "block scheduled" to enable three core courses and one elective course each semester.
- The school day and the school year are extended to enable more intensive instruction.

MISSION AND GOALS

The curriculum and pedagogy of The Preuss School are based on a belief in the value of a traditional liberal arts education. Every graduating student should be capable of written and spoken expression (in both English and a foreign language), mathematical reasoning, and understanding scientific procedures and results and should have a broad appreciation of the diverse cultures that make up Western and non-Western civilization. The fine and performing arts are not construed as "electives" but as well-considered courses in the intellectual and skills-acquisition process. The senior year at the school is integrated with the UCSD freshman year—seniors are expected to take at least one UCSD course during their final year.

Above all, The Preuss School provides an environment in which students are made to feel confident and safe and are encouraged to develop a greater sense of self-worth and a sense of pride in their academic accomplishments. Although specializing in secondary education, the school is designed to reflect UCSD's high level of achievement by continually fostering a culture of academic accomplishment. Students are taught the art of questioning and the skill of logical thinking in an environment that encourages risk taking. The school also sees as its mission the development of personal character, good physical health, good judgment, and ethical behavior. It is further recognized that both the home and the school should share dual responsibility for encouraging young people to develop both as scholars and as citizens. All of this social scaffolding sets the stage for student success.

Academic and Social Scaffolds to Support a Rigorous Curriculum

All classes at The Preuss School, UCSD, are untracked. That is, all students take the common core curriculum that will fulfill or exceed what is known in California as the University of California and California State University A–G pattern. Those courses include: 4 years of English; 3 years of science, including a lab; 3 years of mathematics; 2 years of a foreign language; and 1 year of a visual and performing art. An advisory class is also a University of California approved elective in the senior year.

The founding principal and teachers knew from their collective experience that it was important to structure academic supports to assist students in meeting this challenging curriculum (Stanton-Salazar, Vasquez, & Mehan, 1996). Students who were selected by lottery for the school were students of average ability whose families did not attend 4-year colleges and had low incomes and who had an expressed desire and motivation to attend college.[1] Because many of them lacked the background and educational experiences that are typically found in more affluent families, teachers would need to provide these academic scaffolds consistently to support student learning. The teachers determined that the following elements would guide their efforts in building these supports:

1. All teachers would provide academic scaffolding in their classes that included strategies for reading and vocabulary development in the content areas.
2. The teachers committed to a professional development model that would be ongoing and weekly and directed at assisting teachers to teach for understanding by using research-based methodologies. The school adopted the Japanese practice of lesson study as a format and a process for learning together, planning together, and teaching together.
3. An advisory class would provide social and academic supports in the form of peer collaboration, study skill methodologies, and information and dissemination of college information. The advisory class would serve as the home room, where activities such as K-Bar (Kick Back and Read, a sustained silent reading program), a Newspaper in Education writing contest, and other written competitions would take place.
4. Teachers developed the *I Clear* acronym as a method to remind students of the key skills that were needed for better understanding of concepts (*I*nquiry, *C*ollaboration, *L*inking, *E*vidence, *A*pplication, and *R*esearch). *I Clear* became the organizational format around which to demonstrate student learning. Portfolios, for example, could be organized into the six areas, with student work inserted into the category that utilized that particular skill.

Professional Development and Lesson Study: An Aid for Teachers to Implement Scaffolding

In order to succeed in a rigorous curriculum necessary for college preparation, students need to be able to read with understanding and write with fluency across all content areas. National Assessment Educational Program (NAEP) results of 1999 show clearly that high school students are not mastering essential skills for reading and understanding basic texts. For example only 1 out of 100 African American students, 1 out of 50 Hispanic, and 1 out of 12 European American high school graduates can learn from specialized materials such as the science section of a local newspaper. Furthermore, only one-fifth of the African American students, one-fourth of the Hispanic, and less than one-half of the European American students "understand complicated information" (Ali, 2002). Despite widespread evidence that students are leaving high school and entering college lacking the basic comprehension skills of reading challenging subject matter, the practice of teaching reading and writing across content areas has not firmly taken hold in the practices of most secondary schools (Jacobs, 2002; Lapp, Flood, & Farnan, 1996).

Secondary teachers have always thought of themselves as teachers of their particular content specialty, not as teachers of reading and writing. Most secondary content teachers have typically felt that the teaching of reading and writing is the responsibility of the language arts teachers or specialized teachers of reading. Normally, there would be resistance from some content teachers in mathematics, history, or science to teaching reading or writing strategies in their everyday repertoire. However, the mission of the school clearly states that students would be taught to think like historians, scientists, or mathematicians. Further, teachers have the overriding commitment to prepare students for college. Therefore, professional development in content literacy instruction was a natural outgrowth of the need to have students reading proficiently in the content areas. Lesson study provided the support for teachers to learn together what would work best and thereby provide the necessary academic scaffolding for their students.

What Is Lesson Study?

Lesson study is an educational practice imported from Japan and well presented in Sigler and Hiebert's *The Teaching Gap* (1999). It represents the Japanese approach to instructional improvement and is found throughout that country's schools. In lesson study, the "lesson" and "the student"—not the teacher—is the focus. Basically it is a process by which teachers plan a lesson together, have one of the planning teachers teach the lesson while the others watch, and come back together after the lesson for critique and change. The lesson is then taught by another teacher after the critique, and the cycle repeats. Lessons are research based and teacher driven and focus on observing and doing a "careful study" of student learning (Lewis, 2002). The principal's role is to be a learner alongside the teachers.

> "The traditional role of the principal does not work well in the context of lesson study," cautions Liptak, "you are not leading from in front. You are not leading from behind, you are truly leading from within along with everyone else." (in Boss, 2001, p. 3)

After the publication of *The Teaching Gap* in 1999, the topic of lesson study began to take hold in many educational circles outside of Japan. Since that time, lesson study topics have appeared in various articles and have been the subject of numerous conferences both abroad and in the United States (Lewis, 2002). An active electronic mailing list, through which a steady but growing audience organizes for help and conversation, provides ongoing support and discussion. Whole schools and districts have embraced the process as a professional development tool (Lewis, 2002).

Lesson Study at Preuss: The First Year—Defining the Problem

Because lesson study originated in a country with a relatively homogeneous population, many U.S. educators questioned whether this practice could be transported to the United States, with its more diverse populations and schools. Teachers at The Preuss School thought that it would be a challenge to find out. So, early in 2000, the staff read *The Teaching Gap* and began to imagine how they might implement this practice of ongoing school improvement. Critical to the success of this endeavor was the attitude of the teachers. Most of the original group was selected for the school because they were risk takers and innovators.

For example, Jan Gabay, the 1993 National Teacher of the Year, came to the school because of her passion for working with underprivileged students and her thirst for knowledge about best practices. The library media teacher, Marsha Korobkin, was committed to working with teachers as a resource in the classroom and collaboratively defining a research articulation process. Kenia Milloy, the international language teacher and former elementary teacher, was intrigued with learning how she, as a foreign language teacher, could complement the work of the content teachers. They understood that there was no right way to do lesson study, but they followed the basic steps proposed by Sigler and Hiebert (1999, p. 11):

1. Define the problem.
2. Plan the lesson.
3. Teach the lesson.
4. Evaluate and reflect on its effect on students.
5. Revise the lesson.
6. Teach the revised lesson.

7. Evaluate and reflect again.
8. Share the results.

Lesson Study at Preuss: The Second Year—Gathering the Data

New teachers were added each year as the school grew in student population. With the addition of new staff, lesson study had to be revisited and "sold" to new members. By the second year, the new staff outnumbered the founding teachers. However, embedded in the new group of teachers were individuals who shared many of the same qualities and characteristics of the original teachers: a passion for learning and a willingness to innovate. Together they constituted enough of a critical mass that the work begun in the prior year would be continued.

Teachers divided into departments and began research into defining a department problem that fit within the identified schoolwide lesson study question. In this second year, they analyzed student data to determine students' area of needs. Lesson study in the second year culminated with a lesson planned and taught once by each subject group. The lesson was videotaped and shown to the staff, with the whole staff critiquing and commenting on the format, the hook, and the assessment. Teachers gave positive comments for the most part, with few suggestions for revision: "Wonderful presentation"; "Great Power Point."

The final activity of the year was a plan to revise the lesson and determine how to introduce lesson study to the new staff, as the school was continuing to grow by a grade a year.

Lesson Study at Preuss: The Third Year—Building a Community of Teacher-Researchers and Curriculum Planners

In Year 3, we realized that we needed a better way to plan effective lessons that would "move students away from their current understanding to the desired understanding of the subject matter" (Lewis, 2002, p. 83). We also discovered that teachers were not all that familiar with the many ways that students could be helped with comprehension. Further, materials at the high school were more complex as students began to take their first advanced placement courses and as concepts became more difficult and they needed assistance in reading these more complicated pieces.

Staff developer Jan Gabay spent a good part of the third year helping teachers develop backward design lessons (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998) that focused on student understanding. Using Wiggins and McTighe's six facets of understanding[2] and the school's own acronym of *I Clear*, the teachers planned lessons that were designed to engage students in answering essential questions derived from their designated curriculum. The lessons were ones that anticipated student responses, a practice that is not always used in routine lesson planning. In this way comprehension of expository text was treated as "problem-solving activities that served as scaffolds between reader and text and from one comprehension process to the next" (Bruner, quoted in Jacobs, 2002, p. 59).

In the third year, teachers also began to think of themselves as teacher-researchers. They reviewed and experimented with methods to help students with comprehension. An important distinction between educational research and lesson study research is that the primary goal of lesson study is not necessarily to do the research in order to disseminate the findings but rather to improve instruction for the teacher's or department's use and then to apply it for their own future or present needs (Lewis, 2002).

Some of the more effective strategies that they identified are:

- *Cornell note taking* (Pauk, 1993). Cornell notes is a system of double-entry note taking and responding through questions, categorization, summary, and pictorial or graphic organizers. Students were required to take Cornell notes in all classes. Advisory classes taught and reinforced the note-taking behavior by doing frequent notebook checks.
- *Collaborative strategy instruction* (Anderson & Roit, 1993). This is a strategy used before reading a piece of text whereby both teacher and students discuss and evaluate strategies for understanding nonfiction texts, particularly difficult texts.
- *Vocabulary development* (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). Vocabulary was directly taught in all content areas and was a key focus in all language arts classes.
- *Interactive journals*. Students in grades 6–9 were required to take notes in social studies classes on texts and lectures and to add their own reflections visually or in writing.
- *KWL and KWL+* (Ogle, 1986). Students engaged in an active reading process as they learned new knowledge to build on previous knowledge.
- *QAR*. Question–answer relationship (Rafael 1982) helped students' reading comprehension. They had to answer questions about their reading by noting whether the answer to the question was "right there" or required them to "think and search" or to find it "on my own."
- *The research process*. The school's framework for in-depth understanding, named *I Clear*, tied into the research process—an area that we knew needed to be emphasized. Each letter stands for a facet of research in learning about a topic. Teachers tried out different methods to teach students the process. For example, in the end-of-year culminating exhibition for the eighth grade, each student identified a piece of work they had done and of which they were most proud and categorized it into one of the five areas. Thus, if they had done inquiry in a particular project on volcanoes, for example, they would insert it under Inquiry and explain how they had engaged in *inquiry.* Likewise, if they had completed a project while working with others, they would insert it in the *collaboration* section.

Finally, the librarian, Marsha Korobokin, worked with a research articulation committee to develop a research process across grade levels with the idea that it would be tried out the following year with the incoming sixth graders (see Appendix 13.1).

Lesson Study at Preuss: The Fourth Year—Bringing It All Together

The 2002–2003 school year began with a return to lesson study by each department. In the beginning, some of the teams divided into high school and middle school, because we had grown to 650 students in Grades 6–11. By the end of the year, however, the split teams had joined once again, realizing that the lesson study question of helping students take information and use it for in-depth understanding spanned all grade levels and could effectively be done as a schoolwide department.

Each department completed at least one lesson demonstration by December, and by the first of the year each was ready to reteach the same lesson after it had been revised. Some of the demonstrations showed us both how valuable the practice of teacher collaboration can be and how different a lesson study research plan is from regular lesson planning.

The middle school social studies department tackled the problem of having students formulate a focused opinion, support it with evidence, and clearly explain how the evidence supports the thesis. They began by teaching the differences between fact and opinion, with the objective being for students to be able to show, both graphically and in text, that they were able to make the distinction. When the lesson was completed, everyone agreed that

they had spent too much time in planning what the teacher would do and not enough in analyzing the student response and engagement. They concluded that the lesson was entirely too teacher driven and elementary and that it lacked student participation (Kovacic, 2003).

Middle and high school teachers in the English department met together and planned a lesson to help students learn revision strategies to improve the coherence of their written work. They scripted the lesson carefully and, during the feedback session, decided that they would change some of the wording because students were not clear about editing improvements versus content improvements. When the lesson was retaught in the middle school class, they noticed a marked improvement in the students' performance.

The Future

Still left to do is all the work necessary to perfect our observation techniques in the classroom so that we can assess students' difficulties with understanding and motivation. We also need to develop better feedback protocols so that we are circulating information that helps the lesson move forward more expediently.

CONCLUSION

When The Preuss School was planned as an untracked school, the design called for all students to receive the same rigorous curriculum. There was no question that academic and social supports had to be put into place to assist students who did not have strong academic backgrounds to succeed in rigorous classes in anticipation of going to college. In addition to the structural supports of tutors, mentors, extended learning time, and scheduling, the school needed to build in time and structural supports for Preuss teachers, too. Teachers needed the knowledge and skills to teach in ways that enabled students to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject matter content—and they needed time to do it. Structured weekly professional development time and the lesson study has provided those teacher supports.

One teacher noted in her reflection that participating in lesson study was a "messy, confusing process," but it was "so much fun" to work with other teachers in planning a lesson. Another teacher noted, "our English lesson study group works together really well because there is so much trust." Unfortunately, another teacher stated honestly that their group was "going around in circles."

Clearly, students were aware that something different was happening. When six teachers descended into a classroom to observe a lesson, one student leaned over to one of us and asked, "Did the teacher do something wrong?" Students, like teachers, had to understand that we were developing a community of learners in which students' and teachers' learning would be visible.

Lesson study is truly about changing the culture and context of teaching in everyone's mind. It has taken 4 years to get to this point in our lesson study development because we have had to add new staff each year to accommodate the growing enrollment. As we added new staff, we had to take time to step back and reteach. Nonetheless, lesson study has represented an important step toward ensuring that underrepresented students are prepared for an academically rich curriculum by (1) creating a catalyst for secondary teachers to learn new strategies to help students learn to read content in the disciplines and (2) involving ev-

ery teacher in the process of planning lessons that support student learning. A quote from a Japanese teacher says it best:

> Teachers cannot greatly improve children's lives except by working together as a whole faculty to provide a coherent, consistent environment for children's development of these qualities. What's the use if children learn to "think like scientists" in one classroom, only to have those qualities devalued by next year's teacher? (quoted in Lewis, 2002, p. 10)

NOTES

1. Frankly, for many of these students, the idea of going to college may never have come up until they applied to the school. Frequently it was an interested elementary teacher or a parent who was looking for a better school that influenced the student to apply (student interview, 2000). As the school grew and its reputation began to be established, peer and sibling influence began to play a bigger role (parent interview, 2000).
2. The six facets of understanding as described by Wiggins and McTighe (1999) are application, explanation, interpretation, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge.

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Suggested Titles: Stories of the Children Who Work, Told by Adults

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Jimenez, Francisco	*The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child*	1997	Scholastic	134	In 12 little "story chapters," Jimenez describes the life of a migrant family—the struggles, backbreaking labor, and the movement. The tone is of quiet description.
Tillage, Leon Walter	*Leon's Story*	1997	Farrar Straus Giroux	107	Tillage, who grew up in a North Carolina sharecropper's family, is currently a school custodian in Baltimore. His stories are of hardship, racism, and a loving family.
Govenar, Alan; illustrated by Shane W. Evans	*Osceola: Memories of a Sharecropper's Daughter*	2000	Hyperion	64	Drawn from audiotaped interviews, Osceola's stories, told in her own voice, begin with her childhood memories in an East Texas sharecropper's family. The stories are tightly bound to her recollection of homilies, verses, and hymns. The book is illustrated with oil folk art paintings.

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APPENDIX 13.1. The Preuss School UCSD Research Articulation Plan

In a school serving college preparatory students with a rigorous curriculum from grades 6–12, we recognize that we have a special opportunity to plan instruction for students to ensure that they will be efficient lifelong learners. One piece in the puzzle is the ability to identify their need for information, locate it, evaluate it, and use it to make new meaning.

Regarding student research skills, one thing never seems to change: Teachers almost always overestimate their students' skill in using the research process. At Preuss we believe that if we can integrate research across the sixth-grade curriculum and continue to reinforce concepts and skills as the students get older, by the time they are seniors, they will be ready for in-depth research in an area of particular interest to them. At that point the research process should be second nature to them, and all their efforts can be concentrated on developing and communicating expertise in their chosen field. To this end we are in the process of identifying skills and skill levels for parts of the research process for each grade. The sample below is for the sixth grade. It will always be a work in progress.

This draft is the work of a standing committee made up of representatives from each department, with the "advice and consent" of the grade-level teachers.

Sixth-Grade Research Articulation

First Trimester

As soon as library opens after textbook distribution:

Social Studies—Ancient Greece and/or Rome

- Epic poetry—poetry in general
- Reinforce and require more in-depth use of skills introduced above

Science—Health and body systems—Go through all science and health standards that are applicable

- Reinforce above as well as some computer skills—e.g., downloading graphics
- Currency and accuracy of information
- Search strategies on the internet/HIP

Science—Science Fair prep

- Selecting a project with specific parameters
- Public library resources—Science Experiments Online
- Internet: GSDSEF Web site
- Selecting relevant topics to research
- Using appropriate materials for research

All Trimesters

Leadership—Leader/Self Comparison

- Biographical reference books
- Public library resources for biography—Biography Resource Center
- Note taking

Prepared by Marsha Korobkin, Library Media Teacher, The Preuss School UCSD.

14

Flood Ensurance

When Children Have Books They Can and Want to Read

JO WORTHY
NANCY ROSER

DIANA: [Reading is] for when we're bored.
YOLANDA: Yeah.
DIANA: Like when our parents call us from our friends' house.
YOLANDA: And it would just be for a few minutes.
DIANA: Yeah, when I don't have nothing to do.

The preceding conversation took place during an interview with Diana and Yolanda, two fifth-grade bilingual students who were considered by their teacher to both be good and reasonably motivated students. The girls' explanations of when they read support a prevailing view that students lose their motivation to read as they move through school, such that by the intermediate grades, many could be considered reluctant readers. Research explanations for students' apathy toward reading implicate an array of contributing factors. These include various aspects of the classroom environment, such as limited access to interesting, appropriate reading materials (Worthy & McKool, 1996) and less-than-engaging instruction (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Worthy, 2000). However, few studies have examined the interplay of efforts necessary for changing aspects of the classroom environment to sustain or reawaken the satisfaction from texts that beginning readers often register. The purpose of this investigation was to provide students in Diana and Yolanda's classroom with access to a broad array of reading materials—as well as choice, models, time, and appropriate instruction—and then to examine the influence of this complete "access" on the students' reading interests, purposes, and habits.

So, "over a year and in and out of weeks" (Sendak, 1970) until 8 months had gone by, we put trade books and magazines into children's hands in one urban bilingual fifth-grade classroom and stayed to observe, listen, and even to help guide the interactions. *We* are university "participant observers"—eager to understand more about what and how children

learning English choose to read when available books match their interests and abilities and when instruction supports their strengths. The classroom teacher, Rosemary Flores (her actual name), was a cultural and linguistic insider with whom we have been working and learning for several years. At the beginning of the school year, her 18 students were all literate in Spanish (reading from second- to fifth-grade levels) but varied widely in learning to speak, read, and write English. The dominant home language for all of the students was Spanish. In addition, they were all immigrants or the children of immigrants to the United States from Mexico. The school is located in a predominantly Mexican American community. Beginning-of-year interviews, confirmed by the teacher, indicated that most students reported reading for approximately 30 minutes per day—a homework requirement. Six students said they sometimes read more than the required time; of these, four said they read only when bored. Few students could name specific book titles or authors beyond those recently read aloud by the teacher.

In this year-long inquiry addressing "access" to books, we built on three contentions about book access that we drew from previous work:

1. Students must have books and other texts *appropriate* to their ages, interests, reading levels, culture, and language.
2. Texts (and other forms of print) must be of sufficient *quantity, variety*, and *appeal* such that they "flood" the classroom with broad invitations for reading.
3. Students must receive opportunities and *sufficient time* to read, as well as models of what readers do (read to themselves and others, recommend books, talk with others about text, find answers, grow ideas, and be instructed—in its broadest sense).

Using these three features of access—appropriate texts, appealing texts, and time with texts—we tell the story in this chapter of a year spent learning from children who were offered all three. Through attending to the interplay of their opportunities for tailored instruction, self-selection of titles, discussions, and other response opportunities and their use of language across the day, we attempted to make sense of the role that "access" came to play in these students' literate lives. But first, we sketch a background of informing research.

INFORMING STUDIES

For all students, including young children, struggling learners, and second-language learners, access to books and time spent reading leads to growth in vocabulary, knowledge, language and literacy skills, general intelligence, and achievement (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Krashen, 1995). Similarly, when students do not read, their general academic progress is in jeopardy.

One way of providing students with abundant reading materials is through an intervention called "book flood," in which a large number of books are infused into a classroom for the teacher and students to use (Neuman, 1999; Elley, 2000). Neuman (1999) conducted a large-scale book flood study in child-care centers serving low-income neighborhoods in Philadelphia and examined its effects on the literacy foundations of young children. Teachers in more than 300 centers were provided with a total of almost 18,000 books, as well as training on how to use the books with children. Similar centers were identified as controls. According to Neuman (1999):

> It is not just exposure to books that makes a difference . . . [but rather] the intensity of engagement—the quality of talk and conversational interactions between adult and child—that nurtures and helps them to construct vital literacy-related concepts. (p. 310)

Neuman's book floods set off a "chain reaction." Books and training led to physical changes in the classrooms that in turn enhanced children's desire to interact with print, as well the quantity and quality of teacher–child literacy interactions. Both qualitative and statistical analyses of early literacy measures showed that students in the intervention groups made greater gains in early literacy measures and maintained them after 8 months.

In a follow-up case study of one of the child-care centers in the larger study, Neuman and Celano (2001) found that after the book flood, with its concomitant methodology shifts (including book selection procedures, discussion, drama, reading aloud, and handling books), the curriculum and atmosphere at the center changed drastically. Book use and story time commanded a significant amount of the day. Again, there were striking differences between the early literacy scores of students in the participating centers and those of students from comparable urban child-care centers.

Elley (2000) reviewed book flood studies that were conducted from 1980 to 1999 in a number of developing countries and discussed implications for raising literacy levels. In third-world countries, where large class sizes, inadequate facilities, and underpaid and underprepared teachers are often the norm, instruction typically takes place in the students' second language, and access to books and other instructional materials is limited. In Elley's review, teachers and students in Grades 1 through 6 in a variety of countries, including Fiji, Singapore, and Sri Lanka, participated in the book floods. In every location, students were being instructed in English, which was not their native language. In each site and study, 100 or more carefully selected books were placed in intervention classrooms. As with Neuman's studies, the book flood studies reviewed by Elley (2000) included training for teachers in how to engage students in using the books. Students were compared on formal and informal assessments in various aspects of literacy (comprehension, vocabulary, fluency), oral language, and transfer to content areas. According to Elley (2000):

> The evidence is now strong that it is possible to double the rate of reading acquisition of Third World . . . pupils with a "Book Flood" of about 100 high-interest books per class, and short teacher training sessions. (p. 233)

Elley stressed that in book floods, accessible books are viewed as central pedagogical tools rather than as supplements to the regular program of reading instruction. Further, the studies attest to the powerful language benefits of a rich diet of high-interest reading materials. Students' skills appeared to transfer to other subjects of the curriculum that depend heavily on reading.

Although "book flood" replications are plentiful and have shown consistent positive effects on students' language, literacy, and learning, it is important to note that instruction and engagement are also key determinants of students' ultimate reading progress. Therefore, any study of the infusion of print into the classroom must also examine the instruction that surrounds and supports book selection and use. It is not sufficient to put "lots of" books onto shelves and turn away, trusting to the books to carry the total instructional load.

ASPECTS OF ACCESS

Appropriate Books

A readily agreed-on tenet of instructional research is that reading progress is dependent upon matching a child reader with manageable text (Allington, 2002; Carver & Liebert, 1995). That is, when the material is too difficult, the reader will not make the same progress as if the material falls within a good fit of success and challenge. Even though our beginning-of-the-year assessments (the Flynt–Cooter Informal Reading Inventory) showed that most of the children could decode English sentences at the fourth- or fifth-grade level, they were unable to discuss what they were reading or to respond appropriately to prompts. Even for children who could decode rapidly, comprehension did not follow. (By contrast, the children's reading comprehension of passages written in Spanish ranged from second- to fifth-grade levels.) Through the assessment, we learned that most of these fifth graders were comfortable reading and discussing English texts written at first- or second-grade levels. That is, they *could* discuss what they read in two languages—if the texts were appropriately leveled.

But finding materials children can read may be difficult in many classroom libraries. A consistent finding of classroom library research is that there is often not enough material that children can (and want to) read (Martinez, Roser, Worthy, Strecker, & Gough, 1997; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). Our own analysis of the extant library in our fifth-grade bilingual classroom showed that, in September, the texts in English ranged from first- to sixth-grade reading level, but a big proportion of the books (over 80%) were at the fourth-grade reading level or above.

There is further complexity when the children's home languages differ from the classroom book collection. In an ideal scenario, students find readily available reading materials that support their language and literacy development in their first language, as well as in English. In our library, texts in Spanish were often translations of award-winning books originally published in English and were comparably difficult.

There is also some evidence for the positive effects on students' reading motivation and achievement when they meet culturally relevant literature (in both languages) in the curriculum (Martinez-Roldán, 2000; Roser et al., 2003). Although more titles are being published that reflect the varied cultures of today's classrooms (Bader, 2003; Yokota, 2001), there are not yet enough readily available quality books in languages other than English. Further, school budgets are not sufficient to ensure that these materials appear in classroom collections. Teachers continue to use their own money to give their students access to materials (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). To supplement our fifth-graders' classroom library and to match the children with books of their choice in this investigation, we used the public library, the city's bookstores (new and used), online discount sites, our own libraries, and our own funds.

Appealing Books

Students from economically impoverished homes have less access to print materials (even at school) than do students from middle- and high-income homes (e.g., Neuman & Celano, 2001; Smith, Constantino, & Krashen, 1996). However, when classroom and school libraries do contain large numbers of books, the types of texts do not necessarily match students' instructional needs and interests. This access problem is especially critical for reluctant readers, minority students, students from economically impoverished backgrounds, and students learning English as their second language (Worthy et al., 1999; Martinez-Roldán, 2000).

To ensure that our "book infusion" met the children's interests (and the teacher's needs), we spent the first month observing instruction, taking careful note of the children's reading patterns, and inventorying the classroom library. At the beginning of October, we interviewed each child to learn more about his or her expressed reading interests and habits. Our interview questions focused on when, where, what, and how frequently the children chose to read. Toward the end of each 45-minute interview, we presented each child with a box of books literally spilling over in its of variety of genre, topics, language, and levels—from jokes, riddles, comics, contemporary magazines, picture books, and popular series to adventures, mysteries, classics, and more. As we presented the collection to be looked through, we asked conversational questions about what looked interesting or appealing. (We hadn't counted on our box of books being *so* appealing that children would plead for preview privileges. Many told us they could not wait for all our interviews to be completed before getting a chance at one of the books in the box.) To counter the drift, we refilled the box. The books that seemed most popular (initially) were scary ones (such as Alvin Schwartz's *Scary Tales to Tell in the Dark*, 1986, and Joe Hayes' *La Llorona: The Weeping Woman*, 1987), books in two languages (e.g., *Pepita Talks Twice/Pepita Habla Dos Veces*, Lachtman, 1995), and familiar picture books with Latino/Latina characters (e.g., *Abuela*, Dorros, 1997). Inadvertently, the box of books meant to sample interests marked the beginning of what became a rumbling underground of book movement between and among readers. As the children sampled the titles and read the stories, the sharing of titles began. *La Llorona,* for example, became a "best seller" within a week's time.

We (the university researchers and the classroom teacher) spent the first 6 weeks of the school year mapping the existing terrain. For example, we counted and categorized Ms. Flores' classroom library—recording more than 200 books, or more than 10 books per child. Like many collections, this one had been built from yard sales, the detritus of teachers retiring from the profession, and other low-cost sources. Many titles were entirely appropriate for fifth grade (e.g., *Maniac Magee*, Spinelli, 1990; *Number the Stars*, Lowry, 1989; *James and the Giant Peach*, Dahl, 1996). Some were in multiple copies—in English and in Spanish. A select few were appropriate for beginning readers (e.g., Dr. Seuss's *The Cat in the Hat*, 1957), and a few seemed remote, such as a volume of short stories by O. Henry. Yet books from the classroom collection, housed on shelves facing a comfortable sofa and on shelves below the windows, seemed infrequently chosen for independent reading.

Our book infusions, staged at three intervals (October, January, and March), introduced many books that reflected the Latino/a culture and included what we had learned about the children's favorites, levels, curriculum, and library gaps. We placed popular magazines, activity books, comics, picture books, easy readers, holiday tales, series books, mysteries, adventures, information texts, plays, poetry, folk-tale variants, and books focusing on sports and humor in baskets lining two sides of the classroom rug. The rug was a classroom meeting place where children listened to and talked over books read aloud, met for book club, and read independently. After each infusion, we continued to monitor, observe, record, interview, assist, and support access to books.

Sufficient Books

Although research does not pinpoint the ideal size of the classroom library, some authorities recommend five to six books per child (Fractor, Woodruff, Martinez, & Teale, 1993). Even when classroom libraries duplicate some of the offerings in the school library, teachers argue the value of having books near at hand, instantly retrievable, well organized, and inviting.

Strengthening the case for classroom collections are the hard-to-find books in the school library. Access can mean ready availability, as well as sufficient supply.

A common characteristic of avid readers is that they have had opportunities to read materials of their own choosing (Carlsen & Sherrill, 1988; Fink, 1995/1996). Students who have ready access to a wide range of reading materials are more likely to read and to make more progress than those who do not (Gambrell, Wilson & Gantt, 1981; Greaney & Hegarty, 1987; Halle, Kurtz-Costes, & Mahoney, 1997). Yet there is also evidence that students from economically impoverished homes have far less access to print materials, both at school and at home, than do students from middle- and high-income homes (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2001; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Smith et al., 1996, Worthy et al., 1999). Access was indeed a problem for these fifth graders. They reported that their personal libraries ranged from a low of 2 books to a high of 50, with an average of about 8 books of their own. Most of the books students owned had been purchased at grocery stores or provided by Reading Is Fundamental, a nonprofit program that offers new books to students in low-income schools. Our infusions increased the size of the classroom library to between 500 and 600 books.

FLOOD ENSURANCE BENEFITS

Paco, who claimed to read "only when I get bored," sheepishly admitted that he took home the book *Cuadros de Familia/Family Pictures* (Garza, 1990) "on accident" and "read the whole thing." As with many of Garza's readers, the brilliant paintings, familiar scenes, and text in two languages drew Paco in. We observed Paco and his classmates using books across their days as fifth graders—in free time, in self-selected reading time, before and after school, and at other times.

To record the experiences of our immersion, we made field notes of the "actions, interactions, and events" of the classroom days (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 28). As described, we also systematically analyzed the classroom library (for quantity, level, genre, author, etc.), interviewed the children at the beginning and end of the school year regarding reading habits and attitudes, tracked the children's reading choices, conversed with them about the reasons for their selections, discussed books with readers, and listened to samples of the texts read aloud. We kept a year-long classroom log of their book choices. We also recorded and kept notes during the discussions surrounding books that the teacher read aloud. And we worked in tandem with the teacher to continue to identify books and other materials, adding more than 300 texts to the classroom collection.

The more books that were shared with the students, the more they seemed to share with each other, and the more they found sources for books. The flood was cumulative and powerful. We propose three "flood benefits"—and some ideas about how to operate when there is drought.

Personalized Access: The Right Book in the Right Hands at the Right Time Won't Be Left Behind

We selected the books for the book flood to include a variety of genres, formats, and topics. An assumption of book flood studies is that students choose to read when they find books that appeal to them. Typically, decisions about what appeals to children are often derived from "preference inventories" ("Would you rather read this kind of book or that kind of book?" "Did you like this one? Would you like others like it?") Yet expressed preferences,

especially those measured through surveys, are not necessarily valid indicators of actual reading behaviors. That is, although students may indicate a preference for certain titles, topics, subjects, genres, or the like, their actual choices and habits may be influenced by a constellation of factors, including exposure/familiarity (e.g., peer recommendations, teacher read-alouds), as well as access. Researchers and teachers alike can risk overgeneralizing from children's responses to interest surveys. A complete picture of students' personal interests, then, can better be discerned by observing students as they interact with books in various classroom settings, engage with peers about books, and make independent selections for reading (Hickman, 1985; Monson & Sebesta, 1991). According to Monson and Sebesta's review of reading preference research (1991), the best evidence of reading interests may be derived when teachers/researchers act as participant observers, accumulating broad evidence and reflecting carefully—using ethnographic techniques.

We learned, too, that no single indicator or interview pinpoints the precise classroom collection. Like all experienced readers, our fifth graders became increasingly knowing, discriminating, and "idiosyncratic" in their tastes. Through informal interviews and chats and by simply being in the classroom for extended periods of time, we learned more about each student and about the books that were their hearts' desires. We kept notes and made plans to include these in future book flood phase-ins; but in many cases, it seemed clear that the students couldn't wait (and neither could we). Thus, between book club phases, we each found ourselves sneaking (slipping?) extra books into the classroom through the hands of the seeker of the book. These personal desires were sometimes surprising, as in the case of Gabriela, an able reader who nevertheless wanted nothing more than her own copy of *Green Eggs and Ham* (Seuss, 1960). When she finally got it, this fifth grader hugged it tightly, danced around the room, exclaiming, "I finally have it in my hands!"

By the end of the year, scary books and culturally relevant texts were still popular, but we could barely keep ahead of the demand for the popular characters in series books, most notably Captain Underpants, Junie B. Jones, and the sleuths in easy-to-read mysteries. Although most of the expressed reading interests were not surprising, there were often no books available in the school to match the expressed interest. Elva wanted to learn more about her homeland, Mexico, and was enthralled for weeks with a travel book that had been sitting on one of our bookshelves at home. Ilse and Eva pored over realistic picture books written by Latino/a authors, whereas Emma coveted a book, written in both English and Spanish, about the late Tejano singer, Selena. Several students longed to read *Harry Potter and the Sorceror's Stone* (Rowling, 1999), a book available in the school library but "always checked out." The absence of bookstores within a 10-mile radius of the school, along with the book's expense, made it nearly impossible to obtain on one's own. The extra copies we brought were enthusiastically received. *Harry Potter* (in Spanish or English) became a sort of "status read." Not everyone could move through Rowling's (1999) books, but nearly everyone wanted a chance to try. Copies of *Harry Potter* joined the book stacks growing on the corner of each desk and were also carried nonchalantly through the hallways. Harry's carriers were signaling, "I'm a reader." Indeed, some readers get launched in just that way.

Access and Exposure: The More Real Estate, Time, and Coverage Devoted to Reading, the More Valuable the Activity Is Perceived

Gaining access to books had been a problem for these students, whose personal libraries averaged about 8 books. The book flood, along with the teacher's instruction, seemed catalytic in increasing the flow. Ms. Flores's classroom space, her daily schedule, and her instruction

signaled the importance of thought, talk, reading, and writing—in two languages. We observed the influence of her instruction on reading motivation, including her (1) daily read-alouds from chapter books and picture books (which were then made available for students to read); (2) guided introduction of new books to the classroom collection ("For those of you who have been enjoying books by Marjorie Sharmat, here's a new *Nate the Great* mystery for our collection. In this one, Nate. . . . "); (3) preservation of a nearly sanctified time for students to read in free-choice books; (4) use of trade books during units of study in science and social studies; (5) pointed literacy instruction that focused on decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies, as well as on author craft and reading and writing within genres; and (6) provision of multiple venues for her students to share with their peers what they were reading.

The nearly obvious combination of valuing books, providing time for reading choice materials, and seeding with instruction seemed to catch hold. We observed students begin to be more relentless in their pursuit of library books already checked out; we noted books added to their reading stacks; we heard about books that came from friends, from the neighborhood ("that little store, you know, down at the corner"), or from family ("my uncle, he gave it to me"). A "gently-used book" cart opened for sales on Wednesdays during lunch, and Rosemary Flores' children were always in the line. Reading and writing were decidedly part of their school lives, and they were acting the roles of literate beings.

For example, during the read-aloud (in English) of *Esperanza Rising* (Ryan, 2000), the students linked with, questioned, and considered the events—just as all book responders do:

- Ramón *asks for clarification*: "Was it the house that was burning?"
- Ms. Flores *ensures comprehension*: "Do you remember who Señor Rodríguez is?"
- Several children *verify* what is burning *by looking back*.
- Lupe *speculates* that the fire was deliberately set.
- Gabriela *is reminded of* a dream in which she nearly dies.
- Jose *links* the bad smelling papaya with the pungent smell of broken egg in "our Charlotte's Web story." Abel *connects* with murky water of diaper washes ("oooooh") in another story: "Like Freckle Juice."
- Ms. Flores *lifts language to be savored:* "I like the sound of that: 'The onions bit into her senses.' "
- Cruz *questions* whether grapes actually burn.
- Elena *empathizes*: "It hurts," she says in English and then in Spanish.
- Ana *evaluates*: "I think she is kinda spoiled."
- Juana *wonders* aloud: "Why, if Esperanza can speak only Spanish, are her words written in English?"

The talk stopped momentarily with Juana's inquiry. Why indeed are the words of a monolingual Spanish immigrant character written in English? Speculations began. Some were strained, other more reasoned: "Maybe Pam Muñoz Ryan wanted kids who can't speak Spanish to read it." After good discussion, we adults proposed prevailing on the author to help us. It seemed amazing to the children that the author might consider our wondering. When Ms. Ryan responded with a personal e-mail and book cover postcards for each student, a delegation of boys went to the library to ask for other books by the author. They had become even stauncher fans.

Book recommendations increased. Students reading Marvin Redpost books with their literacy support teacher recommended them to their friends in the classroom and created

new fans. Books once read were recommended and passed among class members. Always there was sharing. For the most part, books were not squirreled away into desks or secreted into backpacks but stacked (rather proudly) on desktops. Tiny Post-it notes tucked inside a book's first page indicated who had signed for the next turn. Was it "plenty" that created the generosity, the willingness to share? More likely, the sharing that manifested itself in so many other ways in the classroom culture had extended to incorporate the books.

Access and Purposes: Reasons for Reading Are Both Personal and "Stretchable"

Observations and conferences also pointed to many individual reasons for reading particular books at particular times. Rosemary Flores cultivated an attitude that students should read for a variety of purposes—from studying illustrations to sharing with friends to living inside a story to furthering understanding. Perhaps because of this attitude, students' book stacks included a range of difficulty levels and a variety of types of books. For example, Miguel's desk held a soccer book, two "how-to-draws," a book about whales, and some books intended for beginning readers. Miguel, a struggling reader in Spanish who had moved back and forth to Mexico several times, was just beginning to read English. At first, he refused to try books in English until we brought a box of easy, first-grade-level readers to the classroom. These books, rarely available in upper elementary classrooms, were just right for Miguel. After reading several books with the teacher or researchers, he began reading them on his own. His purposes for reading included learning how to read. Fortunately, there was no onus on choosing and reading easy books.

Other students, too, used reading time to learn or practice English or to maintain Spanish. Elena, having read the first *Harry Potter* book in English, chose to read it again in Spanish, to "look to see how they tell the story different." From the first chapter, she discovered that "It's longer in Spanish. They use more words to describe things." Esmeralda's father had made it clear to his children that they were expected to continue with their Spanish while they learned English. That valuing of native language was taken to heart by Esmeralda, and she typically alternated between reading books in English and in Spanish. By contrast, when Ricardo selected two books about snakes (one in English and one in Spanish), the fact that they were in different languages didn't seem to enter into his choice. It was his way of flexing his bilingual abilities, an indicator he could read any book he chose. "And they both have good pictures," he explained.

Reading as a social act also became more prevalent. Paulo, a novice English learner, was enthralled with a Texan Cinderella story that Ms. Flores read aloud. He announced he wanted to read it for himself "to get the whole story." Instead, he read it aloud to Miguel, who listened closely and inspected the illustrations even *more* closely. They talked over the book in Spanish, and Miguel, the classroom artist, provided some new illustrations of his own design. Two boys (Ricardo and Abel) who had borrowed the same book from the library showed their choices as they waited in the lunch line. When one of us asked if they planned to read the book together, Abel said no, paused, then turned Ricardo and asked if he wanted to get together after school to read. The students began to use their free time to read books and continuously reported back to us what they were reading and with whom. They also read side by side to encourage each other. For example, Alma, Ana, and Lupe were sitting in the hall at a table taking turns reading *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* together (Dahl, 2001). When asked why they were reading together, Lupe said, "We're helping Ana." Ana confirmed that quietly, "Uh huh." Her demeanor seemed to surprise Lupe: "That's what you told us. You wanted us to help you."

Students seemed to read for all the reasons mature readers do: They read to share, to escape, to get ideas for writing, and to learn. They read just because they could, to test their prowess, and because books made them laugh or think or even cry: "It's so sad, Miss, when Charlotte dies. Ms. Flores cried right here." An adult explained that all you need to do to make Charlotte live is to begin the book again. It seemed a satisfying explanation, whether or not it contributed to the amount of rereading we observed. Nevertheless, we later recorded:

ADULT: Why are y'all reading it now?

ISABEL: 'Cause Charlotte, it was dead, and for he can come alive, we read the book again.

BERTA: So she can come alive.

Rereading seemed to occur for other purposes as well. In this classroom, rereading books, a rarity in upper elementary classrooms, became a tradition. Predictably, popular choices for rereading were books that had been read aloud. As Ms. Flores pronounced the final word in a read-aloud, 18 hands shot up before she could ask the question, "Who wants to read it now?" In her final interview, one student said, "I like to read the books after the teacher so I can make my voice sound like hers."

But Ms. Flores' instruction offered still other reasons for reading and rereading, notably to interpret and perform (via readers' theater) and to talk about important ideas (via book clubs). Frequently, students practiced and presented favorite scenes or stories in well-rehearsed performances. Rehearsals supported both accruing meanings and fluent oral reading. In addition, they made performed books "best sellers," and they were just plain fun. So that we could observe the changes in thought and talk that accompany rereadings, we asked one small group to read *Because of Winn-Dixie* (DiCamillo, 2000) in November and again in April. Students' insights, issues, and expressions of meanings across time lent further documentation to the contention that purposes for reading should include reasons to reread.

DISCUSSION

By the end of the year, students' desk stacks held 4 to 12 books—from thin picture books to tomes, some in process, some in planning—much like the bedside table of an avid reader. The students were reading. Our reading logs and their backpacks were stuffed with the evidence. Each of them (save one) passed the end-of year state examination in reading. That child missed by one question. In a classroom of comparable learners down the hall, the results were much more bleak.

For many students, "young adolescence marks the beginning of a downward trend in academics" (Ryan & Patrick, 2001, p. 438). Although there is a great deal of evidence supporting the positive effects of providing access to engaging materials and instruction, few studies have applied this research in long-term classroom-based studies in the intermediate grades over time. Researchers have called for studies that use a wide variety of data to study these factors in depth and over time in relation to instruction and within the social and cultural contexts of classrooms and communities.

Although it is important for educators to ensure that students have access to high-quality conceptually challenging literature, it is also essential that students' preferences be addressed in order to capture their attention and engagement and to enhance fluency, vocab-

ulary growth, linguistic competence, and confidence and, thus, to foster learning (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Worthy & McKool, 1996). Summers and Lukevich (1983) recommended that teachers "treat norms lightly and analyze preferences for a particular class, within a specific school and community" (p. 358). We suggest going a step further, to attend to students' individual interests and reasons for reading. We have learned that it is impossible to know students' reading interests without knowing students. Certainly there are books that are popular with the majority, but each child also has his or her own personal tastes that change and grow in response to a variety of influences and that are almost impossible to predict.

As we segmented our data into meaningful units, wrote phrasal summaries and reactions to each unit, listed topics, discussed issues, and grouped the topics into categories based on recurring patterns, we returned again and again to the centrality of the teacher in this classroom for modeling, sharing, and, perhaps most important, honoring the children's personal interests and choices. Even more significant than a well-chosen "flood" of books and other materials seemed the orchestration of history and experiences, culture, language, purposes for reading, interests, and interactions that helped one teacher lead virtually every student in her class to become an avid reader. But the right books at the right time in the right hands in sufficient quantity and with time to read was a buoy.

Teachers and parents, who know students most closely, are in the best position to decide which books should be available to their children. But teachers need money to obtain these books as they get to know their students. Evidence such as that gleaned from Ms. Flores' class underscores that neither expensive test preparation nor costly tests themselves created these successful learners but, rather, an informed teacher with the tools she needed. In the meantime, garage sales, donations, online book closeouts, and overstocks, children's own collections, pleas in local newspapers, accruing "points" from publishers specializing in classroom sales, gifts from Reading Is Fundamental, and other civic groups may be more immediate means to obtain the critical "tools" of the trade. As we present these sources for books, a cautionary note comes from "Little Man" in Taylor's (1976) *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.* Little Man's first book at school had been worn and stained and marked by years of use by white children and only then discarded and labeled as offered to the "nigra" school. "No!" shouted Little Man. His rejection should reverberate for all of us who put books into children's hands. It is not classrooms awash with any kind of castoff book that constitutes the vibrant book flood; rather, it is the steady stream of a range of carefully chosen texts filtered through the hands of teachers who know and value both the learners and what they read that should be the flood ensurance policy for all children.

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Suggested Titles

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Soto, Gary	*Baseball in April*	2000	Harcourt	128	Soto offers a collection of 11 short stories set in central California. The Latino/a characters' problems and predicaments are real and universal—being cool, making a team, being embarrassed by family. The stories are lasting and invite talk.
Carlson, Lori (Editor); illustrated by Oscar Hijuelos	*Cool Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Growing Up Latino in the United States*	1994	Henry Holt	123	Appropriate for upper middle and high school, this collection of poetry in two languages unguardedly reveals what it means to be Hispanic. Teachers of intermediate grades will dip in to select poets and poems they, too, will choose to share.
Medina, Jane; illustrated by Fabricio Vanden Broeck	*My Name Is Jorge on Both Sides of the River*	1999	Boyds Mills	48	The immigrant child Jorge describes his experiences in free verse. Facing pages offer poems in two languages of hurt, pride, conflict, cultures, friendship, and family. Most of all, Medina has captured the misunderstandings and apprehensions of being new in the United States.

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15

Literacy Motivation

Implications for Urban Classrooms

LINDA B. GAMBRELL

Finding effective ways to motivate students to read is one of the greatest challenges facing classroom teachers in multiethnic urban classrooms. As classrooms become more diverse, teachers are seeking ways to create classroom contexts that are both inclusive and affirmative in order to meet the challenges of literacy motivation for today's urban youth.

Perhaps the one thing that all literacy teachers would agree on is that we would like all of our students to find reading personally rewarding. We want all of our students to be motivated to read—we want them to read when no one is looking; when no one is "grading" their work. We want our students to read for pleasure and information and for a variety of purposes. We want them to be intrinsically motivated to read, because we know that literacy is the cornerstone of academic success and good citizenship.

Researchers and teachers have become increasingly aware of the importance of motivation in literacy development. Positive literacy motivation has been associated with a number of desirable outcomes, including higher reading achievement, deeper cognitive processing, greater conceptual understanding, and willingness to persevere (Allington, 1986; Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Hidi, 1990; Tobias, 1994).

Teachers are well aware that some students expend a great deal of time and effort on academic tasks such as reading and that other students do not. One of the lingering questions is *why* different students expend different amounts of time and effort on such tasks. Such differences are often explained as motivational in nature. Some students are more highly motivated to read than others. Because of the powerful relationship between motivation and achievement, it is important that we come to a fuller understanding of the role of motivation in the literacy learning of urban youth.

LITERACY MOTIVATION: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

A number of theories have helped us better understand the role of motivation in literacy development. Expectancy-value theory emphasizes the roles of self-concept and value as criti-

cal constructs of motivation (Ford, 1992; Winne, 1985). The self-concept component is supported by a number of research studies that suggest that students who believe they are capable and competent are more likely to outperform those who do not hold such beliefs (Paris & Oka, 1986; Schunk, 1985). There is also evidence to suggest that students who perceive reading as valuable and important, and who have personally relevant reasons for reading, will engage in reading in a more planned and effortful manner (Paris & Oka, 1986).

The motivational systems theory developed by Ford (1992) maintains that people are motivated to attain goals they value and perceive as achievable. Similarly, Winne (1985) views the "idealized reader" as one who feels competent and perceives reading as being of personal value and practical importance. According to Wittrock (1986), motivation is the process of initiating, sustaining, and directing activity. In the research to date on literacy motivation, far more attention has been devoted to what initiates engagement, whereas very little of the research has explored the nature of sustained engagement in reading.

CLASSROOM CONTEXTS THAT FOSTER MOTIVATION TO READ

Flippo (2001) conducted a study of literacy experts to explore what they agreed on as being central to good instruction. She reported compelling agreement among the experts with respect to the importance of literacy motivation. There appears to be congruence across theoretical perspectives, research findings, and literacy experts that the following classroom characteristics foster motivation to read: access to reading materials, opportunities to select reading materials, time spent engaged in independent reading, social interactions concerning books, and cultural identification with text and characters in text.

Students Are More Motivated to Read When the Environment Is Literacy Rich

A number of studies have documented that when students have classroom environments that are literacy rich, the motivation to read is high (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1993; Elley, 1992; Gambrell, 1995; Guthrie et al., 1996; Lundberg & Linnakyla, 1993; Morrow, 1992; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Neuman & Roskos, 1993; Purcell-Gates, McIntyre, & Freppon, 1995). Having an abundance of high-quality, high-interest reading materials is critical to the development of reading motivation. The availability of books and other reading materials supports students in engaging in reading in a voluntary and sustained manner. However, there some caveats worth noting with regard to access to books. It is not just having books available that is important—rather, it is how the books are made accessible to students and what teachers do to promote engagement with books and reading materials. We know, for example, that books that are displayed or featured in some way by the teacher are the books that students gravitate toward.

Teachers also make books more accessible to their students when they include teacher read-aloud sessions in their curricula. When teachers read books aloud, students are often "turned on" to a particular genre or author and will pursue independent reading of related books. Many students will also want to read the specific book that the teacher has read aloud. I referred to this as the "teacher blessing of the book phenomenon," because research suggests that students are highly motivated to read texts that the teacher has read aloud (Chasen & Gambrell, 1992). Teachers who value reading and are enthusiastic about sharing a love of reading with their students make a positive difference in the literacy development of their students (Elley, 1992).

In many classrooms, teachers rely primarily on narrative text for teacher read-aloud. Doiron (1994) has cautioned that if teachers rely primarily on narrative in read-aloud programs, reading for enjoyment will be perceived as reading only fiction. In order to increase access and interest, teachers should strive to provide exposure to a broad range of texts in their read-aloud program. In particular, exposure to informational text is critical during teacher read-aloud time, so that students become familiar with the structures and characters of exposition. By choosing a range of text such as informational books, newspaper articles, narrative stories, magazines, and poems for teacher read-aloud time, the teacher increases student access, interest, familiarity, and comfort with these materials.

Some books are more motivating than others. Particularly in urban classrooms, students must have books that reflect their own culture, as well as a variety of other cultures. Students need to identify with text characters, problems, and solutions. It seems clear that having books available and having a teacher who promotes reading in interesting and exciting ways creates a motivating context for literacy learning.

Access to reading materials is a significant factor in literacy motivation, and greater attention needs to be devoted to assuring that high-quality materials are a priority in urban schools. It is also clear that teachers can enhance literacy motivation and development by sharing, in a variety of ways, a broad range of reading materials and texts.

Students Are More Motivated When They Are Involved in Choosing Texts and Materials They Want to Read

One of the most robust findings in the research literature is that choice is related to motivation. Consequently, it is no surprise that children's self-selection of reading material is strongly linked to motivation to read. The research supports the notion that the books and stories that students find most interesting are those they have selected for their own reasons and purposes (Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Palmer, Codling, & Gambrell, 1994). Schiefele's (1991) research revealed that students who were allowed and encouraged to choose their own reading material expended more effort in learning and understanding the material they read.

One of the most consistent findings across a study of first-, third-, fifth- and eighth-grade students was the compelling motivational power of choice (Gambrell, 1995). When students were asked about what books they had most enjoyed reading, over 80% reported that they themselves had selected the texts from the classroom library. This finding supports the importance of providing students with opportunities to self-select reading materials. When given support in developing the processes of choosing, students generate their own opportunities to learn. Learning experiences that afford students choice of topic and text maximize the development of intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, providing choice supports students in developing and expanding their own reading goals.

Students Are More Motivated to Read When They Have Opportunities to Engage in Sustained Independent Reading

Research suggests that providing students with time to engage in self-selected reading promotes literacy motivation. Increases in motivation to read have been reported for a range of students who engaged in self-selected reading, including remedial readers (Mayes, 1982) and adolescent students with discipline problems (Coley, 1981). These studies also suggest that motivation to read is linked to spending more time reading, thereby helping students gain much-needed practice and experience.

There is clear evidence from reading research that the amount of time spent reading is the major contributor to reading proficiency (Allington, 1983; Stanovich, 1986). According to Cunningham and Stanovich (1998), reading has cognitive benefits beyond getting meaning from the page. Their research suggests that the very act of engaging in reading can help students compensate for modest levels of cognitive ability by increasing their vocabulary and general knowledge. Perhaps the most important finding from the research of Cunningham and Stanovich (1998) is that ability is not the only variable that counts in the development of intelligence. Their research supports the notion that students who read a lot will enhance their verbal intelligence. They found that this was true for all students—those of all ability levels. In their study, everyone benefited from time spent reading, but struggling readers benefited most. In other words, reading makes a person smarter. Students who are motivated to read make time for reading, read more, and as a result are likely to increase their intelligence.

Students Are More Motivated to Read When They Have Opportunities to Discuss with Others What Has Been Read

Theories of motivation and reading emphasize that learning is facilitated by social interactions with others. Sharing ideas with others about books, stories, and information is an important factor in developing engaged and motivated readers. There is ample research evidence that social interactions about what one has read have a positive influence on both reading motivation and achievement. Several studies have documented that social interaction promotes achievement, higher level cognition, and intrinsic desire to read (Almasi, 1995; Guthrie, Schafer, Wang, & Afflerbach, 1995).

A number of studies have also shown that a classroom environment that fosters social interaction is more likely to foster intrinsic motivation, compared with more individualized, solitary learning environments (Ames, 1984; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Guthrie et al., 1995). Guthrie et al. (1996) found that students who had opportunities to interact socially with peers during literacy activities were more intrinsically motivated to read and that they read more widely and more frequently than students who were less socially interactive. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), reporting on trends in academic progress, found that students who engaged in frequent discussions about reading with friends and family were more motivated to read and had higher reading achievement scores than students who did not have such interactions (Campbell, Hombo, & Mazzeo, 2000).

Flippo's (2001) study explored and identified features of literacy instruction that experts agreed on as being central to good instruction. There was almost unanimous agreement among literacy experts about the importance of the role of social interaction in reading. Specifically, experts agreed that students should be encouraged to talk about and share the different kinds of reading they do in a variety of ways with many others. Taken together, research studies and literacy experts place a high priority on social interactions associated with discussions about text and suggest that motivation is enhanced when students perceive the learning context to be socially supportive.

Evidence shows that talking about what has been read increases the readers' knowledge of reading processes and written language conventions (Snow & Ninio, 1986), as well as the interpretation of text (Rogers,1991). Activities that afford opportunities for social interaction related to reading can foster the development of turn taking (O'Flahavan, 1989) and higher order thinking skills (Almasi, 1995). In addition, social interaction fosters knowledge

growth in several important ways for students: participation in peer–peer interactions leads to an awareness of multiple perspectives on a topic (Eeds & Wells, 1989); interactions with other readers leads to an increased awareness of self in relation to others (Green, Kantor, & Rogers, 1991); interactions with others fosters thinking, reasoning, and study strategies (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991).

Students Are More Motivated to Read When Literacy Activities Recognize and Value Their Cultural Identities

A number of theories and studies support the notion that students are more motivated when the literacy activities they engage in are connected to their own lives and their cultural identities (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Delpit, 1988; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Langer's (2001) study of middle and high school students in primarily urban settings suggests that learning is more likely to be enhanced when connections can be made between in-school and out-of-school experiences. In this study, teachers in high-performing schools "worked consciously to weave a web of connections" (p. 864) for their students. Langer (2001) provides a vignette that illustrates how one teacher supported her students in making connections from literature to life:

> To do this, Celeste organized her literature instruction around thematic units, for example pairing *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Raisin in the Sun*, to permit her students to focus on family relationships and ways families deal with the situations they face. For such units, she typically created study guides that provided scaffolding for her students and made overt to both her students and herself the particular connections that were at focus. Comparisons across the pieces helped her students compare and critique aspects of structure, language, and style while they also focused on thematic elements across the pieces and connected (e.g., compared and critiqued) them based on related situations in the world today. (p. 866)

Furthermore, the "new literacy" theorists take the position that social context and cultural diversity significantly affect the literacy process (Morrell, 2002; New London Group, 1996; Street, 1995). Urban students who struggle with "academic" literacy skills often find the school curriculum inaccessible. The new-literacy theorists contend that these students are indeed literate but that their personal literacies have little connection with the dominant academic literacies found in public schools. They suggest that for these students, it is imperative that connections be made between the local literacies and the dominant academic literacies.

According to Morrell (2002), using popular culture has been found to be a highly motivating and effective way to make connections to urban youth's literacy practices. In a study of urban youth, Mahiri (1998) found strong connections between student's literacy practices with popular culture and the types of literacies required in schools. Cultural and critical theorists view popular culture as a site of struggle between the dominant and subordinate groups in society (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1999; Hall, 1998; McCarthy, 1998; Storey, 1998). Popular culture has been defined as a terrain of ideological struggle expressed through music, film, mass media artifacts, language, customs, and values (Gramsci, 1971).

According to Morrell (2002), the argument for incorporating popular culture into the traditional curriculum is compelling. Furthermore, popular culture must emanate from and serve the interests of members of marginalized groups. Pedagogy based on popular culture

brings the students and teacher together to learn from and with one another while engaging in dialogue that is centered on the experiences of urban youth as participants in and creators of popular culture (Freire, 1970; Morrell, 2002).

Morrell (2002) provides an example of how he and a colleague used the popular culture of hip-hop music in the English curriculum. Hip-hop is recognized as a music form that is the representative voice of urban youth—a genre created by and for urban youth. Recognizing the social, cultural, and academic relevance of hip-hop music, Morrell and his colleague developed a classroom unit that incorporated hip-hop music into a traditional high school English poetry unit.

> We began the unit with an overview of poetry in general, attempting to redefine poetry and the poet's role. We emphasized the importance of understanding the historical period in which a poem was written in order to come to a deep interpretation. In the introductory lecture, we laid out all of the historical and literary periods that would be covered in the unit (e.g., the Elizabethan age, the Puritan Revolution in England, the Civil War, and the Post-Industrial Revolution in the United States). We placed hip-hop music and the Post-Industrial Revolution right alongside other historical and literary periods so that students could use a period and genre of poetry they were familiar with as a lens to examine the other literary works.
>
> The second major portion of the unit was the group presentation of a poem and a rap song. The groups were asked to prepare a justifiable interpretation of their poem and song with relation to their specific historical and literary periods and to analyze the links between the two. After a week of preparation, each group was given a class period to present its' work and have its' arguments critiqued by peers. In addition to the group presentations, students were asked to complete an anthology of 10 poems, 5 of which would be presented at a poetry reading. Finally, students were asked to write a five-to-seven-page critical essay on a song of their choice. (p. 48)

Morrell (2002) reported that in this lesson, students generated quality interpretations and made connections between the poems and the rap songs. They created their own poems and gave oral and written critiques similar to those required by college preparatory English classes. In essence, the students became producers of literary texts that provided social commentary and encouraged action for social justice. The unit was situated in the experiences of the students, called for critical dialogue and engagement with text, and related the texts to larger social and political issues. (For other examples of units and lessons based on popular culture—film, television, etc.—see Morrell, 2002).

SUMMARY

The proposition put forward in this chapter is that motivation should be a central and significant consideration in the literacy curriculum for urban youth. The findings from the research on literacy motivation provide a compelling case that we can help all students develop the reading habit and the intrinsic desire to read by creating motivational contexts for literacy learning. It is within the power of every teacher to inspire and motivate students to find a lifetime of pleasure and information in the reading of good books. However, there are many issues related to the reading motivation of urban youth that will require our attention in the future in order to more fully understand how urban students acquire motivation to read.

Suggested Titles: More Than One Way to Show Literacy—Music

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Aliki	*Ah! Music!*	2003	HarperCollins	48	Aliki provides both a structure and ways to grasp this huge topic. Used in juxtaposition, music, the lives of musicians, and the tunes themselves are there to draw readers, already fans of music, toward books.
Pinkney, Andrea	*Duke Ellington*	1998	Hyperion	32	The Pinkneys (Andrea and Brian) combine just the right sassy language and scratchboard art to tell the story of Ellington, from whom jazz flowed. Read it aloud with Ellington's music.
Collier, Bryan; illustrated by the author	*Uptown*	2000	Henry Holt	32	Here's another book to set the jazz behind as you read. Vivid mixed-media art offers Harlem as a vibrant community, bursting with sights—and sounds. The narrator is a young African American boy who comments on each scene.

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16

Preventing Urban Learners from Becoming Struggling Readers

Can Brain Research Be a Foundation for Good Literacy Teaching?

ANDREA F. ROSENBLATT

Many years of practice, research, and intuition have improved the teaching of literacy. In addition, we now have additional opportunities to use the results of scientific brain research, which can positively affect the way we teach. Although scientists have been researching this field for some time, it is only in recent years that educators have discovered the relationships and implications of brain research for the school learning environment. These findings provide us with a greater understanding of how a student's home and community environment, pre- and in-school experiences, and personality affect his responses to new experiences and academic settings and to life's challenges. As an example, neuroscientists have identified chemicals, known as neurotransmitters, that flow during the brain's functioning. The brain selects these neurotransmitters based on the positive or negative experiences of the student at that moment, as well as on his or her memory of similar events.

Educators have extrapolated information from these findings to help develop productive instructional practices. For many years, research on best teaching practices focused on what teachers do. Now, greater emphasis is being placed on the experiences of the learners. Scientists caution us, however, that in many cases, it is too early to draw conclusions about best teaching practices based on this research.

BRAIN STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

A brief summary of how the brain functions will provide a background for understanding how instruction may influence the brain's development. Recent findings of neuroscientists show that the brain functions differently than originally thought. These scientists have been

able to observe the actions taken in various parts of the brain during a variety of experiences, such as solving problems, playing musical instruments, performing physical tasks, and beginning to read. They use medical equipment such as positron emission tomography (PET) scans, which measure blood flow; electroencephalographs (EEG) and magnetoencephalographs (MEG), which record electrical impulses; and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), which provides three-dimensional views of the brain's structure. From these observations, they have been able to identify specific portions of the brain that are being used during these various activities. This knowledge has helped scientists and educators look at the mental relationships between emotional, social, and cognitive learning. As a result, we now know that emotion plays an important role during cognitive learning experiences.

At birth, the human brain contains about 100 billion cells known as neurons and glial cells. Neurons are composed of a cell body, dendrites, and axons, which transmit information through chemical and electrical signals. Axons conduct the information to the dendrites by means of a junction known as a synapse. Glial cells are the helper cells, which assist with fetal brain development, the migration of the neurons, the removal of damaged cells, and the maintenance of the chemical environment around the neurons (Wolfe, 2001). The brain operates electrophysically by generating electrical voltage from neuron to neuron. Calcium enters through pores in the cells when an electrical impulse reaches the axon terminal. Neurotransmitters, forced by the calcium and nerve impulse, travel across synapses to locate on receiving neurons. The neurons' reactions are dependent on the type of neurotransmitters being activated (Given, 2002). These reactions influence the way humans behave.

As the brain ages, it grows neuronal connections and prunes cells that are not useful for the brain's functioning on an ongoing basis. Up to 60,000 connections between themselves and other cells are continuously developed over the next 15 years (Lowery, 2001). When the brain receives little stimulation from the environment, brain cells die and, in many instances, cannot be replaced. Connections that do form create patterns that can continuously change and expand as a result of experiences throughout life. Evidence indicates that the more connections a person has, the better able he or she is to solve problems, think clearly, and understand events (Lowery, 2001).

Although it was originally thought that the brain has a set number of cells that decreases as one gets older, we now know that dendritic growth can continue if a person remains mentally active. It has been shown through autopsies that the brains of university graduates had up to 40% more dendritic material than those of high school dropouts (Lowery, 2001).

This growth can occur in different regions. Paul MacLean's (1978) "triune brain" model describes the portions of the brain in easy-to-understand analogous concepts, which includes the "reptilian brain," the least advanced on the evolutionary chain, which controls physical responses; the "paleomammalian brain" or limbic system, located in the cerebellum, which deals with controlling all sensory input by using the emotions; and the neomammalian or neocortex, located in the cerebrum, which directs academic thought and cognitive learning (Panksepp, 1998). When the needs of lower evolutionary portions are not met, the brain will focus on the emotional, physical, or social needs, hijacking the functioning of the neocortex, which is responsible for cognitive functioning. Although we know that the brain is much more complex, the triune model provides a simplistic representation for beginning an understanding of how the brain works (LeDoux, 1996).

We have also learned that the quality of the storage mechanisms in the brain will affect the ability of the brain to construct meaning and retain information. By using as many

senses as possible during an experience in a positive emotional environment, learning can be stored using many pathways in different portions of the brain. Thus the experience is more easily learned and retained in long-term memory. With this research in mind, educators can ensure that urban students are more prepared by identifying readiness for learning, providing nonthreatening environments, stimulating social growth, and structuring opportunities for cognitive growth in an enriched environment with movement, as well as assessing and providing continuous feedback. The rest of this chapter provides support for these assertions and presents ideas and materials for the implementation of a successful environment for the urban learner.

READINESS FOR LEARNING

A number of areas of the brain are influenced by the experiences that occur in infancy and preschool years. Unfortunately, poor nutrition, excessive stress, and alcohol and drug consumption by the mother can affect the child before birth. Additionally, many children are being raised by teenage mothers in stressful environments and have few opportunities for enrichment. Many urban students begin school with disadvantages due to stressful homes or community environments, poor nutrition, and/or lack of knowledge by the caregivers of best child-care practices, all of which hinder a brain's development. In fact, children today are not as prepared for school as they were one or two generations ago (Healy, 1990).

Emotional intelligence begins to develop in the first year, as the child observes the people around him or her. When dealing with stress, the child's brain consumes glucose that should be used for cognitive functioning. This early exposure to stress and violence can cause the brain to reorganize, increasing the size of the site for chemicals that deal with alertness (Kotulak, 1996). Moreover, during these early years, the brain is customizing itself as it prunes away unneeded cells and unused connections (Jensen, 1998). Stimulation and modeling influence the brain's growth. Therefore, it is vital that the brain receives many opportunities to grow these connections during those early years. Unfortunately, many urban children are spending their days with less-than-adequate caregivers.

Motor stimulation is also required for the brain to make the necessary connections for literacy development. Many urban children spend their time in playpens or sparse rooms or strapped into car seats and walkers during the time when they should be out exploring their environment. "Considering the tomes of evidence on the impact of early motor stimulation on reading, writing, and attentional skills (Ayers, 1972, 1991; Hannaford, 1995) it's no wonder many urban children have reading problems" (Jensen, 1998, p. 21). As only one example demonstrates, the inner ear's vestibular area is important in developing school readiness. According to Restak (1988), "Infants who were given periodic vestibular stimulation by rocking, gained weight faster, developed vision and hearing earlier." Thus the lack of stimulation that occurs in too many urban preschool environments has been linked to learning problems (Cleeland, 1984).

Vision also begins to develop during the first few months of life. The most effective visual stimulation occurs through interaction with three-dimensional objects. Television is a poor substitute because it is two-dimensional, moves too quickly, offers no chance for eye relaxation, deals with abstractions, and provides no opportunity for interaction. Some scientists and researchers have indicated that they would like to ban television for children before the age of 8 years (Hannaford, 1995).

In the preschool years, children also begin to develop their cognitive processes by using

tactile stimulation; at this point the cerebellum, which controls balance and movement, is ready to learn. Researchers have found that very young children are capable of processing simple math, including one-to-one correspondence, when manipulatives and movement are used (Jensen, 1998; Lyons, 2003).

Children's first auditory learning comes from stimulation of the auditory cortex in their own environment. A map is developed in the brain for language, including accents and word pronunciation, as well as household sounds such as music and rhythm. Because math and music circuitry are related, introducing music early may help with learning math (Jensen, 1998).

Stressful pregnancies have been found to be associated with language problems. The flow of stress hormones can be raised to abnormal levels, which can slow down development of the left hemisphere (Jensen, 1998). Many urban parents have dealt with continual stress throughout their pregnancies.

As educators, we have difficulty controlling these environmental factors. However, we must be prepared to address these problems when the students enter our schools. Whenever possible, we need to provide parents of infants and preschoolers with important information that may prevent or reduce the severity of some of these learning difficulties.

If parents speak to their infants frequently and use larger words, many of these children will develop better language skills. This crucial time lays the pathway for reading skills later on (Begley, 1996). According to recent polls, most parents use the television and video games as baby-sitters and do not spend much time interacting with their children in meaningful conversations, which include book-type language.

Sleep and nutrition play significant roles in the child's ability to learn. Many children do not get enough time in a dream state of sleep, which is required for physical renewal. Many do not get enough time in the dream state that occurs during a rapid eye movement (REM) time, which is needed for maintaining memories. As children get older, their sleep cycles change, which affects their functioning in school. Although the importance of good nutrition has been emphasized, even by the media, many children do not receive all of the nutrients necessary for the brain. Children rarely eat enough of these helpful foods, which include fresh fruits, salmon, lean meats, nuts, and leafy green vegetables (Connors, 1989). Dairy products and leafy green vegetables contain calpain, which acts as a "cleaner" of synapses by dissolving protein buildup (Howard, 2000). Recent studies indicate that dietary supplements do not satisfy the need for nutritious food.

Many studies have suggested that water plays a strong role in keeping the brain alert and free from stress. Thirst signals that there is too much salt in the blood, which increases hormone levels associated with stress. Parents and teachers should encourage the intake of water, not soft drinks, throughout the day, especially during school hours (Hannaford, 1995).

ABSENCE OF THREAT AND EMOTIONAL GROWTH

As new information enters the brain, the thalamus and hypothalamus act as filters to determine whether the information can be processed normally or whether it needs immediate attention. The thalamus then sends the information to the amygdala and to the neocortex. The amygdala identifies the emotional relevance and the neocortex begins making sense of the information, while categorizing it for memory (Wolfe, 2001). The hippocampus is responsible for memories of the immediate past, and it eventually sends information to the

neocortex, where it is stored as long-term memory. Research shows that when children are threatened, the limbic and brain stem portions of their brains go into action through the secretion of stress hormones and proteins, leading to the death of brain cells in the hippocampus, thus causing a shutdown of the neocortex, in which higher level functioning takes place (Vincent, 1990). These proteins strengthen the connection by settling around the synapses (Howard, 2000; Erlauer, 2003).

Educators should use this information to guide their planning, because fostering positive emotions can ensure some level of learning and success. By providing a stress-laden, threatening environment, they will ensure that what the students learn will not be what they had planned. In those situations, students learn to fear school situations and personnel and are unable to absorb or relate to the content discussed. Being placed in continuously threatening and stressful situations can affect the brain's chemistry and structure, leading to long-term learning difficulties. The absence of threat and an environment that encourages and sustains emotional wellness will provide the most positive setting for learning.

This emotional impact occurs even on a macro level. It is stressful to feel that you are not in the majority. This all-encompassing awareness can have an impact on learning, as the stress it produces can change the chemicals in the brain, causing electrical activity to be concentrated in the brain stem and cerebellum, with decreased stimulation in the midbrain and neocortex (Forester & Reinhard, 2000). Sonya Lupien, a professor at McGill University, found "that high levels of cortisol produced by long-term stress caused shrinkage of the hippocampus, resulting in memory impairment" (as cited in Erlauer, 2003, p. 17). If the stress continues, it can permanently change the brain's structure and functioning. Anyone who is in a minority will experience some level of stress. How we deal with this stress is very important to emotional growth and academic learning. Educators can assist urban youths to develop strategies to alleviate this stress. For instance, urban youths can learn to succeed in their particular cultures. Because cultures are very different, the behaviors that are acceptable and appropriate in a minority culture may not be viewed the same way by the majority. African American and Hispanic students, in a minority situation, may react impulsively, demonstrating behavior that might be appropriate in their culture. Therefore, urban students too often are viewed by teachers from the majority culture as disruptive or unable to learn. This view causes some teachers to create a more stressful environment for the students through verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

According to some researchers, rewards and punishments can also be stressful, impairing brain cells and changing the body's chemistry. Because of these new findings, educators need to carefully select the form of feedback we provide urban students (Kohn, 1996). Due to the brain's innate interest in learning, the best motivational incentives can be provided by piquing curiosity and using positive emotionally laden activities.

Because many students deal with stress in their homes on a daily basis, children need individuals in the school environment who will listen to them and help them relieve and deal with stress. Teachers must provide a safe learning environment, with continued opportunities to learn ways to deal with stress. Erlauer (2003) identifies teachers' behaviors that both decrease and increase student stress. Although most of the items listed are not surprising, it is important to periodically remind teachers, because they also have human brains and are influenced by their own stress levels. Attention, health, learning, and memory are controlled by our emotions. If we create activities that hook into emotions, learning will be more intense and will create long-term memory. Therefore, we must let emotions influence our planning, goal setting, and value-based decisions (Forester & Reinhard, 2000).

Daniel Goleman, in his book *Emotional Intelligence* (1995), described a model that can guide educators, based on studies done by Peter Salovey of Harvard University. It includes:

- Self-awareness (monitoring one's own feelings).
- Self-management (managing the feelings so they do not disrupt life).
- Self-motivation (maintaining a positive, productive state).
- Other-awareness (detecting emotions in others and feeling empathetic).
- Relationship management (interacting smoothly with others using social skills).

As stated earlier, brain research has confirmed that the brain can function on a higher level of thinking when it is emotionally secure. Goleman's first three components address this concept. The last two components deal with the human brain's need to collaborate with others (Sousa, 1995). Goleman believes strongly that we must plan for emotional intelligence learning. He states, "By leaving the emotional lessons children learn to chance, we risk largely wasting the window of opportunity presented by the slow maturation of the brain to help children cultivate a healthy emotional repertoire" (Goleman, 1995, p. 286).

Erlauer (2003) provides relevant brain-compatible tips for teachers that deal with reducing stress and providing a safe learning environment. These tips fall into the following categories: (1) emotional intelligence; (2) stress; (3) sense of community; (4) expectations for students; and (5) teacher behavior. Providing a sense of community helps make a safer environment for students. This community exists in the individual classroom, where teachers model important social skills. The community should also exist throughout a school through cross-level activities involving reading partners, recess buddies, pen pals, art projects, and so forth. In essence, when students know and are welcomed by other students and adults in their school, they feel more cared for and secure. This emotional stability leads to a willingness to try new tasks and other learning experiences without being emotionally hijacked by stress.

Another action teachers can take is to clearly state academic expectations for urban students. The human brain looks for patterns (Jensen, 1998). When teachers provide a well-organized plan and clear expectations, many urban students feel more comfortable and are able to handle new challenges. Educators can also provide continuous modeling of appropriate behaviors and skills, followed by guided practice until the skills are mastered. This approach reduces stress, because learners know that they will have teacher support until they feel prepared to master the information or skill on their own.

This systematic approach to learning applies to behavioral expectations as well. Acceptable classroom interactions should be established and explained clearly to the students, so that they understand the reasons behind each rule. Wherever possible, the basic rules should be consistent throughout the school. This system makes it easier to provide cross-school collaborative activities without creating misunderstandings among students and staff.

SOCIAL GROWTH

Human beings are social animals and require continuous opportunities to learn through interaction. The brain grows by vocalizing thoughts and hearing varied opinions, strategies, and ideas. Sharing new ideas can be risky, so there must be a nurturing atmosphere of support (McGeehan, 1999). David and Roger Johnson (1999) developed instructional grouping practices for cooperative learning. According to Johnson and Johnson (1999), the five basic

elements of cooperative learning are: (1) positive interdependence; (2) face-to-face interaction; (3) individual accountability; (4) interpersonal and small-group skills; and (5) group processing.

Educators should teach and model cooperation and collaboration skills. Group work with good modeling creates low-stress, high-challenge situations in a meaningful social atmosphere. This brain-friendly strategy helps students master content in a social setting. Based on a review of research of successful schools, Marzano (2003) recommends the use of cooperative learning to provide academic and social experiences for better learning in urban classrooms. In order for these experiences to be maximally successful, collaborative learning practices should be used to:

1. Provide the brain with the opportunity to search for meaning through group problem solving.
2. Give students a chance to learn with and from others.
3. Elicit strong emotional responses, heightening the experiences and memory opportunities.
4. Focus participants toward a goal, providing a challenging learning environment.
5. Help students work with details while accomplishing a task related to a general concept.
6. Provide support in a nonthreatening setting. (Erlauer, 2003)

Effective collaboration should go beyond the class setting to include the interaction of students on the grade level and across various grade levels and involvement of the entire school. The brain likes to work with others. With this knowledge, we should provide the best brain-compatible instruction, using various forms of collaboration.

COGNITIVE GROWTH

Brain research has informed us about effective instructional practices for urban youths' cognitive growth in two areas: how to make content more meaningful and how to provide more valuable choices in topics to be learned.

Meaningful Content

The mind performs two functions in the process of understanding content. The brain is a meaning maker, and it is a pattern maker. As a "meaning maker," it learns best when it can focus on the big picture, with relevant understanding of the information. When a person has background knowledge of a topic, he or she will have a greater opportunity to learn the subject matter, because he or she will be able to hook on to his or her schema, or brain map, for that subject. Because of this mental mapping process, it is important that educators provide background knowledge for urban students when it does not exist, through field trips, experiments, guest speakers, films, and so forth. Through these experiences, the neurons can make more and higher quality connections in the brain. Meaning is also culturally relevant and is affected by the environment in which we live. The learner must find the information relevant, because the brain uses this relevance in making these connections with already learned information (Sousa, 1995). It is up to the teacher to find ways to make the content relevant for urban learners as a part of planning the lesson.

As a pattern maker, the brain groups information into manageable chunks for memory retrieval (Sousa, 1995). Thus, when teaching, it is important not only to identify the student's background knowledge but also to provide a reason for learning the information, which will establish the necessary connections for memory.

Although some universal and easily accessed concepts can be referenced in the development of a unit of study, Erlauer (2003) suggests the use of a Know–Want to know–Learned–Use (KWLU) chart, an expansion of the K-W-L chart (Ogle, 1992), in which the "U" represents "use," focusing on meaning and relevance in urban schools. It provides an opportunity for these students to identify their knowledge base and reason for learning, as well as to reflect on the use of the acquired information in their own lives.

Choices

By creating opportunities for student choice, teachers provide students with a feeling of some control over their learning. Lack of control causes stress, which, as discussed, affects the limbic system that manages the skills related to survival and emotions and shuts down the functions of the neocortex. There must be some control and choices for the neocortex to function adequately and enhance the learning process (Caine & Caine, 1994).

Students can be provided with choices during many instructional activities, through research projects, the selection of topics for investigation, group work, methods of presentation, and so forth. The use of students' learning styles and multiple intelligences provides opportunities for choice and gives students a chance to identify their strengths for learning, so that they can use these strengths to enhance their memories. Students become highly motivated when they use their best modes for learning and have a choice of content.

ADEQUATE AND APPROPRIATE TIME

The brain must have adequate time to attend to a task and multiple opportunities to address similar content, and it must be provided with these opportunities at the most efficient times in the brain's development. Proper timing, which includes time of day, influences the brain growth of the urban learner.

Although it is important to attend to a task, the brain can maintain attention for only a limited amount of time before needing downtime and a change of activity. Research with adults found that physical breaks and change of mental activity increased productivity. These studies also indicated that the type of break would depend on the job and needs of each worker (Howard, 2000). Studies with children showed that a break about every 20 minutes was necessary, because the brain will naturally shift by then (Sousa, 1995). Many scientists believe that children can focus for only as many minutes as their age in years before needing to be directed to another activity. We can provide these breaks as a natural and planned part of the learning. Although our brains are continually bombarded with information, time and numerous exposures are needed for learning to take place. Information initially learned is stored in our short-term memories. The brain requires multiple opportunities to deal with this information in order for it to be stored in our long-term memories. If the information is meaningful and relevant, it will be learned faster and remembered longer. Thus practice and reflection are extremely important for long-term memory (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). It is also important for the student to have a deeper

understanding of a skill or concept, which can be developed while reflecting and through practice.

There are opportune times for certain learning to take place during childhood, as shown by PET scans. The optimum times appear to fall within the first 10 years. Beyond that time, children can still learn, but it will be more difficult for them. Foreign-language learning and playing of a musical instrument are much easier for children before the age of 10, and yet most of our educational programs do not provide these opportunities until students are older (Erlauer, 2003). Offering these types of programs to young urban students would provide an opportunity to enrich their lives, grow dendrites, and help promote greater learning in literacy and mathematics throughout their academic years.

Similarly, certain periods of the day are better for student learning, depending on the age of the students. Elementary students can function well early in the morning. It is beneficial for young children to receive much of their literacy learning earlier in the day, leaving the afternoon for exploration of mathematics, science, and social studies through hands-on projects and other activities. On the other hand, adolescents function better in late morning to early afternoon, due to changes in brain chemistry during puberty and beyond. According to research on circadian rhythms, the first 2 hours after waking and the last 2 hours before sleep are the best times for new learning (Howard, 2000). Therefore, we should encourage our students to study for tests during those key times.

Equally important, students' attention spans influence learning. Because the first 10 minutes of a lesson are very important for learning, teachers must plan to accomplish nonlearning tasks at other times of the period or day (Sousa, 1998). As the lesson progresses, downtime occurs, usually after 20 minutes or around the middle of the lesson. In order to accommodate this downtime, the activity should change to include such strategies as "think–pair–share," group discussion, moving seats, stretching, and so forth, for at least a 2- to 4-minute period (Sousa, 1998). Erlauer (2003) advises teachers of third grade and under to plan their lessons in "blocks of 22 minutes, even if a reading class . . . is an hour long" (p. 92).

ENRICHED ENVIRONMENT

The brain seeks to be continuously challenged, and novelty is critical. Enriched environments increase the number of brain connections. The learning environment should provide varied experiences, be relevant to the learner, and pique curiosity. Diamond and Hopson (1998) found that when an enriched environment remained the same, the learner lost interest and went to seek other activities.

The brain places attention on novelty that has an emotional impact. Educators should rotate materials at learning centers, change bulletin board content frequently, and introduce new strategies and techniques regularly into their lesson plans. Increasing novelty, which addresses the emotions, will encourage the learner to attend and remain on task.

New enriching experiences will create dendritic growth if it is accompanied by practice and rehearsal to stabilize the growth and place it into long-term learning. Cross-lateral activities provide extra opportunities for the brain to make connections through a number of senses by asking students to do activities that involve more than one part of their bodies and minds at the same time. These activities "can force both brain hemispheres to 'talk' to each other better" (Jensen, 1998, p. 89). Designing learning units that use many modalities will provide enrichment with a greater chance for retention. Visualization should be used as a

teaching tool because it helps with episodic and procedural memory retrieval and encourages the use of other modalities.

According to Eric Jensen (1998), the more you vary the environment, the more the brain will adapt to it. This adaptation creates the growth of new dendrites through sensory stimulation, which he calls brain "nutrients." He believes that the best way to enrich the brain is through challenging problem solving, followed by specific feedback. This feedback can be obtained from people other than the teacher, such as other students through peer editing and group interaction. Multi-age and multistatus groups are very effective as cooperative groups (Caine & Caine, 1994). "When we feel valued and cared for, our brain releases the neurotransmitters of pleasure: endorphins and dopamine. This helps us enjoy our work more" (Jensen, 1998, p. 33).

All aspects of the environment need to be enriched. The nonconscious plays an important role in learning. Most of what students learn is not in any lesson plan. The physical environment plays an important role and must be considered. It should include good ventilation, access to drinking water, proper light, nutrients, room arrangement, and opportunities for movement. The environment can also be enriched by providing activity centers, "word walls," opportunities for interaction, and so forth.

ASSESSMENT AND IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK

By providing immediate feedback, the brain has an opportunity to correct misunderstandings before they become embedded. It is very difficult for the brain to unlearn deeply embedded knowledge or skills (McGeehan, 1999). Therefore, assessment and feedback must be ongoing and integral to classroom practice.

Assessment should be embedded into real learning experiences, in which students can choose their methods of evaluation, apply their learned knowledge in contextual situations, and have opportunities to solve real-life problems in creative ways (Ronis, 2000). Because each child is unique, it is important to provide students with the chance to demonstrate their knowledge through a variety of modalities. Standardized tests will continue to be important, as they are most the effective measurement of the general instructional patterns in a school or school district (Erlauer, 2003). Although they are not as effective for individual assessment, we must prepare urban students for these tests by familiarizing them with the format. Periodically giving them timed tests with some low-level stress will help make the testing situation similar to the ones they will have to encounter.

Jensen (1998) believes that students should receive feedback every half hour during instruction. This feedback should come from differing people, including other students and themselves. In a synthesis study of research regarding feedback, Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) found that feedback should be specific, including feedback on correct and incorrect answers and on other ways of performing a task and recommendations for improvement. Along with the feedback, "requiring the students to continue working on the task until they achieve success appears to improve learning and achievement" (Erlauer, 2003, p. 129).

Rubrics have the potential for providing students with a guide or model in preparation for assessment and feedback. They can be very effective even with very young students, because rubrics can lower the level of stress when students are aware of the expectations.

Alternative assessments, such as observations, portfolios, and checklists, can guide instruction while providing immediate feedback for the students. Ronis (2000) identifies a

comprehensive list of the characteristics of brain-compatible authentic assessments, which she divides into four categories: structure, intellectual design features, grading and scoring standards, and equity. By using different pathways, we are able to access the learning through various learning styles and multiple intelligences.

MOVEMENT AND LEARNING

We now know, from research, that movement plays an important role in the cognitive learning process. Movement can create pathways for learning, help the flow of neurotransmitters and oxygen to the brain, and prepare the brain for additional and long-term learning. No single center has been found for movement in the brain (Greenfield, 1995), as many areas are involved, but the cerebellum is linked most with movement. Although it makes up only one-tenth of the brain, it contains more than half of its neurons (Jensen, 1998). Richardson (1996) linked the relationship of thinking and movement in the cerebellum based on a patient's impairment of cognitive functioning when the cerebellum was damaged. Other scientists have found relationships between the cerebellum and memory, attention, and spatial perception. A link has been shown between smaller cerebellums and autism (Jensen, 1998).

Movement helps children learn in many ways. The increased blood flow carries additional oxygen to the brain, elevating thinking while reducing stress. When students are required to sit for extended periods of time, they become fatigued and less able to stay on task. A Canadian study of 500 students found that one additional hour spent per day at physical education increased the students' reaction time, creativity, and short-term memory (Sylwester, 1995). In other studies, people who exercised regularly had more dendritic connections and had faster reactions and recall. Periodic breaks for stretching, rhythm activities, games, and movement around the room pays off in greater concentration for all the stakeholders, including the teacher. People who did not exercise were at greater risk for depression (Howard, 2000).

Memories can also be triggered by location and situations. By rotating locations for certain learning activities, we can help create a new learning environment and mark that location with the newly learned information.

FRAMEWORK FOR A BRAIN-COMPATIBLE CLASSROOM

Authorities in the field have identified some specific principles, experiences, and techniques. Many researchers and educators have developed models that address some or all of the principles.

Caine and Caine (1991) list key principles to explain the way the brain learns. Teachers should consider these twelve principles in providing a structure for planning appropriate brain-based learning experiences. The theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993; Armstrong, 2000; Armstrong, 2003) provides a wonderful framework for addressing students' varied learning intelligences. In his book *The Multiple Intelligences of Reading and Writing: Making the Words Come Alive,* Armstrong (2003) presents ideas for using and stimulating the brain through the use of the multiple intelligences and brain research. His work reinforces the need for hands-on learning activities that evoke positive emotions through a stimulating, nonthreatening learning environment. Some suggested activities include having students act out vocabulary words, scenes from stories or plays, or emotions evoked by reading materials.

He also encourages teachers to use other forms of physical movement, music, and imagery while teaching and reinforcing literacy activities (Armstrong, 2003).

Certain techniques are shown to be successful when integrated into the learning setting. By connecting to prior knowledge, the teacher is able to set up a structure in the brain, as well as to activate an emotional setting in which learning can take place. Personal relevance should be addressed, so that the student will see a reason for learning and want to get involved in the process. The information shared must make sense to the learner. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to explain, model, and demonstrate the information, in as many ways as possible, while providing opportunities for guided practice of necessary skills and strategies. Students should be given learning experiences to help them understand key concepts on a deeper level by involving many senses and their bodies. Hands-on activities help students grasp abstract concepts and help the growth of dendrites in multiple portions of the brain. Simulation activities help embed many pathways for learning in a positive, stimulating manner and provide more connections for memory retrieval. When these activities are provided by nurturing adults who understand and respect them, the students will be able to learn and remember more efficiently and effectively.

Long-term learning requires rehearsal. Teachers can provide the needed opportunities to activate the neuron circuits by giving students many mental and physical cues. These cues may be auditory, visual, musical, or kinesthetic and may include written chances to use and remember information and skills. When developing a unit of study, teachers should address each of these cues to ensure inclusion of all the necessary components.

Ongoing assessment is required for brain-compatible instructional environments. Besides the required report cards and tests, ongoing assessment can be accomplished through portfolios, writing activities, art projects, observation, learning games, and simulations (King-Friedrichs, 2001). Even preschool children can reflect on their accomplishments when the reflective process is modeled by the teacher.

It is imperative that children be nurtured by adults who understand and respect them. If children believe that they are valued and supported, they will be more willing and able to learn the social and academic skills necessary for survival.

Young children require repetitive experiences using varying materials. Repetition will help develop pathways and long-term learning through synaptic activities, and variation will maintain a high level of interest. Guided practice should be an integral part of these lessons so that children are willing to attempt new things without fear of ridicule and failure.

Brain research has found that small muscle movement appears to encourage spatial reasoning. Educators should continue to encourage the development of small muscles in children as they teach them to write, draw, cut, and color.

As mentioned earlier, physical exercise plays an important role in brain development. Due to the emphasis on statewide standardized testing, too many schools have eliminated physical exercise opportunities, even for young children. Many urban children do not have chances to play outside with friends because of safety issues. If the school setting is their only opportunity to play, we are shortchanging our children academically, socially, physically, and emotionally by eliminating these crucial experiences.

Research has found that music engages both hemispheres of the brain and can stimulate abstract reasoning. Music can be used for teaching phonemic awareness, social skills, and stories. It can also be used for changing activities and as background during mental exercise and downtime experiences. For young children, music creates a positive learning environment, creating joy and an interest in learning.

Exploration-based learning activities require the use of many modalities and of higher level thinking. Guided social interaction by nurturing adults who model problem-solving strategies will provide children with the opportunities required to develop in a brain-friendly environment so that they may become productive, caring adults.

The Use of Children's Literature

For many students, reading is a laborious task with no meaning. Therefore, teachers need to identify the children's background knowledge and provide activities that will enable them to place new learning into established patterns in their brains. As we read, language evokes images in our minds, helping us comprehend the text. There are many ways that teachers can use children's literature and the multiple intelligences to help students develop their reading skills, as well as a love for the written word.

Obviously, literacy has a strong visual basis. Young children need numerous experiences with letters. *Albert's Alphabet* by Leslie Tryon helps students see the construction of letters. Armstrong (2003) suggests letting students make designs with the letters and create artwork that will help with memory. *Four Famished Foxes and Fosdyke* and *Dinorella*, both by Pamela Duncan Edwards, use a letter theme to help children read and hear beginning consonant sounds. Although these picture books appear to be written for the early primary grades, they can be used very effectively with upper elementary, middle, and even high school students, due to the wonderful alliterative language and vocabulary. Themed alphabet books, such as *Macmillan Fairy Tale Alphabet Book* by Nancy Christensen Hall and *Geography from A to Z: A Picture Glossary* by Jack Knowlton, share aspects of a topic or concept while providing a wealth of vocabulary development opportunities.

Books with vibrant and meaningful illustrations, as well as relevant content, such as *Going Home* by Eve Bunting or *Something Beautiful* by Sharon Dennis Wyeth, motivate students to continue reading. Illustrators such as David Diaz and Chris Soentpiet furnish readers with beautiful images for appreciation and reflection. Visual imagery, an important strategy used by good readers, can be evoked as the teacher reads aloud books such as *The Ballad of Lucy Whipple* by Karen Cushman or *Jason's Gold* by Will Hobbs.

Many students flourish when given the opportunity to illustrate their writing. Janet Stevens' *From Pictures to Words: A Book about Making a Book* shares her experiences as an illustrator and author through cartoon characters and delightful illustrations. This book shows students some ways that they can learn and demonstrate their knowledge. *Amelia's Notebook* by Marissa Moss presents a journal supposedly written by an elementary student. While sharing common experiences, this book models journal writing using meaningful content.

Written language began as an oral tradition. Young children enjoy silly rhyming books such as *Pigs Aplenty, Pigs Galore* by David McPhail. *Animal Alphabet* by Gill Davies presents the letters with rhyming poetry, using familiar characters. A wealth of other trade books provide these phonemic awareness experiences.

Music is an important medium for instruction. *Take Me Out of the Bathtub and Other Silly Dilly Songs* by Alan Katz gives students and their teachers an occasion to use commonly known music with nonsense songs. Lillian Morrison's *I Scream, You Scream* presents poetry and rhyme to be read or chanted.

An important aspect of children's development is their emotional intelligence. In order to be empathic, they must have some understanding of other points of view. Books such as Jon Scieszka's *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs!* and Alvin Granowsky's *Jack and the*

Beanstalk/Giants Have Feelings, Too use fairy tales to encourage students to look at other aspects of relationships. Although a picture book, *Hey, Little Ant* by Phillip and Hannah Hoose encourages the readers to delve deeply into their beliefs about others. *A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl* by Patricia McKissack and *Anna Casey's Place in the World* by Adrian Fogelin place students into the lives of two very different teenage girls. These types of books help students see that they are not alone in their feelings and difficulties. *Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters* by Patricia McKissack and Fredrick McKissack uses compare and contrast to emphasize the similarities and differences between two groups during a significant religious holiday and encourages reflection and discussion.

Multicultural literature sets the stage for greater understanding among students while providing opportunities for meaningful connections. Lucia M. Gonzalez' *The Bossy Gallito* and *Señor Cat's Romance* and Alma Flor Ada's *Medio Pollito/Half-Chicken* and *The Lizard and the Sun/La Lagartija y el Sol* present stories from the Central and South American cultures, with valuable lessons for character development. Julius Lester's *John Henry* and Alan Schroeder's *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman* address two types of heroes, giving us important information while providing role models for all students. As stated earlier, physical movement is an important component for long-term memory and learning. *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle uses language and beautiful illustrations to encourage this movement. Brad Bagert's book *The Gooch Machine: Poems for Children to Perform* uses silly and sometimes meaningful rhyming poetry to get students out of their seats.

We are very fortunate that there is a wealth of wonderful children's literature. It is sometimes difficult to keep up-to-date with newly published works. As you review new or previously unread trade books, I suggest that you identify and record the various brain-based learning experiences that would enhance the reading of, listening to, and learning of this literature.

CONCLUSION

As teachers, we are entrusted with the sacred charge of educating future citizens. The research of neuroscientists is revealing new knowledge about the brain that can point the way to new instructional strategies. Educational research and in-class experiences have guided us in using best practices for many years. In this chapter, I particularly emphasized the role of emotions, the need to address early learning and environmental factors, the importance of continuous feedback assessment, and the importance of modeling strategies for the urban learner.

Although scientists caution us to be careful about making generalizations, we need to quickly provide many brain-based activities for urban students. The strategies included in this chapter have already been found beneficial for students, but we did not know why they worked so well. Now we have a scientific basis for using them.

In addition, we know that the structure of the brain is influenced by all of its experiences. If we can work with urban parents and community leaders from the very beginning of children's lives, students will have a better chance for academic and social success.

In order to successfully use these brain-friendly activities, teachers must stay informed about new brain research findings. This can be accomplished through reading many of the publications and attending workshops that are available on the topic. This exciting field is changing so rapidly that continued updating is required. This chapter's resources can begin

Suggested Titles: Books That Promote Phonemic Awareness, Alphabet Knowledge, and Sounds

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the Book
Dodds, Dayle Ann; illustrated by Pierre Pratt	*Where's Pup?*	2003	Dial	32	In the best Seussian tradition, Dodds gathers 52 "decodable" words (with a sprinkle of ones to remember by sight) and with them tells a rollicking story of a circus clown wandering about the circus grounds in search of Pup. Each circus worker is queried, and each responds with a rhyming pattern ("Don't know. Go ask Jo. He's feeding Mo."). Unlike the strained fare of too many books for beginners, this tale deserves to be read again and again (and it will be).
Johnson, Steve	*Alphabet City*	1999	Penguin	32	Johnson's paintings help young readers see the letters of the alphabet in urban objects—the letter A, for example, in the angles of a construction site sawhorse.
Isadora, Rachel	*Listen to the City*	2000	Putnam	32	In vibrant colors and pop art style, the sounds of the city bounce from the page. Teachers working to help children focus on the sounds of language often start with a focus on environmental sounds. What a pleasing guide Isadora offers.

your education into brain-based learning and assist you in increasing the learning of urban students under your care.

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CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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17

What Types of Assessment Really Inform Instruction in an Urban School?

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Morrow (2003) recently noted: "With over 50% of the children in the United States living in our cities, and many of those children also living in poverty, the challenges to effective urban reading educators are growing. Reading programs in urban areas are frequently significantly different from those offered in suburban areas." Moreover, the cultural and linguistic demography of urban public schools continues to change. Teachers are faced with the ever-growing complexities of educating diverse populations of students who come from urban homes in which early literacy experiences may not be a part of the daily routine. Additionally, many urban children come from homes in which the adults do not perceive early literacy training as their responsibility. When surveyed, they told us that they believed literacy was the responsibility of the schools (Lapp, Fisher, Flood, & Moore, 2002). Unfortunately, delaying literacy training until children begin kindergarten may result in an achievement gap with lifelong consequences for future employment and earnings (Carnevale, 1999; Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks, 1992; McCormick, 2003; Murnane & Levy, 1996; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Ogbu, 1994).

There is a compelling need to understand the varied literacy experiences that children have had as they enter school. By understanding children's experiences, we know their strengths and needs as we begin our instruction. Although no single factor accounts for the achievement gaps experienced by many urban students (Lee, 2002), we believe that effective, continuous assessment of student performance is a nonnegotiable requirement for teaching urban students.

In this chapter, we focus specifically on how to more effectively assess urban students whose struggle toward success with reading has extended well beyond the primary grades.

As we focus our discussion on struggling readers, we propose a model in which urban students' reading skills are assessed, analyzed, and followed by related instruction designed to promote literacy growth. We recommend a newly developed technique called a "next-step portable assessment," which was described in its original model as "portable assessment" in Lapp and Flood (2003). For many urban students, portable assessment becomes the next step in the evaluation process, as teachers continually assess and then plan subsequent instruction that helps each student take the next step toward becoming proficient as a speaker, reader, and writer. This next-step portable assessment should be conducted daily as teachers observe and monitor student performance and then design each student's literacy experiences.

"Next step" assessment, a continuous, daily process of planning individual or small group instruction that is based on observed student performance, consists of two parts. The first part is to assess yourself as a teacher of urban youths. This in-depth self-assessment explores your attitudes and beliefs about and your level of expertise at assessing urban students' strengths and needs. The second part is the continuous assessment of urban students' performance in your classroom and the subsequent planning of appropriate instruction. By combining part 1 (self-assessment) and part 2 (assessment-to-instruction of students), you will be able to ensure continuous personal growth for each child.

MOVING TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF ONESELF AS A TEACHER OF URBAN STUDENTS

The first action that is needed before evaluating urban students is the assessing of one's own beliefs and perceptions about language, behavior, parent involvement, and the instruction of urban youths. For example, urban teachers must believe that their time is well invested in the assessment and instruction of urban youth. We must believe that with appropriate instruction they, too, will grow. We must believe that as teachers our job is to address the individual learning needs of every child. Because of the cultural and linguistic differences that exist in the urban classroom, educators need to begin the assessment of urban youths by thinking about the attitudes they hold as they approach urban students' literacy challenges and the plan for their growth.

Each teacher has certain attitudes, strongly held beliefs, and perceptions about language. A language, in order to be a language, has to be able to express all of the desires, all of the concerns, all of the hopes, joys, and dreams of the society speaking that language (Salus & Flood, 2003). Language also has to have certain dramatic features: It has to have its own syntax, and its own grammar. Once we realize these things, we need to understand that all languages really are equal. When people say "Italian is the language of love" and "German is a harsh language," they are actually saying that they believe all languages are not equal. What do you think? One way to help you evaluate your attitudes (even at this global stage of perception) is to pose this question to yourself. Is one language better than another? Such a question forms a productive train of thought, because your answer will give you insights about your beliefs regarding the equality of speakers of all languages. After self-reflection and study, you will realize that any one language and those who speak it are not better than others. They are just different from one another.

These are the easy attitudes to talk about; the more difficult attitudes to talk about involve issues of dialect. For instance, some educators not only believe that their dialect is the appropriate dialect but also that they do not have a dialect. All dialects are based on some logical sound differences. When teachers believe that some dialects are good and that others are less good, they unjustly entangle dialect in a wide variety of status issues. What often ends up

happening for urban youth is that AAVE (African American Vernacular English) is viewed as the dialect that is on the bottom of the heap in many schools. AAVE is often viewed by some urban teachers as though it were an incorrect dialect that must be erased. Therefore, it is very important that early in one's self-assessment educators address such prejudices about dialect. If we want to fix or change "low status dialects," it is usually a sign that we have a limited understanding about the functions and features of language. Research shows that urban youth who speak distinct dialects do not have trouble comprehending texts written in a standard orthography (Salus & Flood, 2003). By further asking ourselves if we are as interested in "expanding" the dialect of a New England speaker as we are the range of dialects of speakers of AAVE, we will have gained additional insights about our perspectives and prejudices.

Although it is common for educators to want to teach a standard dialect, there is no such thing as a standard dialect. There are just many dialects. Every dialectical speaker can read standardized orthography in English words that instantly map on to their dialect. Thus a teacher's perception about dialect is really a deeply held set of beliefs that is difficult to change. When we assign a very low status to AAVE or other urban dialects, we act as though "these kids need fixing."

We can unwittingly say to ourselves, "Oh, that kid speaks Black English or Vietnamese. I don't, so I'll just act as if he speaks English like I do, or I just won't pay any attention to him at all." That is a problematic attitude. There is nothing wrong with saying, "I don't speak Black English or Vietnamese, and I'm not sure what to do." Once this situation is acknowledged, we can start moving toward designing instruction that will promote appropriate language learning experiences for the student. Even with effective instruction, we may ask, "Will the Vietnamese student maintain an accent?" Probably, but the more important question is, "Can he communicate effectively?" If the answer is no, our next question should be, "What types of support are needed?" and "Who can offer these?"

As we assess our attitudes about language, we need to also address how a child's lack of understanding might influence his school behavior. Only when our beliefs are analyzed and altered to meet the needs of urban youths can we move on to assessing and planning instruction for the student. We can talk about running records, but maybe the best assessment is first to identify the types of behaviors we are observing and recording every day. For instance, if a teacher who speaks only English has a student who speaks Vietnamese, the teacher may perceive that the student is not paying much attention during class. As a matter of fact, he may be acting out all day long. Unfortunately, an ineffective teacher might believe that this inappropriate behavior supports an observation that the child is not attending to literacy because he is uninterested. This teacher might say, "Look at him now; now he is in trouble in that group, so I am going to move him over here; now he is in trouble when he is reading by himself; now he is in trouble when he is trying to select a book." An effective teacher perceives the same child's behavior differently and realizes that the inattentiveness observed in the morning has occurred for the same reason throughout the day: The child does not understand English and therefore is unable to participate appropriately in the class. This effective teacher also realizes that she needs to alter her instruction to accommodate the developmental differences of this child. By doing so, the effective teacher has not wasted a full day of instructional time but instead has provided the next instructional steps the child must take to become a proficient, independent learner and participant in tomorrow's world. This is the essence of next-step portable assessment. You, as a reflective teacher, must ensure each child's literacy successes through continuous assessment-to-instruction planning.

As we noted earlier, the first step is to reflect on your own beliefs about the language, culture, and potential of the urban children you are teaching.

You may be wondering how you can perform this self-assessment. You might be thinking that you have such limited time. Realizing this, we observed several literacy teachers in action and then asked them about their self-reflective practices. Their actions and advice inform us well. They recommended several methods. Some tape-recorded their reading lessons and reviewed the tapes in the car on the way home from school. Others asked peers to observe them and then returned the favor. Still others kept seating charts and marked each time they interacted and informally assessed each child in a day. These actions enabled exemplary teachers to hear or see the subtle attitudes and beliefs they held about individual urban students' literacy capabilities, as well as the methods they, as educators, were implementing to perform next-step portable assessments for every child in their room. As they observed their performance behaviors, they questioned their beliefs about how they were promoting or stifling learning for each child. One teacher told us that her behaviors were often a "mirror which personified her prejudices." Another said that he realized that "he often acted irritated because of his lack of knowledge about teaching urban children who were acquiring English as their second language."

We have found much value in pausing to reflect and conduct personal self-assessments of our attitudes and beliefs concerning our responsibilities as teachers of urban youths. We highly recommend that you pause now and make a list of the attitudes, beliefs, and values that are having a positive or negative impact on your ability to teach urban youths. When this list is completed, you are ready to move to the second category: identify appropriate assessment measures that will help you to ascertain the literacy strengths and needs of your students. Continuous self-assessment is a primary step that every teacher needs to take, especially those who teach children who speak languages and come from cultures other than their own (Jacobson, Lapp, & Mendez, 2003).

ASSESSING URBAN YOUTH AND WHAT TO DO WITH THE ASSESSMENT

We recommend the following five factors as the foundation of your classroom assessment-to-instruction plan for each child:

1. Collect daily assessments of student performance in order to continually identify their strengths and needs.
2. Create an individual evaluation plan for every student.
3. Increase the amount of tutorial help that each child receives.
4. Create an environment that supports individual growth.
5. Motivate students to take ownership for their personal literacy development.

Collect Daily Assessments of Student Performance in Order to Continually Identify Their Strengths and Needs

Instruction that is tailored to the needs of the students must be designed and continuously monitored in order to ensure that an instructional scaffold is in place for each child. Target your assessment and instruction to the very specific next step that each urban child must take to become more literate. When instruction and assessment are not well connected, many urban readers flounder as they try to read texts above their reading levels. As a result,

many pupils retreat to "good enough reading" (Block, 2001; Mackey, 1997). Good-enough reading means pressing on while reading, saying word after word haltingly, and making compromises to create only a general understanding, hoping that clarity will somehow magically emerge. Other readers, of necessity, implement ineffective reading processes that interfere with complete comprehension. They guess at answers to questions, memorize information, and move their eyes across the text as their minds wander. They skip too many words, gloss over (rather than ferret out) meaning in long sentences, and accept the reality that some ideas will become only confused images in their minds. These readers fail to integrate enough details to interpret upcoming events and fill gaps in a text's meaning with their own personal experiences rather than an accurate interpretation of the printed words.

Teachers are discovering that assessment and instruction in urban settings is most effective when it contains multiple informal measures and lessons designed to strengthen *distinct cognitive*, *emotional*, *and literacy processes* so that students can attain richer understandings every day. As a result of continuous assessment of student needs, effective teachers increase the amount of time spent answering students' individual questions at the exact point in a text at which confusion arises, and they model, give examples, provide think-alouds, and monitor guided practice sessions when strategies are introduced. Then they immediately monitor every child's ability to implement these strategies independently. These "next steps" in instruction occur as a result of continuous performance assessment.

Create an Individual Plan for Every Urban Student

Second, by designing an individualized plan for every student, you can ensure that his or her literacy growth will be continuous. When children are significantly below grade level, one grade level's worth of growth per year will not be enough to sufficiently accelerate their progress. For example, if a student in fifth grade needs 3 more years to achieve a fourth-grade reading level, accelerated growth is necessary. To accomplish this, the teacher needs to believe that accelerated growth is possible and then to conduct initial and ongoing assessments that will provide the specific insights about the student's strengths and needs. These insights can become the foundation on which instruction is built.

The instructional needs of urban students—whose early literacy experiences are often minimal and distinctly different from those of their teachers—require skilled and ongoing assessment by teachers knowledgeable about reading development. We acknowledge that classrooms are very busy places in which teachers rarely have time to conduct formal assessments that may not provide useful instructional information. We believe that portable assessment may be an answer to the demands of ongoing classroom assessment for every urban child, especially those who struggle with learning to read (Lapp & Flood, 2003).

The instructional scenario played out in the course of a teaching day by an effective teacher is complex and never the same for any two children. Teachers are with their students daily and, therefore, have the opportunity to make continuous diagnostic observations about how their students are currently performing compared with their performance on similar tasks encountered in the past. A teacher who is skilled at conducting ongoing evaluation has the data needed to inform the next steps in the child's instructional plan.

After assessment and the creation of a daily diagnostic instructional plan, the teacher's next responsibilities begin with helping students to understand how, when, and why reading is important and providing them with a framework for implementing comprehension strategies as they read. Effective teachers recognize that students who have an understanding of strategic reading have a vested interest in making connections, visualizing, asking questions,

formulating and reformulating predictions, gaining meaning that is personally significant, and satisfying and stimulating their own curiosity.

Increase the Amount of Tutorial Help That Each Child Receives

The third factor involves your organizing of instruction to allow for one-on-one instruction for each child. Although you may be fortunate enough to have aides, parent volunteers, student teachers, or cross-age tutors, you must be a part of this individual tutoring plan each day for each child during guided or independent reading times. Additional individual tutoring can also occur before school, during lunchtime programs, and after school, but each child has to be working with you, as well as with a confident tutor. Even 15 minutes of individualized instruction can be valuable. This type of supportive tutorial needs to be well planned for students who are several years below grade level.

For many years, a common practice among elementary teachers was to divide students into small, same-ability groups for comprehension instruction. During the 1970s and 1980s, this prevailing practice, "began to draw criticism on the grounds that ability grouping lowers self-esteem and motivation among students with reading problems, restricts friendship choices, and often widens the gap between high and low achievers" (Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, & Moody, 1999, p. 372). This criticism led more teachers to turn to more flexible grouping plans in which students are grouped both heterogeneously and homogeneously in the course of each day. Such formats help classroom teachers accommodate the multiplicity of different reading levels of students in urban settings. Research from impoverished but successful schools indicates that children who receive targeted individual instruction experience literacy growth (Frey, 2003). When classroom instruction feeds into home applications for parents to implement each evening, the comprehension catch-up process can be accelerated (Hiebert, 1999, Block, 2000).

Create an Environment That Supports Individual Growth

Classrooms are comprised of *individuals* who arrive every morning from different homes, cultures, and experiences. The overarching atmosphere of every classroom needs to be one that says, "Welcome, support will be given for your differences and each of you will grow as a literacy learner while here."

Attention to individual differences can be given as children work in a variety of grouping arrangements. As illustrated by Lapp, Flood, and Goss (2000), flexible grouping patterns that accommodate the homogeneous (same) and heterogeneous (different) interplay of ideas among students are effective at preserving individuality and literacy growth. For example, teachers often group students heterogeneously during whole-class instruction, which is designed to introduce information to or reinforce a skill or strategy to everyone at once. Whole-class instruction is useful when teachers have short bits of information to convey to students, such as an introduction to fractions or the causes of World War II.

There are also other effective ways to group students. In addition to whole-class heterogeneous grouping, teachers use flexible grouping patterns to meet the needs of their increasingly diverse student populations. Grouping patterns that are flexible provide teachers an opportunity to observe students working in a variety of homogeneous or heterogeneous situations, including working alone, partners working together, and small cooperative teams working together. Regardless of the flexible grouping patterns that a teacher selects, he or

she must consider the *reason* for the grouping pattern, the *type* of group, and appropriate *materials*. The following seven questions should be considered when addressing these variables:

1. What knowledge/strategies are to be taught?
   - By determining the type and amount of introductory information and also the information, skills, or strategies that need to be retaught or reinforced, you will be able to decide how to group your students. Although you may need whole-class instruction for the introductory information, you may wish to use small groups or partnering for reteaching or reinforcing.
2. What prior knowledge of the topic do students have?
   - Knowledge of the *content* may encourage putting students into a homogeneous group or having them spread as experts among several less knowledgeable groups.
3. What is the range of students' proficiency in reading, writing, and talking about the topic?
   - For students who are less fluent in English, placement in a group with an appropriate *language broker* is often helpful.
4. What materials are available?
   - The *task or activity* may dictate that certain students work together because they succeed best when using certain kinds of *materials*.
   - You may also have a set number of materials that need to be shared among the students. The study of various topics within the same theme may be appropriate if an entire set of materials is not available. For example, while studying the biographies of scientific inventors, one group of students could be asked to analyze the behaviors of a particular person and others to contrast characteristics of various inventors.
   - Materials on the same topic but with a range of difficulty levels may be appropriate when students focus on the same concepts. This will accommodate the independent levels of the students' reading.
   - Using the same material for all groups is appropriate in many situations, especially when addressing standards such as core literature selections.
   - Having materials that represent different topics may be appropriate when individual interests are taken into consideration.
5. What are students' interests and work habits?
   - *Interests or work habits* may encourage placing students into groups because of the modeling they can provide or receive.
6. Are there social concerns or needs?
   - Leaders, followers, or talkers may be placed in certain groups for *social* reasons.
7. Do students have a choice?
   - Encouraging *student choice* may provide the best basis for forming some groups.

As you answer these questions, you will arrive at your rationale for grouping. Your students are at varying degrees of proficiency for various reasons, and they will need varied instruction that can be accommodated through six usual types of groups: individuals,

dyads or pairs, small groups of 3 or 4 students, large groups of 7 to 8 students, half-class groups of 15 or so, and the whole class. The groups can be led by a teacher, by a student, or by cooperative leadership, in which the responsibilities are shared among the members of the group.

Given these three variables for flexible grouping—the *reasons for grouping*, the *types of the groups*, and the *materials used*—teachers can plan instruction that meets students' needs.

Motivate Students to Take Ownership of Their Personal Literacy Development

To enhance successful future comprehension instruction, you should (1) provide more time for students to "live within books," to become enthralled with reading, and to depend on the individualized support of their teachers; (2) involve students in decisions about what reading difficulties they want to overcome; and (3) model for and support students as they assume responsibility for their personal literacy growth.

The more appropriate prior knowledge that can be elicited before and while reading, the more urban youths' comprehension increases. Many urban readers are unable to continuously elicit appropriate prior knowledge sources because:

- Their out-of-school, culturally driven experiences are too disparate from school texts.
- Text is not clearly written, so it does not move distinctly from point to point.
- Vocabulary introduced prior to reading does not relate to the central idea of the book (e.g., teachers cannot introduce *all* the words that might cause trouble).
- Metacognition is not engaged, so word recognition errors are left uncorrected (Palinscar & Brown, 1984).

Equally important, readers may need to be taught to recognize when their prior knowledge contains naive or incorrect information. In the process, they must learn how to successfully reconcile new and conflicting information. Without this instruction, some students either will ignore new vocabulary because they believe they already have the needed information or, when a conflict in information occurs, will stop thinking about what they are reading. Equally damaging, today's readers are learning to flexibly adjust their search strategies to fit their own preconceived goal of retrieving only information that is most salient and applying it to their lives in a decontextualized, and less valid, form. Many students have not been taught how to think about experiences they have had with a specific topic in conjunction with, rather than separate from, the author's theme. As Beck, Omanson, and McKeown (1982) demonstrated, it is not background knowledge in general but knowledge about important story ideas in particular that influences comprehension.

To help students acquire background knowledge that will support comprehension:

1. Demonstrate how they can probe their beliefs prior to reading.
2. Model ways of recognizing when their background experiences are inadequate to "read between the lines" in a book.
3. Encourage them to place themselves in the story or identify the questions they want to answer while they read.
4. Model how to use additional resources to acquire information that is not part of their experiences.

In a study by Hansen and Pearson (1983), fourth-grade strong and weak readers were taught to participate in a prereading discussion designed to teach them how to (1) generate expectations about what the story characters might do by using their own experiences in similar situations, and (2) continually chunk the text and make inferences about the story. Such integration required background knowledge to be tied specifically to textual ideas. This technique led to improved comprehension by all readers on a variety of measures, including the comprehension of new, uninstructed stories about similar curricula. More important, trained but less able readers' performances were indistinguishable from the performances of strong readers who were merely given instructions about what to comprehend.

Block (2001) and Blanton, Wood, and Moorman (1990) have demonstrated the benefits of teaching students to integrate setting their own purposes with building background knowledge. Even before expert readers begin the first sentence of a text, they have thought about how to approach that text to attain a rich reading experience based on achieving their own goals, within the context of the author's theme, purpose, and writing style. Children can be taught to set a purpose as the teacher models text previewing.

Rowler (1990) argued that when children are taught that the last word they read could be background knowledge for the next word, they are better able to comprehend a text. This instruction proved to be more powerful than building students' backgrounds using traditional means, such as teaching new vocabulary words and discussing the topic to be read. To illustrate, when children were taught to think about all they knew about the Revolutionary War, they did not increase their comprehension as much as when they were taught to think about what the last sentence they read might have to do with the next sentence that is about to unfold (Beck & Dole, 1994). The ability to use immediate background knowledge in a particular selection of curriculum is at least as important as alerting children to the necessity of making a context-bound global image in their mind for full comprehension.

In summary, we can no longer help urban students build background knowledge merely by giving instructions about how we want them to build it; background knowledge can be built by using curricula as a bridge. It is not as important for us to build students' existing knowledge as it is for them to become aware of their prior knowledge and how to develop it and use it to scaffold their own understandings.

CONCLUSION

We have described the two necessary steps in next-step portable assessment. Both are equally important. The first is to perform an in-depth self-assessment of our attitudes and beliefs as teachers. The second is to make ongoing performance assessments that support instruction that will promote the individual growth of each student. We know how important it is for us as educators to close the achievement gap between urban students and their suburban peers. With the next-step portable assessment plan, we are beginning to do so.

Suggested Titles: Assessment and Instruction in Real Classrooms

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Cohen, Miriam	*First Grade Takes a Test*	1983	Yearling	32	Anna Marie does well on standardized tests, but how well do the others in her class perform? This story about insecurity, confidence, and self-esteem is sure to take the pressure off any youngster about to take a test. Teachers are sure to feel more at ease as well.
Romain, Trevor	*How to Do Homework without Throwing Up*	1997	Free Spirit	72	How relevant is that homework assignment? Can my students really complete the assignment with little adult support? Teachers and students may think differently about homework after reading through these hilarious cartoons about the stresses and "grossed out" feelings students have about homework.

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18

The Role of the Literacy Professional in Addressing the Disproportionate Representation of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students in Special Education

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The promise of special education as defined by Public Law 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975) was that students with disabilities would be afforded a "free, appropriate public education" (FAPE). This keystone of special education in the United States has been upheld in every reauthorization since its inception (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 1997a). Although the guarantee of a free public education has been achieved, it is estimated that, before the passage of the act in 1975, approximately 1 million students were excluded from schools due to their disabilities (Pugmire, 2002). We submit that an "appropriate" education has yet to be realized for all students. Specifically, there continues to be debate and litigation about who are to receive special education services and where they are to receive them. At the heart of the controversy is the disproportionate representation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education. The question, therefore, is not whether special education is effective. We believe it is an essential component for meeting the needs of students. Rather, the question is whether the right students are being identified and whether they are being educated in the most effective way.

HOW EXTENSIVE IS OVERREPRESENTATION?

Although identification and reporting variances across states make it difficult to ascertain the extent to which students from diverse cultural or ethnic groups are overrepresented and underrepresented, the national profile is alarming. The U.S. Department of Education found

that African American students were 2.3 times more likely than European American classmates to be labeled by teachers as having mental retardation (1995). Similarly, whereas Native American students are more likely to be identified as having learning disability (U.S. Department of Education, 1998), students with limited English proficiency (LEP) are less likely to access special education services, probably due to inadequate assessment protocols (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Gender appears to serve as yet another confounding variable—two-thirds of all students in special education are male (Doren, Bullis, & Benz, 1996). All told, ethnically and culturally diverse students with disabilities are more likely to be educated in more restrictive settings, including special day classes and special schools (Singh, Ellis, Oswald, Wechsler, & Curtis, 1997). All of these factors are compounded by the shortages of special education teachers in urban schools. Indeed, a report released by Recruiting New Teachers in 2000 indicated that 98% of urban school districts did not have enough qualified special education personnel to meet the needs of their students.

It is important to note that these students are disproportionately represented in some disability categories, but not in others. In low-incidence categories such as deaf–blindness and traumatic brain injury, ethnically and culturally diverse students are represented in proportion to their presence in the general population. It is the high-incidence categories of learning disabilities, mental retardation, and emotional disturbance in which ethnically and culturally diverse students appear in numbers higher than expected (National Research Council, 2002). This situation has led to charges that cultural and language differences have become analogous to disability (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Coutinho, Oswald, & Forness, 2002).

The education of students identified with social and emotional disabilities is particularly troubling. Culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education are at risk for differential treatment for behavior-related issues. According to the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, African American students with disabilities are three times as likely as their white counterparts to face school suspensions of 10 days or fewer (Losen & Orfield, 2002). The risk for long-term suspensions (more than 10 days) is significantly higher for Native American and African American students with disabilities, and some behavioral offenses result in arbitration between the school and the student. In these cases, it was found that Hispanic/Latino, African American, and Native American students were "67% more likely than Whites to be removed on the grounds of dangerousness by a hearing officer" (Civil Rights Project, 2003, n. p.).

All of these incidents attest to the continued marginalization of ethnically and culturally diverse students in special education. This trend is exacerbated by the growing "resegregation" of all minority students in America's schools. For instance, since the Supreme Court ruling in 1991 that eased the standards for desegregation in the nation's urban school districts, African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian American students are less likely to attend a school with European American children than they were in 1989 (Logan, 2002). As Logan (2002) notes, the Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research reports that whereas European American children (who make up 61% of the population) attend schools that average a 78% European American student body, African American and Hispanic/Latino students are enrolled in schools that average 57% black or Latino, despite making up only 16% each of the national school-age population. Similarly, whereas Asian Americans make up 4% of the national student population, the schools they attend are 19% Asian (Logan, 2002). The researchers report that this is a significant increase from the findings in 1989.

Students identified as having learning disabilities make up the largest segment of special education students, accounting for 50% of all students with disabilities (U.S. Department of

Education, 2001). Reading is the primary area of need for 80% of all students with learning disabilities (Lerner, 1989). This translates to an estimated 2,300,000 students in American schools, or over 4% of all students ages 6–21 (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2003).

Coupling these data with those on ethnically and culturally diverse students in special education leads to an alarming truth—students who are male, poor, and members of minority groups and who possess individualized educational plans (IEPs) for special education are likely to be educated in schools in which the majority of students are members of their own ethnicity, and they will likely spend their educational time in segregated classrooms with other students with disabilities, taught by a teacher without proper credentials. Given these data, one has to wonder about the outcomes for students with disabilities in this educational system.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MEMBERS OR DIVERSE CULTURAL OR ETHNIC GROUPS?

Graduation rates for students with disabilities continue to lag well behind the national averages. In the late 1990s, only 57.4% of special education students graduated from high school with diplomas and 29% dropped out of high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). However, there was considerable variance in graduation rates by ethnicity, ranging from 63% for white students to 43% for African American students. Native Americans with disabilities had the highest dropout rate at 44%. Interestingly, students in the low-incidence categories of traumatic brain injury and visual impairments, which show no disproportionate representation, had graduation rates that were among the highest, at 70% and 75%, respectively (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Graduation rates fluctuated by geography, as well. The Southeastern United States region graduates the fewest number of students with disabilities, such that Mississippi has only a 7% graduation rate (National Council on Disability, 2000).

Employment outcomes are equally grim. Sixty-three percent of people with disabilities were unemployed in 1994–1995 (Loprest & Maag, 2001). In a survey of employers, 43% stated that attitudes and stereotypes in the workplace about people with disabilities made it difficult for them to hire members of this population (Bruyere, 2000). Most chilling of all, 44% of adults with disabilities will be jailed at some point in their lives (Fisher & Sax, 2002).

In sum, two phenomena exert a powerful influence on the lives of students with disabilities who are members of diverse cultural or ethnic groups. One stems from the practices that label these children as disabled at frequencies beyond what might be expected within the population. Second, negative effects of this disproportionate identification are amplified by the segregation they subsequently experience when they are cut off from their nondisabled peers who are ethnically and culturally different from them. It would appear that a segregated school experience for these students prepares them for the equally segregated adult life in prison.

WHAT FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION?

Educators have been concerned about disproportionate representation in special education even before federal law was passed. In 1968, Dunn wrote of the preponderance of students

from low-income backgrounds, many of whom were African American and Hispanic/Latino, and speculated about the effectiveness of special day-class placements for these students. Others have focused on the identification process itself, especially the widespread use of a deficit model of education that first defines a narrow measure of intelligence and then seeks to locate those children who do not meet the definition (Deno, 1970; Hilliard, 1988). Some have questioned the effectiveness of instruction in segregated special education classrooms (Vaughn, Moody, & Schumm, 1998). Not surprisingly, a complex problem such as this defies simple answers. However, a review of the literature reveals three common causative themes: (1) lack of intervention before identification, (2) ineffective testing and assessment practices, and (3) reduced access to general education curricula and reading specialists. We believe that, by addressing these concerns before, during, and after identification, educators can increase the number of options before them and interrupt this 40-year cycle of disproportionate representation.

Before Identification: Lack of Intervention

Historically, special education practices are based on a remedial perspective. Instruction is designed to fill in knowledge and skills gaps (Skrtic, 1995). This "medical model" places at-risk students in the situation of being unable to receive assistance until *after* they have fallen sufficiently behind their peers. Critics point out that students with reading disabilities are particularly victimized by this "wait to fail" model (Stuebing et al., 2002, p. 509). The delay causes otherwise small gaps in the primary grades to widen by the time the student reaches intermediate grades.

Nowhere is this finding more powerfully asserted than in the seminal research of Juel (1988), who found that first graders who lagged behind their grade-level peers in reading had a 90% chance of continuing to be struggling readers in grade 4. This may be due in part to the long-term effects of diminished exposure to text (Stanovich, 1986), called the "Matthew effect" after the biblical reference to the rich getting richer while the poor get poorer. In this model, fluent readers engage in more reading on a daily basis, increasing their exposure to text, which in turn serves to increase their ability to read. Conversely, poor readers read fewer words and continue to fall further behind. Allington and McGill-Franzen (1989) found that exposure to text was significantly limited in segregated special education classrooms—an average of 35 minutes less per day. In addition, they completed more seat work that was "largely undifferentiated" (p. 538). It is important to note that the criticism is not that special education teachers are not knowledgeable, but rather that the homogeneous grouping of students with reading disabilities magnifies the disability to an extent at which no educator can adequately individualize instruction (Vaughn et al., 1998).

During Identification: Questionable Assessment Practices

Testing for the purposes of identifying students for special education has been the focus of much criticism, especially as it applies to culturally and linguistically diverse students. Case law is filled with findings regarding practices that may contribute to overrepresentation. Perhaps the most influential is *Larry P. v. Riles* (1979, 1986). In this lawsuit, African American parents in California charged that culturally biased intelligence testing led to misidentification of mental retardation. The court found on behalf of the parents and banned the use of these instruments with African American children. Of equal significance, a Mississippi

ruling in *Mattie T. v. Holladay* (1979, 1981) required school districts to submit timelines and accountability plans for "minority students in special education."

The testing controversy is further compounded by the role of parents who are culturally and linguistically different from school personnel. Initial evaluation and testing of a child for a disability requires informed consent and is enhanced by partnerships with family members who know the child's history. However, the very notion of such formal procedures may be alien to some families from diverse cultural groups. For example, Fadiman (1997) documented the difficulties for a Hmong family whose child was identified as having a severe form of epilepsy. Because they did not share a common language or cultural belief system with the professionals involved, they were labeled "noncompliant," and their child was removed from their home. Similarly, Joe (1997) recounted incidents of Native American parents who made agreements at meetings that they never intended to carry out, all in an effort to avoid conflict with school personnel. Beliefs about the educational system itself can confound the relationships between families and schools. Ogbu and Simons (1994) found that African American families who participated in the study were more ambivalent about the effectiveness of the education system for their children than Hispanic/Latino or Asian Americans were. Some suggest that these discordant events may arise because professionals do not understand the role of culture in a family's decisions and fail to see that education in America is bound in a cultural context of its own (Banks & Banks, 1995; Heath, 1983; Lynch & Hanson, 1998; Valdes, 1996).

After Identification: Lack of Access to Effective Instruction

How children get into special education is one concern; what happens to them once they are identified is another. IDEA describes a continuum of placements that range from general education classrooms to hospital/homebound services for students who are unable to attend school (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 1997b). In addition, this statute requires that "to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities… are educated with children who are not disabled" (IDEA, 1997b). An important provision is that the supplementary aids and services funded by special education dollars can be utilized in general education classrooms. This means that personal, curricular, and technology supports *can* and *should* be made available to the student with a disability and to the general education teacher. Implemented correctly, such dispersement circumvents the "dump and hope" practices that result in dissatisfactory experiences for students and educators. This can result in a powerful collaborative model between special educators and general educators that is additive and that results in increased achievement for students with and without disabilities (York & Tundidor, 1995).

However, as recounted earlier in this chapter, students who are culturally and linguistically diverse are more likely to be educated in more restrictive environments, especially special day classes and special schools, and never return to a general education classroom after being identified for special education services (Singh, Ellis, Oswald, Wechsler, & Curtis, 1997). Their special education teachers are then faced with a daunting task—to provide an individualized educational program for all the students in the class. Because the classroom teacher cannot rely on the learning that comes from peers, the learning must be teacher directed. This means that students face more whole-group instruction in reading (Vaughn et al., 1998), reduced engagement (Hunt, Farron-Davis, Beckstead, Curtis, & Goetz, 1994), less time devoted to instruction than allotted (Ostrosky, Skellenger, Odom, McConnell, &

Peterson, 1994), smaller social networks (Fryxell & Kennedy, 1995), and less teacher attention and individual instruction than similar students in general education classrooms (Logan & Keefe, 1997). This body of research is remarkably similar to the findings of others on the effects of tracking on reading instruction and reading achievement (Barr & Dreeben, 1991; Ross, Smith, & Lohr, 1994; Slavin, 1987), effects that include less time on task, less time spent reading, and an increased emphasis on low-level skills (Allington, 1984; DeStefano, Pepinsky, & Sanders, 1982).

Confounding this situation for many students with disabilities is the lack of access to qualified teachers. According to a recent survey, 97% of urban districts across the nation reported an immediate need for certified special education teachers to fill positions in their schools (Recruiting New Teachers, 2000). Almost 70,000 job openings existed in the field (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Nearly 11% of all special education teachers nationwide lack the proper credentials to teach students with disabilities, and administrators in very large districts (mostly urban) reported that they believed that only 62% of their newly hired special education teachers were "excellent" compared with 90% hired in small school districts. They also reported fewer qualified applicants applying for positions (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

In sum, the challenges surrounding the education of students with disabilities who are also members of diverse cultural or language groups is complex and encompasses broader social ills related to poverty, class inequality, testing and achievement, and teacher recruitment. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to make recommendations that would address all of these concerns. However, we believe that reading educators are in a unique position to influence the experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse students before, during, and after their entry into the special education system. As with most educational reforms, this requires collaboration with special education colleagues to improve the teaching and learning of students with and without disabilities. In the following section, we examine specific strategies that can minimize unnecessary identification and restrictive placements for students in special education.

WHAT CAN LITERACY EDUCATORS DO TO PREVENT DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION OF CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION?

Before: Increase Early Intervention Efforts

Because the current definition of a learning disability requires a discrepancy between expected ability (determined by intelligence quotients) and academic performance (based on performance tests), most children cannot qualify for special education until after they perform sufficiently lower than their peers. This means that a student might not be referred for testing until after he or she has been enrolled in school for several years. Students whose test results show lower IQ results may also fail to display a large enough discrepancy to qualify for services. Interestingly, although a meta-analysis of 46 studies on policies for identification of learning disabilities demonstrated weak validity for the discrepancy model (Stuebing et al., 2002), it remains in the federal guidelines.

Early intervention should be made available before the long process of testing and evaluation that may or may not result in a child receiving additional support. By taking a proactive approach to extend extra assistance to students showing the first signs of falling behind, we afford the opportunity to emergent readers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to "learn it right" the first time, rather than to habituate on ineffective

reading habits that become much more resistant to remediation later in their school career. There are numerous examples of highly effective early intervention approaches for emergent and early readers, with the most effective offering one-to-one tutoring (Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, & Moody, 2000). Notable approaches that have a strong research foundation include Reading Recovery (Clay, 1993), the work of Vellutino and Scanlon (2001), and Book Buddies (Invernizzi, Juel, & Rosemary, 1996). Additionally, these three approaches require varying levels of financial investment and teacher expertise in order to be successfully implemented.

Reading Recovery is a well-known intervention for first-grade readers based on the work of Marie Clay. Students referred to the program meet daily for 20–60 sessions with a highly trained teacher who has spent a year in specialized preparation. The lessons are 30 minutes in length and follow a tightly structured format that includes word work, writing, and reading connected text. The practitioner also has the student reread a familiar book aloud while the child's oral reading behavior is coded on a running record (Clay, 1993). This assessment provides the Reading Recovery teacher with evidence to create hypotheses about the child's integration of reading processes and guides future instruction. Some controversy surrounds how Reading Recovery effects are computed, because some students are discontinued after 20 lessons if they have not made sufficient progress. Nevertheless, the program has shown positive results for participants who have completed it (Wasik & Slavin, 1993). Ironically, children who are already receiving special education services cannot participate in the program (Clay, 1993). An important contribution of Reading Recovery is its influence on other one-to-one intervention models (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Reading Recovery can be expensive to implement due to the personnel costs and the low number of students seen at any one time (usually four to six students). For this reason, some schools implement a one-to-one tutoring program using classroom teachers. Vellutino and Scanlon (2001) described a first-grade intervention for 118 "impaired" readers who participated in daily 30-minute lessons with certified teachers trained by the researchers. Children in the study made progress in reading, and, after one semester of intervention, the number of students who could have been referred for special education testing had been reduced from 9% before the study to 1.5% after (Vellutino & Scanlon, 2001).

Although lower than the cost of Reading Recovery, the use of certified teachers in models such as the one described by Vellutino and Scanlon creates an expense that some schools cannot afford. Thus it is prudent to look at a successful early intervention model using volunteers. Book Buddies (Invernizzi, Juel, & Rosemary, 1996) recruits community members to volunteer time to tutor first graders at risk for failure. Importantly, a reading specialist guides the tutors before, during, and after sessions in order to ensure fidelity of instruction (Invernizzi, 2001). An effect size of 1.24 has been reported for the first 3 years of the Book Buddies effort (Invernizzi, Rosemary, Juel, & Richards, 1997). The researchers attribute the effect to the training and supervision offered to the tutors. Like Reading Recovery, Book Buddies uses a format for its biweekly 45-minute lesson that consists of familiar readings, word work, writing, and a new book introduction (Invernizzi, Juel, & Rosemary, 1996). The positive effects of this intervention model in urban settings was also documented by Block and Dellamura (2000-2001).

Although varied in their details and in administration, all these interventions have several elements in common (Strickland, 2001):

- Emphasizing intervention over remediation.
- Strengthening bonds between school and the community.

- Giving at-risk children more time for instruction.
- Using materials that are appropriate for the child's reading level.
- Designing intervention programs that provide both word-level and text-level instruction.
- Monitoring student progress.

During: Consider Culture When Teaching and Assessing Students

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) reports that one in six children under the age of 18 lives below the poverty line (CDF, 2003). Some students from low-income and culturally or ethnically diverse backgrounds may arrive at the classroom without the literacy experiences valued by the culture of school (Heath, 1983; Valdes, 1996). Although exposure to spoken and written language is vital for all children, many urban students have rich literacy experiences that are valuable but overlooked by teachers. For example, African American boys from some communities have been shown to possess sophisticated oral narrative skills compared with their white counterparts, although these skills were frequently viewed as problematic to their classroom teachers (Feagens & Haskins, 1986). Children from cultures with an oral tradition (e.g., Native American and Asian) may possess a sense of story that is nonlinear and bound in metaphors and pictures (Ballenger, 1997; Ong, 1982). Although they are facile at telling these stories, they may find it difficult to recognize the story grammar present in Western literature.

As well, many researchers have examined differences in home literacy practices of culturally and linguistically diverse families. For example, Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) described the vibrant home literacy practices of African American families as frequent, interactive, and broad in their scope. A study of the home literacy opportunities for Hispanic kindergartners found that the participating parents read to their children and provided emotional support for their learning (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990). Overall, however, there has been a dearth of research on the family literacy practices of Hispanic/Latino families (Vernon-Feagens, Hammer, Miccio, & Manlove, 2001).

Given the increasing likelihood that a teacher will have students from ethnic and cultural backgrounds different from his or her own, the role of teacher preparation and education becomes more important than ever. In order for teachers to be culturally competent, they must have access to information about the literacy and language development of their students. In addition, teachers need ongoing professional development in order to integrate this knowledge into their classroom practices. When teachers understand the varied literacy experiences of their students, especially those who are developing dual-language skills, they are able to incorporate this specialized student knowledge in order to develop more traditionally measured literacy skills (Au, 2002). They are also better able to distinguish between "deficient" and "different."

An important aspect of teacher preparation for work in urban settings must include education about myths and beliefs held by educators. For example, Bondy and Ross (1998) identified six myths held by white teachers about their African American students and about effective curriculum and instruction. What is striking is the extent to which some of these also describe the misconceptions about students in special education. The myths discussed by Bondy and Ross include the following:

- Parents do not value their children's education.
- These students fail because they are not motivated.

- They have few literacy experiences.
- Good teachers are "color blind."
- Curriculum should focus on mastery of skills.
- Teachers should work on eliminating nonstandard dialects.

These beliefs are often grounded in the attitudes and beliefs acquired before a teacher candidate has even entered a credential program, and many programs have limited success in shifting beliefs (Tatto, 1996). One method for broadening teacher knowledge and dispelling misconceptions about other cultures is the use of multicultural teacher book clubs (Flood & Lapp, 1994). The use of literature as the focus of a discussion can be valuable for learning about people from diverse backgrounds (Athanases, 1998). We have included an annotated bibliography of books about people with disabilities at the end of this chapter.

After: Improve Access to General Education Literacy Education

Despite well-intentioned and hardworking professionals, segregated special education classrooms have not lived up to the promise of accelerating student learning (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; Vaughn et al., 1998). This has been particularly true for culturally and linguistically diverse students and for classrooms in high-risk urban settings (Artiles & Trent, 1994). In our experience, this situation is attributable in part to the difficulties of supporting so many struggling readers and writers at the same time. A viable alternative is to place students with disabilities in general education classrooms with supports and services (Fisher & Frey, 2001). This "push in" model allows special education students to acquire and refine their learning in a setting that mirrors the world they are being prepared for—an adult life with people with and without disabilities. At the same time, students without disabilities may profit from the incidental benefits that come from having the personal, curricular, and technology supports of special education in their classroom (Fisher, Sax, Rodifer, & Pumpian, 1999).

There is compelling evidence that students with disabilities acquire critical academic skills from general education classroom experiences. For example, students with autism showed higher reading gains in the cooperative learning groups employed by the classroom teacher (Kamps, Leonard, & Potucek, 1995). Klingner, Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm, and Elbaum (1998) found that students with learning disabilities made significant gains in the general education classroom. Similar gains have been documented for students with more significant disabilities as well (Kliewer, 1998; Ryndak, Morrison, & Sommerstein, 1999). Indeed, Mathes and Torgeson (1998) report that the literacy needs of special education students are similar to those of their nondisabled peers and advise that the general education teacher should be the primary provider of literacy instruction.

This should not be misinterpreted as a dismissal of the special educator. To the contrary, all of the studies mentioned featured a competent special educator who collaborated with the general education teacher to create meaningful learning opportunities for the students with disabilities. Through collaborative efforts, instruction and services provided by general and special educators can be coordinated to eliminate the loss of instructional opportunities caused by lack of early intervention, lengthy testing and assessment, and lack of interaction with peers without disabilities.

A final element that can contribute to the literacy growth of students with and without disabilities is the use of disability literature in book clubs. Suggested titles categorized by grade levels appear at the end of this chapter. The purpose of using this literature is to sensi-

tize students to the unique nature of a disability experience and to give students an opportunity to see themselves in the books they read (Harris & Willis, 2003).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Most Powerful Tool: Proactive Literacy Practices for Diverse Learners

In this section, we discuss our specific recommendations regarding the role of literacy educators before, during, and after the referral process. We would be remiss if we failed to advocate for powerful classroom practices that benefit all students, especially those at risk. Because the majority of students are referred for special education testing in the first years of school, we have confined our discussion of literacy practices to those relevant for K–3 classrooms. Our recommendations include actions we can take through general education initiatives to build the oral, listening, reading, and writing abilities of urban students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Oral Language Development

The foundation of literacy development is rooted in a child's aptitude with spoken language. As these skills are nurtured, students acquire new literacy abilities to augment their existing means of communication. Yet classroom practices may not always capitalize on the primary oral language skills of students to foster second-language acquisition. This divide can occur with children who speak a language other than English, as well as for those who speak African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and detrimental effects have been documented thoroughly (e.g., Au & Kawakami, 1991; Heath, 1983; Valdes, 1996).

A useful instructional frame for oral language development is described by the New Standards Project (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2001, p. 11) as:

- Habits
- Kinds of talk and resulting genres
- Language use and conventions

Habits associated with oral language development include the ability to speak about oneself, about a topic, and about a book. *Kinds of talk* refers to purposes, which include telling a story and giving and getting information. *Language use and conventions* include grammar, vocabulary, and interactions (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2001). Not surprisingly, building these skills requires that students be drenched in a rich environment of modeled talk, direct instruction about language, and many opportunities to practice talk with peers and adults. One instructional arrangement that provides all of these dimensions is a book club.

Book clubs (Raphael & McMahon, 1994) consist of small heterogeneous groups of students who gather together under the guidance of a teacher to discuss a book they are reading and actualize the tenets of the New Standards Project. Because the nature of this instructional arrangement is organized around the importance of discussion, students get ample opportunities to practice their communication skills using the academic language associated with the task. In the book club, students first read a portion of the book and then record their responses in a reading log. These writings may focus on literary structures (such as

character development or the author's choice of words), or readers can make connections to their own personal experiences. The writing portion of the book club can be particularly useful to students who are less sure of their oral language skills, because it allows them to collect their thoughts and choose their wording in advance. Student-led discussion groups then meet to share their reading logs. Raphael and McMahon (1994) point out that, as students become more comfortable with this portion of the book club, the discussion begins to flow more easily. As a result, reluctant readers may find it easier to "try on" more formal academic language within the security of a small collaborative group.

Listening Skills

Although it may appear artificial to separate oral-language and listening skills, it does allow us the opportunity to describe the importance of both creating a disposition toward listening and teaching listening to develop comprehension. The first, disposition, refers to fostering a child's preference for listening through their understanding that good things will happen. This can be accomplished through classroom games that require listening in order to be successful. Examples include a common game variously called "telephone" or "the rumor game." Although the variations are endless, the basic premise is that an oral message is quietly passed from one student to another until all have been involved. The goal is to repeat the message accurately enough to ensure that the integrity of the original message is preserved to the end of the chain. For older children, classroom activities such as Around the World can promote listening. This activity involves individual students reciting in sequence information printed on note cards. For instance, a child's card may read:

When you hear: "A blue whale is the largest mammal on earth."

You say: "The average blue whale weighs 110 tons."

The next student's card reads:

When you hear: "The average blue whale weighs 110 tons."

You say: "It eats 4 tons of krill a day."

The second aspect, listening comprehension, is the ability to understand spoken messages. Instructional practice to develop this ability can come from teachers who offer multiple-step directions. For example, a three-step direction to first graders during a Making Words lesson (Cunningham, Hall, & Defee, 1998) might be, "Please set up your word tents, arrange your letters in alphabetical order, and then put your hand on your head so I know you're ready." Another powerful instructional approach for English-language learners is the use of realia to develop vocabulary—a key component to listening comprehension. *Realia* is the use of everyday objects in the classroom to illustrate the concepts being taught. For example, the informational text *The Pumpkin Book* (Gibbons, 2000), about how pumpkins are grown, harvested, and used in seasonal celebrations, comes alive when the teacher brings in a pumpkin and carves it with the children so they can build their schemas around words and concepts such as *seeds, pulp,* and *stem*. This approach can be extended to any content area and grade level, as the need for vocabulary development continues throughout the curriculum.

Reading Skills

Although the list of reading practices that are effective for students at risk is far too extensive to discuss within this chapter, we would like to highlight two fluency practices that may be overlooked—Reader's Theater for group instruction and the neurological impress method (NIM) during individual instruction (Heckelman, 1969; Samuels, 1979). For many students with reading disabilities, disfluency can represent a major barrier to comprehension. The ability to read smoothly is closely related to automaticity (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974) and prosody (defined as reading with a level of expression) and reflects the reader's understanding of the message. Reader's Theater is an instructional arrangement that places students in small heterogeneous groups to engage in repeated readings of a poem or text passage that will later be performed. Students do not rely on memorization, instead using a script to recite their part. Each part is often performed in unison with several students, and rehearsals focus on creating appropriate pacing, intonation, and inflections for a particular dramatic reading. This practice is especially effective for struggling readers when they are paired with more fluent partners who can assist them in becoming more fluent with their speaking parts (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1998-1999).

The neurological impress method (NIM) is receiving renewed attention in the field of reading disabilities. First described by Heckelman in 1969, this practice (also called "echo reading") involves the teacher reading orally at a pace that is slightly ahead (a syllable or two) of the student. The student and teacher sit side by side as the child hears a fluent reader modeling pronunciation and prosody. Like Reader's Theater, the power of this form of instruction lies in the student's access to modeled reading. Daily practice in NIM can lead to increased fluency and prosody for early readers (Samuels, 1979).

Writing Skills

Like the other aspects of literacy instruction discussed previously, early attention to the development of writing is essential for emergent and early readers (Shanahan, 1980). When young students are offered direct writing instruction from the time they enter school, they begin to learn that print carries a message, as well as how to compose and plan using conventions of text (McCarrier, Pinnell & Fountas, 1999). With its roots in "sharing the pen" as a practice of writing with children (McKenzie, 1985), interactive writing also strengthens students' oral language development through its extensive conversations about the intended purpose and audience of the written message. Daily use of interactive writing has been effective in introducing and reinforcing many of the skills necessary for literacy development (Brotherton & Williams, 2002).

CONCLUSION

For more than 30 years educators and researchers have been concerned about the disproportionate representation of culturally and linguistically diverse learners in special education, and this concern is mounting as the largest proportion of this population is served in high-risk urban school settings. High-incidence disabilities such as learning disabilities, mental retardation, and emotional and behavioral disorders have historically (and inaccurately) been associated with African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American students. Once in special education, these students are likely to attend schools that have become in-

creasingly more segregated over the past decade. These same students are also more apt to attend segregated classrooms and to be suspended or expelled compared with their European American peers.

Issues of race, culture, poverty, and urban settings are inexorably entwined to confound the problem of disproportionate representation. Although it is important to acknowledge the role of these macro-level conditions, it is essential also to recognize the contributions of practices at the school level that unwittingly contribute to the problem. The good news is that literacy professionals can alter this trajectory by advocating and implementing processes that prevent some students from entering special education while better meeting the needs of those who do qualify.

Early intervention is vital to avoiding the reading difficulties that are the frequent cause of referrals for special education testing. Schools are in a unique position to offer well-designed one-to-one reading tutoring that complements the ongoing assessment and responsive instruction of the classroom. Of course, some students will need more extensive evaluation to identify their specific learning needs, but even then schools can make the process more meaningful through collaboration with families. Urban schools should exhibit a belief system, grounded in cultural reciprocity, that recognizes the influences of both the families' and the profession's cultural values. This spirit of collaboration prevents judgments that fail to recognize a child's nontraditional literacy strengths. Perhaps the area in which literacy professionals have the most influence is in what happens to special education students after they qualify for special education services. Stated simply, the general education teacher and his or her classroom environment offer the greatest potential for growth in reading achievement. The special educator, who can offer personal, technological, and curricular supports, represents the third member of this team.

Reversing the rate of disproportionate representation is not a solitary act. In order for this all-too-predictable pattern to be interrupted, general and special educators must create alliances that welcome the unique contributions each can offer the other. This willingness to work together must extend to the families of the students involved. When this caring alliance is nurtured, the winner is sure to be the child who stands at the center.

APPENDIX 18.1. Disability Literature

Picture and Easy Trade Books

Bloom, B. (1999). *Wolf!* New York: Orchard.—A wolf creeps up on a farm, ready to do his usual wolf business. Imagine his surprise when the animals aren't scared! It seems the only way he can impress them is to read, a skill he does not possess. The story illustrates the power of reading, as well as what we sometimes do to those with less ability. Ages 5–10.

Cheltenham Elementary School Kindergartners. (1991). *We are all alike . . . we are all different*. New York: Scholastic.—This kindergarten class created the text and illustrations to demonstrate what they have in common and what makes them unique as individuals. The text and pictures are somewhat dated but it remains an interesting model for teachers of a writing project on social justice for young children. Ages 4–8.

Cowen-Fletcher, J. (1993). *Mama zooms*. New York: Scholastic.—A young boy tells why it is so wonderful to have a mother who uses a wheelchair. They "zoom" through their world together, and their relationship is a strong and positive one. This book is unique in presenting a disability as a special ability without ever being cloying. Also available on CD-ROM. Primary.

Estes, E. (1944). *The hundred dresses*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace.—An impoverished girl tells

her classmates she has "one hundred dresses, all lined up in the closet." A classmate who participated in daily teasing feels guilty when the girl moves away, and she is unable to rectify the wrong. The text and illustrations set this story in another time, but the theme of judging others by superficial things such as appearance is timeless. Ages 8–12.

Gilmore, R. (1999). *A screaming kind of day.* Toronto, Ontario, CA: Fitzhenry and Whiteside.—Scully is a young girl who is deaf and feeling out of sorts. She and her brother are stuck inside on a rainy day, squabbling with one another and getting on Mom's nerves. Children and adults will connect with the familiarity of the story as it unfolds into an evening of peaceful family reconciliation. Ages 7–12.

Lakin, P. (1994). *Dad and me in the morning.* Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman.—The strength of this story lies in the "normalness" of the tale—a young boy and his father prepare for an early morning fishing trip. That the boy happens to be deaf is a small detail that never overwhelms the theme of the magic of a close relationship between parent and child. Ages 5–10.

Lester, H., & Munsinger, L. (1999*). Hooway for Wodney Wat.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.—Rodney Rat can't say his *r*'s, much to the amusement of his classmates. But when a bully shows up at his school, it's Rodney's voice that saves the day. The puns used to drive the story are critical, so the reader must have a sophisticated understanding of the language in order to appreciate the story's resolution. Ages 7–10.

Martin, B., Jr. & Archambault, J. (1966). *Knots on a counting rope.* New York: Henry Holt.—A Native American boy begs his grandfather to tell the story of his birth once again. The text reveals the importance of family and the high expectations for a family member with a disability. Although it is never explicitly stated in the story, the young boy is blind. Readers may need to have this detail made apparent to them. Ages 5–10.

Rogers, F. (2000). *Let's talk about it: Extraordinary friends.* New York: Puffin.—Mr. Rogers brings his gentle and frank style to this picture book about disability and difference. Believable photographs complement an excellent text that reassures children about their hesitancies toward those who look or act differently. He offers insight into how to introduce yourself, offer help, and nurture friendships while never talking down to his audience. Ages 4–8.

Shannon, D. (1998). *A bad case of stripes.* New York: Scholastic.—When a little girl comes down with an unusual ailment, lots of changes occur in the way others interact with her. This book features funny dialogue and illustrations that are not to be missed. The story can lead to interesting discussions on reactions others may have to those whose appearance is different. Ages 5–10.

Shannon, D. (1998). *No, David!* New York: Scholastic.—This Caldecott Honor book is derived from the author/illustrator's first literary attempt at the age of 5. Each page contains a hilarious situation portraying the small protagonist's misbehavior, along with his mother's admonition, "No, David!" The tale ends with a kiss and a hug from mom, who reminds David that she still loves him, even though his actions sometimes frustrate her. The book is an excellent tool for assisting children (and adults) in separating what they do from who they are. Ages 4–8.

Shannon, D. (1999). *David goes to school.* New York: Scholastic.—The further adventures of David, the six-year-old alter ego of the author/illustrator. David now attends school and wreaks havoc in the classroom and schoolyard. His teacher is able to appreciate his innate goodness and wins him over with her belief in him. Ages 5–8.

Chapter Books: Elementary and Middle

Betancourt, J. (1993). *My name is (Brain) Brian.* New York: Scholastic.—Brian is a teenager with a learning disability who must navigate the challenges of school and how they affect his social structure. This book would work well with A. Schmitt's *Brilliant Idiot* (1994) and *Adam Zigzag* because they discuss similar topics at different readability levels. Middle school and up.

Fenner, C. (1995). *Yolanda's genius*. New York: Simon & Schuster.—Yolanda's brother, Andrew, is a genius. It's just that no one knows it—and Andrew doesn't read or even talk very much. It's Yolanda's responsibility to run a kind of interference between her brother and the rest of the world, as well to convince others of his gift. Ages 9–12.

Gantos, J. (2000). *Joey Pigza swallows the key.* New York: Harper Trophy.—This sharp, funny book offers the reader insight into the world of a child with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Fifth-grade Joey careens in and out of control as he struggles to find his place in his family and the world. An incident on a field trip lands Joey in a special education school and serves as an emotional shock for Joey and the reader. The book ends hopefully as Joey returns to his school. Intermediate.

Gantos, J. (2002). *What would Joey do?* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.—The last book in the award-winning Joey Pigza trilogy gives us Joey, the character who showed us the inside of ADHD, being home schooled with a feisty blind girl, torn by his parents' erratic behaviors, and nurtured by his dying, irascible grandma. Intermediate.

Hesse, K. (1996). *The music of dolphins*. New York: Scholastic.—A young girl raised by dolphins is found on an island and brought back to the "civilized" world to be studied and educated by researchers. Her disenchantment with their world is reflected in the unique presentation of the book, which begins with large type and simple phrases, then becomes more complex as her language grows. Her psychological return to her cradle of experiences is portrayed by a fascinating use of language construction. Middle school and up.

Martin, A. (2002). *A corner of the universe*. New York: Scholastic.—In the summer of Hattie's 12th year, she is surprised to learn she has an uncle who has lived in an institutionalized school all Hattie's life. When the school closes and he must return to her grandparents' house, her uncle's exuberant, somewhat unpredictable behaviors, as well as Hattie's responses, are touching and believable. Ages 9–12.

Metzger, L. (1992). *Barry's sister.* New York: Antheneum.—A young girl wishes her mother wasn't pregnant because she doesn't want a sibling. When her brother is born with cerebral palsy, she must deal with her guilt. This story discusses a phenomenon often experienced by children but rarely discussed by grown-ups—the power of wishes. Middle school and up.

Mikaelson, B. (1998). *Petey.* New York: Hyperion.—Petey Corbin is a toddler in 1920 when he is sent to an institution because his family can no longer care for him. Because he has cerebral palsy, the caretakers at the hospital wrongly believe that he understands nothing around him. This novel takes off when Trevor, an adolescent with his own troubles, meets an elderly Petey in a nursing home. How these two characters establish a friendship and transform one another makes for an intriguing book club discussion. Middle school and up.

Nones, E. J. (1995). *Angela's wings*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.—Angela awakens one morning to discover she has wings. Although she is embarrassed that she is now different from the other children, she soon learns that there are many advantages. The story is ethereal and muted in both its illustrations and meaning and may remind adult readers of the Gabriel Garcia Marquez short story, "The Very Old Man with Enormous Wings." Ages 10–14.

Shyer, M. F. (1988). *Welcome home, Jellybean.* New York: Macmillan.—When a sister with significant disabilities returns home after several years in a residential school, the Oxley family must go through a series of changes as their roles are redefined. Neil, the middle school brother, tells the story of his jealousies, anger, and love for his sister as his life is changed. The dialogue is at times contrived and stilted, but the conflict that arises when a marginalized family member returns seems to ring true. Middle school and up.

Spinelli, J. (2002). *Loser.* New York: Harper Collins/Joanna Colter.—Spinelli details the odyssey of Donald Zinkoff as he goes from being a weird kid who is tolerated by his classmates to a complete "loser" when he lets his team down in a race. Donald's gentle nature and optimistic outlook stand in

stark contrast to the peculiar cruelties of fellow students. What follows is a lesson in how all are diminished when one is alienated. Middle school.

Tashjian, J. (1999). *Tru confessions*. New York: Scholastic.—Twelve-year-old Tru tells her story through a journal filled with the complications presented by boys, school, and family. Tru's family life is distinctive because of her twin brother's cognitive disability. Her insights about Eddie's school experiences in and out of general education are realized when she makes an audition tape about her brother for a cable access channel. Tashjian does a wonderful job of capturing the voice of middle school girls and boys with and without disabilities. Late elementary and middle school.

Novels: High School

Clements, A. (2002). *Things not seen*. New York: Philomel.—The protagonist is a 15-year-old boy who feels invisible—unnoticed by classmates and teachers, barely acknowledged at home. When he meets a girl who is blind, the two forge a powerful friendship built on the premise of being invisible. Young readers will relate to the notion of social ranking as a way of defining the relative worth of others.

Ferris, J. (2001). *Of sound mind*. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.—What's it like to be the only hearing member of a deaf family? This book chronicles the senior year of Theo, a young man frustrated by the responsibilities that have fallen on him to communicate with the outside world. Teenagers of families who do not speak English will relate to Theo's plight.

Hurst, J., & Dumas, P. (1998). *The scarlet ibis*. New York: Creative Education.—This short story tells of an older sibling of a brother with a significant physical handicap. His shame for his brother drives him to harass and cajole the younger boy. The illustrations complement the story because they effectively capture the changing emotions experienced by the lead characters.

Koertge, R. (2002). *Stoner and Spaz*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.—The "stoner" in the title is Colleen, an outsider famous for her drug usage, while the "spaz" is a straight-laced classmate with cerebral palsy named Ben. These two loners find an unlikely friendship and romance with one another as they help each other wrestle with their personal demons. Watch out for frank discussion about drug abuse.

Steinbeck, J. (1937). *Of mice and men*. New York: Penguin.—This classic novella tells the Depression-era story of George and Lenny and their unlikely friendship. George protects Lenny, described as "simpleminded," until a lynch mob arrives to hang him for a crime. George's horrific choice and Lenny's unique view of the world can spur discussion of what it means to be a member of a community.

Trueman, T. (2000). *Stuck in neutral*. New York: HarperCollins.—Shawn is a 14-year-old with a severe form of cerebral palsy brought on by a stroke when he was small. Although he is unable to perform many of the routines of daily living due to his condition, he has an active and observant mind that appreciates the small details and large issues around him. He also believes that his father is going to kill him "in order to put him out of his misery." This novel challenges beliefs about the value of life, freedom, and love. Pair this book with *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (Bauby, 1997) for an interesting juxtaposition of fiction and autobiography.

Williams, D. (1992). *Nobody, nowhere*. New York: Avon.—The author tells her story of growing up with autism in a world in which she struggles to make sense of the harsh life around her. Pages 1–27 make a good excerpt to prompt dialogue about a child's very early years with a violent family. The afterword provides a perspective on how she interacts with the world. Williams's writing is difficult at times, as she has trouble describing, in particular, the emotions and motivations of those around her.

Adult Readings for Teacher Book Clubs

Anaya, R. A. (1979). *Tortuga*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.—The title character is an adolescent boy recently paralyzed in an accident. He earns the name "Tortuga" because his full-body cast restricts his movement, much like a turtle on its back. His prolonged hospitalization in a remote Mexican institution spurs a self-examination of identity, friendship, and love, and how those can change when the body is changed. Lyrical passages intertwined with Mexican folktales and Indian legends create an unusual and challenging novel.

Bauby, J. D., & Leggett, J. (Trans.). (1997). *The diving bell and the butterfly.* New York: Vintage.—Is there ever a life not worth living? Bauby challenges the beliefs of many as he offers his unique view of a life few of us will ever experience. Bauby was the 43-year-old editor of *Elle* France when he was struck by a brain stem stroke. When he emerged from a coma weeks later, he had volitional movement only in his left eye. The author painstakingly blinked this entire manuscript with the assistance of a friend. The result is a joyful collection of essays about life, love, family, and work. Bauby died 2 days after the publication of the book in France.

Dedieu, T. (1997). *The boy who ate words*. New York: Henry N. Adams.—Gabby talks too much, and all his words tumble together in a confusing mess. He then stops talking altogether, prompting worry, fear, and, finally, exclusion. This beautifully illustrated French picture book portrays communication disorders such as autism in a poetic fashion and prompts discussion on language and the many ways we make ourselves understood. The text is challenging, perhaps due to its translation from French. The illustrations are bold and graphic, with an abstract bend. Although this is billed as a children's book, it is sufficiently complex to use with adults.

Fadiman, A. (1997). *The spirit catches you and you fall down: A Hmong child, her doctors, and the collision of two cultures*. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.—This moving story recounts the tragic life of a young Hmong girl with epilepsy whose death is blamed on her family's failure to follow a complex treatment regimen. However, the family's beliefs find Western medicine sorely lacking in humanity and mutual respect. The inability of these two cultures to communicate with one another leave both sides, each well intentioned, to ultimately fail this young girl. There are no villains, just doctors, nurses, and parents who must mourn the loss and reevaluate what might have been done instead.

Hockenberry, J. (1995). *Moving violations: War zones, wheelchairs, and declarations of independence*. New York: Hyperion.—MSNBC and National Public Radio journalist John Hockenberry recounts his life from childhood to present, including his life-altering accident at the age of 19. Hockenberry is frank and, when needed, profane about the attitudes of others in his personal and professional life about his abilities. The author does not spare examination of his own attitudes, both about himself and others with and without disabilities. Well-timed humor is juxtaposed with searing candor, and the reader is likely to continue to reflect on his story long after the last page is read.

Mooney, J., & Cole, D. (2000). *Learning outside the lines*. New York: Simon & Schuster.—Authors Mooney and Cole are recent graduates of Brown University and identify themselves as having learning disabilities. This book is part autobiography, part self-help manual. The first chapters detail the educational histories of the authors, and the bulk of the book is devoted to very practical advice about surviving college with learning disabilities. Individual chapters offer tips about note taking, organization, and participating in class discussion. A favorite chapter, titled "Less Reading, More A's," shares suggestions for completing reading assignments depending on how much time you have—even if it's just before class. Where was this book when we were in college?

Morrison, T., Morrison S., & Potter, G. (1999). *The big box*. New York: Hyperion.—This picture book's deeply philosophical perspective make it too dense for the young audiences it was written for, but adults who live and work with children are unlikely to miss the pointed message in this extended poem about "children [who] just can't handle their freedom." Each of the three characters is

placed in a lovely box after well-meaning adults determine that it is the best way to contain their behavior. The warning about individuality sacrificed for conformity is a sobering reminder for professionals. Potter's illustration of the meeting at school is particularly chilling for those of us who have been participants in similar gatherings.

Scherer, M. (1996). *Living in the state of stuck* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Brookline.—The second edition of this book examines technology and its impact on the lives of people with disabilities. Although it is often regarded by professionals as positive, the consumers of this technology have something else to say. By following the lives of individuals throughout the chapters, the reader is able to witness the successes of well-designed devices and the failures that occur when assistive technology is placed ahead of those who will use it.

Shapiro, J. P. (1993). *No pity: People with disabilities forging a new civil rights movement*. New York: Times Books.—The author chronicles the awakening disability rights movement, including historical records, legislative trends, and watershed events. Chapter 1, "Tiny Tims, Supercrips, and the End of Pity" captures the theme for the entire book: "pity oppresses." This book is rude, militant, and immensely challenging in its social-bending stance.

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PART IV

NEXT STEPS: CLASSROOM PRACTICES THAT INCREASE LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT FOR EVERY STUDENT IN AN URBAN SCHOOL

19

Honoring Children's Reading Rights

Accounting for Success in One Urban First-Grade Classroom

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The words "no child left behind" are now familiar to administrators and teachers in urban schools across the United States. As the title of federal legislation, the phrase is supposed to signify the expected outcome of measures taken to ensure effective learning opportunities for all children. Although many seem to believe that this motto represents a new stance in public schools, a review of mission statements in any random selection of urban school districts would indicate that educators and policymakers have long recognized their responsibility to meet the needs of every child who enters their school doors. Despite the frequently articulated commitment, evidence from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Donahue, Finnegan, Lutkus, Allen, & Campbell, 2001) tells us that in too many cases we have fallen short of that goal.

Although we can argue convincingly that our schools are doing as well as they have ever done (e.g., Allington & Johnston, 2002; Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Bracey, 1997; McQuillan, 1998; Schrag, 1997), most experts also agree that we cannot justify or excuse the large numbers of children who fail to become successful readers. Often, children who fail reside in high-poverty urban communities, and they attend schools in which children as a group experience high rates of learning failure. Educators in these schools often explain students' low levels of achievement by citing the multiple challenges that must be overcome (e.g., high rates of student transience, low rates of attendance, low levels of parent involvement, large numbers of children acquiring English as a second language, inadequate preparation prior to entering school, or insufficient instructional resources). It is true that teachers and children in urban schools often compete with their peers in affluent and middle-income schools on a less-than-even playing field. But it is also true that some teachers manage to level the playing field through better-than-average teaching. During the past year, we had the privilege of working with one such teacher. This chapter is an account of what she did to

ensure that the phrase "no child left behind" was not simple rhetoric but rather the reality in her classroom.

THE CONTEXT

The Scrimshaw Elementary School is a small, two-story brick building located in a large urban community of 14,600 students in the northeast United States. At the time of our investigation, the Scrimshaw School exhibited most of the challenges for literacy success described previously. It had approximately 150 students, one classroom in each of grades prekindergarten through five, with the exception of the first grade, of which there were two classes. Seventy-six percent of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch and 32% represented racial or linguistic minorities. On the state-mandated assessment, children in this school achieved the lowest mean score of any students in an already low-performing district. As a result, the school was formally designated by the state Department of Education as a "low-performing school."

The principal, teachers, and paraprofessionals had made a commitment to improve the achievement of their students in literacy. Toward this end, they applied for and received a state-funded literacy grant, which supported professional development in literacy. The program of study included on-site workshops and study groups, which met monthly and were focused each time on a single, literacy-related topic. In accordance with funding guidelines, children were assessed on a variety of measures at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year, and they were assessed by both classroom teachers and independent, external evaluators.

The urban children who were the focus of our study began their formal schooling as a single class in a half-day kindergarten. Following their kindergarten year, the federally funded Class Size Reduction Program supported the addition of a first-grade classroom, and as a result the children were evenly divided between two first-grade classrooms. Test data gathered in September of first grade indicated that, as a group, the children in each classroom began the school year with remarkably similar literacy profiles. As was the pattern in this school, the literacy abilities were judged to be below what was expected of the typical child on entry to first grade. However, by the end of first grade, the literacy profiles of the two groups of children diverged. In one classroom (hereafter designated as Classroom A), the children maintained the pattern of low performance, achieving substantially below end-of-first-grade norms on several measures. However, in the other classroom (hereafter designated as Classroom B), all but one of the children reached grade-level norms on the same set of measures. The principal of the Scrimshaw School, Maria, noted the differences in the achievement of the two groups of children and asked us to help her to understand what might have influenced the outcomes. Her request prompted our investigation.

DOCUMENTING CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENT

In accordance with the requirements of the grant award, the teachers at the Scrimshaw School had agreed to monitor student achievement using a set of common measures, which included the following: Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA; Beaver, 2001), given by the classroom teacher in October and June; the Nonsense Word Fluency Test (see *http://dibels.uoregon.edu*), given by the school's special education teacher in October and June; and the Oral Reading Fluency (ORF; see *http://dibels.uoregon.edu*), administered by an external eval-

uator in January and June. In addition, at the beginning of second grade, the Stanford Achievement Test (9th ed., 2001) was administered to all children by the classroom teacher.

As the first-grade teachers began the school year, each was responsible for children whose test performances suggested that they were at risk for failure in reading achievement. On the DRA, a test of students' ability to read connected text, 10 children in each classroom achieved below grade level, and no child achieved above grade level. The remaining children (4 in Classroom A and 3 in Classroom B) achieved on grade level. On the Nonsense Word Fluency test, a measure of children's knowledge of sound/letter associations, the mean number of correct letter sounds per minute achieved by children in classroom A was 21, and in classroom B, 24, performance levels that indicate that students are at "some risk" for failure in reading. On the test of children's reading accuracy and fluency (ORF), given in January of first grade, pre- and posttest scores were not available for all of the children. Of the 7 children for whom scores were available in classroom A, all achieved below the published research norms for frustration level (Deno & Mirkin, 1977). Of the 10 children for whom scores were available in classroom B, 7 achieved at the "frustration level" and 3 achieved at the "instructional level."

At the end of first grade, these initially similar profiles diverged. Although the reported scores on the DRA indicated similarly high levels of achievement and notable gains by the children in each classroom (grade level or higher performance for all but 2 students), other test measures suggested notable differences in the mean scores of children in the two classrooms. For example, on the ORF, only 2 of the 7 children in Classroom A who were tested in January achieved instructional-level proficiency in June, and 5 remained at frustration level. In contrast, of the 10 children tested in Classroom B, 6 children achieved at or above the norm for mastery level, 2 children achieved at the norm for instructional level, and 2 remained at the norm for frustration level. On the Nonsense Word Fluency, children in Classroom A finished the school year with a mean score of 32, compared with a mean score of 44 for children in Classroom B. Performance differences were again evident when children were tested at the beginning of second grade. On the Stanford Achievement Test, children from Classroom A achieved a mean performance at the 35th percentile, as compared with a mean performance at the 47th percentile for students from Classroom B.

As we considered Maria's request to help her account for the differences, we decided to follow the lead of others (e.g., Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block, & Morrow, 2001; Taylor & Pearson, 2002) and to investigate the teaching actions and learning conditions in the classroom in which children excelled. In so doing, we framed our analysis by considering the ways the classroom teacher, Julia, provided instruction that was consistent with research-based principles of effective instruction. The particular analytic framework we used was that published by the International Reading Association as a compendium of "children's rights to excellent reading instruction" (International Reading Association, 2000). In the section that follows, we present evidence that Julia honored 9 of the 10 reading rights. Because all Julia's students were first-language English speakers, we excluded from our analysis the 8th right, which addresses the rights of children who are acquiring English as a second language.

HONORING THE CHILDREN'S READING RIGHTS: THE WAYS JULIA MADE A DIFFERENCE

Julia was born, raised, and continued to reside in the urban community in which the Scrimshaw Elementary School was located. At the time of this study, she had been teaching for 31

years, and her classroom experiences ranged from first to sixth grade. Of the 14 children in Julia's first-grade classroom, 12 received free or reduced lunches, and 12 represented racial or cultural minority groups. In order to take a closer look at what was going on in Julia's classroom, we videotaped and analyzed 4 consecutive days of literacy instruction. In addition, we interviewed Julia and the principal, Maria. We used these data, along with the formal and informal test results previously described, to construct an understanding of children's experiences in Julia's classroom.

Reading Right #1: Early Reading Instruction Based on Individual Needs

A fundamental principle of effective early reading instruction is an understanding of the individual needs of every child in the classroom and a recognition that "no single method or single combination of methods can successfully teach children to read" (International Reading Association, 2000, p. 3). This is a principle that is frequently articulated by researchers and teachers alike; however, in truth, it may fall within the range of ideas that are "more easily said than done." In classrooms in which state frameworks and state assessments require that all children reach certain benchmarks by particular points in time, in which district-selected curricular texts and materials often are expected to be used with every child, and in which teachers have far more to do than time allows, finding ways to effectively differentiate instruction creates a special challenge. We found clear evidence that Julia met this challenge. To start, she embraced state standards not as a list of abilities that she needed to teach to students in a lockstep manner but rather as a guide for her own instructional planning and monitoring. As an apparent reminder to herself, she displayed the standards on a wall in her classroom. The principal explained:

> "She has broken up the Massachusetts standards. She makes her lessons standards-driven. She makes sure . . . she teaches the skills that are necessary [for each child] to move to the next [level]. . . . "

Our observations suggest that Julia used the standards to help her organize much of what she did with children as a whole class. For example, during the period in the morning that is commonly described as "shared reading," we observed Julia introduce and practice key phonics elements or critical comprehension strategies with the whole class. Following the large-group lesson, Julia shaped opportunities for individual review and practice. For example, during our observations, we observed Julia focusing on one child during each guided reading lesson. We asked her about this practice, and she explained that each day, during each guided reading group, she chooses a different focal child. She explained: "I have them sit next to me. I can keep an eye on what they're doing, and I can guide them in what needs to be done without stopping the lesson."

In addition, consistent with evidence that the amount of time children actually spend reading correlates with achievement in reading (Taylor & Pearson, 2002; Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990), Julia met individual needs by providing ample time during the school day for children to practice reading and to gain fluency. In general, Julia was able to skillfully orchestrate different contexts for reading. The principal commented that there was a constant hum of children's voices throughout the day, and we noticed it as well during our observations. The hum was often the sound of children reading. In whole-class sessions, the children chanted chart poems and stories. They echoed new text as Julia read slowly, pointing to the words and emphasizing new word families and high-

frequency words. During small-group meetings, children not working with Julia would often pair up and read. It was not unusual to see children reading aloud independently alongside a pair of students doing choral reading without distracting each other.

Children also had a daily independent reading time when they would scatter around the room, some alone and others with a partner, some at their desks and others on rugs or rocking chairs or some other comfortable space, some reading silently, others reading aloud, and, with only a rare exception, *all* children engaged in reading. We speculated that their motivation to read could be traced to a number of different factors: Julia's establishment of daily reading routines, the freedom the children had to choose where and with whom to read, and the careful selection and display of texts that matched their interests and their abilities. The classroom bookshelves and the books we saw in children's hands during independent reading reflected the multicultural identities of the children. During the days we visited, we observed children reading texts such as *Sing to the Sun* (Bryan, 1992), *ABC of African American Poets* (Bryan, 1998), *Señor Cat's Romance and Other Favorite Stories from Latin America* (Gonzalez, 1997), *Bein' with You This Way* (Nikola-Lisa, 1994) and *Black Is Brown Is Tan* (Adoff, 1973).

Finally, although these classroom routines are useful in meeting many individual needs, in virtually every classroom there are some children who need yet more instruction and more practice. Julia recognized these children and went beyond class time to accommodate them by tutoring children before school. She did this three times a week, in the half hour before the beginning of the school day. During this time she sometimes worked with individuals and sometimes worked with children in pairs.

Reading Right #2: Reading Instruction That Prepares and Motivates Children to Read Increasingly Complex Text

The second reading right emphasizes teachers' responsibility to provide instruction that prepares and motivates children to be critical readers of texts that are complex and challenging. Such instruction requires that teachers provide children a challenging curriculum that requires critical reading and thinking; systematic and explicit instruction in both word study and comprehension; a classroom climate that encourages children to question and discuss what they hear, read, and see; and practices that motivate children to *want* to read.

As we noted previously, most of Julia's students entered her classroom underprepared for the first-grade curriculum. Nonetheless, Julia provided a challenging curriculum for them and set high standards. During our observations, Julia's approach to meeting individual needs emphasized differentiating the amount of support and instruction she gave, rather than changing the task or her expectations for task completion. For instance, in one observation, students were engaged in a writer's workshop, during which they were composing stories and making books about animals. All the students were observed selecting and using the various books about the animals that Julia had purposefully selected and displayed. During this time, Julia moved from student to student to observe and, when necessary, provide assistance. In many instances, the help consisted of reminding them to consult the many classroom sources to choose words to convey their ideas or to spell words correctly. In response to spelling requests, we also frequently heard her remind them of a key classroom resource: "You can use the word wall." In addition, she directed the students to use their individual spelling journals or one of many picture dictionaries available in the classroom. It was evident that the students had learned to find

and were comfortable finding answers to their own questions. Julia wanted her students to be good and independent readers and writers, and she gave them frequent opportunities to practice the strategies she introduced.

Maria, the principal, perceived Julia's attitude and practice as more than having high expectations for her students; rather, she described Julia's approach as a purposeful attempt to empower her students—to give them the skill *and* the will (Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983) to succeed:

> "She understands what [is] very important for kids to be successful in their lives. Independence is one of them, and having a love for learning is another. And she sees the importance of empowering them so they don't sit back and say, 'It's because of where I grew up. It's because of this . . . it's poor me.' . . . It has nothing to do with what their parents don't do at home. It has everything to do with what they can do for themselves."

Julia's own comment seemed to confirm Maria's perceptions: "I think I want the best, and I don't want anything but the best that a child can give me. . . . I also want them to have the skills to succeed."

Along with attention to state frameworks, Julia also relied on the scope and sequence of her commercial reading program to guide her in planning and administering systematic and explicit introduction of word study and comprehension skills. Julia typically introduced skills during whole-class, shared reading lessons. She then relied on guided reading groups to follow up on the introductory lesson, targeting particular groups or individual children within each group for review and practice. During the guided reading groups we observed, the emphasis was squarely on constructing meaning. The lesson invariably began with a picture walk and a discussion of children's predictions and questions about the text. It was followed by a choral reading, during which the group often stopped to discuss and question. After reading, Julia's objective shifted to developing reading fluency, and she directed children to reread the text, usually with a partner.

Although Julia concentrated her efforts on the effective design and implementation of systematic instruction, when asked, she attributed much of the students' success to the overall climate of the room. Julia put a great deal of emphasis on creating a child-centered classroom, and she greatly valued peer talk, particularly what Dudley-Marling and Searle (1991) referred to as "talk-around-the-edges." These were times outside of teacher-directed lessons and during classroom discussions when students took risks with language, and the interchange among the students and with Julia were simply authentic conversations. As with most first graders, Julia's students were still in the early stages of becoming competent language users, and their attempts at using language were often humorous. Julia honored their comments and responses, helping them to revise and edit their language in meaningful ways, without making it seem as though she was correcting them. She carefully monitored which of the students were speaking and which were not. The principal noted that it was almost uncanny the way Julia seemed to remember which students got a chance to contribute to discussions or to share their experiences each day. In one instance, we observed her gently coaxing one student to share something he had done the previous weekend. When asked why she had singled him out, she explained that he was a new student and that she wanted him to feel comfortable being a part of the classroom community and participating in the class discussions.

Reading Right #3: Instruction from Well-Prepared Teachers

The third reading right recognizes the importance of the teacher's preservice and inservice education. Teachers who honor this right (1) possess a thorough and current understanding of reading and writing development, (2) know and implement a repertoire of strategies for addressing group and individual needs, and (3) use a variety of instructional materials and texts. We found solid evidence that Julia honored this right.

A seasoned teacher of grades 1 through 6, Julia continued to participate in professional development activities. The district had offered numerous courses and workshops in literacy, and Julia was a participant in many of them. In an effort to promote and offer support of literacy at each school, the district had implemented a trainer-of-trainers model, which required the literacy coach in each school to attend an intense, 2-week course on balanced literacy. In turn, the literacy coaches provided training during school time, first to the primary teachers and eventually to all teachers in grades 1 through 6. Julia was a member of the first group to receive the training, which included designing authentic assessment, leveling texts, and conducting small group reading instruction with a focus on comprehension strategies.

It was evident that she transferred what she learned from courses and workshops to classroom practice. We observed her implementing an array of teaching strategies, some clearly learned in recent professional development meetings and others developed and practiced during her many years of teaching. Her lessons during the guided reading groups, for example, combined her most recent understanding of best practice with her experience teaching first graders to read. Her interactions in these groups showcased her ability to use a repertoire of strategies to help her students acquire the skills to become competent readers. Like most teachers, Julia enjoyed learning new strategies to keep her students engaged and to help them develop language. During one of our observations, Julia was sitting on the rug with her students in a large circle. The students were taking turns rolling a very large rubber die with the words *setting, character, problem, event, solution*, and *consequence* labeled on each face of the die. The students used the words to prompt an interactive retelling of the story they had just read during the shared reading session. Julia looked up when we walked in and said, "I just learned this at a workshop, and the kids love it."

Maria described Julia as a teacher who benefited greatly from having taught most of the elementary grades. She commented on the influence Julia's teaching experiences had on her understanding of the ways reading develops across children's years of schooling: "She sees the whole gamut. She knows what to look for, what they haven't got, and what to do to get them there."

In addition to having a repertoire of teaching strategies, Julia also established consistent learning routines. At no time did we observe any child wandering around the classroom without knowing what to do. Maria attributed children's engagement and focus to two factors: Julia's persistence and "strictness" about routines at the beginning of the school year and her efforts to create a child-centered environment. As noted by Maria, "[Julia] sets up her room in such a way that the kids own the room. She truly is a facilitator of learning."

Clearly, the students felt comfortable in the classroom—their routines were so well established that our interactions and observations appeared to be without notice. We were able to move about and interact with the students while Julia worked with small groups without disrupting their routine. On those occasions, when we questioned the students about the activities in which they were engaged and the kinds of things they were reading

and writing, they responded to us with ease and then promptly returned to what they were doing without missing a beat.

Reading Right #4: Access to a Wide Variety of Texts

The importance of access to a variety of texts is underscored with a simple statement: "Children who read more read better" (International Reading Association, 2000, p. 6). Indeed, every child deserves texts that are motivational, engaging, and worthy of being read. This right was honored in a variety of ways at the Scrimshaw School.

Julia's classroom had hundreds of books, arranged and categorized by topic, genre, and reading level. Like many teachers, Julia purchased many of these books with her own money, but awards from district and schoolwide literacy grants and initiatives also provided her classroom and the others with additional funding to purchase more. The literature she chose to display provided evidence of her attention to children's cultural and linguistic heritage and of her efforts to support their motivation to read by introducing them to literature to which they could relate.

During the previous 2 years, the teachers and staff at the Scrimshaw School had made efforts to increase the amount of literature available to students in their classrooms. No available space was wasted. Wide corridors became vital areas to store and display literature and materials for both children and teachers; portable rolling bookshelves held numerous collections of Big Books and multiple copies of leveled trade books to be commonly shared among classrooms. Teachers who typically had shelves of professional books in their classrooms shared additional professional materials in a "teacher station," also located within these corridors.

These efforts were largely successful in meeting the needs of children's in-school reading, but teachers also wished to influence children's access to books outside of school. Because this community spread out over many square miles, many children lived in neighborhoods that were not within walking distance of the public library, and many parents did not have cars for transportation. The presence of a Bookmobile that parked on the asphalt of the Scrimshaw School once a week partially addressed this problem. But teachers perceived a single day as insufficient to meet the varied schedules of all the families. So, to increase access to book borrowing, teachers and parents worked together to create the first school library at Scrimshaw School. Basement space, once a walk-through to the girl's bathroom and the cafeteria, was converted to a library with colorful curtains, area rugs, and shelves—most purchased or made by parents and teachers. Volunteers from the community and staff spent many hours cataloging the books, which were largely donated by the teachers, parents, and a local bookstore. The library earned praise from local newspapers and community leaders, and it now serves as both a source of pride for the families at Scrimshaw School and as a model for other schools in the community.

Reading Right #5: Effective Reading Assessment

The fifth reading right addresses the importance of using classroom assessments that are curriculum based and consistent with ongoing instruction, that provide useful feedback, and that "position students as partners with teachers" (International Reading Association, 2000, p. 7) in monitoring and evaluating performance.

As noted previously, schoolwide measures were used to monitor children's performance at the beginning and end of the school year in kindergarten through grade 3. However, Julia

understood the need to monitor children's performance on a day-to-day and week-to-week basis. Our observations revealed routine administration of running records (Clay, 1985) during guided reading periods, systematic collection and use of anecdotal data during the course of the school day, and an emphasis on children's self-assessment. These observations were confirmed by the principal's comment noting Julia's intentional monitoring of children in all areas of the classroom, even at times when she was engaged with a particular group or individual:

> "Her assessments are always ongoing. She is affirming and listening all the time. I think that's probably her greatest strength. She's a great listener, and she's very in tune with those kids. So to another teacher she might look like she's sitting with one group and only working with that group. [But] she's in tune to the kids at the end of a room in a corner at the computers, and you would never know it by her focus on what she is doing."

Reading Right #6: Special Instruction for Struggling Readers

The sixth reading right addresses the needs of children who experience particular difficulty learning to read. It emphasizes the importance of reading specialists who are specially trained to meet the needs of struggling readers. Despite the school's designation as a low-performing school and the apparent recognition that there were large percentages of children with special learning needs, the Scrimshaw School faculty did not include a professional who was certified as a reading teacher. It did, however, include a literacy coach, an experienced first-grade teacher who had received some additional training in literacy and whose job it was to provide classroom support in literacy, and a teacher certified in special education. Julia arranged to have these persons provide additional help to the children who experienced the greatest difficulty in reading. Julia maintained responsibility for their instructional reading program and included them in both large- and small-group reading lessons. In addition, she directed the types of activities they completed with the special education tutor by identifying the particular skills on which they needed further instruction and practice. The principal perceived the instruction received by the children in and out of the classroom as seamless, explaining that these children received help from the tutors outside the classroom but then "dipped right back in" to the classroom curriculum and ongoing activities.

Reading Right #7: Effective Instruction Involves Families, Schools, and Communities

The seventh reading right addresses evidence that children do not learn to read in school alone—that what happens outside of the classroom is integrally important to what happens inside the classroom.

Julia's students had an exceptionally high rate of attendance, and although one might argue that this is a tribute to the effective classroom climate Julia created and its influence on children's motivation to be in school, it must also be perceived as a tribute to parents and their recognition of the importance of their children's daily presence in the classroom. High rates of attendance made it easier for Julia to provide a consistent, high-quality program that met her students' needs. In addition, in response to Julia's requests, many parents escorted their children to school well before the start of the school day, and this early arrival provided time for Julia to give the extra help she determined was necessary for some children to succeed.

Julia's commitment to home–school connections did not end here. She honored children's family heritage and traditions and acknowledged both their commonalties and their differences in the choice of texts she read and discussed in class. We observed the reading of two such books: *Houses and Homes* (Morris, 1992) and *Celebrating Families* (Hausherr, 1997).

She perceived parents as partners in the children's literacy development, and she solicited their help in bridging the gap between home and school. For example, she requested that they participate in helping their children in rereading "take home" versions of the texts they read in class, signing them, and sending them back the next day. Each marking term, she gathered the parents of her most struggling readers before report cards were issued, because she wanted them to know "what we were doing in class, where the students were, where we need to be, and about all the steps we are doing extra for their children." She praised the parents, saying they were "wonderful about helping them at home." In addition, she provided parents with specific suggestions to help them develop the skills to be competent language users. She explained:

> "I tell my parents, 'When you are walking down the street or in the car, have a conversation! . . . Turn off the radio and ask them, 'Tell me about your day. Tell me three good things that happened to you today. Make it very specific.' "

Julia believed that teachers really need to *know* the children's parents, and she believed that she did. She took the opportunity to interact with one or more parents of most of her students each day after school when they picked up their children. This was a good opportunity for Julia to touch base informally with each one and to give each a quick assessment of the day.

Reading Right #9: Equal Access to Technology

The ninth right recognizes the fundamental importance of information technology to an educated citizenry. It underscores the responsibility of schools and teachers to provide children equal access to technology that will contribute to their literacy education. This right is often fully disregarded by primary grade teachers, and in Julia's classroom, it was clearly not given top priority. But it also was not ignored. Julia created a small computer lab to which each child was assigned for 20 or more minutes each day. Although children typically worked by themselves for most of the assigned time, they were often seen helping each other choose the software and set up the headsets. The reading-related software was primarily intended to support word reading accuracy and fluency and relied on digitized text that enabled students to choose to hear the text read aloud or to request assistance with a particular word or phrase.

Reading Right #10: Classrooms That Optimize Learning Opportunities

The tenth reading right takes into consideration factors that influence the quality of instruction, such as class size, curriculum and supplemental materials, and the condition of the building itself. This right, too, was honored at the Scrimshaw School.

Although old, the Scrimshaw School is well maintained. The school has a warm and welcoming climate. It is evident that teachers take pride in the building and in their own

classrooms—several are adorned with teacher-made curtains and furnished with overstuffed easy chairs and area rugs purchased by the teachers themselves.

Julia's small class size was a result of the Class Size Reduction Act, a federally funded program, and her large classroom with high ceilings provided more than ample space for her 14 students and her large collections of books and materials. As previously noted, the district provided ample instructional materials and resources for Julia's first-grade classroom, including a current and high-quality commercial reading program (selected on the basis of teacher review and vote), an adequate supply of high-quality children's books, an in-class computer lab, and high-quality computer software.

Julia's attention to children's learning also extended to their nutritional needs. The principal reported that Julia would not allow her students, 12 of whom qualified for free or reduced lunches, to choose a cold sandwich.

> "If you ask her, 'Is anyone going to get [a cold sandwich]?' she'll say, 'Oh, no. They'll get a hot meal. It's the only hot meal they'll get today.' And, you know what? They don't balk. They eat a hot meal at lunch. . . . There has never been a complaint by children or a parent. But her thought behind that is, 'I know for sure that they'll have a hot meal every day when they are with me,' and that means something to her. . . . And most of the time they have breakfast here as well. So, she's almost sure that they're nourished, and that is very important to her."

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD THROUGH EXCELLENT TEACHING

Since at least the early 1960s, educators and policymakers have searched for an instructional program or approach that can be relied on to teach every child to read. Repeatedly, researchers have concluded that no single approach or program makes a difference (Bond & Dykstra, 1997; Duffy & Hoffman, 1999; Duffy-Hester, 1999; National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform, 2001). Instead, in classrooms in which children excel, teachers are found to implement common, research-based practices (Allington & Johnston, 2002; Bond & Dykstra, 1967; Morrow, Gambrell, & Pressley, 2003; Pressley et al., 2001; Taylor & Pearson, 2002). Our examination of Julia's teaching practices is consistent with these findings. We did not find a specific program or set of materials that framed Julia's teaching. Rather, we observed Julia choosing from a variety of instructional resources, sometimes using a basal reading program, sometimes using leveled books that she selected from various commercial publishers, sometimes using lessons that she created herself, sometimes relying on commercially prepared lessons to guide her. What did not vary, however, were the instructional principles and routines that guided her selection of materials and lesson plans. On each of the 4 days that we visited, principles that were fundamental to her decision making were evident:

1. She had high expectations for every child, and she operationalized her expectations by including all children in lessons based on grade-level curriculum. She then held every child responsible for what had been taught, providing extra help as necessary in small-group or individual contexts.
2. She understood the need for systematic and explicit instruction in both word study and comprehension, and she relied on state standards, published materials, and her

well-developed professional knowledge to guide her in planning skill and strategy instruction.

3. She recognized that individual needs vary, and she relied on multiple contexts, including whole-group, small-group, and individual meetings, to offer appropriate instruction.
4. She recognized the need for children to practice reading, and she allocated ample in-class time for children to read every day.
5. She understood the connection between assessment and instruction, and she thoughtfully used formal and informal measures to monitor children's performance and acted promptly on what she observed, fine-tuning instruction to meet individual needs.
6. She established clear and consistent daily routines that included shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading, and by so doing, provided children opportunities to develop the range of literacy abilities they need.
7. She optimized children's opportunities to learn by building partnerships with parents that helped children to achieve high rates of attendance; by monitoring their school lunch choices; and by extending the school day with before-school tutorial meetings.
8. In addition to developing the skill to read, she supported the desire to read by selecting literature that was not only high in quality but also high in interest. Children read and heard stories in which they saw children like themselves, allowing them to make meaningful connections. They also read and heard stories in which they saw children and places that were unfamiliar to them, allowing them to stretch their understanding of the world in which they live. Through the texts she chose and those she made available in her classroom for her children to choose, she helped children to realize that reading can both entertain and inform.

CONCLUSION

In closing, we return to where we began. In today's educational and political arena, urban teachers are told—sometimes warned—that they will be held accountable for the learning of every child. To meet the accountability challenge, many urban administrators, teachers, legislators, and policymakers are searching for the "right" program—the one that will ensure that every child succeeds. Time and time again, researchers have provided evidence that this approach to school reform will fail; that good teachers are bound together not by the programs they use but by the practices they implement. Julia provides more evidence to support that claim. Her children succeed (and the programmatic materials she uses are effective) because of the expertise she brings to the practice of teaching and the high standards to which she holds herself accountable. Studying and imitating her and others like her will bring us closer to the challenge of leaving no child behind.

Suggested Titles: Books for the First Grade Classroom Library

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Thong, Roseanne; illustrated by Grace Lin	*Round is a Mooncake*	2000	Chronicle Books	40	Deceptively simple, this book of shapes from the world of an urban Asian child will serve as an invitation for first graders to find and write about the shapes in their homes and neighborhoods.
Milch, Zoran	*City Signs*	2002	Kids Can Press	32	Everyone in the city (and especially urban children) can read these 30 beautifully photographed signs on the first day of school.
Hesse, Karen; illustrated by John J. Muth	*Come On, Rain!*	1999	Scholastic	32	The city is parched, the mamas need lemonade, and children beg to play in the hydrant spray. The lyrical language makes readers thirst for the rain, too. And when it finally comes, the mamas and children dance in the rain, and we all rejoice.

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20

Grouping for Child-Centered Reading Instruction in First Grade

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Children learn to read and grow as readers when they receive explicitly designed instruction in both large- and small-group settings (Flood, Lapp, Nagel, & Flood, 1992; Hiebert & Taylor, 2000). A comprehensive literacy program designed to accommodate whole groups, small groups, and individuals needs to include read-alouds, independent reading, word study, oral interactions, and time for writing. All of these learning encounters should be offered through explicit instruction designed to help children function independently in a variety of literacy endeavors (Lapp, Flood, & Goss, 2000; McCormick, 2003).

This chapter provides examples of explicit instruction as it occurs in a self-contained classroom. The chapter presents a first-grade teacher, Ms. Cunningham, and her work with several small groups of children who have demonstrated similar reading strengths and needs through the teacher's continuous assessment of them.

SMALL HOMOGENEOUS GROUPS

During small-group homogeneous interactions, children work with Ms. Cunningham to learn, practice, and extend the specific skills and strategies they need in order to comprehend a text at their instructional level. A text is at the reader's instructional level when the child can read the words with 90% accuracy. In order to acquire the knowledge to read a text independently, children need explicit instruction designed to help them when they are decoding words they don't know, when they are trying to understand difficult sentence structure, or when they are attempting to comprehend concepts that are new to them. Small-

group instruction occurs after Ms. Cunningham has introduced a grade-level story to the children through whole-group shared reading. Ms. Cunningham continuously observes and assesses the needs of all of her students. As the reading fluencies of her students change, so does composition of the small homogeneous groups.

During small-group homogenous reading instruction, Ms. Cunningham motivates, instructs, models, monitors, observes, and confirms her students' reading behaviors. Her primary goal is to teach children the skills and strategies they need to read independently. When students are involved in small-group reading experiences with Ms. Cunningham, they are attempting to create meaning independently as Ms. Cunningham assists them in acquiring the appropriate skills and strategies they need for comprehending. In order to manage these small homogeneous group interactions while also planning and monitoring what the other children are doing in heterogeneous learning centers, Ms. Cunningham often uses the Center Activity Rotation System (CARS; Lapp, Flood, & Goss, 2000). This is a system that accommodates both heterogeneously and homogeneously grouped instruction. Ms. Cunningham uses this system in her first-grade classroom. Modifications can easily be made so that each center is developmentally appropriate to the instructional strengths and needs of students at other grade levels.

Like most classrooms, Ms. Cunningham's class includes a culturally and academically diverse group of children. At the beginning of school in September, it is common to see a class in which 95% of students are not reading and have limited knowledge of the concepts of word or print. During her initial assessments, Ms. Cunningham found that 70% of her students could not name the letters or sounds of letters of the alphabet and that 80% of these first-grade students could not print their first and last name. As in many first-grade classrooms in early September, children exhibit a wide range of emergent literacy behaviors.

LITERACY CENTERS

While Ms. Cunningham works with a small group of students, the others are heterogeneously grouped at learning centers that are designed to engage them in activities that provide practice in reading fluency, comprehending narrative and nonnarrative text, word study, writing, and conversation. Ms. Cunningham changes the center activities each week. When selecting and designing these weekly activities, she reflects on the broad range of literacy experiences that she has introduced. She also reflects on the skills and strategies that all of her children need to develop.

The following center activities, which occurred in Ms. Cunningham's classroom, span a wide range of reading competencies and are designed to engage students in discussion and to offer assistance to each other.

Center 1: Computer Station

At Center 1, which is the computer station, two children can be involved in comprehension and word study activities as they explore "Reader Rabbit." They can also practice making words that contain the phonograms that are being studied. Although Ms. Cunningham creates and implements many integrated thematic units, she chooses words for word study ac-

cording to the developmental needs of the children rather than those that would be dictated by the theme.

Center 2: Content Area Connections

Center 2 is currently the "volcano" center. This center changes to accommodate whichever content area topic is being studied. Four children, who are reading a range of leveled expository texts as they answer "who, what, when, where, why, and how" questions that were identified earlier by the class as a part of a Know–Want to know–Learned (KWL) exploration, can be accommodated at this center. Some of the leveled texts that the children are exploring and discussing are *I Can Read about Earthquakes and Volcanoes* by Deborah Merrians, *Shake, Rattle and Roll: The World's Most Amazing Volcanoes, Earthquakes and Other Forces* by Spencer Christian, *Volcanoes and Other Natural Disasters* by Harriet Griffey, and *The Magic School Bus Blows Its Top: A Book about Volcanoes* by Joanna Cole.

Center 3: Word Study Adventures

Three children at Center 3 are studying real and nonreal words as they practice writing and spelling them on white boards. Dictionaries are available if the children have questions about the meaning or authenticity of a word. Ms. Cunningham analyzes patterns of errors in students' writing assignments in order to plan developmentally appropriate word study activities. The children were introduced to words that have a one-to-one sound–letter correspondence during initial word study activities. Once the children were able to read and spell these words, Ms. Cunningham planned additional word study activities with more complex sound–symbol correspondences. Children were also taught sight words so that they would feel confident reading sentences and developmentally appropriate texts.

Center 4: Library Explorations

The library serves as Center 4. Here three children engage in "buddy reading" and discuss *I Like Me* by Nancy Carlson. Ms. Cunningham has all the books in the library leveled. She encourages children to read at their independent levels when they are in the library. Although these books may be at all three children's independent levels, their instructional levels may not be the same, as the children are heterogeneously grouped at the centers.

Center 5: Listening and Sharing

Three children at Center 5, the listening center, are listening and reading along with a tape of *Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse* by Leo Lionni. Ms. Cunningham believes that this activity increases their fluency. When the children finish their reading, they are asked to share their responses to the text and make text connections as they discuss story elements such as characters, setting, and plot.

Center 6: Authors at Work

At Center 6, two children are writing a letter to a friend to share memories of their weekend experiences. These children are encouraged to think about their experience and to first share

it orally with a partner. The partner asks them "who, what, where, when, and how" questions in an attempt to help them expand what they plan to share in writing. The first draft is always an oral draft. After conferencing with their partners, the children write the second draft. Once finished, they again share and discuss their letters. Children are then encouraged to work together to peer edit their letters.

As the children work at the centers, Ms. Cunningham calls children with similar strengths and needs to work with her at the teacher center, where she meets with a group of children who have been homogeneously grouped on the basis of their literacy needs. Depending on students' needs, they may be called to work with Ms. Cunningham in more than one homogeneous-group instructional activity. In addition to working with children in groups, Ms. Cunningham also meets with the children individually when they have a need that cannot be addressed in a group setting.

Teacher Center: Group 1

Ms. Cunningham first works with a group of students who are developing their literacy skills. She realizes that they need help with general comprehension strategies, as well as spelling and word study activities. After a buddy reading experience in which Ms. Cunningham listens as pairs of children read to each other, the children and Ms. Cunningham read the text with one another.

When Ms. Cunningham is comfortable with the children's comprehension, she invites them to engage in spelling and word study activities. The children select words from the text that they would like to change into plurals. After they have selected the singular words and discussed how to change them into plurals, they play a word game in which they orally construct sentences using these target singular and plural words. This group of children needs continued practice in reading and discussing texts at grade level. Through such practice and text-related word exploration, Ms. Cunningham believes their comprehension and fluency will continue to increase.

Teacher Center: Group 2

Ms. Cunningham next calls to her center one child who is developing the concept of word sound–letter association and word-part knowledge in order to support his efforts to learn to read fluently. The child and Ms. Cunningham track the words with a finger pointer as she invites him to read together with her. Next, as the student reads independently, Ms. Cunningham takes very careful notes and provides assistance when he encounters a word that cannot be read automatically. The child and Ms. Cunningham decode the words that he cannot read automatically as they work with Elkonin boxes to identify the sounds that make up the target words.[1] After identifying the sound, they attach the corresponding letters. Once they have completed these word study activities, the child and Ms. Cunningham echo read, and then he reads independently. The next time they read together, Ms. Cunningham will present the targeted words to assess his proficiency at reading them automatically and independently.

Teacher Center: Group 3

The third group of children invited to work with Ms. Cunningham are six very fluent readers. She helps these children make difficult connections across multiple texts by the

same author. Together the children read the text *Strega Nona* by Tomie De Paola as Ms. Cunningham listens. She periodically stops individuals to check their comprehension of the plot and to help them if they are having trouble decoding a phonemically irregular word. Once they have completed a reading of the text, Ms. Cunningham asks them to retell the story to a partner so that she can observe and assess each child's comprehension. Next, Ms. Cunningham and the students have a discussion about the text and other books by this author. Ms. Cunningham models the ways in which they can make connections across texts as they discuss plot, setting, characters, and other story elements. Ms. Cunningham compares and constrasts De Paola's characters Strega Nona and the grandmothers in *Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs*. Ms. Cunningham also encourages the children to identify the rich descriptive language in the text by emphasizing the key vocabulary words that describe Strega Nona's magic pot. At this point, she asks the children to discuss the author's book and to share elements they like about the author's writing style and story elements.

Teacher Center: Group 4

Next Ms. Cunningham reads a shared text with four children. She selected this text, *Seven Blind Mice* by Ed Young, because she had earlier determined that these children needed additional practice identifying and reading contractions and using them in their writing. Once she was comfortable that the children could read the text, which was slightly above grade level, she worked with them to locate and discuss the many contractions that were in the text. Next, she engaged the children in a game of contractions as a means to study the concept of contractions. After the game, Ms. Cunningham asked the children to individually read the text orally at their own pace as she listened.

As evidenced among the children who are working with Ms. Cunningham in these small-group settings, their reading behaviors are individual and ever growing. Even though Ms. Cunningham uses ongoing assessment of their performance to guide her instruction, she realizes that no two children are ever exhibiting exactly the same literacy development at the same time. She believes that as she observes her students she becomes aware of the instruction each child needs to become a fluent, independent reader.

Because children gain reading fluency at different rates, regrouping is ongoing. Ms. Cunningham believes that this model of grouping allows for explicit small-group instruction, as well as small- and large-group heterogeneous instruction. In this way, Ms. Cunningham avoids placing and labeling children into static groups that are unmotivating and do not serve their individual needs. She has designed a learning environment based on sound research-to-practice theories. She believes that the implementation of these theories promotes her philosophy, which is that the successful daily experiences that children have are the basis for their success in future learning experiences. It is evident from the literacy instruction in this classroom that Ms. Cunningham believes that children can and do learn what they are taught well.

NOTE

1. Elkonin boxes make oral pronounciation of words spatial, sequential, multisensory, and concrete. Students push counters into squares drawn on paper to represent the sounds in the words.

Suggested Titles: Books That Emphasize the Importance of Working Together

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Cronin, Doreen	*Click, Clack, Moo Cows That Type*	2000	Simon & Schuster	32	Learning to compromise is difficult for kids . . . and cows! This book is sure to help students learn the importance of cooperative give and take.
Dyer, Sarah	*Five Little Friends*	2002	Bloomsbury USA	32	One day, five little greedy fiends each decide to take home their favorite thing, the moon, the sky, the land, and the sea. It doesn't take long for the fiends to realize that one of these favorites isn't a favorite at all without the others. A great book to teach cooperation and sharing!
Mavor, Salley	*You and Me: Poems of Friendship*	1997	Orchard Books	32	This collection of poems will give children an opportunity to read about animal friends, family friends, friends who move away, girl friends, and boy friends.

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21

Scaffolding Vocabulary Learning

Ideas for Equity in Urban Settings

JUDITH A. SCOTT

Vocabulary knowledge has been recognized as an important component of reading comprehension in recent national reports (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000). It is also seen as a major component of a language development program for students who are learning English as another language (Nation, 2001) and a major stumbling block for those learning academic language (Cummins, 2000; Scarcella, 2002). In response to a survey on academic language, most educators indicated that vocabulary knowledge was a key feature of academic language proficiency (Solomon & Rhodes, 1996).

The multitude of factors that affect the achievement of urban students make it impossible and unwise to point to a single factor as the solution to the complex social and political issue of raising student achievement (Hunter & Brown, 2003). However, an accumulation of research evidence points to differences in students' knowledge of the language of schooling as a key element in measures of academic achievement.

This chapter is a call to action, a call for teachers to actively and passionately embrace a curriculum that promotes accelerated and generative word knowledge for students who depend on schools and on teachers to teach them how to use words effectively. Eric Cooper's message, in Chapter 2, this volume, is that the status quo will prevail unless we, as leaders in the field, pick up the gauntlet and help create conditions for change. Part of the change needs to occur at the classroom level, in the teaching of vocabulary knowledge. In this chapter, I review the literature on effective vocabulary instruction and suggest a programmatic and intensive approach to vocabulary learning in which students become sophisticated language learners.

VOCABULARY AS A KEY

The significant correlation between vocabulary test scores and reading achievement test scores is well established (e.g., Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Davis, 1944). The proportion of difficult words found in a text and a reader's general vocabulary knowledge predict how well a reader can understand a text (Anderson & Freebody, 1981). Research also indicates that early differences in vocabulary knowledge affect reading achievement scores in later grades (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Hart & Risley, 2003)

Moreover, in calls for urban reform, the achievement gap in reading has received much attention (American Youth Policy Forum, 2002; Bloomberg, 2003; Schwartz, 2001). Less attention has been given to the well-documented gap that exists in knowledge of word meanings across different populations. In 1990, White, Graves, and Slater, studying vocabulary growth in first through fourth grades in three distinct schools, found that third and fourth graders from an economically advantaged school knew significantly more meanings of infrequent words than did students from either an economically disadvantaged inner-city school or an economically disadvantaged semirural school. They also knew about 50% more total words by the end of grade three.

Research by Chall, Jacobs, and Baldwin (1990) reported that low-income students in grade 4 were approximately 1 year behind grade-level norms in defining abstract, literary, and less common words. By grade 7, they were more than 2 years behind norms. Stanovich (1986) has identified this pattern as the Matthews effect, in which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Estimates are that children, on average, learn 2,500–3,000 new words per year (Beck & McKeown, 1991; Nagy & Scott, 2000). Although there is some disagreement on the exact figures (Biemiller & Slonim, 2001; Nagy & Scott, 2000), it is important to consider the ramifications of disparity in word learning. Biemiller and Slonim (2001) found a 3,900-root-word gap between the highest and lowest quartiles measured at grade 2. By extrapolation, we can predict a gap of almost 20,000 root words at the end of grade 7, if some children learn 1,000 new words per year and others learn 4,000. The children at the lowest quartile would need to make up the difference plus more to reach the highest levels of achievement.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE VOCABULARY GAP

Differences in the type of language structures, interaction styles, and vocabulary found in many homes means that the language of schooling is significantly different from the language many students encounter prior to entering school (Health, 1983; Zentella, 1997). The academic language of schooling, which differs from oral language on several dimensions, contains a high proportion of words that are rarely encountered outside of school (Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987; Cummins, 2002). The mismatch between oral vocabulary and school vocabulary is aptly demonstrated in a study by Hall, Nagy, and Linn (1984). Using a corpus of nearly 1 million spoken words from home and school environments, they found that the correlation of spoken-word frequencies with printed-word frequencies was lowest for children from African American working-class families and that families in this group used approximately half as many words as either the white or African American middle-class groups.

A striking finding is that, in an analysis of 1,318 observations of child and parent language in the first 3 years of life, on average, 3-year-old children of professional parents had

a recorded vocabulary size greater than the *parents* of children on welfare (Hart & Risley, 1995, 2003). Whereas children on welfare heard an average of 167 different words per hour, children of professional parents heard 382. Hart and Risley (2003) extrapolate their differences to determine that, by age 4, the average child in a welfare family might have been exposed to 13 million fewer words than the average child in a working-class family and 30 million fewer total words than the average child in a professional family. Given these data, it is not surprising that vocabulary differences and differences in academic language proficiency are evident in schools.

On a more positive note, research strongly suggests that the nature of adult–child conversation can affect early literacy, language, and vocabulary development. Weizman and Snow (2001), for instance, found that even a small amount of sophisticated word use by low-income mothers, in conjunction with instructive support for the meaning of the words, translated into increased vocabulary performance by their children in school. Dickinson and Tabors (2002), examining both home and preschool contexts, found that exposure to varied vocabulary, extended discourse, and cognitively and linguistically stimulating environments were highly predictive of kindergarten literacy and that kindergarten scores, in turn, were highly predictive of reading comprehension and receptive vocabulary scores in fourth and seventh grades. Their study also indicates that excellent preschools can compensate for experiences in homes with well below average language and literacy support. Unfortunately, the preschools they observed offered a range of language and literacy support. For instance, although one-fourth of the teachers of 4-year-olds reported planning for more than 51 minutes of book reading per week, another 17% reported planning for reading 15 minutes or less per week. In addition, many preschool teachers did not seem aware of language and literacy development or of activities that could promote such development (Dickinson & Tabors, 2002).

One such activity is reading aloud to students. Findings from several studies indicate that reading aloud to students can contribute to vocabulary growth. Wells (1986) found that teachers' assessments of children's vocabulary size at age 10 were positively associated with how often they heard stories read aloud. Other studies indicate that reading aloud to students expands vocabulary knowledge, with both frequency of exposure to target words and teacher explanations enhancing learning (Elley, 1989; Robbins & Ehri, 1994; Penno, Wilkinson and Moore, 2002). However, this intervention alone will not be sufficient to overcome the Matthew effect, as the students with higher initial vocabulary scores appear to learn more words than children with smaller vocabularies (Robbins & Ehri, 1994; Penno et al., 2002).

CLOSING THE VOCABULARY GAP

Closing the vocabulary gap is going to take a coordinated, concerted effort. Several researchers have called for a multifaceted approach to vocabulary instruction that includes wide reading, teaching students to learn words independently, and fostering word consciousness (Baumann, Kame'enui, & Ash, 2003; Graves, 2000; Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2002; Scott & Nagy, 2004). I believe that these recommendations, and more, are needed to close the gap. More needs to be done more intensively if we wish to accelerate the learning of students who depend on schools for their knowledge of academic language. Current pedagogy does not contain much focus on word learning at any level. In a recent study of 23 ethnically diverse upper elementary classrooms, I found that teachers spent less than 6% of

the observed school days attending to word-level knowledge (including spelling) in all subject areas, with less than 5 total hours in 68 days (2%) focusing on words in subjects other than language arts (Scott, Jamieson-Noel & Asselin, 2003). In addition, much of the observed instruction did not match principles for appropriate vocabulary instruction identified by Blachowicz and Fisher (2000).

This review of the literature points out the need for an accelerated curriculum with a strong focus on word learning at all levels of schooling. The following section outlines some insights into word learning and a curriculum that promotes accelerated and generative word knowledge for students who depend on schools.

INSIGHTS INTO WORD LEARNING

In order to promote word learning in schools, teachers need to understand some basic principles of vocabulary instruction, because what teachers know influences how they teach (Fillmore & Snow, 2002). In the *Handbook of Reading Research: Volume 3* (Nagy & Scott, 2000), Nagy and I identified a set of insights that we believe will help teachers understand appropriate vocabulary instruction:

1. Word learning is multidimensional.
2. Word learning is incremental and takes place in many steps over time.
3. Different types of words require different types of instruction.
4. Traditional dictionaries are poor tools for learning the meanings of words.
5. Word consciousness and generative knowledge about words are useful and important.

Word Learning is Multidimensional

A conservative estimate is that many people know more than 30,000 different words by the time they complete high school (Anglin, 1993; Dale & O'Rourke, 1981). Yet knowing a word can range from knowing it well enough to supply a definition to a vague understanding of its semantic field. In addition, for all the words that are known, there are dimensions of knowledge that are not captured by a mere definition. Rather, there is a set of interrelated connections, a network of knowledge that is attached to knowledge of the word. Nation (1990) identified eight aspects of word knowledge which we can explore using the word *breeze* as an example. Knowing the word *breeze* means that a person can tie this particular string of letters (*breeze*) and the sounds (/brēz/) together with a meaning (a *breeze* can be identified as a light, gentle wind). In addition to this definitional information, the part of speech (noun) is known, as are possible variations in both the part of speech and the definition. Thus in the sentence, "She breezed through the hallway," *breeze* is a verb indicating a type of movement. The frequency with which the word is encountered is another node in the network of knowledge. *Breeze* is a less common word than *wind* but is more common than *zephyr.* It is also more likely that a paragraph containing *breeze* would also contain words such as *leaves, blowing*, and *gentle* rather than *storm, thunder*, or *lightning*. In addition, one who knows the word *breeze* well would be able to distinguish a *breeze* from a *gust* and would know that the phrase "it's a gust" is not equivalent to "it's a breeze" when referring to an easy task.

Different words also have different stylistic registers. A stylistic register conveys when

and how a word is used in context. *Breeze* is a word found commonly in both oral and written language, whereas *zephyr* is a more formal word, most commonly found in written works of literature. Although the three phrases "I wanna go," "I would like to go," and "I wish to accompany you" all have the same meaning, they are used in different registers. These different aspects of word knowledge are at least partially independent. Thus a given person may know the definition of a word but not its frequency or register, whereas another may be able to pronounce it but not be able to distinguish it from other similar words.

Word Learning Is Incremental and Takes Place in Many Steps over Time

We develop word meanings incrementally over time (Nagy & Scott, 2000; Stahl, 2003). There appears to be an initial "fast mapping" of new words into general categories or associations, but it takes multiple exposures to the word to build up enough knowledge to be able to use it comfortably (Carey, 1978; Clark, 1993). As a word is encountered repeatedly over time, information about the word builds up, and it moves up the continuum toward "known." McKeown, Beck, Omanson, and Pople (1985) found that it took 12 encounters with a word to reliably improve reading comprehension. Schwanenflugel, Stahl, and McFalls (1997), found that word meaning grows at a relatively constant rate, whether or not the word is partially known.

Each encounter adds to the students' contextual knowledge, as well as to their definitional knowledge (Stahl, 2003). Penno, Wilkinson, and Moore (2002) found that repeated readings and retellings of stories resulted in primary students' increased ability to use targeted vocabulary words accurately, suggesting increased understanding of word meanings. Although one exposure to a word may lead to a partial understanding of the semantic domain of a word, many exposures may be needed to feel comfortable using a word. If you really want your students to know a word, you need to keep coming back to it.

Dale (1965) proposed four levels of word knowledge, ranging from "I never saw it before" to "I know it." More recently, Paribakht and Wesche (1996) added a fifth point: "I can use it in a sentence." Rather than considering these as discrete points or levels, one can think of them as points on a continuum at which various words can be placed. This continuum of word knowledge is unique for each individual. For instance, one person may know that *taupe* is a color word but not be able to pick out a taupe swatch in a paint store. Another may know that a *router* is some kind of tool but not know how to use one.

Different Types of Words Require Different Types of Instruction

Not all words are equal. Graves (1987) points out that words that represent an entirely new concept need a different type of instruction than words that are synonymous for a known concept. Thus it is relatively easy to teach a word such as *superfluous*, for which there exists a close synonym (*unnecessary*). However, when a word is a new or difficult concept, such as *photosynthesis*, conceptual knowledge must be developed. The idea of an associative network of knowledge is useful in thinking about types of appropriate instruction. When people learn new word meanings, they are either building a new concept and creating new links (as in the case of *photosynthesis*); attaching a new label to a known concept (i.e., gluing *superfluous* onto the concept of *unnecessary*); or expanding the domain of a label (i.e., adding to the associative network). Expanding the domain occurs when a word is known in one context but not in another. Thus a student may know the word *break*, as in *breaking bones* or *breaking china cups*, but not realize that waves can *break on the shore*.

Traditional Dictionaries are Poor Tools for Learning the Meanings of Words

The strength of dictionaries is that they provide explicit information about a word's meaning that is normally only implicit in context. Their weakness is that they are poor tools for teaching school-age children the meanings of new words. Miller and Gildea (1987) studied the sentences children generated when given definitions of unfamiliar words and concluded that this widely used task is pedagogically useless. For example, students take a definition such as *erode: to eat out or eat away dirt* and create a sentence such as, "My family erodes a lot." Even when definitions were revised to enhance clarity and accuracy, student-generated sentences were judged acceptable only 50% of the time (McKeown, 1993). Scott and Nagy (1997) found that the difficulty experienced by children in interpreting definitions was primarily due to their failure to take the syntax or structure of definitions into account. Their errors reflected the selection of a fragment of a definition as the meaning of an unknown word, and 50% of the students were unable to make basic distinctions, such as whether the word was a noun or a verb, from a dictionary entry.

Word Consciousness and Generative Knowledge about Words Are Useful and Important

Word consciousness can be thought of as the metacognitive or metalinguistic knowledge that a learner brings to the task of word learning. It is an interest in and awareness of words (Anderson & Nagy, 1992; Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2002; Scott & Nagy, 2004). This knowledge is not necessarily conscious knowledge, but it is information that many native speakers possess about the way that their language works. Included in word consciousness are several types of metalinguistic awareness, such as morphological awareness, syntactic awareness, and semantic awareness, that may help students acquire not just specific words but also a facility for learning words in general (Scott & Nagy, 2004). This knowledge is generative. That is, it consists of knowledge and dispositions that will transfer to and enhance students' learning of other words beyond the subject being addressed.

Developing word consciousness calls for strategic mediation by teachers so that students can consciously learn how words function to gain facility in both understanding and using sophisticated and academic language. Word consciousness is identified by several researchers as a critical component of a vocabulary curriculum (Baumann, Kame'enui, & Ash, 2003; Graves, 2000, Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2003; Nagy & Scott, 2000; Scott & Nagy, 2004). However, like strategy instruction, word consciousness should be integrated into all subject areas and not seen as a separate entity. Rather than adding word consciousness as one kind of vocabulary activity, teachers need to consider word consciousness throughout the day as integral to instruction in all subject areas. The goal of creating word consciousness is critical for both the development of conscious control over language use and the ability to negotiate the social language of schooling.

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

Well-meaning teachers may seek prepackaged programs with vocabulary exercises or send students scurrying to dictionaries to copy definitions in an effort to increase vocabulary instruction. Hopefully, the ideas provided in this chapter thus far will discourage such behavior. To accelerate the vocabulary learning of students who depend on schools, we need a multipronged approach that translates the information provided here into practice.

Increase Time and Exposure

First and foremost, we need to increase the amount of time and exposure devoted to word exploration and learning. Students need to be immersed in an atmosphere that celebrates rich language use. The small portion of the school day currently devoted to word-level learning (Scott et al., 2003) is likely not enough to accelerate vocabulary knowledge and close the vocabulary gap.

Build Links

Beyond that, teachers need to help students build bridges and links in the associative network surrounding words. They need to create multiple opportunities to see and use concepts, and they need to help students develop knowledge of the subtle distinctions between related words that occur in the same semantic field.

A lesson that exemplifies such teaching is described in Scott et al. (2003). A sixth-grade teacher explored the term *racism* with students through an art activity. She created a semantic map of terms related to racism with the class and discussed the words on the map as a group (see Figure 21.1). The class then suggested ways that the terms and concept could be visually represented. The last step was to create individual posters that represented the concept of racism using pictures from magazines.

In deconstructing this example, several facets of exemplary instruction emerge. This teacher used the social context of the class to collectively explore the background knowledge of the students through the semantic map. This process provided the opportunity to develop core understanding of terms, as well as clarification of words and their usage. It also provided the forum for expansion of their knowledge of the new terms, with information about how all the concepts link together and are differentiated from each other. As the class engaged in discussion of how the concept of racism could be visually represented, the words were used again. This discussion modeled what the students were asked to do, providing guided practice in the upcoming task. Their independent work of creating a collage from magazine pictures required students to evaluate numerous images to capture the meaning of the concept of racism. In the process of completing this assignment, the students were building the domain knowledge that anchors and consolidates the meaning of terms.

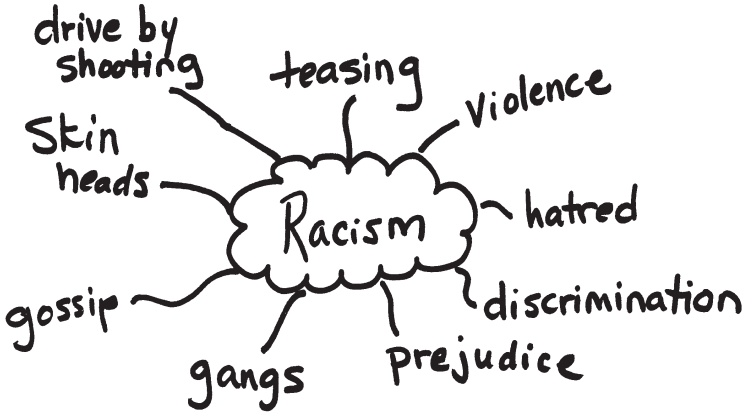

FIGURE 21.1. Concept map for the concept of racism.

Immersion in Massive Amounts of Rich Language

Anchoring and consolidating the meaning of terms is particularly important in subject areas in which particular concepts are being developed. However, it can also be introduced in oral everyday conversations. Nagy and I (2000) argue that the high rates of vocabulary growth seen in at least some children occur through immersion in massive amounts of rich written and oral language. In a recent study (Scott, 2001), I looked at the type of oral interactions that occurred in my family when my 12-year old son was playing a computer game. Audiotapes captured 16 exchanges concerning word meanings in approximately 12 hours of game playing. The words he asked about typically occurred as decision points in the game, such as in the following exchange:

DAN: What's a tenement?

JOHN: A tenement is like a big apartment building that's . . . typically run down. It's sort of a negative term usually.

DAN: So I can either. . . . Should I build a tenement or an apartment complex? An apartment complex costs $2,000 more dollars.

JOHN: (*Laughs.*)

DAN: But it's better housing.

JOHN: A decision you'll have to make.

DAN: I know. It's also a decision I don't want to make.

Similar exchanges occurred for such words as *parochial, amnesty, mutation, dossier, teamster, bungalow, dictator, edict,* and *tactics*. An analysis of the interactions revealed that 88% of the parental responses included definitional information and 69% contained other information about the word, such as its etymology and affect, examples and nonexamples, its superordinate categories, and its usage.

In this study, it was revealed that adults in our home served as on-site vocabulary coaches who could interpret the language demands of the task and discuss word meanings in context. The language demands of the game provided a forum for discussion of infrequent sophisticated words that would not emerge in everyday oral conversations. It is in this discussion about words that they are learned. In addition, the words asked about were words that were needed in order to move forward in the game.

However, not all families have equal access to computers or computer games or to academic vocabulary coaches who are readily available to answer questions. The 1997 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) data indicate that 12% of the students in the low-income range used computers at home compared with 75% in households with high incomes (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999, p. 39).

Although most urban teachers are not in the position to buy their students home computers, it is important to consider what teachers can do:

- Teachers can increase the volume of exposure to sophisticated language.
- Teachers can establish a community in their classroom in which the teacher and other students serve as vocabulary coaches.
- Teachers can create a community that fosters and nurtures consciousness about words as tools of communication.

- Teachers can develop activities in which the student needs to pay attention to words in order to "play the game."

Ideas for Increasing the Volume of Vocabulary Exposure

One way to increase exposure to sophisticated language is to increase the complexity of the language children hear. Much compelling vocabulary comes from books read aloud at a level beyond the capabilities of the class. The words in books contain many more words than those commonly used in oral language, and the context of the book gives the teacher a forum to talk about the meaning of the words. For instance, in *Dogzilla* by Dav Pilkey (2000), as the mice gather for the First Annual Barbecue Cook-Off, "the hot grills lifted the irresistible scent of barbecue sauce over the rooftops of the city." Then from the depths of the volcano outside of town came the "monstrous mutt", the "colossal canine" . . . the "dreadful Dogzilla." In the end, a "blast of warm, sudsy water hit Dogzilla with tremendous force" and the "panicking pooch" left town. This 29-page picture book contains 35 words that occur less than 10 times per million words of written text (Zeno, 1995). From this text, the teacher can point out morphological units (i.e., *ir-*, *-ible*) in discussing what "irresistible" means and can use the pictures of the giant dog to discuss the meanings of "colossal" and "canine." Even without discussion, the context is rich enough to allow some incremental knowledge to seep in regarding the meaning of these words.

Penno et al. (2002) found that reading aloud raised vocabulary knowledge, but even rich discussions were not enough to close the achievement gap. Accelerated focused attention on words is needed and can occur in many ways throughout the day. For instance, teachers can consciously introduce new words in context during oral conversations or in the course of giving directions. Phrases such as, "How many of you were aware of (something), and how many of you were oblivious?" provide the context for a discussion of the meaning of *oblivious*. In providing the opportunities to hear words used in context, the teacher becomes able to expand and build associative networks of knowledge. *Oblivious*, when juxtaposed with *awareness*, provides knowledge about each term. Children can *meander* in from the playground one day and *strut* in on another. After reading and discussing *Dogzilla*, student's lexicon of words relating to the concept of dog may also include *mutt, canine*, and *pooch*. This may not seem profound to teachers in areas with highly literate families, but consider the difference it might make if some students are exposed repeatedly to this type of rich vocabulary and others are not.

Blend Content Learning and Word Learning

In erasing the line between conceptual knowledge and vocabulary knowledge, acceleration in word learning can occur across all concept areas. Thus, as knowledge about the world is being developed in classrooms, knowledge about words is also being developed. Hirsch (2003) discusses the importance of this type of integration at length. For example, teaching science concepts in elementary classrooms can introduce a plethora of new terms and build background knowledge at the same time. Words such *chamber, fiery, lava, magma, cinder, dormant, crater, scorching*, and *eruption* can all be introduced in a second-grade unit on volcanoes.

Writing can also provide a rich opportunity for word learning and for learning how to use words. When students are asked to write, taught how to write, and encouraged to increase the sophistication of language used in their writing, they develop a consciousness

about words that translates into their own writing (Henry et al., 1999; Scott & Nagy, 2003; Skobel, 1998).

Develop Word Consciousness

The Gift of Words project, in which a group of seven teacher/researchers explored ways to develop vocabulary learning and word consciousness, provides some models for encouraging sophisticated language use with students and ways to develop a community that fosters and nurtures consciousness about words as tools of communication. One idea used by all the teachers in this project was the explicit identification of powerful language in books read to and by students and the development of conscious attention to words throughout the curriculum. Ideas for teaching vocabulary were developed in conjunction with art, drama, poetry, word play, and writing short stories and memoirs (Scott, Blackstone, et al., 1996; Scott, Butler, & Asselin, 1966).

One teacher, Bonnie Skobel, described her grade 5–6 literacy program and the role of writing and word choice within it in her master's project (Skobel, 1998). She explains, "My focus in investigating poetry, picture books, memoirs and short stories is to construct units that force my students to become more thoughtful word choosers. I want them to experiment and play with language, to develop their own voice and style, to be excited and capable writers. This does not happen through osmosis or with more applied effort. I believe it comes through direct teaching of the skills that writers need" (p. 66).

Identifying the way other authors used words effectively was the core of her program to improve student writing. When students or the teacher identified a phrase in which an author put words together powerfully, it was called a "Gift of Words." The following Gifts of Words were collected from the first chapter of *Half a Moon Inn*, by Paul Fleischman (1980):

- A chill darted up his spine.
- He felt as restless as a chipmunk.
- He burst out of bed as though the sheets were afire.

In groups, students created webs around the central topic of powerful language, recording words and phrases they found in the novel that they might like to use in their own writing. This process was also used to gather descriptions of the main characters. After each webbing, students were required to write a paragraph or sentences using some of the powerful language collected. Figure 21.2 contains a web of some Gifts of Words found in *Smith* (Garfield, 1967).

One assignment was the creation of diary entries from the perspective of one of the main characters, using phrases from the book. An example of incorporating the Gift of Words phrases can be seen in this entry, in which one student wrote, "My mom was supposed to have been back and she is not here. A *chill ran up my spine*. A coldness filled the air. Just the feeling that she is out there alone in the forest that is *crawling with brigands like a corpse full of maggots*. Just the feeling gives me the creepy cawlies [*sic*]" (Skobel, 1998, p. 27).

Bonnie Skobel found that having a bank of powerful phrases helped give reluctant writers a way of improving their work. Although the phrases were often inserted improperly at first, this experimentation with language allowed conversation about correct usage and alternatives. The errors in use provided opportunities for teaching subtle distinctions and nuances among words.

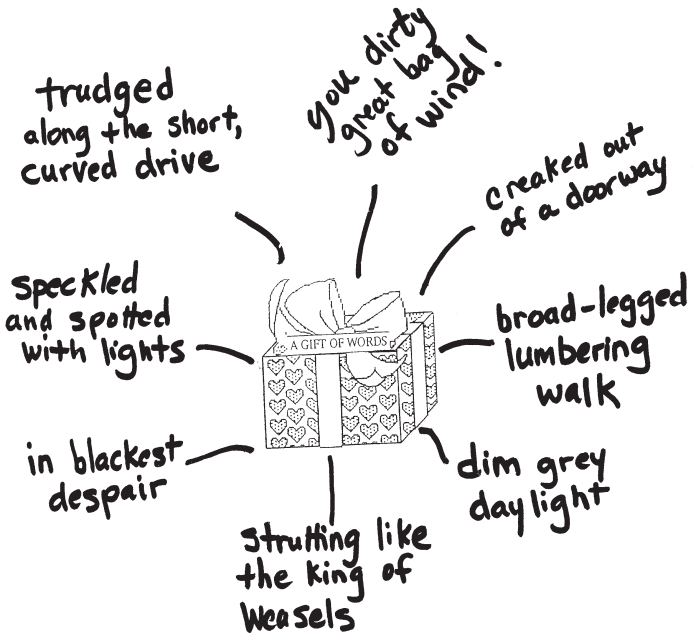

FIGURE 21.2. Gifts of words from *Smith* by Leon Garfield.

Scaffold Writing with a Focus on Word Choice

Another process used repeatedly with the class contained the following steps:

1. Introduce a cherished book (which can be used as a model).
2. Discuss and examine how the book can be used to scaffold student writing.
3. In groups, generate ideas and appropriate effective language.
4. Publish as a class or group project.
5. Produce and publish individual pieces of writing.

This process employs the five standards for effective pedagogy identified by the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (Tharp, 1997):

- Joint productive activity.
- Language and literacy development.
- Connecting school to students' lives.
- Teaching complex thinking.
- Teaching through conversations.

As an example of the teaching cycle, Bonnie described her use of the book, *I Heard My Mother Call My Name* by Nancy Hundal (1990). In this picture book, the narrator is a child playing outside at dusk while his mother calls him back inside. Bonnie's lesson began by asking students to list all the things they did outside after dinner and to circle their favorites. They converted their favorites into an excuse not to come inside, and they shared these excuses aloud. This cherished book was then read aloud to the class of fifth and sixth graders.

After the reading, Bonnie engaged the students in an analysis of the pattern used by the author, the word choices and vocabulary, and the various excuses used by the narrator. The assignment was to produce a double page with an excuse on the left and an illustration on the right. The excuses could come from their own list or from ideas in the book, from the class, or any other source. However, the explicit requirement was to "incorporate powerful language" into their writing.

Each student produced one or two pages ending with the pattern used in the book: "I heard my Mother call my name. I know I should go in. . . . " Here are examples of the excuses they created:

> "But a ton of monstrous disgusting creatures chased me far from home. When the sun crashed from the sky the creatures, who were petrfied [*sic*] of the dark slipped away through the shadows of the night. I heard my Mother call my name. I know I should go in. . . . " (Rory, grade 6)

> "But I saw two dog's [*sic*] shadows dancing down the street. I looked back but there was nothing there. Curious, I wanted to know what was going on, so I tipped-toed down the street. I heard my Mother call my name. I know I should go in. . . . " (Katrina, grade 6)

This joint analysis and creation of a class book allowed students at different language and ability levels to work collectively at an appropriate instructional level with modeling and support from instructional conversations. The cumulative effort is impressive.

The activities that supported word learning in Bonnie's classroom, and in the classrooms of other teachers, are too numerous for inclusion in this chapter. Descriptions of additional classroom implementation ideas are available elsewhere (Scott & Nagy, 2004; Scott & Wells, 1998). Next I have listed some ideas that are particularly useful and relevant for teachers in urban settings:

1. *Found poems*. Found poems are poems made out of prose. The assignment is to take a piece of prose and highlight key words and phrases that capture the essence of the message the author wants to convey. The purpose is to help students pay attention to word choice and the power of individual words and phrases. Figure 21.3 illustrates a found poem created from the "I Have a Dream" speech by Dr. Martin Luther King (1963).

2. *Idiom cards*. Idioms are often difficult, particularly for English-language learners. Bonnie discovered that it was helpful to have parents of children in her class from different cultures explain idiom use in their first language to the students. Although the idioms are different, the use of idioms is common in many different languages. This conceptual knowledge of idioms helped students understand that English idioms such as "it's raining cats and dogs" should not be taken literally. As an activity, she had each student choose one idiom. Their task was to illustrate the literal meaning, then write the meaning of the idiom and give an example of it in a sentence. These were put on cards that could be borrowed during writing activities (see Table 21.1).

3. *Explicit teaching of academic verbs and phrases*. An analysis of academic reports yields a set of phrases and verbs that are useful in writing academic reports. Discussion about the meanings of these words, how they are used, and how they can replace oral language structures can help transform students' academic writing. The list in Table 21.2 is not exhaustive, but it serves as a starting point for discussing how such academic language can be used. To start, a teacher may require that students use five to seven of these words or phrases in the write-up of a lab report or in a short descriptive paragraph. Students' ability and comfort in writing in an academic register will increase over time as they encounter and

I HAVE A DREAM
Millions of slaves,
Withering injustice,
Manacle of segregation and the
Chains of Discrimination

I have a dream today
Join hands
As sister and brothers
Symphony of brotherhood

Work together
Pray together
Struggle together
Climb up for freedom together

Let freedom ring,
Let freedom ring,
Let freedom ring,
Free at last!

FIGURE 21.3. Found poem from the "I Have a Dream" speech by Martin Luther King (1963).

use such words, especially when the misuse of these words and phrases is seen as an opening for gentle instructional conversations and feedback.

Word Play

One of the students in Bonnie's class, after studying a book of poetry in which appeared the phrase "pink is the daughter of red" (O'Neill, 1961), wrote, "Laughter is the big sister of a giggle." Some of the books and activities using word play create both giggles and laughs.

Word play can take many forms, although starting with cherished books is, once again, effective. Several books use puns and word play. *The Phantom Tollbooth* (Juster, 1991) has Miles jumping to the Island of Conclusions; a vocabulary disaster occurs when Sage identifies Miscellaneous as Miss Alaineus, the woman on green spaghetti boxes (Frasier, 2000);

TABLE 21.1. Common Idioms Used for Idiom Cards

Raining cats and dogs	Red tape	Speak of the devil
Seemed a little fishy	Under his thumb	Given the cold shoulder
Dog-eat-dog world	Up to snuff	Cost an arm and a leg
She was all ears	Five o'clock shadow	Caught red-handed
Chip off the old block	The big picture	Fit as a fiddle
A wet blanket	All thumbs	Feeling on edge
Tickled pink	Level-headed	Itching to go
Kick the bucket	In the line of fire	Break the ice
Hit the nail on the head	Get the hang of it	Tie the knot
Stick your neck out	Show him the ropes	Strike while the iron is hot
Sour grapes	Under the weather	All the eggs in one basket
Eat crow	Chicken out	The cart before the horse

TABLE 21.2. Academic Language: Supporting Sophisticated Word Use

Students who are learning academic English find it useful to have sentence frames and word walls with vocabulary to scaffold their production of English. Here are some simple sentence frames and academic verbs for scaffolding understanding and the production of academic language.

Simple academic sentence frames

I think that . . .	Furthermore . . .
I believe that . . .	In this report, I will . . .
This report is divided into x sections.	This document reports . . .
We intend our report to . . .	In my opinion . . .
I hypothesize that . . .	In conclusion . .
We concluded that . . .	I disagree with x because . . .
I discovered that . . .	This section contains . . .
In addition, I think . . .	In order to understand . . .
	The purpose of this paper . . .

Academic verbs

acquire	determine	introduce
allude to	differentiate	inquire
analyze	discuss	investigate
anticipate	enhance	justify
associate	enable	juxtapose
claim	evaluate	manipulate
collect	examine	pursue
convince	express	organize
communicate	extended	realize
compare	extract	reconsider
contrast	facilitate	respond
contribute	frame	refer
connect	focus	relate
conclude	generate	represent
create	hypothesize	sequence
critique	indicate	synthesize
describe	identify	summarize
demonstrate	inform	symbolize
	integrate	trace

and Amelia Bedelia is well known for her humorous misinterpretation of words (Parrish, 1963).

A favorite word game is the identification and creation of Hink Pinks (one syllable), Hinky Pinkies (two syllables) or Hinkety Pinketies (three syllables). In this activity, students guess a rhyming two-word phrase when given an alternative description. For instance, a plump feline is a fat cat; a whale washer is a blubber scrubber; a frightful bird is a scary canary; and a headache is a brain pain.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have argued that word learning is particularly critical for those students economically or culturally outside the mainstream. Students from economically disadvantaged homes are much more likely to come to school with smaller academic vocabularies than their advantaged classmates. This gap is evident in the first 3 years of life and increases with age. This is a wake-up call. Students in urban schools are underserved, underfunded,

and under the gun. They come to schools from a multitude of cultures, often with a home language that differs significantly from what they hear and are asked to read and write in school.

If we wish to close the vocabulary gap, we need to create conditions that not only mirror but also intensify the type of informal vocabulary coaching that occurs in advantaged households. If students are not encountering sophisticated language outside of school, and if we believe that it is important for academic success, then we need to create the conditions that emphasize rich knowledge and use of vocabulary words throughout the school day.

To accelerate vocabulary growth, we need to move out of the status quo. We need to increase exposure to sophisticated and academic language with instruction that helps students become conscious of words as tools for powerful communication. Academic language is a tool of those with power and privilege (Gee, 1990; Purves, 1990). Learning academic English makes negotiating success in academic settings more feasible. Words *do* matter, particularly for those students who depend on us to teach them academic language.

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Suggested Titles: Books That Stretch Language

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Frazier, Debra	*Miss Alaineus: A Vocabulary Disaster*	2000	Harcourt	40	It makes perfect sense that Sage is confused when she tries to define her new vocabulary word. She has written it as: Miss Alaineus. Here's a book that makes vocabulary learning visible—including sentences that crawl the border, word puzzles, and even "Vocabulary Parade Rules"—all within a good story rendered with a "school-supplies" look.
Scieszka, Jon; illustrated by Lane Smith	*Baloney (Henry P.)*	2001	Viking	32	Suppose the vocabulary were new to everyone in the class—because it was spoken by a guy from outer space? In the zany Scieszka and Lane style, there's a decoder in the back of the book, but meanwhile, there's all that possibility for classroom discussion of what you do when you don't know a word's meaning! Best of all, readers learn that the words aren't nonsense after all, but rather borrowed from languages around the earth.
Gwynne, Fred	*The King Rained*	1988	Aladdin	48	Homonyms (and the laughter they can prompt) help make the talk about word meanings imminently palatable and typically leave children open for more.

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Intermediate Level Books with Gifts of Words

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22

Metacognition through Writing and Sharing Connections

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BERNICE E. CULLINAN

Chris, an urban New York City fourth grader, writes his first connection to literature during a process called Writing and Sharing Connections. The book *Wilma the Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World's Fastest Woman* (Krull, 1996) has been read aloud. He relates himself to Wilma's overcoming a physical handicap: her amazing ability to run in spite of polio, winning three gold medals in the 1960 Olympics.

Chris connects:

> "This story reminds me of the time I had a bad cold and I ran five miles with my homework."

Chris's simple connection is a documentation of his transaction with text. He has comprehended the story, as evidenced by his connection. Chris, who is on grade level, lost his father, a firefighter, to cancer about a year prior to writing this connection. During the beginning of the school year tragedy struck again, as his foster-father figure lost his life during the September 11, 2001, World Trade Center disaster in New York City. Throughout this challenging school year, the Writing and Sharing Connections process was a safe haven for Chris, and it was used by most students to move from inward transactions with text, those that focus on self, toward outward transactions that included the world around them, other classroom curricula, and intertextual transactions.

Chris writes and shares connections, along with his classmates, at least once a week throughout the school year. Fast forwarding to February 2002, Chris responds to the book *Molly Bannaky* (McGill, 1999):

> "This story reminds me of 'O Captain! My Captain!' because Molly Bannaky's husband, Bannaky, died just like Abe Lincoln died. Also in *Molly Bannaky* it was very hard to

keep that farm in good shape and it was hard to win the war. Molly had to do something that she hated to do. She had to buy a person to help."

This writing sample of connections between two texts is an indicator that Chris is not only transacting with text but also that he has developed abilities to compare and contrast historical events to construct his connection. He is also able to view Molly's situation critically when he states that she hated to purchase a slave to help her with the farm. Later in the story, Molly and her slave fall in love and get married. This interracial marriage results in Molly becoming a grandmother to Benjamin Banneker. This explains the connection between Benjamin Banneker and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson. Banneker wrote to Jefferson to complain about the treatment of slaves (Giblin, 1994). The story closes with Molly teaching her grandson Benjamin how to read. Wooten describes the process fully in Teaching Idea 3.1, "Making Connections with a Trilogy of Picture Books" (Galda & Cullinan, 2002). In summary, reading aloud culturally rich stories such as *Molly Bannaky* each week—stories that provide values such as courage and wisdom—is one powerful way to provide relevance from literature to urban students' lives—lives that might not include these types of experiences (Kilpatrick, 1992). We fast forward again, this time to the end of the school year. After a year in the Writing and Sharing Connections process, Chris has written a final composition in which he is asked to think metacognitively. Observe how he has moved from transacting with text to critically analyzing information in order to uncover literacy learning strategies. Students reviewing their work and realizing the learning strategies they have used is an integral part of the Connections process and is discussed later in this chapter.

"Writing and sharing connections has helped me to dig deeper into my thoughts about books. The process reminds me of the underground railroad because that is where my connection lies. The secret passageway is my way of discovering my connection. For example, when we studied the poem 'O Captain My Captain," by Walt Whitman, I found that this poem was so rich in emotion and history information that I connect other books to it easily. Thinking of my connections was just one important passageway for me. I was able to connect this poem to the books *Molly Bannaky* and *They Came from the Bronx*. I connected 'O Captain My Captain' to *Molly Bannaky* because Molly's husband was a slave and tragically died and the poem is about Abe Lincoln's tragic assassination right after the Civil War. When I recently looked at our connection charts. I thought the Post-Its looked liked little windows or lenses into our thoughts. When all of the windows and thoughts come together they stack up to build a telescope into more thinking which becomes a deeper connection. Now whenever I listen to a story I think of a connection immediately."

Chris uses a metaphor to describe his literacy learning strategies. It is as though Chris is granting us a private cerebral tour. He has been able to construct knowledge in a way that is relevant and socially informative. Dewey (1910) intended that educative experiences be social, connected to previous experiences, embedded in meaningful contexts, and related to students' developing understanding of content. Chris's experiences with Writing and Sharing Connections have accomplished this goal. Chris experienced a school year filled with students writing and sharing connections to culturally rich literature, which has provided the necessary scaffolding for him to be able to move from transacting with literature to critically thinking about literacy. Conferencing with Chris reveals concern, sensitivity, and a visual

image of the underground railroad. He says that we all need freedom to think and find out where that will take us. Harriet Tubman led the slaves to freedom and Chris was able to vicariously find freedom, through this historical passageway as well. Chris is lighting the way for us to discover what he has read and how he has processed it for future literacy lessons. His voice is valued, and he is cognizant of his freedom. Chris's work vividly illustrates the type of growth that most students experience in a Writing and Sharing Connections classroom. Because the Connections process is designed to sidestep social pressures, eliminate grade pressure, and give all children an equal voice in the classroom, it is especially appropriate for the urban classroom. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology and to help you incorporate it into your classroom.

WHAT IS WRITING AND SHARING CONNECTIONS?

Writing and Sharing Connections is a systematic, interdisciplinary, literature-based methodology that has proven successful in teaching urban students how to strategically connect their lives with literature. Consequently, these readers gain a deeper insight into their lives through literacy experiences (Wooten, 2000). Because Writing and Sharing Connections is internally differentiated, the needs of all urban students, from those with special needs to those who are gifted and talented, are met. All participants get a chance to "think out of the box" about their literacy experiences and discover that they are critical thinkers who can make unique connections to literature. Students in the critical reading project described their reading as "reading between the lines"; it is clear that making connections and thinking critically are similar (Wolf, Huck, & King, 1967).

The Connections process also provides ways for urban students to be actively engaged in constructing meaningful learning. This type of learning, rooted in Dewey's (1910) work, which Piaget (1963) expanded, undergirds the constructivist approach to teaching and learning. Writing and sharing connections also exemplifies Rosenblatt's (1976, 1971) explanation of readers bringing their background experience to the act of reading; they make a transaction with the text by combining what they know with what they read. This kind of teaching responds to Rosenblatt's plea for teachers to encourage readers to construct their own meaning by thoughtful interaction with the text. The methodology includes time for students to reflect, elaborate, question, and reconstruct what they know in light of what is being presented to them. Consequently, students create meaning from stories by applying their own ideas to them. Piaget defines this as schema, or personal patterns of meaning making. Vygotsky stresses the connections between a child's development of thought and language, the social aspect of learning, and the importance of child—adult interaction (Vygotsky, 1952). The methodology is also simple. The process of writing and sharing connections is rooted in three fundamental principles of teaching and learning: reading aloud excellent children's literature, responding to literature as a transaction with text, and reflecting on learning (metacognition). Research shows that reading two nonfiction trade books back to back increases overall reading ability for the total population (Block & Reed, 2003).

The Connections methodology is a two-tiered process accompanied by the ongoing generation of a time line. Tier 1 encompasses the basic writing and sharing sessions that should be conducted at least once each week. Tier 2 is a reflective session that motivates students into metacognitive thinking and writing. Tier 2 sessions should happen two or three times each year. Both Tier 1 and Tier 2 sessions depend heavily on the student-driven time

line. The time line is constantly in development, contains entries representing all subject areas, and serves as a constant reference point and organizational tool.

TIER 1: WRITING AND SHARING CONNECTIONS SESSIONS

Introduce a book and read it aloud. If possible, move students to a relaxed, comfortable environment, such as a carpeted classroom reading center. Write the title of the book to be read aloud and the date on a chart tablet (24" x 32"). After reading the book aloud, have students go to their desks and write the responses or connections to their lives, the world, or other books that they have made from that book on a Post-It note (see Figure 22.2). To help students get started on that first connection, have them write down what this book reminds them of and *why*. A typical first-time connection to the book *Wilma the Unlimited* might look like this: "This book reminds me of when I ran the 50-yard dash because Wilma was a runner, too." We recommend that you keep assorted colors of unlined 3" × 3" Post-It note pads in the classroom. Eventually students will bring their own note pads. As weeks go by, urban students' creativity will begin to unlock and will be exhibited in, for example, Post-It notes being formed into various shapes as part of their composing connections to literature. Have each student stand beside the teacher, next to the connections chart, and share their connection aloud with the class. In this step, your role as the teacher is facilitating, supporting, and comforting students as they overcome "stage fright" in sharing their private thoughts before the class. Your nurturing attitude soon turns stage fright into enthusiasm. Based on the content of their connection, have students assign a category to their connection (see Figure 22.1). In categorizing, they pinpoint the main idea of the connection. These categories will be used later to emphasize the greater value of having urban students connect life and literature to enhance learning.

Under the category that describes it, attach the connection Post-It note to the chart. Write the student's name next to his or her note. Use tape to reinforce the note adhesive when attaching it to the chart tablet (see Figure 22.2).

Have students take notes in their writers' notebooks to document the title of the book read aloud, name of each classmate, and corresponding category. Students can explore note taking and "note making" strategies that will support future note taking experiences (Buzan & Buzan, 1996).

Ongoing documentation illustrates the development of students' responses to literature. Occasional review of the connections charts reveals to the teacher areas of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and concept development that individual students need. More important, review encourages students and parents to track growth in the areas of creativity, depth of thought, writing content, and style. Students begin to replace their fears of writing and shar-

Self	Famous Person	Book (Intertextual link)	Media (TV, Movies)	
Friend	Subject (History/Math)	Experience	Family	Thought
Comment	Question	Memory	Prediction	Music

FIGURE 22.1. Some frequent connections categories students have used.

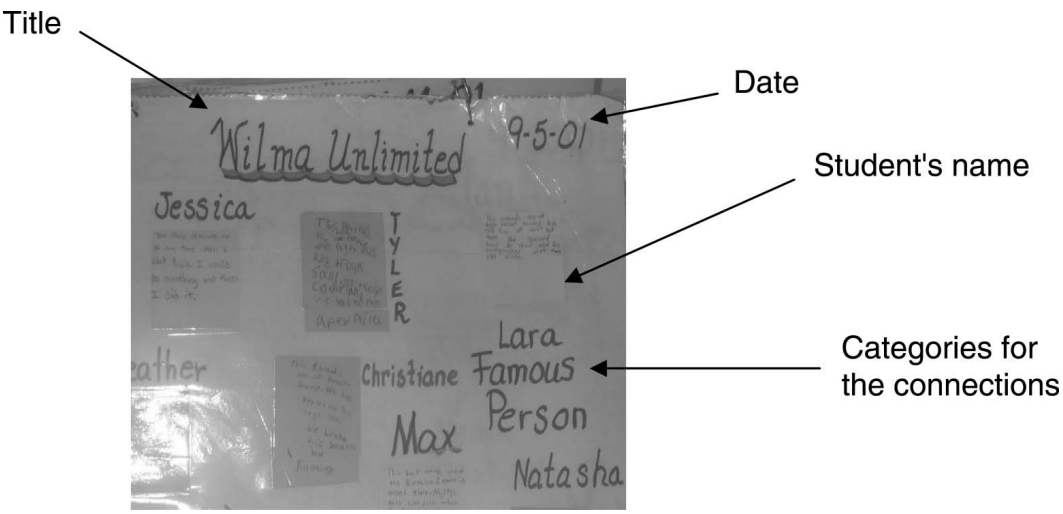

FIGURE 22.2. Section of a Writing and Sharing Connections Chart.

ing ideas about their literary learning experiences with self-confidence that leads them to more creative and divergent thinking.

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR WRITING AND SHARING CONNECTIONS SESSIONS

Writing and Sharing sessions should always provide a "safe forum" for creative expression and discovery in which everyone, including the teacher, is a participant. Never pull out that red pen and mark, correct, or grade connections. Instead, make note of problem patterns in writing mechanics and spelling and create minilessons to address these needs. In the case of individual errors, try to praise the individual for great effort, then, privately, casually mention an improvement they can make. "I like the way you wrote about your 'ant' in this connection. Let's add the word 'aunt' to your spelling list. . . . " Add to the fun of reading aloud. Read in different voices and accents. Give each character a different voice. Be creative. Be sure to read a variety of genres. Poetry, historical fiction, biography, expository text, textbook excerpts, and appropriate newspaper articles can be used for read-aloud material. Of course, it is always more profitable to use literature that directly relates to current areas of study. First connections are almost always brief and usually fall into categories, such as self, television, movies, or friends. Be sure to praise and support all students, and be on the lookout for the student(s) who begin to break the mold and take risks. When students see that connecting to information they have been studying in the classroom, searching for multilevel connections, adding artwork, writing a connection poem, and reading it in character are applauded by the teacher and their classmates, they begin to raise their own standards at an amazing pace. They are empowered. As students learn from each other, it might appear that they are copying one another. Assure them that repeating ideas is perfectly appropriate and help diffuse any quarrels that might arise. Unfortunately, assessment has been treated as if it were merely a technical problem. In order to draw valid conclusions

about a child's learning, a teacher must understand how the learning takes place. Sharing connections reveals the inner thinking processes of children's learning. Students review and record types of connections they make; this establishes an ideal basis for assessment (Johnston, 1997).

With Tier 1 established as a regular part of the classroom routine, then you can focus on Tier 2 of the process. After students have experienced about seven Writing and Sharing Connections sessions, lead into Tier 2 sessions.

TIER 2: GRAPHING AND REFLECTION

Tier 2 involves reflection. Research shows that if students think about their thinking, such as describing strategies they use in order to learn, and then apply those strategies, they are employing metacognition (Weaver, 1994). In Tier 2, urban students write about their learning strategies. They create their first metacognitive piece early in the school year so that they can begin to develop cognitive clarity. The purpose of Tier 2 is to assist students to identify strategies that help them learn best during Writing and Sharing Connections and to apply these strategies during future connections sessions, as well as in other areas of learning.

To open the first Tier 2 lesson, ask students to review what they have learned during their past seven Writing and Sharing Connections sessions. They accomplish this by rereading all of the connections they have written thus far and by creating a graph of categories (see sample in Figure 22.3).

Display all charts around the classroom and allow students time to review their work. As they review, have them ask themselves the following questions:

"What do you think about the Connections process?"
"Which connection is your favorite and why?"
"Which connection is your least favorite?"
"What do you like most/least about making and sharing connections?"
"As you read the connections you have written, how do you think you have progressed?"
"How does the Connections process help you understand the book read aloud? Why?"
"How might Writing and Sharing Connections help you understand other subjects?"
"Could we set a goal or two for the next series of Connections sessions?" (Here we specifically want to see students select one or two important connections categories that they have not used and work toward connecting to them.)

As students review the connections they have written thus far, have them copy down the titles and dates of the literature read aloud and the categories into which they assigned each of their connections. Then assist them in creating a graph, as illustrated in Figure 22.3.

Once the graph is completed, ask students to mark the categories into which their connections fall. It is likely that in the first Tier 2 session, their categories will be weighted toward self, media, family, and other common life experiences. The real payoff comes in the second (and third) Tier 2 sessions. Students begin to make connections to other texts (intertextual links) and to learning in other subject areas. Point out these connections and offer praise. Many urban students also discover that making connections between text and what they have learned in life or from other texts, regardless of the subject area, is a power-

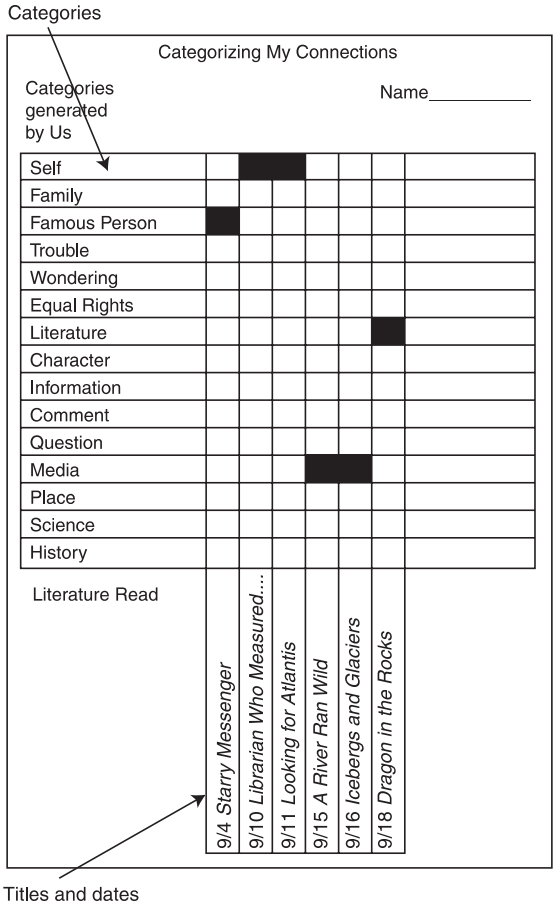

FIGURE 22.3. Writing and Sharing Connections: Graphing the titles and categories.

ful learning strategy. Teachers, of course, realize the importance of this strategy. When they do the next graph, they should be proud that the old categories of self, media, and the like have given way to categories such as history, explorers, math, science, books, and other academic, abstract, and universal concepts.

Show students how to take the answers to the questions in step 1 and the category observations in step 2 and convert them into a paragraph form. This "thinking about their thinking" becomes these students' first metacognitive writing piece.

Here is an example of what a first metacognitive piece might look like:

> "My connections have improved from the first one I wrote. My first connection was the hardest one to write because I did not understand how to find my connection to the book read aloud. I believe that I have improved because when I listen to my friends' connections read aloud I get lots of ideas for my future connections. My favorite categories to write connections to are self, media, experience, and book. I wrote my first and only connection to the book category last week and was very proud of myself. I connected *The Rough-Face Girl* to *Cinderella* because they are both fairy tales. Writing

and Sharing Connections has helped me to not be afraid to share my ideas about my learning with my classmates. I now know that I am learning from them and they are learning from me."—MATT

As previously stated, the first several connections will probably fall into such categories as self, television, movies, and so forth. Whereas this is fine to help get the connections process started, we want to see students move toward connecting to the learning that is happening in the classroom. The most effective way to facilitate this is to keep constant reminders of their learning on display and easily accessible. Keep read-aloud literature on display around the room as well. Display student work, projects, and accomplishments for all to see. And the most important tool is the student generated time line, which we describe next.

MAKING THE TIME LINE TICK

The class time line continuously displays significant learning highlights for all to see and use as a reference. It becomes the catalyst that encourages students to write connections that cross the boundaries of subject areas. It is also a review tool that never stops reminding students in the month of April what they learned back in October. Students know what is on it, and they refer to it because *they* build it all year long. Here's how:

Ask your school custodian to run a strong nylon string around your room. Start with string along two walls. You can add more as needed. Use a standard piece of 8½" x 11" paper. Fold it in half. On an outer surface of the paper, write the name of the person or event and the year of occurrence (year of birth for a person). Write it in large print using a black marker so it can be read from anywhere in the room (see example in Figure 22.4). Reward a student by letting him or her decorate or personalize the time line addition. (Kids love to decorate. Be careful that the information is still easily legible.) Using a yardstick, slip the new entry over the string and hang it in place in chronological order.

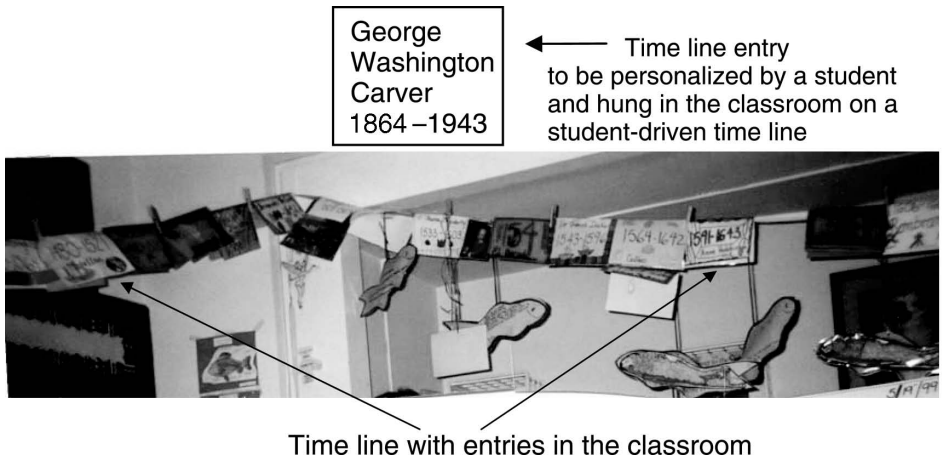

FIGURE 22.4. Time line with entries in the classroom.

Additional hints:

- A gust of wind can send your time line entries flying. Laminate entries before hanging or secure them in place with clothespins.
- Virtually all read-aloud books should be added to the time line. Exceptions might include fairy tales and other fictional books.
- As you work through your science, social studies, and math curriculum, important people, events and dates will be self-evident. Nevertheless, place the students in charge by asking them about possible new entries. "So what do you think? Should we put George Washington Carver up on our time line?"
- Your time line will grow crowded as the year progresses. Add more string. Also, hang one item under another with tape as appropriate. For example add an entry for Abraham Lincoln's term as president from 1861–1865 directly to the time line. Taped to the bottom of Lincoln's entry could be an entry for George Washington Carver, born in 1864, and/or an entry for the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863.
- Math on a time line? Beyond the obvious entries for mathematicians and dates of certain advancements in math, use the time line for authentic math experiences. Sequential numbering, greater than/less than, addition and subtraction, discovering number patterns, and rounding lend themselves well to this activity.

A TEACHING IDEA: PROMOTING CRITICAL LITERACY

In the introduction to this chapter, we presented three compositions written by a student named Chris. In the third composition, written at the close of a school year in which Chris experienced the Writing and Sharing Connections process, he makes reference to connections he made to the book *Molly Bannaky.* This book was presented to the class in a grouping of three books. The three picture books are *Molly Bannaky* by Alice McGill (1999), *Dear Benjamin Banneker* by Andrea Davis Pinkney (1994) and *Thomas Jefferson* by James Cross Giblin (1994)—referred to hereafter as the "Bannaky Trilogy" because all three share interesting information about Benjamin Banneker's life (see Figure 22.5). This teaching idea provides a way for students to experience three pieces of literature that are interrelated and promote critical thinking.

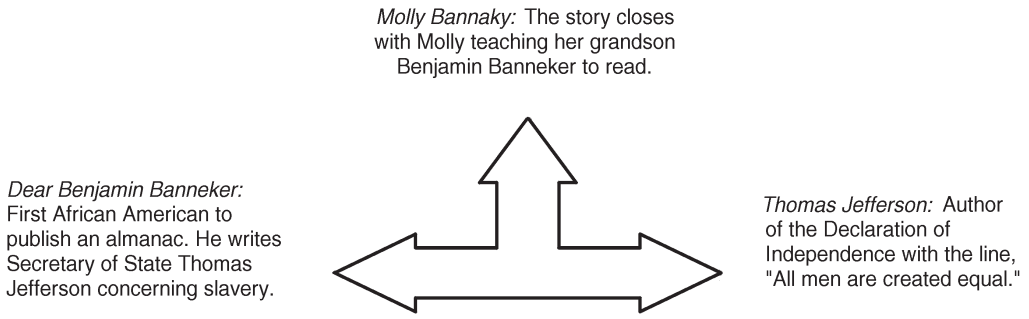

FIGURE 22.5. "Bannaky Trilogy."

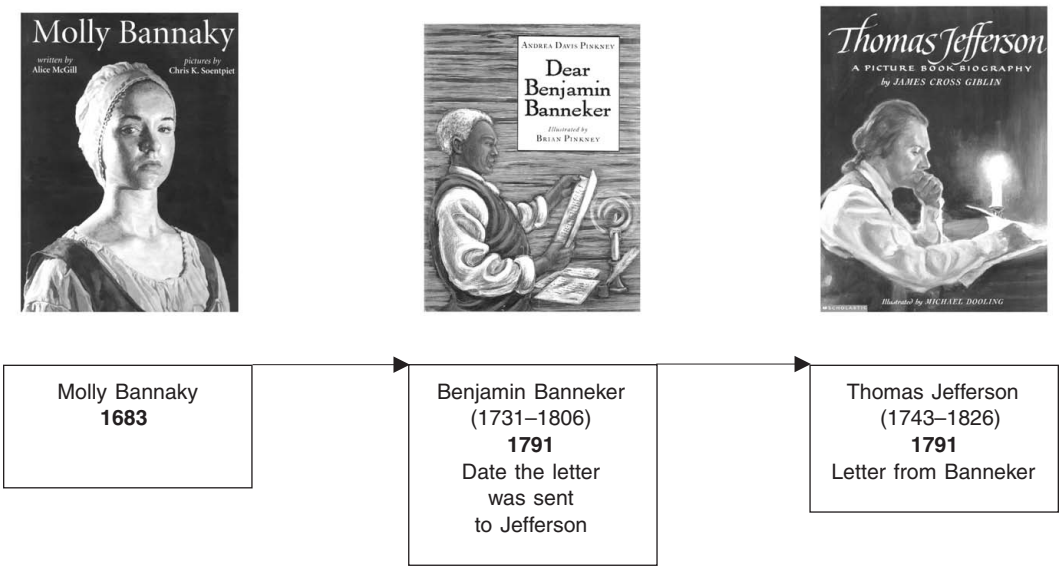

FIGURE 22.6. Time line examples.

Having students construct and control the time line makes learning more relevant. If what students are learning is relevant, then students are going to make more connections to their learning. In fact, brain research supports that when learning is relevant, neurons connect more frequently than when it is irrelevant. "The greater the number of links and associations that your brain creates, the more neural territories involved and the more firmly the information is woven in neurologically" (Jensen, 1988, p. 92.) The time line entries are personalized by students and relate to what is being studied and read aloud. These timeline entries are reminders of where they have been in their learning and provide opportunities for them to construct visual ways in which today connects to yesterday (see Figure 22.6 for an illustration).

In summary, honoring all students' voices, being certain that all students are heard, is the heartbeat of Writing and Sharing Connections. Transactional and critical literacy theories are two of the processes that Writing and Sharing Connections activates. Louise Rosenblatt (1978) believes that literacy is based on a transaction between the reader, the text, and the social context. The response to literature that each student contributes with his or her classmates is an example of this type of social transaction. Writing and Sharing Connections lifts the level of expectation, with the understanding that the literacy goals are to empower students to become critical thinkers about their literacy learning experiences. Critical literacy is a 21st-century theory that views literacy learning as an active, challenging approach that promotes students to go beyond making meaning and toward analyzing text and making judgments (Fehring & Green, 2001). The Connections process provides structure and a sense of responsibility to a read-aloud experience, and, at the same time, it offers a safe harbor for all voices to be heard, recorded, and revisited. It represents theoretically sound, results-proven methodology for the urban classroom in pursuit of the goal of leaving no children behind.

Suggested Titles: Books That Connect—And Cause Children to Connect

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Farris, Christine King; illustrated by Chris Soentpiet	*My Brother Martin: A Sister Remembers*	2002	Simon & Schuster	40	The great civil rights leader is remembered as a boy and a brother as only a loving sister could reveal it. The illustrations are glorious.
Rappaport, Doreen; illustrated by Brian Collier	*Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*	2001	Hyperion	40	A beautifully illustrated life of Martin Luther King relies on some of his own "big words," as well as Rappaport's spare text. Orbis Picture Award Winner.
Tate, Eleanora E.	*Thank You, Dr. Martin Luther King*	1992	Bantam	237	A young black girl, tired of being reminded of slavery and of Dr. King, changes her mind.
McKissack, Patricia; illustrated by Jerry Pinkney	*Goin' Someplace Special*	2001	Atheneum	40	When a 1950's small town African American child travels by train to the city, she meets racism in the forms of "whites only" signs and places. Her wise grandmother counsels for the ages, "You are somebody." Children can get a palpable sense of a world Martin Luther King worked to change.

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23

Building Background Knowledge for Literacy Learning through Informational Books

BARBARA MOSS

Numerous studies establish the critical importance of prior knowledge to student understanding of text (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Nothing is of more importance to student understanding of content than the knowledge that they already have about a topic. This knowledge that serves as the foundation for all future learning and provides the "hooks" on which students can hang that new learning about a topic.

All too often, students in urban classrooms lack prior knowledge about the complex and diverse topics they encounter in their content-area classrooms. Teachers often observe that their students lack schemas for concepts ranging from manifest destiny in social science to the literary elements taught in literature classes. Schemas are complex networks of information that people use to make sense of new situations, learning, or events. As readers, we use these schemas to organize and store the information in our heads that constitutes our prior knowledge. Children, as well as adults, possess these networks of information. However, children may have less well-developed schemas for different topics because they have fewer experiences than adults, because they come from different cultures, or because they lack exposure to particular concepts and/or vocabulary.

Sometimes, too, students lack awareness of the knowledge that they already have about a topic. I recently observed a student teacher in an urban ninth-grade history class with many English-language learners. The student teacher asked the students what the word "media" meant. They offered several answers, including "middle." Only minutes before, the teacher and students had been discussing various forms of media, including television, film, and CDs, as they reflected on the differences between life today and in the 1920s. Although these students could readily identify examples of media and were well aware of its important role in their lives, they were unfamiliar with the term itself.

As this example illustrates, without support from their teachers, youngsters may not realize how much they know about any given subject. Through the use of trade books, teachers can build background knowledge for learning, as well as activate the knowledge children

already have (Alvermann & Phelps, 2002). Informational books can build this prior knowledge, stimulate curiosity, help students anticipate text content, and provide exposure to unfamiliar technical vocabulary required to understand various school subjects (Moss, 2003). These trade books can "prime the pump" for students; this "literature of fact" can help them anticipate and mentally prepare for virtually any topic they will encounter in school.

WHY USE INFORMATIONAL TRADE BOOKS TO BUILD BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE?

Children's informational books offer a rich resource for engaging students of all ages with content-area information. There are many advantages to using informational trade books in the classroom (Moss, 2003), not the least of which is that they contain well-written exposition. Today's informational books are of high quality and are attractive, interesting, and up to date. Such books are especially useful for the many urban students at all levels who are struggling with the demands of poorly written or badly organized content-area textbooks. In addition, informational trade books can facilitate student's understanding of a wide range of topics, thereby providing an important complement to content-area textbooks.

Expanding the typical classroom "canon" to include informational texts may also play an important role in motivating reading about various school subjects and may even improve reading achievement. Informational texts make up 50–85% of the circulation of juvenile libraries, yet these books are only occasionally found in classrooms. By giving students access to this body of literature, teachers may provide students with new avenues for entering into the world of literacy, resulting in greater motivation for reading.

In addition, the inclusion of informational literature can help to broaden students' literary experiences and lead to much-needed experience in reading nonnarrative texts. By sixth grade, nonnarrative and nonfictional materials make up more than 75% of students' reading demands in school. This percentage increases as students move into high school (Venezky, 1982). The ability to understand exposition is essential to success in the information age—an age in which information is doubling every 5 years (Wurman, 1989). Results of the 1995 National Assessment of Educational Progress (Campbell, Kapinus, & Beatty, 1996) support this view. Those students who reported having had experiences with magazines and informational books had higher average reading proficiencies than students who had never read these types of materials.

ADVANTAGES OF INFORMATIONAL TRADE BOOKS OVER TEXTBOOKS

Informational trade books provide several benefits over textbooks. First, they can build background for learning in ways that textbooks cannot. Textbooks are often "inconsiderate"—their writing is often poorly organized and unclear. Informational trade books, conversely, are written by authors skilled in making the most difficult concepts comprehensible. These authors can and do create compelling accounts of even the most difficult concepts. Some authors who are particularly skilled in this area include Gail Gibbons, Laurence Pringle, James Murphy, and Patricia Lauber.

Second, content coverage in most content-area texts is uneven. Typically, textbooks provide cursory examination of many topics rather than an in-depth study of only a few. They are often guilty of merely mentioning people or events rather than providing real background information. This can result in students' possessing merely superficial knowledge of many topics

and lacking an in-depth, real understanding of any. Informational trade books can provide in-depth information about an array of subjects ranging from art museums to zoology.

Textbook information is sometimes inaccurate and often outdated. By exploring recent topics through trade books, teachers can ensure that students receive the latest, most accurate information on a particular topic. Current trade books reflect the latest developments in society, science, and recent world events. They address timely topics such as AIDS; September 11, 2001, terrorist attack; homelessness; child abuse; and many others.

In addition, informational authors take great pains to ensure accuracy of information. In a speech in Columbus, Ohio, Jim Murphy explained that *each* fact in his award-winning *The Great Fire* (Murphy, 1998) was checked for accuracy at least three times. Such attention to detail is the norm rather than the exception with books of this genre.

Last, and most important, informational trade books provide more motivating reading than do typical textbooks. Their extraordinary visuals and lively writing make them the favorite reading of many students from grades 1–12.

Consider, for example, *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome But True Story about Brain Science* (Fleischman, 2002). In 1848, Phineas Gage had a 3½-foot iron rod blasted through his head, but he survived. Despite his recovery, Gage's personality underwent a drastic transformation. He changed from a reliable, respected foreman to an unpredictable and temperamental man who eventually lost his job. The focus of the book is not just on what happened to Gage but on what neurologists learned and continue to learn today about the workings of the human brain. This amazing book, because of its lively writing and extraordinary visuals, provides background information about the human brain in a format sure to motivate even those students who have little initial interest in the topic.

Informational trade books can also help students see how knowledge in different domains is organized, used, and related and increase their familiarity with the language and vocabulary of any discipline. The range of topics available, the variety of formats, and their sheer "kid appeal" make these books an indispensable resource. They can provide a perfect complement to the textbook in virtually any subject.

STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING BACKGROUND THROUGH INFORMATIONAL TRADE BOOKS

This section describes three ways that teachers can build student background knowledge through informational trade books. Because children have less prior knowledge about content-area topics and less experience with these texts than adults do, they will often need support as they interact with informational texts. The strategies described in this section can be used to support students' reading of information and help to build important background knowledge for content-area learning.

The first strategy, reading aloud, involves students in listening activities designed to enhance their understanding of content. The second strategy, shared reading through informational texts, provides a way to build background understanding of the workings of expository text. The third strategy, exploration of primary-source photographs and visuals, provides an opportunity to build student background through visual literacy.

Reading Aloud

Information read-alouds are one of the easiest ways to build student background knowledge in any content area. Daily reading aloud is the simplest, least expensive, and most often rec-

ommended practice for improving student reading achievement. Although reading fiction aloud is a common classroom practice, reading information aloud is far less common.

Reading information aloud can draw students into the magic of the real world—of predators and prey, of planets and space exploration, as well as of the lands and lives of other times. It has the ripple effect of a pebble tossed into a pond. It expands students' knowledge, which adds to their schemas about an infinite number of topics (Moss, Leone, & DiPillo, 1997).

Reading information aloud can also teach children concepts and terms related to a variety of topics and people. It can sensitize students to the patterns of exposition, which are far less familiar to students than stories are. It can spark interest in a topic, enrich literature study, or provide tie-ins to many curricular areas. Most important of all, it may whet students' appetites for information, leading to silent, independent reading, a powerful factor in the development of lifelong readers.

Information read-alouds can introduce students to people, places, events, and phenomena that they encounter in their content-area texts. For example, reading excerpts from *Kennedy Assassinated! The World Mourns* (Hampton, 1997) might increase student understanding of the impact of that terrible event. *Hurricanes: Earth's Mightiest Storms* (Lauber, 1996) could provide background for a study of weather and its effects in a science class.

Read-alouds can take a variety of formats. The examples listed here are just a sampling of the many ways that teachers can use information read-alouds to build background knowledge.

1. *Read informational picture books aloud*. There are literally dozens of wonderful picture books that can help urban students quickly grasp new information about a topic. Titles such as *The Red-Eyed Tree Frog* (Cowley, 1999), for example, provides simple but clear information about a tiny rain forest tree frog told through amazing color photographs. This visually intriguing book can provide primary-grade students with simple information about life in the rain forest.

2. *Read "bits and pieces."* Bits and pieces read-alouds include single chapters or sections of a given title. To build background for science classes involved in studying animals, the teacher might read aloud sections from *A Whale Is Not a Fish* (Berger, 1995). This book, appropriate for intermediate-grade readers, details the differences between commonly confused animals such as alligators and crocodiles through 2-page spreads that compare and contrast a variety of animals. Teachers can select portions of this book for brief comparison/contrast activities using Venn diagrams.

3. *Read picture captions*. Reading picture captions can whet urban students' appetites for information. Captions from *Anne Frank: Beyond the Diary* (van der Rol & Verhoeven, 1993) for example, connect artifacts back to the diary itself, providing rich sources of background information for reading the diary itself or for a study of the Holocaust.

4. *Break up the reading of entire books*. If the text is complex or full of unfamiliar concepts, you may want to read the text over a period of days. Even picture books may fall into this category. Identify logical breaking points and read short sections of text, rather than the entire work.

5. *Link information with other genres*. Linking *Flight: The Journey of Charles Lindbergh* (Burleigh, 1997), a beautifully illustrated book that describes Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic, with *A View from the Air: Charles Lindbergh's Earth and Sky* (Lindbergh & Brown, 1992), a tribute by his daughter Reeve, can enhance students' understanding of this man and his extraordinary life. Teacher Maria Gomez read the fictional Newbery Medal

winner *Out of the Dust* (Hesse, 1997) to her urban class to build background information for a unit on the Depression. She then had her students read *Children of the Dust Bowl* (Stanley, 1992), an informational title addressing Depression life for the Okie children.

6. *Read different books about the same topic*. For example, teacher Ellen James's students were studying the Civil War. To help them see the Civil War era from a variety of perspectives, she read aloud excerpts from *A Separate Battle: Women and the Civil War* (Chang, 1991), *The Boy's War* (Murphy, 1990), and *Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters* (McKissack, 1999). In this way these urban students developed understanding of the war from the perspectives of women, young people, slave owners, and slaves.

7. *Plan activities before, during, and after reading*. These types of activities are even more important when reading information, because this genre is typically more difficult for urban students than fiction. For that reason, these students will need more scaffolding than is the case with fiction read-alouds. Before reading, establish links between students' experiences and text materials. Use brainstorming, Know–Want to Know–Learned (KWL), or problem-solving activities to engage urban students in the topic. Bring in realia or examples of things mentioned in the story to make information more concrete to students. During reading, students can answer questions or help other students complete graphic organizers such as semantic maps or data charts. After reading, students can engage in creative responses to the text. Activities such as discussions, creative dramatics, and journal writing can help students extend their learning in meaningful ways.

Shared Reading With Information

Shared reading is a strategy that can provide students with valuable background information about the way expository text works and how it differs from narrative text. Shared reading can be particularly useful as a way to introduce nonnarrative texts. It lets teachers demonstrate how this type of text works and how it differs from narrative. Demonstrations and discussions of the features found in these two types of texts can develop urban children's metacognitive awareness of the characteristics of the two text types and add to prior knowledge about the nature and purposes of informational text.

Shared reading can be done with big books for younger children or with textbooks or trade books for older ones. Regardless, the teacher needs to focus urban students' attention on the various aspects of expository text. After that, he or she demonstrates and explains how children can use locational devices such as tables of contents, indices, glossaries, and headings to help them locate specific information. Finally, the teacher points out visual information, including charts, graphs, maps, diagrams, and time lines. The following questions (adapted from Green, 1992), asked before, during, and after reading, serve as a guide for instruction.

Predictions

What kind of book is this?
How do you know?
What kind of information do you expect to find?
What kind of illustrations do you expect to find?

Reading the text

What do the headings and subheadings tell me?
What parts of the book help me find information?

How is the information organized?
How do I read the diagrams (or maps, graphs, time lines)?

Locational devices

What is the table of contents for? When and how is it used?
What are the page numbers for?
Why are the pages numbered?
What is the index for? When and how do I use it?
Do all information books have contents and indices? Why? Why not? (Moss, 2003, p. 91)

At this point teachers can bring in fiction and information for comparison purposes. They can focus on the differences between the two types of texts using the following questions (Moss, Leone, & DiPillo, 1997):

Do we read information books the same way as stories? Why? Why not?
What are some of the differences in the way we read the two text types?
What do information books have that stories do not?
What do storybooks have that information books do not? Why are they different? (Moss, 2003, p. 92)

Building Background through Primary Source Photographs

Documents, including original letters, photographs, cartoons, maps, and so on, add authenticity to books that describe people and events of the past. They involve readers through the depiction of the actual words, thoughts, and appearances of those who lived through specific events. Authors locate these documents in libraries, on the Internet, and in museums. The inclusion of information from these primary-source documents is increasingly popular in children's informational trade books and particularly common in books relating events from history.

Crossing the Delaware: A History in Many Voices (Peacock & Krudop, 1998), for example, combines fact with fiction to describe the terrible events of the winter of 1776. The authors use actual quotations from primary sources, including memoirs, journals, letters, diaries, and a cartoon by Paul Revere.

The visuals found in informational trade books are very important to readers of all ages. Historical photographs are particularly valuable to urban students because they enhance student understanding of textual content by providing arresting glimpses of people and events from the past. Through careful examination of historical photographs, these children can "read" pictures and develop visual literacy skills as they collect data, draw inferences, and arrive at conclusions about their content. Through discussion or writing, students can share insights and interpretations about the content of these photographs. They can also develop greater awareness of how to select historical photos for inclusion in their own research projects. Titles such as *Buffalo Gals: Women of the Old West* (Miller, 1995), *The Boy's War* (Murphy, 1990), and many others contain excellent historical photographs ideally suited for discussion activities.

Table 23.1 contains a questioning model for studying historical photographs. Through this model, urban students examine photographs and hypothesize about the people and objects in them. They then identify or label people, groups, or objects. Students describe what they observe, make inferences about this information, and then draw conclusions about the contents of the photograph.

TABLE 23.1. Questioning Model for Historical Photographs

Step 1. Introduce the photographs.
Present the photograph, providing students with background information on it.
Step 2. Ask questions about the photograph.
Ask students to make predictions about the people, places, and objects shown.
Sample question: What are the people doing in this picture? Record student hunches on the board.
Step 3. Identification.
Ask students to list everything they can see in the picture. They should identify the people and objects in the photograph and compare these observations with those of their peers.
Step 4. Description.
Ask questions that will elicit descriptions and identify relationships among people, animals, and/or objects.
Sample questions: How are the people dressed? What do you think they are doing? How would you describe the way they feel? What are they carrying in their hands?
Step 5. Inferences.
Ask questions to guide students in making inferences. Help students make educated guesses about what they see based on their observations and provide opportunities to modify, abandon, or confirm earlier predictions.
Sample questions: What clues are there to suggest that these children are from another country? What may be happening to them now? Where do you think their parents are?
Step 6. Conclusions.
Return to student predictions about the photograph. Students can discard or change their predictions at this point. Students can share their conclusions, as well as their evidence, with the class.

Note. From Moss (2003, p. 167, adapted from Felton & Allen, 1990). Copyright 2003 by The Guilford Press. Reprinted by permission.

As an introduction to a unit on immigration, sixth-grade teacher Judy Hendershot involved her students in studying the poignant cover photograph appearing on the book *Immigrant Kids* (Freedman, 1992). The photograph depicts two immigrant children. Using the questions in Table 23.1, she involved her students in analysis of that photograph. During the description step, one student commented:

> "As soon as I saw this photograph, I felt like I just could have been there to help them. It looked cold outside and the little girl had no jacket on. . . . I felt so sorry for them because the little girl was crying. Their shoes looked as hard as rocks and uncomfortable. If I had one wish I would help those children." (in Moss, 2003)

This response to a photograph shows how powerful visuals can be in connecting today's children to people of the past. It reminds us that combining powerful visual content with effective verbal information can help today's children understand the lives of children of yesterday.

Many other informational trade books contain primary-source documents that can build background for student learning. Titles such as *We Were There, Too: Young People in*

U.S. History (Hoose, 2001), *Give Me Liberty: The Story of the Declaration of Independence* (Freedman, 2000), and *The Perilous Journey of the Donner Party* (Calabro, 1999) are just a few of the many excellent books containing outstanding examples of reproductions of primary-source photographs, paintings, posters, and lithographs.

SUMMARY

Informational books afford urban teachers and students many rich opportunities for building background knowledge for literacy learning in every content area. Informational books can be an effective complement to content-area textbooks, because they have the potential not only to extend and enhance textbook material but also to motivate students' independent reading. Informational books have several advantages over textbooks, as they are written by authors who take care to make difficult topics comprehensible to students through clear organization and in-depth examination of particular topics. In addition, informational books expose students to the language of a discipline and provide recent, accurate information presented through lively writing and intriguing visuals. By using a variety of engaging formats for read-alouds, teachers can strengthen student background knowledge about an amazing array of topics. Through shared reading experiences, students can gain knowledge about the workings of expository text that can also enhance their ability to read their textbooks. Through careful examination of the many primary-source photographs found in today's informational books, urban teachers can develop student understanding of people and places of the past. Informational books offer today's urban teachers an incredible array of books rich with possibilities for developing urban students' background knowledge for learning in any and all content areas. They represent a rich resource for helping students link the new to the known, thereby enhancing their schemas for learning in the content-area classroom.

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Suggested Titles: Critically Acclaimed (and Recent) Biographies/Memoirs

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Nelson, Marilyn	*Carver: A Life in Poems*	2001	Front Street	96	The scientist's life unfolds in free verse. Critics have applauded this exquisite blend of art and science to showcase Carver's times, troubles, and accomplishments.
Bridges, Ruby; Margo Lundell, Editor	*Through My Eyes*	1999	Scholastic	64	A six-year-old girl took big steps in 1960 to integrate an all-white New Orleans school. Here, with sepia toned photos, are her memories, supplemented by accounts of contemporaries, and newspaper records. A remarkable book.
Murphy, Jim	*Pick and Shovel Poet: The Journeys of Pascal D'Angelo*	2000	Clarion	164	Immigrant Pascal D'Angelo wrote his life. And, because he did, author Murphy had the source material to describe conditions for Italian immigrants entering New York City at the beginning of the 20th century. Wretched living conditions, low pay, and hazardous work met D'Angelo and his father instead of a land of opportunity. Photos and Murphy's text show the contributions of the laborers.

Freedman, R. (2000). *Give me liberty! The story of the Declaration of Independence* (1st ed.). New York: Holiday House.

Green, P. (1992). *A matter of fact: Using factual texts in the classroom*. Armadale, Victoria, Australia: Eleanor Curtain.

Hampton, W. (1997). *Kennedy assassinated! : The world mourns: A reporter's story*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

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Lauber, P. (1996). *Hurricanes: Earth's mightiest storms*. New York: Scholastic.

Lindbergh, R., & Brown, R. (1992). *A view from the air: Charles Lindbergh's earth and sky*. New York: Viking.

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24

Content Counts with Struggling Urban Readers

GAY IVEY

Consider two separate observations of Lewis, a seventh-grade struggling reader in a culturally and ethnically diverse school, in fifth-period science class. In the first scenario, he "moonwalks" into the classroom after lunch, stumbling backward over desks, chairs, and other students who are retrieving their field notebooks from a shelf in the corner of the classroom before they take their seats. Lewis is still up dancing as Ms. Helms introduces the new topic, which is animal cells. After several prompts from Ms. Helms, Lewis finds his desk. After noticing other students taking notes, he gets up again to look for his field notebook, which he cannot find. His teacher stops lecturing as they search for the notebook, and they eventually find it in the second-period stack. Lewis returns to his seat, and Ms. Helms labels the parts of an animal cell on the chalkboard. Within a minute or so, Lewis is waving his hands in the air, snapping his fingers, and calling the names of two classmates on the other side of the room. This is a typical scene for Lewis during whole-class science activities.

In the second scenario, Lewis hurries into science class after lunch. His classmates are once again scurrying to prepare for class, but this time they are selecting science-related trade books from three large plastic bins to read during free-reading time. Lewis grabs *Slinky Scaly Snakes* (Dussling, 1999) and anxiously asks, "Can I go read with you today?" As I sit down at his desk, he dives into an explanation of how snakes' jaws expand so that they can eat animals that are much bigger around than they are. We take turns reading, and he stops intermittently to share more of his expertise on snakes as it relates to the text. When we read about molting, Lewis says that when he was in sixth grade, someone found a snakeskin in the school hallway. At another point he suggests, "If a person is doing research on snakes, then they should read this book because it has all kinds of information, like how a snake makes itself move without legs." He is deeply engaged even as the free-reading time ends 20 minutes later. This is a typical scene for Lewis during one-to-one science reading times.

There are thousands of students like Lewis sitting in elementary, middle school, and high school content classrooms, and for each of them, the context for instruction makes a

crucial difference in what they learn from reading in content classrooms and in how their teachers see them as learners. The purpose of this chapter is to examine how content classrooms might be reenvisioned to offer reading, writing, and learning experiences that honor both individual needs of urban youths and the required content curriculum.

First, I identify some of the challenges teachers face as they try to conceptualize reading and writing experiences within subject areas that are worthwhile for academically diverse students. As an interesting contrast, I describe recent research that documents students' experiences and perspectives on content-area reading. Next, I suggest three features of instruction that help teachers make reading and writing more manageable and purposeful for a range of students in content classrooms.

TEACHERS' DILEMMAS VERSUS STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES IN CONTENT READING: WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

The relationship between reading instruction and content-area instruction in schools, particularly high-risk urban campuses, has never been easy. Research from several decades ago offered much documentation for content-area teachers' resistance to infusing reading instruction into the curriculum (e.g., O'Brien & Stewart, 1990; Ratekin, Simpson, Alvermann, & Dishner, 1985), and these findings inspired a second wave of studies investigating how teachers decide to include or not to include reading instruction in their content teaching (e.g., Moje, 1996; Sturtevant, 1996). Historically, subject matter coverage has been prioritized over literacy development (O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995). In present times, with state-mandated curricula and content-specific competency tests in many areas, teachers must feel more pressured than ever to concentrate on delivering vast amounts of information at the expense of opportunities for students to read, reflect on, and critically evaluate that information. Given the pressure to cover specific information, setting aside time to read may be a difficult decision even for language arts teachers (Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998), much less other content-area teachers, particularly when they may have limited expertise in getting struggling readers to read purposefully.

Making matters more difficult, there are few models of urban classrooms in which teachers provide content-rich experiences connected to the mandated curriculum and simultaneously organize instruction and materials in response to students' literacy needs. Only a handful of studies have examined instructional contexts that weave together literacy development and content learning (e.g., Gaskins et al., 1994; Guthrie et al., 1996; Morrow, Pressley, Smith, & Smith, 1997), but these studies do provide evidence that promoting purposeful and manageable reading in the subject areas enriches students' literacy experiences with no cost to content learning. However, for the most part, these studies were done in the primary and intermediate grades, in which teachers are more likely to have expertise in literacy development and instruction. It is challenging for a sixth-grade science teacher or an eighth-grade social studies teacher to envision instruction driven by knowledge of urban students' literacy needs.

But what if content-area teachers came to see reading as a way to increase interest, engagement, and learning in the content area that they are required to teach, rather than as a hindrance to content coverage? What if reading is the avenue by which the most disengaged and academically challenged students can become active learners? A careful examination of research on urban students' perspectives on reading may shed important light on content-area learning, and three general themes can be identified from this work. First, students are

interested in reading informational literature, although not the textbooks (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999), particularly when they have a personal investment (Fairbanks, 1998; O'Brien, 1998; Oldfather, 1993). But students' desire to learn through reading may be impossible for teachers to observe when students are limited to typical content-area textbooks or other materials that may be too difficult, too boring, or too irrelevant to capture their curiosity. Thus classrooms that prioritize traditional academic reading and writing to the exclusion of the varied literacy activities that students engage in urban settings outside of school may be disadvantageous to low-achieving and culturally diverse students in particular, who may have literate strengths and personal interests that are not recognized in school (Alvermann, 2001; Knobel, 2001). Even academically successful students may perceive different reasons for reading and writing in school than outside of school (Bean, Bean, & Bean, 1999).

As a second, and related theme, students are not necessarily uninterested in reading about required content. Some research-based instructional frameworks suggest that school-sanctioned topics can become personally interesting to students when teachers deliberately set up motivating contexts focused on inquiry (e.g., Guthrie et al., 1996; Bruning & Schweiger, 1997). In content-oriented reading instruction (CORI; e.g., Guthrie et al., 1996), for instance, students are motivated to read science-related topics after engaging in hands-on experiences and posing real questions that they genuinely want to investigate. Students will read information when they genuinely want to know something (Moss & Hendershot, 2002), but not necessarily at the *beginning* of a unit of study. It may be that, in many cases, we do not give students enough information on new or difficult concepts before we ask them to read. More accurately, perhaps, we may not be identifying for students what is interesting about the topics that we need to teach and providing them with texts that make the intriguing details easy to find. Students also report that teacher read-alouds help get them interested in new topics and motivated to read on their own (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001), but how often are read-alouds used to build engagement in content-area classes, particularly beyond the primary grades in urban schools?

Third, students actually want time to read about content (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). Typically, time to read is confined to language arts classrooms or to schoolwide sustained silent reading times, or it is assigned for homework. But what do content-area teachers make of the students' reports that having time to read helps them to think and learn new information and concepts (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001)? For years, language arts teachers have been sold on the "practice makes perfect" phenomenon associated with time spent reading. But if improved reading ability is the sole purpose of time set aside to read in school, it is not surprising that content-area teachers would rarely consider it a priority in their classes. However, given the right materials and real purposes for reading, students view this time as an opportunity to learn. This is perhaps the best example of how urban teachers might come to view reading as a way to facilitate rather than inhibit engagement with content.

In summary, although content-area teachers' discomfort with students' reading continues, recent research indicates that common instructional practices and ways of enacting content literacy instruction (e.g., a sole focus on before-, during-, and after-reading strategies) may not have tapped the hidden interests of students, including connections to school-sanctioned topics assumed to be universally unappealing. In the next section, I suggest some ways that urban content teachers might discover and capitalize on students' interests in a range of information through building engagement and competence in reading informational texts, particularly for students who struggle in reading.

MANAGEABLE AND PURPOSEFUL READING AND WRITING: A KEY TO PARTICIPATION IN CONTENT LEARNING

What can a teacher do when students cannot or will not read assigned content texts that contain concepts and topics integral to the curriculum? You could promise students a quiz after the reading to make them try harder. You could call on students to read aloud to force them to pay attention. You could read everything to them. You could abandon texts altogether by delivering the information through lecture while students take notes. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that any of these alternatives help our neediest students learn vital content, much less help them to become more adept and motivated at reading and writing about it. Likely, these so-called solutions do little more than ensure that struggling readers will become more alienated, less interested, and less competent in content classes. Besides, these kinds of instructional decisions imply the belief that reading stands in the way of learning for all students and must be either endured or circumvented.

But as students' perspectives suggest, the right kind of reading can both reveal students' interests and prior knowledge and enrich content learning. So, rather than dream up new ways to trick students into dealing with the same old texts for the same old reasons, I argue that we need new texts and new contexts for reading in the subject areas, using students' needs and preferences as a road map for deciding on materials and instruction.

Know Students' Interests, Strengths, and Needs in Life and Literacy

A culturally diverse middle school in my local community has come to understand the importance of initial and ongoing literacy assessments for use not only by language arts teachers but also by teachers across the curriculum. Each September language arts teachers, in coordination with the school literacy specialist, administer a range of assessments to all students, including an informal reading inventory, a spelling assessment, and several commercially available comprehension tests. Information for each student is entered into a database, where it is accessible to all teachers. When I recently began a research project in that school, the seventh-grade social studies teacher with whom I worked was able, without hesitation, to give detailed information about the literacy strengths and needs of the struggling readers in his class. Given this teacher's knowledge of individual students gained from initial assessments and his own subsequent data gathering, it is not surprising that even the most academically challenged students in this class could participate and learn history. In short, knowing about students helped this teacher plan instruction and provide interesting and manageable reading and writing experiences for all students in the class. However, I am afraid that attention to individual needs in content-area reading may be the exception rather than the rule.

Short of a schoolwide effort to make assessment-based instruction a priority, there are ways that individual urban teachers can gather information to help them identify useful reading experiences for students.

First, rather than administer informal reading inventories to every student in the class, content teachers can listen to individual students read a short passage from a grade-level text in their particular subject.

For instance, in planning for assessment during the first several days of the school year, a social studies teacher uses a chapter from Hakim's (1994) history text, *Liberty for All?*, a typical book in a middle school curriculum. Because she wants to engage students and ob-

serve their best reading, she searches for a highly interesting excerpt. She settles on a chapter titled "Do Girls Have Brains?" (pp. 119–123), which deals with the women's rights movement of the mid-19th century. She reads aloud the first page and a half to engage students' interest. Then she stops and asks students to write down any prior knowledge or anecdotal recollections they have about women's rights that were triggered as they listened. As students write, she asks individual students, one at a time, to sit with her privately and read the next several paragraphs aloud. She takes note of students who have difficulty reading on their own (i.e., read with less than 95% accuracy or seemed confused by concepts and vocabulary).

Although this is fundamentally a screening device of sorts that does not begin to reveal the complexities of students' reading, it does give an initial indication of students' comfort with grade-level texts and of the need for further assessments, particularly if assistance from the school literacy specialist is required. For instructional purposes, the teachers now knows that there are some students who would have tremendous difficulty making sense of this kind of text on their own. She appreciates the information and detail in this text, but she figures she will have to provide support for students to access it, even if it means she mainly reads it aloud to them.

Second, urban teachers can gather interview and questionnaire data that is specific to the content of the class. For example, a middle school history teacher in my area was struggling to find something to engage Robin, a struggling reader, in the activity of his class. At the time, they were studying personalities and events that prefaced the Civil War. Robin consistently zoned out during teacher read-alouds, discussions, and even video documentaries. During an interview, however, Robin revealed that in previous years she became interested in historical fiction and biographies. With this information, the teacher gathered some easy-to-read chapter and picture books on the topic at hand (e.g., *Frederick Douglass*, Welch, 2003; *Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth*, Christie, 2002), and Robin eagerly selected a text to read.

Some initial questions for urban students that yield rich information about individual competence, experience, and interests in content-area reading include the following:

- "Tell me about a time you got hooked on something you read about science."
- "Tell me about a bad experience with reading in social studies."
- "What would help a person become interested in reading about mathematics."
- "What should teachers do to help students read and enjoy books in English/language arts class?"

Third, at the beginning of the school year, teachers can provide a range of content-rich texts across difficulty levels, subjects, and genres and allow students to peruse these materials. Much can be learned about students' reading abilities and their specific interests by observing their book choices and discussing their selections. For instance, consider a fifth-grade class in which, during the first week of school, the teacher allowed time for free reading in a large collection of science and social studies texts, ranging from easy-to-read pattern books to sophisticated informational texts that contained few pictures. That teacher learned volumes about a student who consistently selected and read with engagement very easy texts such as *The Children We Remember* (Abells, 1983), which includes real photographs of children in the Holocaust with only one-sentence captions on each page, or *About Amphibians: A Guide for Children* (Sill, 2001), which is a series of illustrations with about a line of text per page. If this teacher wanted to maintain that stu-

dent's engagement in content reading across the school year, she would likely seek out similar texts on upcoming topics.

Provide Varied Interesting Texts Connected to Content and Make Them Accessible and Appealing

I have argued that principles of good reading instruction in language arts classrooms are often thrown by the wayside once content instruction begins (Ivey, 2002a). This could not be truer than in the case of reading materials. As in language arts classes, urban students will learn most from their reading in content areas when they have texts they can read nearly effortlessly. But it seems that hard content is usually accompanied by even harder texts in subjects such as science and history.

A good rule of thumb for content teachers is that when students need to learn particular content, they should find easy texts that contain that information. When students get tangled up in reading the words and sorting through dense, fuzzy, or complex syntax, it is unlikely they will pick up essential ideas, much less the noteworthy details. A preservice teacher enrolled in one of my courses lamented that even in college she has to find alternative materials in her own studies because required textbooks make it impossible to learn. This geology major recalled consulting her high school physics textbook during her junior year of college because it offered basic concepts in a manageable format. The message is that even good readers learn from easier books. Also, if a student does manage to plug through a difficult text on a particular topic, he or she likely leaves that experience ready to be finished with that topic forever rather than eager to read other texts to increase his or her knowledge about the topic.

On the other hand, good reading experiences with manageable texts may lead to additional reading in new, related texts. Consider the case of Roberto, a seventh-grade second-language learner who read most comfortably in primer-level texts. When his science class studied ways plants and animals protect themselves, he read *Hard to See Animals* (Fowler, 1997), an easy beginning-reader book about camouflage. This experience triggered a library and Internet search for more easy books on camouflage. It is doubtful that the science textbook chapter on plant and animal survival (which Roberto could not read) would inspire the same motivation to learn more. I find that when I work in middle school urban classrooms in particular, I cannot find enough easy texts with pictures to satisfy students. Simple but intriguing selections—such as *Here is the African Savanna* (Dunphy, 1999), a cumulative text; *How to Talk to Your Dog* (George, 2000), which offers illustrations; and straightforward instructions, and *Postcards from Pluto* (Leedy, 1997), an easy alternative text that embeds information on the solar system—are difficult to keep on the classroom shelves.

When starting a topic that is unfamiliar to students, it pays to point out the details in text that would make them want to read about it. Whereas few students would get excited about a history textbook chapter on the settlement of the western United States, they might become intrigued by sections of *The Perilous Journey of the Donner Party* (Calabro, 1999), which details the sometimes unthinkable survival tactics of those who migrated westward. Imagine the following teacher read-aloud as an incentive for independent reading:

> *Were one to die, the rest might live*. Patrick Dolan's words must have echoed in many minds the morning after his death. On December 26, he became the first to be cannibalized. While some of his friends lit a fire, others cut the flesh from Dolan's thin, dead limbs. At that point they had not eaten anything for five days. They are said to have sobbed and covered their faces as they roasted and ate Dolan's body. . . . (pp. 108–109)

Traditional content-area reading—the dry, difficult exposition of textbooks—conceals what students find appealing and may lead teachers to believe that students have no interest in the content we have to teach. Good, readable materials facilitate participation from students who might be otherwise disenchanted in subject-area classrooms. Asking all students to read the same thing at the same time, even with some support (e.g., an anticipation guide), almost guarantees that struggling readers will be left behind. When teachers have a difficult text that includes essential information that cannot be found in easier materials, they should probably read it aloud to students.

Give Students Time to Read about the Subject and Provide Individuals with Advice and Information

Content teachers frequently tell me that they would like to see students reading in their classes but that the crowded curriculum leaves little time for it. But when all systems are in place—that is, when students have readable, content-rich texts, appropriate teacher support, and real purposes for reading—it is hard to imagine an instructional activity in which students are more focused on the subject at hand than when they are set free to explore it on their own. Recall from earlier in this chapter that urban students prefer time to read most because it affords them the chance to think and learn (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001).

I often ask teachers to think about a topic they know quite well (e.g., gardening, sailing, auto mechanics) and to consider how they became such an expert on it. Although firsthand experiences play a significant role, most people admit that they also consult texts related to their interests to learn as much as possible. I am a faithful fan of the Atlanta Braves baseball team, and although I have learned much from watching their games on television and at the ballpark, I cannot stop myself from reading any newspaper article or Web site on the team, its members, or its management, and I even have a subscription to the team's monthly magazine. It is through text that I get insider information, details not evident to the casual spectator.

In school, this principle also applies. Content coverage without opportunities to read ensures that most students, particularly those with little prior knowledge about a topic, will get little more than a surface level understanding of the curriculum. But independent reading in science or social studies may differ from reading in language arts class. For example, in a reading workshop in language arts class, students may read a wide range of texts not connected by theme or topic, whereas in the other subject areas, teachers may want to provide a range of texts of varying levels of difficulty but all related to a particular unit (e.g., Civil War, ecosystems). In content classes, reading can and should be connected to the curriculum, and it ought to be placed at a point when students themselves want to know more about a topic. That would unlikely be at the beginning of a unit of study, when students may know little and care even less.

A seventh-grade social studies teacher got students ready to explore the topic of westward expansion in the United States by building students' knowledge and interest for over a week before requiring students to read on their own. She began by reading aloud to students from portions of Hakim's (1994) *Liberty for All?*, and a range of picture books (e.g., *Mountain Men: True Grit and Tall Tales*, Glass, 2001; *Snowbound: The Tragic Story of the Donner Party*, Lavender, 1996). This period of just listening and discussing with no strings attached gave students a chance to learn enough of the vocabulary and critical events of the time to be ready and inclined to read on their own.

Keep in mind that it is knowledge about a subject that creates the desire to learn more. It is unlikely that we are motivated to read about subjects about which we know very little,

but that is just what children are asked to do frequently in school. In fact, asking students to read with little prior information or real reasons to read does little more than widen the gap between good and poor readers. Our best readers are likely to be the students who already have the most knowledge about school-sanctioned subjects, so it is no surprise that these are the students who participate most in content-area reading and discussion.

In contrast, even struggling readers in the social studies class studying westward movement were ready to read following their teacher's thoughtful and strategic introduction to the unit. To facilitate self-selected reading projects, the teacher brought into the class more than 50 different trade books (multiple copies of each), covering a wide range of difficulty levels and formats, and allowed students to select one or more on topics that had piqued their interest during the preceding days (see Table 24.1).

But even with all of this preparation to read, it is likely that some struggling urban readers will need additional instruction and advice to get hooked and continue reading (Ivey, 2002b). One student might need help finding a text that suits both his comfort level and his interests. Another will need the company and support of a teacher, through echo reading, choral reading, partner reading, or having the teacher just listen until she gets pulled into the text and will read alone. Still others will need modeling and explicit conversations with the teacher on how to make sense of text as they read. Student independent reading time actually frees up the teacher to do some of this essential one-to-one work with struggling readers.

MOVING FORWARD IN CONTENT-AREA READING

I have not addressed the standard whole-class reading strategies (e.g., anticipation guides, concept mapping) that one might expect in a chapter on content-area reading. These strategies are relevant, but they do not address the teaching-to-individuals mentality I am convinced is necessary to uncover urban students' curiosities to learn in school, particularly in ethnically and culturally diverse classrooms. The three principles I have discussed—knowing about students and their literacy, providing good content materials and making them accessible, and giving students time to read about content and making the time worthwhile—all necessitate up-close teaching with individual students.

Given the importance of meeting individual needs to making content reading count,

TABLE 24.1. Sample of Books on U.S. Westward Expansion Selected for Independent Reading

Blashfield, J. F. (2001). *The Santa Fe Trail (We the People)*. Minneapolis, MN: Compass Point Books.

Garland, S. (2000). *Voices of the Alamo*. New York: Scholastic.

Harness, C. (1996). *"They're off": The story of the Pony Express*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Krensky, S. (1996). *Striking it rich: The story of the California Gold Rush*. New York: Aladdin.

Lavendar, D. (1996). *Snowbound: The tragic story of the Donner party*. New York: Scholastic.

McNeer, M. (1950). *The California Gold Rush*. New York: Random House.

Mercati, C. (2000). *Kit Carson: A life of adventure*. Logan, IA: Perfection Learning.

Schanzer, R. (1999). *Gold fever! Tales from the California Gold Rush*. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society.

Thompson, G. (2002). *Our journey west: The Marshall family on the Oregon Trail, 1853*. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society.

future research possibilities appear endless. For starters, traditionally, content-area reading and instruction has assumed a one-size-fits-all format, with all students expected to learn the same things using the same materials. Content-reading strategies have done little to make individual needs the guiding force of instruction. How does individual literacy development fit into content-area teaching? What do content teachers need to know about literacy development in order to deliver instruction that captures students' interest in academic subjects? What does personalized reading and writing look like in a diverse-content classroom?

Regardless of what questions urban teachers and researchers still have about literacy practices across the curriculum, we ought to begin with the belief that content-area reading does matter to struggling readers. I have observed countless math, science, social studies, and English classrooms in which the three or four most academically advanced students not only carry the discussion of the class but also get most of the teacher's positive attention. Think back to Lewis at the beginning of this chapter. If there is an urban student who appears either incapable or uninterested in reading to learn, chances are that the context for instruction, the materials for reading, and the kinds and amount of teacher support offered are all wrong for that student. Changing texts, contexts, and instruction in reading is key to making it possible for *all* students to participate completely and enthusiastically in diverse content-area classrooms.

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Suggested Titles: Content Texts That Hook Readers

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Branzei, S.	*Grossology: The Science of Really Gross Things*	2002	Price Stern Sloan	80	The yuckiest book middle graders will ever love—the science of scabs, zits, eye gunk, smelly feet—and worse. This is the true story behind "Ooooooo!" Text that accompanies the cartoon-style illustrations is in different sizes. Struggling readers will choose the larger size (in color), leaving the smaller, black and white print for their "lucky" teacher.
Curlee, Lynn	*Brooklyn Bridge*	2001	Atheneum	40	Here's a place to read drawings, diagrams and maps, as well as to relish magnificent paintings, while being drawn into the story of the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge.
St. George, Judith; illustrated by David Small	*So You Want to Be President?*	2000	Philomel	52	The "seductive details" of presidents' lives make the holders of the office human, and the job seem . . . well, achievable. Winner of the Caldecott Medal.

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25

Meeting the Challenges for All Students in Urban Schools

DONNA OGLE

Meeting the needs of our urban students poses enormous challenges for our literacy professionals. The standards for literacy keep rising, and students and teachers are being held accountable for learning. At the same time, our students are more diverse, with large numbers of new immigrants and ethnic minorities, and competition for the time they need to devote to reading and writing is strong. The challenges are clear. Responding effectively means that we must think and act smarter together. By creating strong teams of administrators, teachers, parents, and community members, we can find the resources we need. Experiences of those schools who have concentrated their efforts indicate that such united efforts do make a difference in students' learning. Therefore, as we look to the future, we have some clear directions.

Teachers are the most important variable in students' initial success in becoming literate. With high-quality instruction, we maximize the opportunities for all children to be successful in learning to read and write. Several of the chapters in this book illustrate the kinds of instruction that are most effective in developing reading abilities in all students. The differences between well-intentioned teachers and master teachers are significant. These differences involve both what they teach and how they relate to students. Successful teachers know how to link to their students' lives and concerns. They bridge cultural divides so that students find purpose and meaning for their own literacy in school.

We also know that urban students need excellent teachers from year to year if they are going to maintain their reading growth. Strong primary instruction is not sufficient. Schools need to conceive of learning to read as an ongoing developmental process and to insist that students receive sustained high-quality instruction across the grade levels so that they can continue their literacy development. This means that good instruction needs to be embedded in all-school programs to make sustained differences. Several examples have been provided in chapters in this volume in which partnerships and focused efforts have been effective in

improving literacy. For us to be successful with our urban students, these all-school efforts need to be well conceived and sustained. They also need to involve family and community participation.

In this chapter I look at some of the research that underscores the importance of our work in urban schools. First, the quality of instruction students receive does make a difference. We must continue to provide teachers with the best instructional support possible. Second, it is important that teachers know how to teach literacy to the students who are part of their classrooms; this means knowing the students and their families and ways to build links between them and the literacy curriculum. Third, the research on effective schools also makes it clear that, for teachers' efforts to be most effective in providing sustained literacy growth for students, all-school literacy efforts are needed. In this chapter, some examples of larger scale studies of effective schools provide evidence of the importance of such efforts. When schools are working well for students, all teachers focus their efforts to ensure that the most effective instruction is provided all students and that students do not fall through the cracks.

TEACHERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

One of the most well-documented factors in students' achievement is the quality of the instruction they receive. Snow and colleagues' study (1991) looked at the influences of both instruction and home factors in students' development of reading abilities. When the factors of home and school were compared, the influence of teachers became clear. The study compared the percentages of children from both low- and high-literacy homes who made expected gains in literacy over a 2-year period. When children from low-literacy homes were in classrooms with high-literacy teachers, 100% of them made expected gains in literacy. In contrast, if these same low-literacy children were in classrooms that were characterized as low literacy, none of them developed adequately in literacy. In the classrooms with intermediate literacy instruction, the children from high-literacy homes did fine, with 100% making expected gains; however, in those same classrooms, only 25% of children from low-literacy homes made those gains. Snow et al. explained that "excellent classrooms can compensate for less than ideal home conditions. . . . However, for the majority of children in intermediate classrooms, home and school appear to have a complementary relationship" (1991, p. 161).

In another large-scale study, Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997) reported that, for more than 60,000 students across grades 3–5, the teacher was the most important factor affecting student achievement in reading and mathematics. On the average the most effective teachers produced gains of about 53 percentage points in student achievement over one year, whereas the least effective teachers produced achievement gains of about 14 percentage points over one year. In summarizing results from this and other large studies, Marzano (2003) concludes, "Regardless of the research basis, it is clear that effective teachers have a profound influence on student achievement and ineffective teachers do not" (p. 75).

The "teacher factors" that make a difference involve both the ways reading is taught and the kinds of relationships teachers have with students. Rich, integrated instruction with much direct teaching of strategies and concepts by teachers has been demonstrated to support students' learning (Allington & Johnston, 2002; Pressley et al., 2001; Guthrie, 2001, 2003). Knapp, Shields, and Turnbull (1995) compared the learning that students achieved in classrooms with rich literacy environments with that in more skills-oriented classrooms.

They concluded that children in meaning-oriented classrooms made larger gains than similar urban students in skills-based classrooms. In addition, they found that general intellectual and language stimulation were important pluses in the richer meaning-oriented classrooms. Students from urban neighborhoods need intellectually stimulating classrooms that compensate for the lack of some of the experiences that more affluent families provide their children. They need to hear elaborated academic language and to learn daily about an expanding world. They need to be engaged in inquiry and encouraged to explore their own questions and interests.

This book contains many chapters exploring effective reading instruction. I want to highlight one area that is particularly important for urban students—vocabulary development. Urban students need rich content vocabulary to be successful beyond the primary grades. Yet researchers have noted the scarcity of attention to *vocabulary development* in many schools (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2000). Snow et al.'s study of urban students, cited earlier, contains an epilogue that focuses on the increasing disparity, or "broad deficits in word knowledge" (1991, p. 205), that the researchers found in a follow-up study of the students 4 years later. Those students who had been on par with their peers in elementary school now were an average of 1.6 years behind in word recognition and 1.8 years behind in vocabulary development. The early gains promoted by excellent teachers were not sustained. For a variety of reasons, these students' vocabularies had not grown enough to support their reading and learning. One conclusion Snow et al. (1991) reached was that, as these students moved up in the grades, they needed more explicit instruction in content areas and the vocabulary associated with them (p. 186).

Judith Scott's recent research (see Chapter 21, this volume) indicates that urban children are still not receiving the kind of direct attention to vocabulary that is so important as they move up in the grades. She found that less than 4 minutes per day of instructional time is focused on words (whether spelling, vocabulary, or content-area concepts). That certainly is cause for alarm and calls for teachers to make alterations so students get more help with vocabulary. This is even more important when we consider that the urban student body today includes many more second-language learners than it did even a few years ago. As Scott suggests, we need to create classroom communities that foster and nurture consciousness about words as tools of communication.

CONNECTING WITH OUR STUDENTS

The authors of several chapters in this volume also indicate how important it is that teachers not only be knowledgeable about how to develop students' literacy skills and strategies but also know how to connect with the students they teach. Teachers need to know themselves well and know how they are perceived by students and families of other cultural groups. Because the majority of American teachers do not share immigrant or bilingual experiences and do not come from a culture of poverty, the differences between them and many of their students are enormous. Teachers' attitudes toward and recognition of diversity are important. Both knowing students' experiences and bringing their cultures and families into the school can make important differences in how comfortable students feel in school and in the nature of support parents can provide. Helping teachers become more comfortable and knowledgeable about diversity can begin early in preservice programs (Fleming, Chapter 9, this volume; Fisher, Frey, Lapp, & Flood, Chapter 11, this volume).

I have found the framework provided by Eugene Garcia helpful in considering how lit-

eracy teachers can become more responsive to our diverse student population. Garcia's own life experiences, coming to the United States as an immigrant child and being educated in U.S. schools, has provided a personal grounding for the work he now does with school and classroom cultures. To help schools change their policies and practices to meet the needs of increasingly diverse students in our schools, he has translated his suggestions into the "five R's of reform" (Garcia, 2002). These useful recommendations highlight the importance for teachers and schools in urban environments of being *respectful*, *responsive*, *responsible*, *resourceful*, and *reasonable*.

These five R's provide a good framework for teachers to think seriously about how their school is prepared for the increasingly diverse population of students we now have the opportunity to meet. The first R's—*respectful* and *responsive*—certainly remind us of the need to listen to students and families and to take time to learn about their experiences. In some schools, teachers take time to use their teacher book club readings to focus on books about the experiences of immigrant groups in their midst. It is a very practical way to gain a sense of some of the different experiences of the families in our communities. A great number of both adult and children's books provide windows on others' life experiences and values.

Connecting the literacy of the new immigrants to the school is also important. One school (Ogle, 2002) holds a book celebration in the spring and has highlighted authors and books from each of the cultures represented by students in the school. The entry hallway of the school becomes the author gallery. Pictures of authors are enlarged and put in frames in the hall near samples of the books they have written. In all cases, the books themselves are the testimony to the literacy of each culture. Students and parents who enter the building are immediately aware of the varieties of literacy represented. In some cases, the original books that are now loved by American children and adults are connected to the cultures from which they came; for example, *The Arabian Nights Entertainments*, *Cinderella*, and *Don Quixote*. This kind of cultural book celebration is a very tangible learning experience for everyone and helps minority families gain a sense of stature in a school community.

Garcia's next R, *responsible*, also brings to mind many ways teachers can think deeply and be responsible to students in their charge. At a basic level, we need to listen to students and assess what knowledge, resources, or funds of knowledge they bring with them. Even though their English may be less elaborate than that of the majority of students, teachers need to think of the resources, not just the deficits, of all students. Our experience in Chicago comes to mind. Many students in our schools new to America have come from eastern European countries and have been in very rigorous academic programs. They have knowledge many times surpassing that of our own students and are accustomed to taking homework very seriously. Their desire to learn, their study habits, and their knowledge can all be great resources in their rapid transition to academic life. We as teachers need to be responsible and to treat students individually and provide appropriate support at their particular points of need. Adapting curriculum to more broad-based inputs (visual, spatial, artistic, etc.) rather than relying solely on verbal knowledge transmission can recognize students' intelligence and abilities to learn (Ogle, 2002). Providing supportive tutoring and intervention programs can make important differences in learning for many students. It is distressing to see that most of our suburban districts provide a variety of tutorial and support services to students at points of need but that some of our large urban districts lack those same added supports. Instead, in several cases, Title I dollars have gone to all-school efforts that do not

focus on students' academic needs, and no individual or even group instructional support has been provided.

The last of the R's are *resourceful* and *reasonable*. These are also important concepts as we think of ways to ensure that students are well served in our schools. One way that districts are being resourceful is to find more time for students to learn to read. Some schools are extending the school day with before- and after-school programs. Weekend and evening times are also opportunities for students to explore new learning and to consolidate what they are studying in regular classes. Several cities are experimenting with summer as an integral part of the year for many students, especially those most in need of good teaching. As a long-scale study in Baltimore (Alexander, Entwisle, & Steffel Olson, 2001) found, when school is in session, the learning resource "faucet" is turned on for all children. However, in the summer this faucet is off for urban and poor families. Poor families cannot compensate for the lack of opportunities given the children, whereas middle- and upper-class families are showering children with a wide range of travel, camps, and lessons. Schools need to become more resourceful in providing similar ongoing learning for children in need. For students less far behind in reading, Allington (2003) suggests that children be kept on a regular reading diet during the summer—even reading a book a week can sustain some of the loss in reading ability noted when children are away from books for a few months.

Another example of how teachers can be resourceful comes from a WestEd project with Hispanic families. The culture of the Mexican immigrant families is such that coming to an individual conference with teachers is very "countercultural" and intimidating. Therefore, as the teachers thought about how to make their conference time more inviting to the families of their students, they decided to hold group conferences with two or three families together. In this way, the adults were much more comfortable, and the teachers could explore their expectations and the work the students were doing more easily. Simply shifting the conference format slightly, starting with group meetings and then permitting individual parents to stay for added questions, meant that the families were willing to take part in the meetings and showed their underlying real interest in their children's progress in school.

By being resourceful and reasonable, teachers and schools can find ways to adjust school routines and practices to meet the new realities of our times. Being reasonable also means that everything that a school might brainstorm or want to develop cannot be done at once. Experiences of schools that are successfully meeting the needs of their students and communities reveal that they have not tried to do everything at once but have focused on a few key areas and then planned more long-term changes slowly. Even in the areas of literacy instruction, it is usually wise to take on one or two goals rather than a whole set of adjustments. Perhaps making a connection between home languages and literacy instruction in school is enough to begin with. Then more in-depth study of how to use a variety of linguistic bases in the school can help teachers maximize the knowledge students bring.

There are many opportunities for teachers to get acquainted with families from other cultures. Teachers working together need to think through the most appropriate ways to link school and community. Several examples are provided by Tinajero and Munter (Chapter 7), by Lapp and Flood (Chapter 6), and by Boyd, Ndura, Brock, and Moore (Chapter 4) in this volume. Teachers working together need to think through the most appropriate ways to link school and community. The many successful projects that have been developed provide clear evidence that attention to the differences in cultural expectations and values can make school literacy learning more effective and gain the important support of families.

SCHOOLS MAKE A DIFFERENCE: BECOMING LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Teachers who are sensitive to their students and their families can create literacy environments in the schools that build bridges between the cultures and school literacy (Jimenez, 2003). This sensitivity can be developed when teachers work together and focus on knowing their community well (McNaughton, 2002). Therefore, a critical challenge for the future is for schools to become learning environments for teachers, too. Teachers can do much more together than any one teacher can do alone. They set the tone for the community, and they provide consistent instruction for students. In addition, the teachers work together to improve the quality of their teaching and explore new ways of meeting students' literacy needs.

Several recent studies of schools that have been able to "break the mold" or create higher levels of achievement than typical for urban schools underscore the importance of teachers working together to create conditions in which urban students can have success in becoming literate (Schmoker, 2001; Reeves, in press; WestEd, 2000; McGee, 2002). In all of these studies, an essential factor in school success is teachers who work together with a focus on actual student performance. Rather than mounting disconnected staff development efforts, these schools have carefully directed efforts to improve students' achievement. The research of both Schmoker and Reeves emphasizes the importance of using student achievement data as a central part of school efforts. Schmoker (2001) introduces his review of several schools and districts that are accelerating students' achievement with the statement, "When teachers regularly and collaboratively review assessment data for the purpose of improving practice to reach measurable achievement goals, something magical happens" (p. 1). Reeves (2002) has been involved with the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Schools, identified as 90-90-90 schools—meaning that 90% of students are in poverty, 90% are minority, and 90% meet state standards. He has identified five characteristics of these schools: (1) a focus on academic work, (2) clear curriculum choices, (3) frequent assessment of student progress and multiple opportunities for improvement, (4) an emphasis on nonfiction writing, and (5) collaborative scoring of student work (p. 5).

McGee (2002), former Superintendent of Schools in Illinois, studied the characteristics of public schools in Illinois that were identified as being successful in improving the academic achievement of students over a 3-year period of time. These high-poverty, generally minority schools McGee labeled as "the golden spike schools" because they had been successful in bringing together the conditions that enabled challenged students to learn. McGee found many variations in the schools, but they shared some important commonalities: an ongoing professional learning commitment; more time for learning; strong, active school leadership; exceptionally hardworking teachers; parent engagement, and integrated early literacy programs with supplemental tutoring for students needing additional help.

These findings are similar to the WestEd (2000) report of schools with exemplary professional development that also showed exceptional student achievement. The five characteristics identified by WestEd include:

1. Clear, agreed-on student achievement goals that focus and shape teacher learning.
2. An expanded array of professional development opportunities.
3. Embedded, ongoing informal learning.
4. Collaborative school cultures.
5. Use of a broad range of student performance data.

These characteristics of successful schools are similar to those reported by the Denver Public Education and Business Coalition, described by Sweeney (2003). Her book *Learning Along the Way* describes the model of adult learning that has developed over the years of the project as one that takes adult learning seriously (learner-centered professional development). The project employs a gradual release-of-responsibility model, with staff developers, coaches, and lab classrooms supporting the goals of improved comprehension instruction. Teachers gather to study and learn together. They develop plans for moving their instruction to new levels, and they are given a great deal of support from the project staff in doing so. An important part of their study involves analyzing student work together after developing and using protocols for such review. They do not center their focus on assessment data, but the process is grounded in the same idea that has been found in other studies—seriousness about student outcomes and achievement. Leadership is also an important component of the success of this project. Principals are involved throughout, and teacher leadership as part of a school "leadership team" is carefully nurtured.

In all of these examples, urban schools that have been able to overcome the challenges and inspire and educate students who achieve above expectations show us both that students can learn and that it takes smart schools to realize these gains for all students. In none of these cases did change happen quickly or easily. Focused, concerted work over years with teachers at the center as learners, diagnosticians, and risk takers, has been required in all these efforts.

CONCLUSIONS

As we look to the future, with increasing demands for improved literacy for all students, we need to learn from the successes that surround us. We do know a great deal about good classroom practice that leads to students' reading success. With high-quality reading instruction, students from all economic levels of society can and do learn. We also know that teachers need ongoing professional development and learning for them to become successful with the challenges urban students pose. They need to be in schools that are "professional learning communities."

As reading professionals, we must be proactive in insisting on these supports for teachers and schools. The more we combine our knowledge of best practices in literacy with the creation of strong ongoing professional development, the stronger our impact will be. As teachers continue to reflect on and refine their teaching, students benefit. Creating the conditions in schools in which teachers learn together is critical. Supporting teacher study groups is one step; focusing those efforts so the study is linked to student performance and involves regular review of student work is also an important aspect of successful school improvement. In many schools, creating these shared focused efforts is a real challenge. Yet the benefits have also been clearly demonstrated.

It is also clear that family and community matter, especially as students move from primary into middle and secondary schooling. Teachers who are responsive to the parents and communities from which their students come and who include them in the educational process experience more success with students. As our population changes, we all must be more open to learning about the families who are now coming to our schools eager to have the benefits of public education. We need to reach out and find ways to involve all members of our school community in our ongoing activities. Literacy is both a

skill and a life practice, and children need to see those people most important to them engaged positively in literacy.

All of these components—excellent classroom reading instruction, involvement of students and families in literacy, and school-based ongoing professional development—are important to our success in developing students' literacy. Current practices in schools are evolving to address our needs, and these essential components are becoming more evident. As we strive to meet the challenges posed by No Child Left Behind and the international concerns for higher levels of literacy for all students reported in the PISA assessment (Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development, 2001), we do have directions for how to succeed. Ensuring that all students have the best opportunities to become literate is not easy, but it is clearly within our reach.

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Suggested Titles: Books Addressing Urban Issues

Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Pages	Inside the book
Hoose, Phillip and Hannah	*Hey, Little Ant*	1998	Tricycle	28	A great tool for readers' theater! One student can read the words of the "kid" and the other can become the "ant." Discussions about diversity, tolerance, and respect are sure to come from reading this book.
Myers, Walter Dean	*Monster*	2001	HarperCollins	288	Told from the perspective of a movie screenplay, Myers writes about Steve, a seventh-grader accused of serving as a lookout for a robbery of a Harlem drugstore. The owner was shot and killed, and now Steve is in prison awaiting trial for murder. From there, he tells about his case and his incarceration.
Flake, Sharon	*The Skin I'm In*	2000	Jump at the Sun	176	Seventh-grader Maleeka Madison is miserable when a new teacher comes to her depressed inner-city school. Miss Saunders is notorious for getting into kids' faces about both their behavior and their academic potential. Young teens will appreciate Flake's authenticity and perhaps realize how to learn from Maleeka's struggle for security and self-assurance.

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Epilogue

Building on the Dream; Becoming a Reality

RICHARD LONG

On August 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to commemorate the Emancipation Proclamation, issued 100 years before by President Abraham Lincoln. In his speech, Dr. King said, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but the content of their character." This volume is about making that dream a reality by understanding how different experiences affect the teaching of reading in urban schools.

Each section and chapter discusses the many different aspects of the human experience that have an impact on literacy instruction and learning. What is clear is that the experiences of many of the children in these schools are different from the experience of most Americans. Urban youths have different language and family environments; they attend schools with teachers who do not usually reflect those differences; and they live in communities that are frequently isolated from the mainstream. They also live in poverty, which in and of itself is destructive to the human spirit. Yet these children, who are in fact all of our children, can and do learn. The contributions these children can make as adults are needed for the long-term health and well-being of themselves as individuals, of their own families and communities, and also of the wider society. This book is about how our schools can be more effective in reaching them.

What have we learned about urban schoolchildren? The reviews of research reported in this volume provide an impressive array of data. They cover four key dimensions of learning as it occurs in urban environments. First, individual urban students' experiences are frequently significantly different from those of the mainstream culture, and this has an impact on how they are viewed and how they view learning. Second, the language of urban children may be different from that of the mainstream, and these differences affect not only the ability to communicate by using words and language but also, with some languages, how the world is organized and perceived. Third, urban communities are themselves different; often

they are not safe and frequently isolated from the mainstream economy and culture. Fourth, although reading instruction needs to be adapted for urban students, expectations about their abilities should not be modified.

What is called for in this book is a better integration of what we know and what we know is needed.

WE NEED MORE MODELS

We need more models of instruction and learning. Classrooms are rapidly changing. Monolingual school districts are quickly becoming multiple-lingual environments. Today's English-speaking students aren't taking Spanish to learn an academic language; they are doing so to play soccer with their friends. How is instruction keeping pace with these many changes? Many schools are solving problems and adapting based on what they know and see as the need. In short, they are trying to match the problem they have in their schools to the theory they learned in their training. It is time to create a framework for learning that reflects the dynamic nature of the classroom, with its wide-ranging needs. Just over the past 10 years, we have seen a wide variation of ideas for coping with the changes going on in our schools and the need to be more effective. One group calls for research-based instruction, another for small class size; still another claims that the schools need to be smaller, another that accountability will make the difference. All the while urban teachers are still trying to figure out how to eke out a few more minutes to help a few more children.

WE NEED MORE RESEARCH

Research is part of the investment in making a difference. The research agenda needs to be wide ranging both in scope and in methodology. Experimental research is key; but it is only as good as the question that is being posed, which oftentimes is the result of case study or observational work. Applied research builds on theoretical research. All function together. In the urban school environment, a research agenda needs to be built that is comprehensive in terms of methodology and scope. Information needs to be more readily available to teachers from the research community, and teachers need to be able to take the time to participate in research activities that will inform them as to their students' needs and how to fulfill them. Specifically, almost all groups in the urban school environment need to be part of these ongoing and rigorous processes. Although in 2003 there is a significant emphasis on K–3 reading, many teachers are claiming that they need more information on adolescent reading. Similarly, multiple-language literacy needs a far more aggressive research strategy that will provide a coherent model of how English-language instruction should effectively proceed.

WE NEED MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Isolation is one of education's greatest problems. Classroom teachers are isolated from each other, from research, from parents. College professors are isolated from researchers and classroom teachers. Researchers are isolated from each other in separate branches of study. The government is creating policy that reflects goals but little understanding on implementation.

Clearly we need more communications, such as this volume, that organize research information around critical issues. Unfortunately, we have few models of effective communications for educators. Oftentimes policymakers seem to think that in order to communicate effectively they should commission a writer. A recent national report on reading produced a summary that, for all intents and purposes, missed the critical elements of the report. At other times educators believe that the parents' needs are different from those of the teacher and also from the needs of the building administrators and of the research community. This model of communications is faulty. Communications can be more effective when they are written to be understood by all and not targeted at one small segment. Changing schools involves all parts of the school understanding their roles and how they work together.

WE NEED TO BE MORE CONFIDENT

How often does the public hear that children are not doing well in schools? It seems to be often, yet it isn't. States report on schools that are acclaimed as unusually successful; teachers are honored with teacher of the year recognition; spelling bee champions are heralded. Educators do not take those opportunities to celebrate.

In 2003 and over the next few years, a lot of schools will be named as failing because they fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP). Failing to make AYP is caused by many things. One school will fail to make AYP because it has attendance below 95% of the kids in the school. Another school will fail to make AYP because it fails to educate one or more of the subgroups in the school. The reality is that we can reach these kids. We should also let people know that we have the knowledge to do this. The public is more likely to support education and research on education if they believe that it will result in progress. Billions were spent on the promise of putting a man on the moon. Even before the rocket was designed, failures were rampant in the space program, and yet support was there. People had confidence partially because the professionals talked confidently. Educators need to talk confidently, to acknowledge problems and to be part of the cadre seeking solutions. Urban schools can be effective places of learning—many of the research reports cited in this volume tell us how to be effective. Let's tell people that with the tools we can do the job.

WE NEED MORE SUPPORT

Money is not the answer, but it is a tool, a very important tool. Researchers and educators are frequently saying that if they had more money, they could reach more kids; what they need to be saying is that we know how to reach more kids, but to get results we need more resources. Money, time, and commitment are part of the resource mix. Money is what allows books to be purchased, buildings to have lights, and teachers to be paid. Time is the most important resource. We need more time for kids to read and to learn. Schedules that allow for summer vacations in which learning is lost constitute a bad use of a resource.

Support also means having dependable sources of funds. Having budgets that are finished weeks or a few months before the start of the school year encourages short-term thinking—and short-term programming. Some challenges and some research programs need years of support to be effective. Currently, the children in our nation's neediest schools are the most dependent on state and federal resources that are allocated on a yearly basis. Unfortunately, these schools are open to swings in "emphasis" by these levels of government.

Children with specialized learning needs—whether instruction in English as a second language, bilingual education, or supplementary reading instruction—have these needs independent of government action. Schools are trying to meet those increasing needs for services, but they need a dependable and adequate funding level to meet the needs of our children.

A FINAL WORD

All of these items are part of a more basic problem, which is reflected in the research that is presented in this book. Almost everything that is being looked at concerning urban education is being looked at in isolation—the kids, the schools, the instruction, and the impact of the wider environment. We have the ability to turn Dr. King's dream into a reality; now let's put the pieces together and do it.

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