Preparing Teachers for Urban Schools

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by

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The Problem

The history of education in urban schools is often painted in glowing terms by those who claim that New York City and other large cities successfully educated 30 million immigrants in this country during the period from 1890 to 1920. They argue that if we could educate urban youngsters then, we can do it now. And they wonder why urban dwellers in the 1980s are demanding new forms of schooling. The truth is that people who make such statements do not have the dropout or pushout rates for the 1890-1920 era and do not know the numbers who were prepared for neither work nor postsecondary training. They do not speak of those who were simply dumped on an expanding labor market; neither do they speak of our inability to assess the degree to which uncounted lives might have been substantially enhanced and our society significantly advanced had people been more fully educated. Without such data it is impossible to assess the quality of urban education in the early years of this century, but there is no lack of data about the conditions of urban schools today.
The Urban Educational Environment Today

Data provided by Harold L. Hodgkinson in *All One System* (1985) gives us some sense of the conditions urban educators must deal with today:

- Since 1981, every day 2,000 children fall into poverty.
- Each year, almost 500,000 children are born to teenage mothers — twice the rate of any industrialized nation in the Western world.
- Every day, 40 teenagers give birth to their third child.
- By the year 2000, one-third of all Americans will be non-white; and the non-white school population will be above 50%.
- Beginning in 1983, 60% of the children born in this country will, by the age of 18, live in one-parent households. Growing up in a two-parent household is no longer the norm.
- Currently 45% of black children, 36% of Hispanic children, and 25% of all children live in poverty.
- There has been a 6,000% increase in drug use since 1960.
- Teenage homicides are up 200% since 1950, and delinquency is up 130% since 1960.
- Teenage unemployment rises every year.
- The dropout rate is more than 50% in many large cities.

Other studies show that of the more than 3,600,000 children who began school in September 1987, 25% were from poverty families;
15% were the children of teenagers; 15% were physically or mentally handicapped; 15% speak a language other than English; 25% will never finish high school; and 10% have illiterate parents. These data are nationwide. For urban schools, these percentages are even more staggering.

There are also statistics relative to current and anticipated teacher shortages in urban schools, which call for immediate action. In 1982 approximately 115,000 new teachers were hired in the United States. By 1992 the number of new teachers needed will be approximately 215,000. The total number of public school teachers is currently about 2.1 million. Of this total, about 10% are first-year teachers. These are national figures and do not begin to reflect the increasingly greater needs in urban areas. For example, 3,000 new teachers will be needed each year in Los Angeles and 2,000 in Houston.

Given the current and projected need for more teachers, it is troubling that there has been only a very modest increase in the number of college students who are entering teacher preparation programs. In 1985 only 4% of college students chose teaching as a profession. Today, this has increased to only 10% and is projected to remain at that level.

Although it is clear that there will be a shortage of teachers for urban schools, this is not likely to be true for rural, small town, and suburban schools except in math, science, and special areas. However, even in rural and suburban districts, fully one-half of the total teaching force leaves the profession and must be replaced in a five-year period. And the number leaving the profession is markedly higher in most urban school districts. Some argue that there is no teacher shortage, merely a distribution problem, and that the 1,297 teacher preparation institutions can meet the needs for the foreseeable future. Others contend that if we improve working conditions in urban schools, more teachers will stay and the shortage will be abated. The reality, however, is that there already is a shortage of urban teachers; and all signs indicate that the shortage will continue to increase.
Besides the shortage of teachers for urban schools, two other problems that must be addressed are: 1) Even successful teachers in urban schools report that their preservice teacher preparation program was not relevant to the kinds of problems they face in their day-to-day work. That they elect to stay in teaching under survival conditions has earned them the label of "strong insensitives." 2) There is growing evidence that the use of liberal arts graduates, who learn their professional skills on the job, is no panacea for the urban teacher shortage. For such programs to work requires one-on-one supervision from well-trained mentors. Few urban school systems use their most qualified staff for such assignments. However, it is possible to identify and train master teachers as on-site teacher educators. Local teacher associations welcome such career options because they give experienced teachers an opportunity to use their instructional expertise to help beginners.

A third and intensifying problem is attracting and retaining able minority teachers in urban schools. By the year 2000, it is projected that 50% of all urban school children will be from ethnic minority groups. At the same time, only 5% of all college students will be from ethnic minorities. Out of this small pool must come minorities preparing for all professions, not just teaching. Therefore, it seems totally unrealistic that we can expect to attract enough teachers from minority groups to develop anything close to a representative number for urban school classrooms — even if every minority group teacher candidate elected to teach in an urban school. Indeed, even if all minority group members in college became teachers, they would still not be adequately represented. Clearly, not enough teachers from ethnic minorities will be prepared unless new methods of recruitment and preparation are developed for untapped constituencies.

In this fastback, we shall look at the conditions of urban schools and ways of recruiting and preparing qualified persons to teach in these schools. In discussing conditions of urban schools, we shall consider the "at-risk" characteristics of urban students and the debilitat-
ing, bureaucratic school climate that make teaching in the nation's largest 120 school districts a special order of work. As a preface to this discussion, it is important to consider the impact of the recent reform movement literature (some call it "exhortation literature"), since teacher education for urban schools as well as for schools in general is directly and markedly influenced by this literature — not only in terms of what is done specifically to prepare urban teachers, but even more, in terms of what is not done to prepare them.
Impact of the Reform Movement on Urban Education

The influential reform report, *A Nation At Risk* (1983), did not emerge from a vacuum. Several developments during the 1970s were the impetus for calls for greater state centralization of control over schools and teachers. During the 1970s the accountability movement was growing, and there was increasing public concern about declining test scores. When the reform proposals began appearing in the 1980s, the public had already been well-prepared to believe that something must be done to restore academic standards. But even with this preparation, neither those who wrote the reform reports nor the education establishment expected the breadth and depth of public support for reform.

Among the many reform recommendations, the two that are most germane to our discussion here are those that call for more rigorous academic requirements for students and for higher standards of preparation for teachers; specifically their impact on the at-risk urban student and on the preparation of their teachers.

Some have argued that because the national high school dropout rate has continued to hover around 27% for many years, the reform movement has not had a negative impact on at-risk students. The fallacy of this argument is that it assumes the status quo dropout rate is acceptable. In an economy in which unskilled jobs for non-high-
school graduates were plentiful, the dropout rate was not a matter of great concern. But in our present and future economy, reasonably compensated unskilled jobs are disappearing. The consequences of dropping out today are likely to be welfare dependency, long-term unemployment, and involvement in criminal activity. Levin (1972, 1985) has developed a system of calculating these costs and estimates that the approximately 12,000 dropouts from the Chicago schools in 1982 alone will cost taxpayers $60 million each year for the next 40 years or $2.5 billion dollars over their lifetime. And it is important to note that this 12,000 dropout statistic is an annual figure for only one city. In the same way, the approximately 500,000 births to U.S. teenagers each year is an annual, repeating figure, the consequences of which are often lives of desperation for the young women and loss of productivity for society in general.

The national dropout statistic of 27% needs scrutiny in the context of urban education. As Hess (1986) points out: “Survey approaches give the impression that . . . there is an average of 27% dropouts. In fact, there are wide variances in dropout rates across urban systems: in Chicago, individual school dropout rates vary between 11% and 63%.” Dropouts from some schools in Detroit go as high as 75%. The point is that survey data based on a national sample mask the great variation of dropout rates among school systems and among individual schools within systems, and the data undermine approaches for dealing with critical situations where they exist (Wehlage and Rutter 1986).

Because of the different methods used to track dropouts, all statistics are suspect; but there is no question that in urban areas the dropout rate is high and is increasing rapidly. And it takes its toll in incredible personal, social, and real costs. Even without precise statistics on the total number of disadvantaged children/youth in the U.S., it is possible to estimate the number in poverty and the number with handicapping conditions. These data create the specter of a two-tier education system with the lower tier composed of economically
deprived non-white minorities, immigrants, impoverished whites, and a range of students with handicapping conditions — concentrated in the 120 largest urban school districts. In these districts the majority of students are classified as disadvantaged or "special" by one criterion or another. Estimates made as recently as four years ago now seem to have been understated. Levin's (1985) statistical analysis presents a bleak picture:

If we assume that about three-quarters of minority students meet the economic and/or cultural-linguistic criteria, that accounts for almost 8 million disadvantaged students in 1982. About 40% of minority students met the poverty criterion alone in 1983. . . . If we augment that total by the estimated 14% of non-minority students who live in poverty, another 4 million are included for a total of about 12 million disadvantaged students out of a total of 40 million in 1982. . . . [D]isadvantaged students accounted for about 30% of elementary and secondary students in 1982, and the proportion is increasing. . . . [I]n 1982 the U.S. Department of Education estimated that 42% of all children between 5 and 14 had limited proficiency in English . . . and this total does not include the high number of disadvantaged dropouts who left school but are less than 18 years old. Further, the evidence suggests . . . the disadvantaged population is being augmented by poor immigrants. . . . [T]he challenge to American education posed by disadvantaged students will rise precipitously at a time when even the present needs of educationally disadvantaged students have not been addressed satisfactorily.

How have the reforms affected disadvantaged constituencies? Some of the additional academic requirements have created barriers to high school completion because there has been no provision for additional material and human resources needed by at-risk students to meet the new requirements. Reforms calling for more rigorous academic requirements in the absence of improved educational services for at-risk students, in the long run, will only increase the dropout rate in urban areas. Mandating a specific score on a competency test for
graduation may be justified, but at-risk urban youth who begin high school with a three-year handicap in achievement will need extra and more effective instruction, more and better materials, smaller class sizes, and more appropriate grouping patterns if they are to master the skills required to pass a competency test. All of the above will require both commitment and money.

The same argument holds true for the reform recommendations for lengthening the school day and year or adding more course requirements. If special efforts are not targeted for at-risk students, increasing their time in an environment that they perceive as oppressive and requiring them to take courses they cannot understand will only perpetuate failure. Exhortations for higher standards without an infusion of resources for at-risk students is little more than a form of community catharsis.

The popularity and political support of reform legislation makes it clear that the reform movement is really directed at middle America. Neither the education establishment nor the media have acknowledged the irrelevance or the potential negative impact of the reforms on at-risk students. One explanation for this might be that the general public simply does not believe that its quality of life is lowered (or threatened) by neglecting at-risk students. Another explanation might be that the general public is dubious that there are any solutions for at-risk students and is, therefore, satisfied simply to support efforts to upgrade "regular" students.
Stated and Unstated Reasons for the Urban Teacher Shortage

With the exception of periods like the Great Depression in the 1930s and in the late 1970s when there were reductions in force in several urban districts, there has been a continuing need for urban teachers throughout our nation's history. For example, in 1803, in an effort to teach the large number of children who had emigrated from the London slums, the New York City schools adopted the organizational plan of Joseph Lancaster, a system whereby older boys (monitors) tutored younger children in classes of up to 1,000 — at low cost to the taxpayers. Why has the need for urban teachers persisted?

The answer that this need is caused by the growth of our urban population is not an adequate answer for several reasons. First, in recent times the total population of urban students has not increased; only the number of minority students has increased — mostly because of white flight. Second, the urban teacher shortage has persisted even through periods of general teacher oversupply. Third, when there has been an oversupply of teachers nationally in certain subject areas, in urban school systems there still has been a shortage of teachers in these subject areas. A final reason, while difficult to document, is the hiring and assignment practices used in some urban school systems. For example, in some systems beginning teachers may not know the grade level or subjects they will teach or even the school they will work in until the day the school year begins. And in some urban
school systems, there is a rule or a strong preference to hire only teachers who live in the city or geographic area served by the school system.

To understand why there is a continuing shortage of urban teachers, I would like to propose 13 hypotheses or explanations before going on to suggest some solutions or ameliorative policies. These 13 explanations may not be exhaustive, but they do cover what is mentioned in the literature and include the folk wisdom among professional educators and others who have studied the problem. There is a temporal quality to the explanations with different ones being favored by various constituencies at different times.

1. *Teacher supply and demand.* The supply of college graduates for all occupations or professions has some relationship to the size of the pool from which urban teachers are drawn. Occupations that carry higher salaries and status than teaching are frequently cited as one explanation for the urban teacher shortage. However, thoughtful analysts are uneasy about the simplicity of this explanation. It is not uncommon for experienced teachers to leave teaching when they find better outside opportunities. We also know that during periods of contraction in the general economy, those who have left teaching generally do not return. The supply-demand explanation may be more applicable to those just entering teacher education programs or beginning their first teaching jobs, since they are affected more by contractions in the general economy than experienced teachers who have already left the field.

The single issue of salary does not explain fully the motivations for entering or leaving teaching, but it cannot be discounted. It is noteworthy that a major source of experienced teachers for some urban school systems is the nearby parochial schools, whose salaries for lay teachers are much lower than the public school salaries. In some metropolitan areas there are even “gentlemen’s agreements” between school superintendents and church officials not to raid parochial school faculties.
The reasons individuals have for entering, leaving, or remaining in teaching are complex, so it is difficult to show a direct relationship between supply and demand in the job market; but some relationship does exist, and it seems to affect those entering a teacher education program or seeking their first job more than it affects experienced teachers or those who have left the field.

The real supply-and-demand issue — rarely discussed — is internal to the profession; namely, how does the supply and demand for teaching jobs in suburbs and small towns, which are perceived as more desirable positions, affect the supply for urban teaching positions? Currently there are urban districts needing hundreds of teachers surrounded by contiguous suburbs with several hundred highly qualified applicants for each vacancy.

2. Expanded career opportunities for women. As the need for classroom teachers decreased (1975-1983), the opportunities for women graduates increased in several professions. In the past decade universities have consistently reported increasing numbers of women students in law, business, engineering, architecture, and other traditionally male professions. In earlier periods, many of these able women would have been limited to teaching, nursing, social work, and library science. The bottom line is reflected in the following statistics: In the 1960s, 40% of female freshmen students indicated they intended to become teachers; by fall 1985, this percentage was less than 10% (American Council on Education 1986).

A different point of view, reflecting the influence of the women's movement, is made by Astin (1981), who argues that since twice as many women are pursuing college careers as were 14 years ago, there is an increase in the total female pool. And Weaver (1983) argues that awareness of the demand for teachers has influenced shifts in career choices, and that the women's movement actually has had a positive effect by increasing the number of high-quality female teacher candidates.

Again, it would be simplistic to attribute expanded career options for women as the single reason for the urban teacher shortage. After
all, there is no evidence, even when women's career choices were more limited, that those who went into teaching would choose urban schools in preference to small town and suburban ones.

3. The conditions of practice. One of the most commonly cited explanations for the shortage of good urban teachers is poor working conditions. These include a range of factors in urban school settings that impinge on the teacher's functioning, such as large class size, burdensome clerical duties, non-teaching police duties, lack of instructional materials and equipment, no access to a private telephone or restroom, and poor safety conditions, among others.

The importance of working conditions as a factor in attracting teachers to urban schools cannot be overstated. There is general consensus that no proposals for improving the preparation of urban teachers have any validity without consideration being given to the improvement of conditions of practice. Urban teachers cannot be treated as functionaries in thick bureaucracies where working conditions inhibit professional practice.

4. Irrelevance of teacher education programs. The contention that existing teacher education programs are irrelevant as far as preparing teachers for urban schools has several subparts relating to recruitment and selection. One view is that all teacher education is irrelevant, but that a neophyte teacher is more able to learn teaching skills on the job in small-town and suburban schools that still have some semblance of discipline than in the debilitating conditions found in many urban school settings. Another view is that many students come to their teacher education programs ready and willing to work in urban schools but are subjected to such poorly taught and vacuous education courses that their subsequent failure is predestined. A third view is that schools of education have never accepted the charge of preparing urban teachers. They see their role as one of providing generic principles for teaching in all situations, so they cannot be held accountable for a goal they have never accepted — preparing urban teachers. Finally, there is a worst-scenario view that urban schools
are beyond redemption; and rather than engage in "band-aid" efforts to try to keep dying institutions alive, it is better to do nothing at all and opt for some alternative plan, such as school vouchers.

In recent reform reports, teacher education is either cited as a cause of urban school problems or is ignored. The notable exception is *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (1986) issued by the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession.

5. **Institutional racism.** A common explanation for why good urban teachers are in short supply is the existence of institutional racism. This includes university admission policies to teacher education programs, state teacher certification requirements, and school district hiring practices that limit members of minority groups from entering the profession. Some charge that individuals who do their student teaching in urban schools but then seek employment elsewhere are practicing institutional racism. The charge is also made about fully licensed teachers in urban schools who do not expect their students to learn and do little more than put in their time. They remain in the urban school as "lifers," but offer little in the way of effective instruction. There is an extensive, compelling literature detailing this form of racism among teachers (Payne 1984).

6. **Fear of the urban school setting.** Fear related to in-class and out-of-class activities is a factor that cannot be dismissed. Some of these fears are very real; for example, not having a place to park one's car without fear of vandalism. Other fears are the perceptions of beginning teachers who lack experience in urban settings, let alone urban schools. A general fear of failure is a normal reaction of any beginner; but many beginning teachers in urban schools know enough about themselves and the conditions of work to have a reasonable basis for fearing failure. In some cases these fears are unfounded, resulting from lack of experience, media hype, and embellished war stories. In other instances, their self-evaluation is quite accurate; they will very likely fail in urban schools, and they are simply trying to avoid such failure. According to Yarger (1987) only 13% of those prepar-
ing to teach indicate they would even consider working in an urban school system.

7. Teachers in urban schools have to spend too much time on discipline. The general perception that the day-to-day work of the teacher in an urban school is not teaching but maintaining discipline deters persons from teaching in urban schools. Many individuals choose to become teachers because they like students and want to be liked in return and because they want to help students learn. These individuals see themselves as someone who should be respected and appreciated for all they are “giving.” Such a mental set is difficult (perhaps impossible) for many teachers to alter when faced with urban students who are surly, unappreciative, and often genuinely suspicious of the teacher’s motives. In a strict sense, a professional is an individual who makes a “best effort” to perform services for clients, who may or may not value those services. Such a viewpoint, however, is not held by many of those who seek to become teachers.

Complaints that one is a clerk, a policeman, or a lunchroom monitor are common among urban teachers. Although studies vary, the amount of time urban teachers report spending on non-teaching activities may go as high as 75%. Where these conditions exist, they tend to frighten neophytes and to cause even experienced teachers to leave the profession.

8. Bureaucracy in urban schools. Bureaucracy in urban school systems is a factor often cited as the reason why large numbers leave teaching. There is a substantial literature on the depersonalization that occurs in large bureaucratic organizations. For beginning teachers in urban schools, it is upsetting to realize that no one really cares if they are absent. Others report that that they feel they are like “interchangeable parts of a machine.” In a recent study by the author in which he asked 54 urban teachers, “What does the principal do that decreases your motivation as a teacher?” the responses were typified by the following: “We don’t see the principal. We check in with a secretary to pick up our keys in the morning and check out with
a secretary to hand in our keys in the evening. It's stand in line and say your number — your key ring number."

Some define "bureaucracy" as intrusions on the work that employees are supposed to be doing. An example of such intrusion is the constant classroom interruptions that interfere with teaching and learning — supposedly the stated purpose of the organization. In a high school in a boy's reformatory, where schooling was given as the highest priority, the author counted approximately 123 interruptions per week in a typical classroom. There is some research evidence and a wealth of personal testimony to support the thesis that large bureaucratic structures cause good teachers to leave the field while protecting less able teachers. A hypothesis worthy of study is whether urban school bureaucracies, highly depersonalized and thick with rules and regulations, select and retain less able teachers.

9. Sense of efficacy. Teachers who feel that they can make a difference in the lives of their students approach their work differently from those who believe that factors beyond their control influence student achievement. Teachers' perceptions of their own efficacy influence their expectations for student learning. This sense of efficacy is a critical dimension of urban teaching.

A sense of efficacy should be a factor in the selection of individuals preparing to teach in urban schools, and developing this sense should be part of both preservice and inservice programs. Although there is no definitive research to show that more teachers with a low sense of efficacy quit teaching, the reverse may be true, that is, more teachers with a low sense of efficacy may burn out but remain in teaching. And that is not good news for urban schools where bureaucracy is likely to lower teachers' sense of efficacy.

10. Hard work. The sheer expenditure of physical energy is a fact of life frequently overlooked in urban teaching. It may very well be that expecting individuals to work at this emotionally and physically exhausting job for more than five to eight years is unrealistic. The net effect of the present situation is that deciding who will continue
teaching in urban schools is more a matter of self-selection than it is a carefully planned program of recruitment and inservice training. Perhaps one way to maintain quality instruction is to limit teachers’ years of full-time service in the classroom. The folk wisdom of practicing urban teachers clearly recognizes that lifetime careers at full tilt are superhuman, unrealistic expectations. Those responsible for teacher training, licensure, and recruitment have yet to recognize that the actual career span of urban teachers functioning at full capacity is significantly less than a lifetime. Urban teaching may well be a truncated career.

11. Geographic maldistribution. This factor is a critical but frequently overlooked explanation for the urban teacher shortage. In 1985-86 the State of Washington had more than 2,000 certified graduates of teacher education programs seeking employment. At the same time the Houston Independent School District was in need of approximately the same number of teachers. In an effort to recruit, Houston even pays student teachers. Statistics on the number of teachers available nationally would indicate that there is no problem of teacher supply. But the problem is geographic maldistribution, with critical shortages in urban school districts. Most teacher education graduates seek to remain in their own state, indeed, often within commuting distance of their homes.

12. Locations of major teacher preparation institutions. Many of the largest teacher preparation institutions are in small cities or towns remote from urban areas. In Wisconsin they are in Oshkosh and Whitewater, not Milwaukee. In Illinois they are in Carbondale, Normal, and DeKalb, not in Chicago. In Indiana they are in Bloomington, Terre Haute, and Muncie, not in Indianapolis or Gary. Teacher education students in these universities are predominantly from small town and suburban areas and they do their student teaching in rural, small town, or suburban schools. If most future teachers come from non-urban settings and attend mostly non-urban universities and student teach in mostly non-urban schools, it is not surprising that few
of them elect to teach in urban schools. The urban teacher shortage can be attributed in part to the pastoral heritage of our major teacher preparation institutions.

13. **Lack of urban teaching experience among teacher educators.** My best estimate is that less than 5% of the full-time faculty in schools of education (approximately 45,000 faculty) have taught for even one year in the classrooms of one of the 120 largest urban school districts. This means, to me, that they do not and cannot teach what they do not know. When we combine the non-urban nature of teacher education students, the non-urban experience and orientation of teacher educators, and the bucolic settings of the teacher preparation universities, it should come as no surprise that we continue to have a shortage of good urban teachers.

The 13 factors discussed above are interrelated in many ways. In order to address these factors it is helpful to think of them in three clusters: 1) those that relate to the perceptions of persons who choose to become teachers; 2) those that relate to the nature of university-based teacher education; and 3) those that relate to the conditions of professional practice in urban schools. Recommendations for dealing with the urban teacher shortage will be presented in the context of these three clusters in the chapters that follow.
Selecting Urban Teachers

Most studies of entry level students who report that they always wanted to teach support the stereotypes: 94% are white; 74% are female; two-thirds of the males express preference for high school teaching; two-thirds of females express a preference for elementary schools; and 12% of both sexes prefer middle school teaching. (Book, Byers, and Freeman 1983).

These students are overwhelmingly from rural and suburban areas. Few of them have had all their previous schooling in urban areas, and fewer still express a desire to teach in urban schools. Only 57% indicate they plan to remain in teaching for more than 10 years. About half who plan to leave the profession indicate advanced training and career change as their reason; the other half plan to raise a family.

Almost 80% of them report that they were “leaders” in high school (and earlier), took mostly academic or advanced courses, and had little or no involvement in vocational education. The majority of these students attended school in the same community, K through 12. They were successful and enjoyed school. Many decided on a teaching career by observing their own teachers (Lortie 1975). About 80% indicate they had been camp counselors, aides, or Sunday School teachers.

The overriding perception of most of these students is that “teaching is an extended form of parenting about which there is little to learn other than through instinct and one’s own experiences as a child” (Book, Byers, and Freeman 1983, p. 10). About one-quarter express
a high degree of confidence and another two-thirds a moderately strong
degree of confidence that they could begin teaching immediately with-
out any teacher training. The two functions they express least confi-
dence about performing immediately are relating to pupils with special
needs and managing discipline problems. Enhancing children’s self-
concepts is perceived as a higher goal than fostering pupils’ academic
achievement or creating an effective learning environment. These
perceptions of entry level students, who have not yet taken even one
education course, are the basis for my contention that they are poor
prospects for teaching in urban schools.

What, then, might be done to select individuals to prepare as ur-
ban teachers? Following are recommendations designed to attract con-
stituencies currently ignored or undervalued, which use more relevant
criteria for predicting who might succeed in urban schools.

1. The most valid criterion for selecting persons to prepare to teach
in urban schools is to observe their interactions with children and
youth. The basic admissions criteria now used in most teacher prepa-
ration institutions are G.P.A. and basic skills tests. These traditional
criteria should be supplemented by observing students in early field
experiences (before student teaching) to see how they relate to chil-
dren and youth. Teacher education institutions should have policies
in place that allow them to turn down students with high G.P.A.’s
and high test scores if these students do not demonstrate their ability
to work with and relate to children and youth.

Pre-student-teaching experiences should include at least 200 hours
in the schools. Part of the experience might involve tutoring an eth-
nic minority youngster who needs extra help in regular school sub-
jects. Another experience might be conducting an after-school activity
with a small group of youngsters, some of whom have a handicapping
condition.

Currently teacher preparation institutions allocate about 95% of their
supervisory time and budgets to the supervision of student teachers
and interns, some of whom never should have gotten that far. Effec-
tive pre-student-teaching experiences would lead many individuals to self-select themselves out of the teacher education program — before they have invested two or more years. Pre-student-teaching experiences should play a central role in the selection process. Clearly more time and budget must be allocated for this purpose.

2. A personal interview (which it is possible to fail) should be part of the selection process for those preparing to become urban teachers. This interview should involve, in addition to faculty, at least one urban classroom teacher who is an adjunct of the university. While it may not be possible to keep a person from entering the program on the basis of an interview, obvious misfits can be identified and counseled out of the program. This will save much time and anxiety later on.

The personal interview also is useful for identifying outstanding candidates whose paper credentials might not show the person as having high potential for urban teaching. The interview might show that traditional criteria for admission should be “bent” if the candidate has other qualities that signal success in urban teaching.

3. The first course in education should be the most rigorous and should serve as an integral part of the selection process. Rather than such traditional courses as Introduction to Education or Social and Cultural Foundations, the first course in the professional sequence should be academically rigorous and should deal with the day-to-day work of urban teachers. It might be titled, “Behaviors of Effective Urban Teachers” and include content that is now reserved for graduate students or inservice teachers. This course should include simulation experiences and micro- and peer teaching. Furthermore, it should be taught by the institution's leading education faculty member in cooperation with an experienced classroom teacher.

A second emphasis of this course would be the professionalization of content. Students would be subgrouped by grade level and subject matter and be required to demonstrate that they can translate abstract principles from various subject areas into learning experiences that are appropriate for children and youth of all ages and abilities.
My rationale for this recommendation is twofold: It would counteract the perceptions of many beginners who believe that education courses lack content, that they are irrelevant to urban schools, and that common sense and one’s past school experiences are all that is necessary to teach. And it would make the first course in the professional sequence serve as a screening device as it does in other professions. While it is not possible to cover all that is known about teaching in one course, it is imperative that the first course provide students with an in-depth knowledge base for dealing with instruction. As long as universities take no deliberate steps to counteract the perceptions with which education students typically begin teacher education, then their programs will continue to serve as self-fulfilling prophecies — with students not expecting to learn much and then proving it.

Taken together, the early field experiences, the interview, and a rigorous beginning practicum course should be used to select those who should continue in the urban teacher preparation program and to counsel out those who are likely to fail in an urban setting.

4. Students accepted into the teacher education program should pass through a series of decision points prior to student teaching, which will determine their continuation in the program. Growing out of the rigorous course described in #3 above should be a syllabus that includes 30 to 50 specific skills of teaching. These would include, among others, the skills of planning, classroom organization, effective discipline, making assignments, questioning, and evaluation. Each preservice student should be tested on each skill prior to being allowed to student teach or work as an intern. This emphasis on teaching skills will convey to preservice students that there is much more to pedagogy than assigning pages out of a textbook.

Students should be allowed to proceed through these skills at their own pace. Schools of education should be able to individualize instruction, not just preach about it! The important point is that if students fail to master these skills, and if subsequent efforts to relearn them prove inadequate, then these students should not be allowed to
student teach or serve as interns. Student teaching and internships are expensive, labor-intensive operations. And I might add, they exploit the services of underpaid, overworked classroom teachers who serve as cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers have a right to expect that the students and interns sent to them have already been taught and have demonstrated basic instructional skills and are not coming, de novo, for skills training.

5. Selection of candidates for urban teaching should involve continuing evaluation of their reasons for wanting to teach in an urban setting. Of students who self-select to enter a teacher education program, 95% cite as their reason a desire to help build children and youth's self-esteem; 81% state that they love children (Book, Freeman, and Broussard 1985). If what these students tell us is true, that they are are motivated primarily by their love of children and a desire to improve these children's self-concepts, then they are in for both shock and disillusionment when they enter an urban school classroom.

Successful urban teachers are able to teach effectively whether their pupils are lovable or not; and they are able to teach students who may not demonstrate gratitude or affection in return. Preservice students and beginning urban teachers must be disabused of the notion that love is the basis of instruction. Space does not permit an analysis of the relationship between self-concept and learning, but suffice it to say that there is an extremely strong case to support the contention that how people feel about themselves is a function of the situations in which they find themselves and not in some persisting inner state called the "self-concept." Finally, the cumulated craft wisdom of successful urban teachers supports the premise that how pupils feel about themselves is a consequence of successful school experience, not a prerequisite condition for learning. Education professors may argue this issue; effective urban teachers do not.

Urban schools will chew up and spit out novice teachers who begin with the notion of love as the basis for relating to pupils or who
believe that students' lack of achievement or misbehavior is a func-
tion of a low self-concept. Teacher education programs should ac-
tively seek to change such student perceptions if they expect their urban
teacher candidates to succeed. The best evidence we have is that suc-
cessful urban teachers work hard at teaching the unlovable; see their
role as developing academic skills and intellectual growth, not as shap-
ing personalities; and are not driven by personal emotional needs for
pupil approval (Payne 1984).

6. Candidates for urban teaching must be helped to become con-
tinuing students of teaching. Student teachers, interns, and beginning
teachers must learn from their own experiences and become students
of teaching (Dewey 1904). We know that beginning teachers suffer
professional isolation. One of the reasons for the high fail-
ure/quit/dropout rate among beginning teachers is that they do not
function as continuous learners. They frequently are observed using
the same ineffective behaviors in the tenth month of teaching as in
the first month. They have not learned from their experience and they
do not have the self-evaluation skills to overcome their deficiencies.
Of course, this is partially the result of inadequate feedback from su-
pervisors. This recommendation is particularly germane to urban
teaching where there is less margin for error before losing the class.
The challenge for beginning urban teachers is to learn from every
encounter with children and youth. To do less puts one's professional
survival at stake.

7. Master urban teachers should have a central role in the selec-
tion of students preparing to teach in urban schools. Increasingly,
urban school systems are using their most effective teachers as men-
tors, coaches, and trainers of interns and beginning teachers. Such
individuals should serve as clinical professors in the teacher educa-
tion programs preparing urban teachers. In carrying out Recom-
mendation #1, these field-based clinical professors might have a major
responsibility for setting up early field experiences and supervis-
ing/evaluating the students participating in them. In this role, they
would have a voice, along with faculty, in deciding which students are actually admitted to the program. In carrying out Recommendation #2, they also could participate in the personal interviews and have a voice in the selection process.

In implementing Recommendation #3, clinical professors should be involved in identifying the teaching skills to be taught and, when appropriate, serving as instructors to teach these skills. Recommendations #4, #5, and #6 deal with perceptions of preservice students. The clinical professors are likely to be more knowledgeable than the university faculty and, therefore, should be directly involved in advising and counseling preservice students. "Involvement" here means that the clinical professors should have a voice (and a vote) and at least the same degree of authority as university faculty (or administrators) in determining who shall be admitted to the teacher education program.

8. Every teacher preparation institution should have a deliberate plan for recruiting, selecting, and inducting minority group members into urban teacher education programs. The argument that more minorities need to become teachers does not derive from evidence that urban at-risk students learn more from them. Neither is "the minority as model" argument any more appropriate for urban schools than it is for small town or suburban schools, where white students hardly ever see minorities as models of the educated professional. Rather, the argument is essentially an ideological one for a democratic society that purports to practice social equity. In theory, social equity means to me that there should be approximately the same percentage of each minority group in the various professions as their percentage in the total population. And by extension, because more minorities live in urban areas, there should be more minorities in professional roles in those areas. The gap between theory and reality is a continuing dilemma in our democracy, and seeking solutions will provide fodder for social scientists and politicians for years to come.
I will attempt a more modest effort by making recommendations for increasing the number of minority teachers for urban schools.
First, let me review and comment on some of the recommendations others have made for ways teacher preparation institutions might select and prepare more minorities. Some of the recommendations call for coaching minority students in "test-wiseness" and for countering their feelings of alienation in higher education settings (Bell and Morsink 1986). Others call for states to consider alternatives to competency tests (Smith 1987), which are unlikely to be considered and, if adopted, would be challenged on grounds of lowering standards. The most common responses of universities are to expand loans and other means of financial support and to offer remedial programs in basic skills. Another practice for urban universities is to sponsor Future Teacher Clubs in local high schools in an effort to identify good candidates at an early age. These efforts have been somewhat successful, but the pool of minorities attracted have been small and mostly female. Teacher education institutions should consider all of these methods.

Three suggestions that have not been generally pursued are worth trying. First a caveat: Focusing recruiting efforts solely on late adolescent blacks and Hispanics is not the most fruitful approach. We know that many of them will not make it to the junior year when most teacher education programs begin, and even fewer will graduate. It would make more sense for urban universities to recruit minority adults — those who have completed a year or two of college — and work with them in meeting both their liberal arts and professional requirements. The advantage of this approach is that this population is more mature and more likely to have mastered the basic skills. The disadvantage is that these individuals tend to be part-time students, who have low priority in schools of education, and most of them will need financial aid. A second cohort with promise, although admittedly a smaller pool, are adult minority college graduates in other fields. The advantages are obvious; the disadvantage again is the the need for financial aid.

Still another approach that remains untried is linkages with junior and community colleges. This approach holds much more promise
than trying to raid the small pool of academically successful minorities in other departments in the university. The largest pool of blacks and Hispanics is in junior and community colleges. Most urban universities have one or more junior or community colleges nearby with whom they could establish a partnership. Minority (and majority) students who complete two-year programs and want to prepare for urban teaching could enter the professional education sequence in the university. Such students could work as teacher aides in local urban schools to help support themselves. The challenge would be to provide this cohort with the advanced courses needed for an academic major. But there are ways to do this if there is a genuine universitywide commitment to do so. Teacher educators should stop scratching around in pools where minorities are in short supply and begin to identify and work with minority populations where they exist — in junior and community colleges.

Of course, not all or even a majority of two-year community college graduates will be interested in or capable of becoming teachers. But the pool of potential candidates is greatest there, and efforts should be made to develop programs to help these persons make the transition to the teacher education sequence in an urban university. The average age of two-year graduates is 27, and they tend to have a good sense of what it takes to operate in the urban school scene. Also, since they have completed two years of post-secondary education, they are more likely than high school youth to pass basic skills tests.

9. In order to recruit, select, and prepare teachers for urban schools, it will be necessary to tap new constituencies. Edelfelt (1986) has proposed 16 ideas for dealing with the urban teacher shortage. Some of his suggestions involve redeploying existing school staffs; others involve recruiting untapped constituencies. These latter groups include those interested in job-sharing and those who are willing to make shorter commitments of two or three years in the classroom. He also proposes establishing cadres of college graduates interested in performing community services in urban areas and enlisting faculty from post-secondary institutions. What I find interesting in Edelfelt's
list of alternative proposals is that it reinforces my contention that we cannot rely on traditional university teacher education programs to recruit and prepare quality candidates for teaching in urban schools. While universities have procedures for screening the students they already have, such screening uses inappropriate criteria for a constituency that is unsuited for and uninterested in urban teaching.

The Hard Criteria for Successful Urban Teaching

The hard criteria for selecting future urban teachers are derived from an analysis of the attributes and behaviors of successful, practicing urban teachers. We know that unsuccessful urban teachers are subject to burnout, are demoralized by oppressive bureaucracies, and are unable to apply theory and research to practice in their teaching. They tend to blame the victim — the “at-risk” students themselves — as the cause of their own problems. They also have an emotional need for approval from their pupils. Successful urban teachers, on the other hand, possess both personal and professional attributes that allow them to cope with and overcome the problems associated with unsuccessful teachers.

Successful urban teachers have a dogged persistence that mitigates the conditions for burnout. They are able to work within a bureaucratic structure but are adept at working around it when the situation calls for it. They are able to apply principles and research findings in the classroom and are able to make abstract generalizations concrete for their students. They understand the conditions that create at-risk students but, nevertheless, are able to accept these students and work with them. Finally, they find professional satisfaction in their teaching and do not have a psychological need for the approval of their students. Successful urban teachers have a professional stance that says, in effect, “I deny you to prevent me from coming up with activities at which you will be successful!” These attributes should serve as the basis for determining the hard criteria for those responsible for selecting candidates preparing to teach in urban schools.
The Two Worlds of Teacher Education

Preparing urban teachers will require extensive field experiences in urban schools, beginning with experiences early in the program as an integral part of the selection process. The best basis for selecting candidates for urban teaching is by observing them interacting with children and youth in controlled, specially designed situations. Field experiences related to coursework should also be with students in urban schools. Similarly, student teaching and internships also must be in urban schools. We either have to urbanize teacher education programs in our universities, or we have to start selecting candidates from different constituencies and prepare them in alternative programs designed and controlled by urban school systems working with selected universities.

The time has come for requiring a special license endorsement for urban teachers. This urban endorsement should be available to current urban teachers and to beginners who successfully complete a demanding program of preparation, such as described here. Initially such a requirement will exacerbate the shortage of urban teachers. However, the solution to the shortage lies neither in continuing to send those prepared in traditional, non-urban programs to almost certain failure nor in abandoning the standards of an effective urban teacher education program.

Following are some of the conditions and practices for upgrading urban teacher education programs leading to an urban license endorse-
ment. Those controlling admission to the program could include traditional constituencies of college youth but also should seek out college graduates and other adults whose primary identification and self-definition is urban teacher not university student. Criteria for selection will be significantly different for those who perceive themselves primarily as urban teachers. The typical university student's mental set is one of completing required courses with passing grades leading to graduation. By contrast, those who define themselves as urban teachers approach all their learning experiences against the reality of practice.

Using Edelfelt's (1986) 16 recruitment suggestions as well as others, it is possible to have more relevant selection criteria and still prepare enough teachers for urban schools. Next to improving the conditions of practice in urban schools, upgrading the quality of preparation may be the best single method of solving the urban teacher shortage.

The geographic location of most universities precludes them from preparing teachers for urban schools. Whether they are in the Holmes Group or are NCATE approved is irrelevant when it comes to providing urban-based professional laboratory experiences. Closely related to the factor of geographic isolation is the lack of urban education experience by school of education faculty, and this includes even faculty in urban universities.

The first world of teacher education (that envisioned by many of the current reform reports) involves improving the quality of university-based teacher education programs. Specifically the recommendations include: completing an undergraduate academic major outside of education, deferring the professional education sequence until after completing the baccalaureate, taking research-based coursework, extending periods of practice in supervised internships, and testing basic skills for admission and professional competency at exit for purposes of certification. In this world, the standards of quality, as universities currently assess them, will no doubt be raised.
But what will be the effect of these improved standards of quality on urban teaching? In my view, as long as university-based teacher education programs continue to use their traditional selection procedures and continue to serve mostly non-urban-oriented students, they will only perpetuate the irrelevance of their programs to urban schools.

The second world of teacher education offers more relevance but questions of quality remain. I am referring here to recent legislation or regulations in certain states (California, Texas, New Jersey), which have enabled school districts to select college graduates and prepare them on the job. Other states are following suit. Urban school districts long have used uncertified persons in the classroom on an emergency basis. They would not have been able to open the school doors in September without these persons. However, these new laws enable districts in selected states to operate their own teacher education programs, with or without university involvement, and legitimize their right to offer a training program leading to state certification and licensure. College graduates may now be hired as district employees and assigned full teaching loads. The district (with varying degrees of state support) provides a mentor or master teacher, who is released part-time to supervise the neophyte. Alternative programs also use district personnel (and in some cases university faculty) for workshops and classes as part of the on-the-job training.

In the two worlds of teacher education I have sketched, there is an active debate in process regarding how to inject quality into university-based programs. In the alternative certification programs the issues seem to be focused more on time and efficiency. That is, how much on-the-job time with a mentor is required to give beginners the basic skills to be on their own? Or what is the minimal number of workshops beginners should have?

From a recruitment/selection viewpoint, many adults now choosing to enter one of the alternative certification programs may be better suited for urban teaching than those from traditional university-based programs. They are college graduates with academic
majors in fields other than education. They self-select to teach in urban schools. They do not begin with the mental set of “loving children” as their primary motivation; neither do they report “improving self-concepts” as their primary goal. They expect to learn about teaching by doing it on the job (with supervision and help from a mentor). They are older and more experienced in the ways of the world. They include more minorities and males than is typical of traditional teacher education programs. They are more willing to reside in urban areas and are more accepting of urban conditions. They readily pass basic skills tests and compare favorably with other college graduates on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). But there is much that must be improved in these alternative certification programs. For example, they emphasize technique to the almost complete exclusion of reflective thinking about teaching. In effect, these programs serve as a screening mechanism for selecting teachers at the expense of children and youth. Nevertheless, in terms of recruitment and selection, there is much that traditional teacher education institutions can learn from the constituencies who are attracted to such programs.

Nowhere is the gap between the two worlds of teacher education more evident than in Texas, where in 1985 the number of uncertified people hired by school districts was approximately double the number of those trained in “improved” university programs (Haberman 1986). This gap between the two worlds will continue to increase, with the university programs stressing graduate work, research-base content, and ever more sophisticated ways of analyzing teaching; and the alternative, school-based programs stressing an on-the-job apprenticeship model for individuals predisposed to urban life.

In the final chapter, I will discuss future directions for improving teacher education with an emphasis on preparing teachers for urban schools.
Future Directions in Preparing Teachers for Urban Schools

If, as I have argued in this fastback, teacher education programs as they currently operate in universities do not and cannot prepare teachers for urban schools, then who can? Some would argue that only practicing teachers can. While there may be merit in that argument, teachers need much more than their own direct experience to transform neophytes into effective urban teachers. What is needed is new, more honest forms of cooperative relationships between master teachers and selected professors working together in urban schools, not the university setting. Following are eight proposals that I believe are essential for a new form of urban teacher education.

1. Traditional university-based teacher education programs will have to be modified so that a major portion of the program is conducted where pupils are — in the public schools and particularly in urban public schools.

2. Both preservice programs and inservice programs for practicing teachers will be taught or supervised by selected university faculty and master classroom teachers. This will require new forms of cooperative relationships between the universities and the schools, with the master teachers serving as clinical professors in the preservice program and as mentors for beginning teachers. Those serving as mentors will continue to serve as classroom teachers for part of the day.

3. The new teacher education faculty, consisting of selected professors and master classroom teachers, will need its own inservice train-
ing in order to develop a new urban education curriculum. Once the urban education curriculum is developed, they will be responsible for seeing that it is effectively implemented.

4. A full year of carefully supervised internship will be required before candidates are recommended for certification. Certification will be in the form of a new licensure for urban teaching requiring endorsement in additional competencies beyond those required for current state licensure. This will require modifications in current certification requirements in most states.

5. Functional partnerships among parents, teachers, administrators, community groups, and the teacher preparation staff will have to be created to give these constituencies a voice in teacher education.

6. The fiscal and human resources to support new forms of teacher preparation at school sites will come primarily from the districts and the states. Eventually, some of the state funds currently directed to schools of education may be reallocated to urban school districts where cooperative urban teacher education programs are offered.

7. The conditions of practice in urban schools must be improved in tandem with the implementation of the new urban teacher preparation and inservice programs.

While there is no guarantee that any of the proposals suggested here will solve all the teacher shortage and teacher quality problems in urban schools, one thing is certain: current university programs are not doing the job and the situation continues to deteriorate. We can identify the many factors that are the root causes of the urban teacher problem. The solutions suggested here address these factors, and I believe they can do much to alleviate the problems. To attempt less than a full-scale overhaul of existing teacher education programs will only perpetuate urban school failures, which erodes the foundation of a democratic society.
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