

Prioritizing Urban Children,
Teachers, and Schools
through Professional
Development Schools

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themselves, but a unit within a much broader environment, and they know that engaging in exchanges with that environment is a condition of survival. This makes them *active* in survival strategies, utilizing whatever resources and services the environment has to offer to better their chances of success. Thus, they create and build connections both within and outside of their school structure—in short, they bridge the traditional *disconnect* gap inherent within schools and between schools and institutions of higher education.

Making History by Creating New Traditions

Concluding Reflections and Future Directions

Ronald David Glass and Pia Lindquist Wong

The six years of Equity Network PDS projects that are described in this book constitute an impressive body of work and chart the creation of new traditions that will, we hope, address the more persistent educational equity challenges that have been a part of the history of public schooling and teacher preparation to date. In the preceding chapters, we have showcased our work while offering critical and honest reflections on the limitations and missteps that have also been integral parts of our experience and our learning. In this chapter, we situate our accomplishments and our challenges within the broader historical context of reforms in teacher education and for educational equity in the K–12 sector. In analyzing the interplay between tradition and our attempts to interrupt it through the Equity Network PDS projects, we are able to identify key themes that we hope will frame our future collaborative projects as we use a model of engaged pedagogy to create new and more equitable traditions in teacher education and urban public schooling.

Themes in the History of School Reform and Teacher Education: Toward a New Tradition

As those who spend time in urban settings quickly conclude, public schools are not working well for LI/RCLD children. In fact, historical analysis reveals that schools have always produced mixed outcomes for the poor, providing a modicum of opportunity for the few while exacting a heavy psychological

price from the many who suffer its ranking and sorting assessments with little hope of success. For people of color, these processes were made all the harsher by decades of discriminatory segregation and paltry funding for their schools, with few social and economic opportunities awaiting even the best and brightest. After World War II and the vast expansion of schooling for the poor and working class that flowed from the generosity of the GI Bill of Rights, new obstacles were placed in their way in the form of broader applications of standardized testing. Not surprisingly, LI/RCLD students found themselves again at a decided disadvantage. Consequently, closing the test-score gap and pursuing educational equity have been consistent themes in education policy discourse since *Brown v. Board of Education* broke down some of the primary legal props upholding segregated schooling.

Nationally, several trends have surfaced. Increased and more equitable distribution of resources are perennial demands, and while simple fairness would seem to require the provision of adequate resources for all students to have an equal opportunity to learn, this has proven astonishingly difficult to achieve. The issue remains much debated but rarely addressed in a systemic manner (Hanushek, 2003; Levin & McEwan, 2002). Lawsuits to address funding injustices have made little headway, and even the victory achieved in the *Williams* case in California was limited because it was settled without redressing the underlying structural discrimination against LI/RCLD children and their communities. Despite substantial moral, political, and legal pressures on public education nationally to provide equitable and adequate resources, the discrepancies in funding between school districts in a community can amount to literally hundreds of thousands of dollars per classroom, and, even in California, where there are limits on such gaps, it typically amounts to tens of thousands of dollars per classroom (Peske & Haycock, 2006).

Similarly, one can find a substantial gap between rhetoric and practice when it comes to honoring a curriculum that embodies the contributions and perspectives of the multiethnic and multiracial realities of U.S. life. The democratization of content and fostering of anti-bias skills and dispositions in students has fallen victim to the narrowing of curriculum caused by the push toward greater emphasis on standardized testing (Jones, Jones, & Hargrove, 2003). The push back against the post-*Brown* gains has been relentless, and over the last 25 years it has been the dominant driver of school reform.

The anemic responses of the educational system to the most serious challenges of the past 50 years to its dominant "grammar of schooling" betokens the power of institutional forms to resist substantive transformation when they have become absorbed into the taken-for-granted cultural frame of reference (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Although a confluence of historical, economic, and political forces can produce tectonic shifts in schooling, even these changes have had limited effect in altering the foundational social

structures of inequalities tied to race, gender, language, and class (Katznelson & Weir, 1985; Tyack, 1974). For the most part, however, over the last 100 years, reformers have tinkered with the system with minimal effect on the core structure and the underlying assumptions and values that shape schooling. This has led other analysts to view the battles about schools as embedded in larger power struggles about resource distribution and representation in the social and political sphere (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Carnoy & Levin, 1985). They argued that broader social forces perpetually shift alignments in an uneasy coexistence in the midst of fundamental conflicts structured into the contradictions in democracy and capitalism, and thus historically evolving coalitions compete for control over school policy decisions, from curriculum content to instructional strategies to governance and contract issues. The ideology and discourse of school policymaking swing from a pro-democracy stance, in which concerns about representation, opportunity, and equity are paramount, to a pro-capitalism stance, in which workforce preparation, efficiency, "excellence," and standardization dominate.

Recent national reform efforts are reflected in this analysis. Reform advocates in the 1950s and 1960s focused the nation's attention on the unequal educational outcomes and opportunities that sorted children by social class, gender, and race, producing schooling outcomes that reproduced existing social relations. Many of their demands focused on issues of access—for students and communities—and on the content of the school curriculum. Still concerned with this equity issue, reformers showcased "effective schools" in the early 1980s as the model to follow for improved educational outcomes, particularly for LI/RCLD students (for example the Accelerated Schools Project and Comer School Development Project). But the creation of effective schools proved more difficult, and the staying power of the old system more persistent, than anticipated. Administrators and policymakers soon discovered that conditions needed to replicate effective schools for LI/RCLD students on a systemwide basis required considerable investment, that policy and program mandates did not always translate into projected behaviors, and that the same combination of factors in different contexts produced varying results. Not surprisingly, the momentum for change waned.

As support for the effective schools approach faded, calls were issued for new reforms focused on the management and administrative structure of schools, and on imposing measurable standards on schools and teachers in order to make them "accountable." The Reagan-Bush era *Nation at Risk* report decried the "rising tide of mediocrity" engulfing the nation, and called for the return to basics that could enable the nation to compete in the rapidly globalizing economy. When the politics of blaming schools and teachers for a weak economy played well with voters, schools became harnessed to the corporate effort to retool the workforce and restructure the economy.

Corporate and industrial models of management and decision-making became predominant, and business leaders again exercised explicit influence over school policy matters, whether at the local level through Chambers of Commerce or at the state and national level through organizations such as the Business Roundtable. Reforms such as site-based management teams were touted because of their success in improving efficiencies and profits for corporate giants like Toyota (or General Motors' Saturn plants, which mimicked the Japanese forms of management) (Emery & Ohanian, 2004). The argument was that these proven industrial modalities would transmute the inefficiencies in schools to produce better teaching and learning (i.e., higher productivity and profitability). Aligned with these demands were market-oriented reforms (charters and vouchers) intended to promote competition, which in turn was supposed to yield increased excellence in school performance (as measured on standardized tests). To make this restructured system work, schools had to conform to uniform curriculum and outcome standards and adopt prescribed accountability systems to measure progress toward the standards. These initiatives, launched a quarter century ago, have become the transcendent organizing principles for public schools, and have imposed an especially heavy burden on those who serve LI/RCLD students and communities (Orfield & Kornhaber, 2001).

In 2000, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as "No Child Left Behind" or NCLB, launched a standards- and testing-based assault on the test-score status quo in schools. NCLB dramatically increased federal activism in local education matters, with unprecedented mandates related to testing instruments and protocols, curriculum adoptions, teacher certification, and teacher training. On its surface, NCLB appears to prioritize the education of students who have historically been marginalized, and it calls for accelerated implementation timetables for schools serving the nation's poorest and most diverse students. At the same time, NCLB has been widely criticized by scholars for its reliance on invalid measures and inappropriate test-score targets. Its implementation has been fraught with difficulties caused not only by the faulty logic of its mandates, but by severely inadequate funding of key legislative provisions. NCLB's exclusive dependence on standardized tests to measure what a "child knows and can do" ignores the realities that these tests do not and cannot fully measure student learning and achievement, they are often misaligned with adopted state content standards, they fail to provide accommodations to students whose learning cannot be accurately measured by current tools (e.g., tests in English for recently immigrated students), and they do not provide informative data for subsequent teaching and learning decisions. Furthermore, NCLB imposes arbitrary proficiency targets that do not reliably or validly capture student growth in learning, and it exaggerates testing requirements

as a performance measure, which channels significant resources away from a wide range of important teaching and learning needs toward simply raising test scores. This reorientation of instruction is driven in part by insufficient funding to enable quality teaching, and it creates disincentives for professionalism and creativity among teachers through a growing reliance on highly scripted curricula geared into the tests, which cannot simply be ignored because NCLB provides for serious sanctions that are often hastily applied and/or applied based on invalid data. The resultant narrowed curriculum for those who score low on tests most severely impacts schools serving LI/RCLD students, once again putting these children at a disadvantage. Sadly, NCLB requirements and consequences ignore solidly grounded research findings that contradict the political agenda behind the act (such as when decades of research showing negative consequences of retaining children for low test scores is ignored in favor of supposedly "higher standards").

Many educators of all political persuasions see a broader agenda underlying NCLB that explains its imperviousness to these very substantial criticisms. Though the Bush-Cheney policymakers' propaganda about NCLB heralds it as a significant attempt to transform a failing public school system and make it more fair for LI/RCLD students, the legislation's discrete actions and mandates indicate that the end goal of this transformation may well be an education system that is decidedly in the hands of private and entrepreneurial education providers. Schools facing five successive years of "program improvement" status must cede their operations to state control, to a private firm, or pursue charter status. Local control cannot include the pursuit of practitioner-created programs that reconstruct organizational, managerial, and teaching systems to expand local capacity and meet a variety of locally determined learning goals rather than test-score improvement. Similarly, schools in chronic "program improvement" status must allocate funds to contract with private tutorial programs to provide interventions for profit, rather than extend the instructional day through programs taught by the certified publicly employed teachers who already know the school's students and its curriculum. Not surprisingly, this national policy push toward the dismantling of public education is not warranted by any research that demonstrates that for-profit corporate approaches achieve any better testing outcomes, and some recent research actually shows that the public schools serving LI/RCLD pupils outperform their charter and private competitors on this most simplistic and meaningless of measures (though the only one legitimated by these policies).

These various corporate or industry models of management appeal to that faction of the policymaking community concerned foremost with reforming schools to meet efficiency goals in relation to workforce preparation, and the testing regimes provide easy information (though not always accurate)

to the public at large and permit policymakers to make what sound like objective claims in the pursuit of a broad political agenda that cares little for public schools or the LI/RCLD children who are most dependent on them. While these approaches may mollify the business sector, professional educators and advocates for children worry deeply about the effects, particularly for children who are already disadvantaged by virtue of their home language, socioeconomic position, race, or abilities. Yet the prevailing policy environment goes forward with its programming no matter how often critics of NCLB point to the logical and technical flaws in transferring corporate-industrial models to schools, where human beings learn, develop, and teach but cannot be manufactured and engineered to specification. The fact is, the stated aims of these reforms are in some ways beyond reach, but meanwhile the evidence of negative consequences continues to mount.

Fortunately for LI/RCLD students and communities, human beings are resilient, unpredictable, and capable of subverting the intention and practices of even the most inhumane environments, so teachers, parents, and students have been fighting back with growing force against the globalized standards and testing regimes. More and more people are calling for schools to return to their democratic purposes, and demanding that adequate resources be provided so that all students can learn and have a fair opportunity in school and in life (Oakes, Rogers, & Lipton, 2006; Shirley, 1997). A sophisticated strategy for enhancing the social, economic, and political context in which public schooling occurs for LI/RCLD families—job prospects for parents, availability of health care and affordable housing, safe neighborhoods, accessibility of cultural and educational opportunities—must accompany any serious effort to improve public education (Anyon, 1997, 2005; Lipman, 2004).

At the same time, while many of the barriers and challenges facing LI/RCLD schools cannot be overcome by the professionals within them but rather need the allied forces of the larger community that are now getting in motion, there remains much that can be done with high-quality teacher preparation and development. Recent research affirms the centrality of quality teaching as a significant and necessary ingredient for producing educational success (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Peske & Haycock, 2006), and particular characteristics of highly qualified teachers and conditions needed for high-quality teaching have been identified. These factors include strong subject matter preparation, pedagogical knowledge and competence, analytic skills, interpersonal skills, organizational skills, and the ability to work across disparate groups of stakeholders who vary in age and in their objectives for being involved with schools (Achinstein, Ogawa, & Speigman, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). Critical educators also cite the importance of anti-bias knowledge, sensitivities and skills, an ability to negotiate between multiple cultural and identity worlds, a commitment to education for social

justice, and advocacy and leadership skills (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Glass & Wong, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Oakes, 2003). The university clearly has an important role to play in preparing and supporting such a high quality teaching force. But, without a clear and current understanding of K-12 teaching and learning realities in LI/RCLD schools and sophisticated strategies for how to prepare new teachers to be successful in this context, universities could easily and widely miss the mark in their teacher preparation efforts, particularly when it comes to dynamic and complex urban settings.

Despite the shortcomings often noted about teacher education, specific preparation programs have been shown to positively impact the subsequent performance of its graduates (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). Such programs usually focus on particular aims and outcomes, are built on clear unifying principles, and often are relatively small. Still, many conservative commentators and pundits condemn the quality of the teaching force and call not just for the reform of teacher education in general, but for the virtual elimination of university programs, suggesting that credentialing programs be replaced with hiring criteria related to verbal acuity and subject matter knowledge (Walsh, 2001). Others take a more studied approach and focus on improving several factors that appear to plague college- and university-based teacher education programs across institutions and regions (Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990):

1. The absence of teacher education from the shared mission of the institution, often despite what the proportion of education-focused students might actually warrant.
2. Fragmentation across the teacher education curriculum creating a situation in which future teachers take subject matter and pedagogy courses in a number of departments, none of which claim full responsibility for their ultimate preparation.
3. Discontinuities in terms of the kinds of values being transmitted to future teachers.
4. Tensions between knowledge-theory and practice, with knowledge-theory often taking a backseat to practical concerns because of district pressures, hiring forecasts, and candidates' own anxieties.
5. Lack of attention to the distinct challenges of preparing mostly monolingual, dominant culture women for highly diverse and poor urban education settings.
6. Efforts by the state to standardize and narrow teacher education to the most basic technical concerns.

Not surprisingly, the calls for eliminating teacher education understandably find few supporters in colleges of education or among the ranks of certified teachers. There, a deep understanding of the emotional, cognitive, and social complexities of classroom teaching makes it easy to dismiss the notion that teaching is merely about being verbally adept, "loving kids," and knowing some subject matter. Rather, most teachers and teacher educators recognize and affirm the set of critiques offered by Goodlad, his colleagues, and others (Sarason, 1993). They agree that teacher preparation programs and university structures need to be profoundly reconceptualized to address the major challenges that face not only the field of teacher education but the reform of schools serving LI/RCLD populations. Programs must enable new teachers to emerge with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work productively with diverse learners in ways that are respectful and rigorous, to engage families and communities in school life, and to reorient the organizational life of the school toward goals of equity and quality.

Sarason (1993) argued that reformed teacher education was the logical and more efficient first step to K-12 reform, and could *prevent* problems by changing attitudes and practices before they became socialized into the existing routines of schools, which are so resistant to change. He also recognized that the *repair* of schools must be undertaken concurrently and symbiotically with the *prevention* achieved with the restructuring of teacher preparation. This could be achieved by having future teachers engaged in structured experiences that allow them to understand the full complexity of working in classrooms, schools, and school districts. In his vision, candidates would have early undergraduate experiences in which they would interact not only with teachers, but with other school personnel active in the lives of children and they would learn about other aspects of the school system such as policymaking, curriculum development, parent relations, and collective bargaining. These integrated course and field experiences would help foster the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for success in these complex systems.

Goodlad and his colleagues call for a much more ambitious agenda that reconstitutes teacher preparation through a wholesale reorientation of universities. Teacher education hovers at the bottom of the priority list even when teacher candidates comprise a substantial percentage of the overall student body, and even when the universities began as teachers' colleges or Normal Schools. The diminished resources, power, and status afforded to teacher preparation leads to a range of difficulties associated with fragmentation and to a lack of coherence in the socialization of students into the teaching profession (Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990). Goodlad and his colleagues argue that the institutional barriers that prevent equitable and sufficient funding for teacher preparation must be eliminated, and that new

pathways that cross traditional boundaries between academic units must be constructed around shared goals and a consistent vision of what is needed for high-quality teacher education. As they argue,

A reasonable expectation for teacher education programs is that they be oriented toward a conception of what education and teaching ideally are and what schools are for. A further reasonable expectation is that this conception be shared and continually examined by the faculty group responsible for each program—not just the tenure-track professor but everyone, including cooperating teachers. (Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, p. 30)

This kind of collaboration both within the university and between the university and the K-12 system can help overcome the fragmentation and discontinuities that plague traditional programs. But more is needed, including providing incentives that create a consistent group of teacher educators (including content, pedagogy, and field-based faculty members) who can be engaged in maintaining the vitality and vision of the program across the many contexts and institutions that are loosely coupled in the K-16 structure.

To realize this conception of teacher preparation, a core challenge is to foster a productive dialogue between research-based and practice-based knowledge. The traditional vision of "a fresh stream of knowledge and ideas flowing down into the ponds of practice" has never, and never can, overcome the mismatch between the university realm of theory and the classroom realities. Suspicion and disdain are unsurprising by-products that pollute the flow of this stream: university faculty members publicly defer to district and state practices while distancing themselves from them in the privacy of their discourse with student teachers; student teachers publicly defer to their professors while grabbing for any teacher-endorsed strategy that promises help with survival in the classroom; cooperating teachers publicly appease the university faculty members while assuring student teachers that the true knowledge is only to be found in the classroom; both professors and teachers publicly claim allegiance to "best practices," but are not firmly integrated into communities of reflection/inquiry that enable the critical examination of practice and generation of warranted knowledge about what truly is best. Most often, the working relationships between university faculty members and K-12 classroom teachers is congenial, but it is rarely collegial. As a result, teacher preparation lacks consensus on professional norms of conduct, on necessary skills and dispositions, and on accepted bodies of knowledge about pedagogy. This situation is not inevitable, despite being historically entrenched, but without its transformation at a deep level, there is little prospect of reconstructing teacher education to meet the needs of LI/RCLD students and communities.

Many researchers and practitioners agree² that the needs of LI/RCLD students and communities require specialized attention in teacher preparation because of the profound challenges that go beyond those already identified in our review of themes in the history of school reform and teacher education. These challenges are especially acute in urban areas and urban teachers consequently need preparation that differs in some ways from that for their rural and suburban counterparts (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Howey, Post, & Zimpher, 2002). The majority of students in U.S. public schools reside in urban areas and these areas continue to be the most diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, language, family structure, and social class, even as more people of color move into suburban areas (Anyon, 1997). Yet the overwhelming majority of teachers today is still white and female (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005), and these women will be working with cultural, language, and income groups with which they have had virtually no direct prior contact, history, or knowledge.

This was the situation faced by the Equity Network as we organized ourselves in the late 1990s to undertake a strategic intervention to transform teacher preparation for urban schools serving LI/RCLD students. The stories told in this book speak to the multifaceted effort we made to respond to the conditions in which we were embedded and to the possibilities we could envision. As we have demonstrated, the results were mixed, but show genuine promise. In this next section, we will draw together the lessons from our work within a framework that we call “engaged pedagogy” and then we will outline the direction of our current work as we strive to grapple with the deep challenges of improving the lives of LI/RCLD students and communities.

Lessons from the Equity Network: Engaged Pedagogy and Beyond

We quickly learned that we were confronted with an enormous challenge of creating PDSs that had to be specifically geared into their particular local situations and thus could not have models imposed upon them. While we had the four primary goals as direction finders—strengthening teacher preparation, linking this to in-service professional development, embedding both in action research directed at classroom and school-level reform, all aimed at improving outcomes for LI/RCLD students—we had no road maps; the route had to be discerned as we went along, and even the wisdom of others who had traveled this way before had to be translated afresh into our own programs and schools. We had to give up the false hope of a method; prescribed methods were no more applicable in the invention of structures for deep learning across the professional spectrum than they were in the

development of evocative curriculum for the classroom. We had no choice but to engage our situation directly, with all its limits and its few open spaces, to discover what could and should be done to realize our vision. We had no choice but to abandon the constraints of our old roles and institutions, to interrupt the traditions that had shaped us, and then to reinvent our profession and establish new systems that could facilitate the work that needed to be done. The practical realities of these processes coupled with the grounded knowledge that emerged from reflection and research on them, led us to articulate some core principles to guide us, and while these were never fully realized or embodied, they nonetheless provided a touchstone for measuring how far we had come and the distance yet to go.

One of our first realizations was that we were engaged in a profound historical struggle for the just treatment of LI/RCLD people. We were aware of the history of the reform of schools and teacher education previously recounted, but even more acutely we recognized that political forces in California had aligned in ways that threatened the very premises of the Equity Network. In the previous decade, an often cynical agenda had been enacted into law that constituted a virtual assault on low-income, minority, and immigrant groups, whether by denying public schooling and health care to undocumented immigrants and their children (Proposition 187), by virtually ending bilingual education (Proposition 227), or by establishing standards and testing that exclude or devalue their history, culture, language, and experiences. We saw that this political agenda was also an attack on us and the values to which we were committed, and understanding that we were aligned in an historic struggle not only gave us the energy to persevere when we might otherwise have been tempted to give up, it offered us a moral and political foundation for solidarity with the students and families in the Equity Network schools and neighborhoods. It also reaffirmed that the commitment to education for social justice meant a commitment to a way of life, to a struggle over the long haul (Horton, 1998).

Equity Network faculty members, teachers, and schools, together with pupils and their families, found many creative ways to resist the political forces arrayed against the ideals and goals of the PDSs, and to publicly value the language, culture, and experience of students and their families in concrete ways that impacted the curriculum content and instructional practices both in the schools and in the teacher preparation program. *We constructed the core curriculum across the teaching and learning domains of the PDSs on the basis of LI/RCLD students' lives and voices, historical and cultural backgrounds, and their current perspectives and emerging cultural formations.* In order to do this, all the professionals in the PDSs, from university faculty members, to teachers, to teacher candidates, had to grasp the lives of LI/RCLD students in both their intimate detail and their broad outline. As we have

described and discussed in section one, our commitment to these principles of engaged pedagogy led to programming that elevated community funds of knowledge in constructing science curriculum in a PDS and addressed community health needs in the science curriculum of another PDS. We also found ways to connect the PDS professionals directly to the community, through such activities as home visits, oral history projects, and participation in community organizations. The development of grounded knowledge of the lives of LI/RCLD students became a central focus of our learning as professionals, and we accepted responsibility for this in the same way that we accepted responsibility for the acquisition of research-based knowledge about cognition or instruction.

As we deepened our understanding of the complex realities faced by LI/RCLD students and their families, we learned that this had to occur in collaboration with them. It was not a case of "studying others" as if their realities were somehow disconnected from our own, but rather it meant grasping that we are all inextricably caught up in a single web of reality that shaped our everyday experiences and understandings in different ways. Thus, our commitment to an engaged pedagogy meant that we pursued *dialogical approaches that ensured the inclusion of students' and families' languages, thoughts, ideas, and perspectives*. Not only did this enable us to more fully subject our own actions to critical evaluation, but the dialogues brought students and families into a more critical understanding of the challenges confronting us as educators and thus made them more capable of effective actions to strengthen learning outcomes. By demonstrating in practical and concrete ways that we had a genuine desire to make equitable connections with the community in order to become partners in the teaching and learning process, we became allies in the larger struggle to make schooling more meaningful and rewarding for LI/RCLD students.

As we examined the ways that schools often gave LI/RCLD students and families the message that they were not valued or respected, we discovered more deeply the often unintended and subtle dynamics of these processes, and how frequently we were implicated in them. While there was little we could do about the testing regimes and the negative messages conveyed by them, we were able to ensure that students and their parents got other forms of positive feedback about their knowledge and skills. *We became more cognizant of the role of schools in identity formation and took steps to ensure that students received support for navigating the often treacherous forces of assimilation that discredit and ignore their rich, complex family journeys*. Too often, educators pay little attention to the gaps between school assumptions, expectations, and identity ascriptions and the family and community realities, concerns, and hopes; too often, educators allow the prevailing ethnic, racial, linguistic, and gender norms of the dominant culture to exercise their influence without concern for the impact on kids who do not and cannot measure

up. By bringing these dynamics into the conversation of the classroom and the school, by exploring them in the studies and self-reflections of the PDS professional formation work, we could begin to construct the schools as places that affirm and preserve valuable legacies for their LI/RCLD students while at the same time prepare them for the vicissitudes of everyday life. Identities are shaped in complex interactions among culture, language, ethnicity, race, gender, and social class, and as we became more aware of these processes in our students and our teacher candidates, we also became more aware of them in our own lives and self-understanding.

As we took the initial steps to explore these matters within the discussions of the LENS faculty meetings and in some of the dialogues with the cooperating teachers, we quickly uncovered the difficulty of unpacking the emotionally laden forces that are hidden not far beneath the surface descriptions of who we are. We have far to go, and we have yet to even initiate these important dialogues with administrators, community members, and others less central to the teaching and learning environments of the Equity Network. But there was no escaping the truth that *our commitment to engaged pedagogy meant that we had to confront our own processes of self-actualization and identity formation*. Simply our status as professionals was something we experienced as contested. Maintaining a sense of efficacy in our work in underresourced and so-called underperforming schools is difficult as teachers and teacher educators bear the brunt of the blame for test scores deemed to be substandard. What is substandard in our experience has more to do with teaching/working conditions that complicate our mission. Our voices are dismissed when we petition policymakers to address the mismatches between our LI/RCLD students' needs and the mandated curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 1994). We are caricatured and demeaned in unrelenting ideological attacks promulgated in the media and political debates. The Equity Network took steps to analyze and counter these forces, but, more important, *we built new professional roles and routines that connected us with one another and provided us with the grounded knowledge and experience we needed to succeed with our students* despite the hostile context that surrounded us. We discovered that by working collaboratively and honoring the knowledge that we each brought to our project, we were each enriched and our sense of efficacy solidified and became enhanced. We began to create new traditions for the teacher candidates we were preparing, so that it became taken for granted that we had multiple domains of responsibility that included the formation of the profession, the improvement of schools through action research and community engagement, and the long-term success of LI/RCLD students (not simply raising their test scores).

We wish we could say that it was easy to achieve these transformations, or that we always reached the goals we set. The reality was more mixed, as our case studies show. The context of criticism of LI/RCLD schools and

teachers intensified, punitive measures against “program improvement” schools increased, and mandates for the adoption of highly scripted standardized curricula were implemented. The existing conditions of work in the K–16 system could not always be as flexible as we needed, and the extended responsibilities of our reconstituted professional roles had to be met largely through personal sacrifice since few formal accommodations were made to permit this restructuring. These pressures often led to resentment and tendencies to want to regroup around the safety of the traditional mode of doing our work, each professional safely ensconced in his or her cocoon free from the encroachment of the others. Some faced questions from their families about their priorities, and wondered how they could possibly meet all the obligations entailed by the Network PDSs. Administrators in both schools and the university questioned the value added by these expanded professional roles, and challenged the cost-benefit ratios of the time commitments that led teachers and faculty members to be working in one another’s domains of practice.

To understand these dynamics, we had to return to the recognition that *race and class matter* not only in the value placed on prioritizing sites for the investment of K–16 resources and in the value placed on supporting the reconstruction of the profession to address the needs of LI/RCLD children and communities, but also in our own professional and personal identities. We had to confront issues of privilege that mark the race and class divides between teachers and university faculty and between all of these educators and the LI/RCLD students and communities they are trying to serve. Our varying senses of privilege and entitlement influenced how we approached the resolution of the pressures we faced just as surely as they influenced our teaching practices and relationships with one another and the students and families. Once again, we learned that *engaged pedagogy means that the work of confronting dominant ideologies was both internal and external*, and that the more we did the internal work necessary to develop a more critical self-understanding, the more we were able to do the external work necessary to build strong connections across race and class lines to struggle for our vision of quality education.

Part of that vision of course focused directly on the classroom, and many of the activities of the Equity Network approach to engaged pedagogy *involved deepening collaborative knowledge construction about teaching and learning and deepening collaborative curriculum construction (and selection)*. We refused to be discouraged by the imposition of standards and test-driven scripted curricula, and we discovered that many niches for innovation remained that could be turned to our advantage. As our stories have conveyed, we created transformative modes of teaching and learning that integrated content reflecting community resources and concerns, methodologies that incorporated

research-proven best practices in instruction and assessment, and technologies that prepared both teachers and students for the mediated realities of the twenty-first century. All of the educators in the Network PDSs significantly expanded their repertoire of constructivist, inquiry-based, concept-based, and thematic instructional approaches, and learned more deeply how to differentiate instruction while incorporating scaffolding for English learners and academic language acquisition. We also not only advanced our knowledge of designing authentic assessments for the students, but discovered how these insights could be applied in the design of authentic assessments of the professional knowledge of our teacher candidates. This in turn led to more critical self-reflection by our cooperating teachers and Network faculty members about their own professional development needs.

As we have described, it was important that *we built sturdy yet flexible structures to support these new forms of professional collaboration and practice*. Whether these structures took the form of physically locating university office and classroom space on school grounds, of providing for the concurrent delivery of university methods courses and the school curriculum, of lesson study and praxis groups to critically analyze and transform teaching, or of any of the other ways we grounded our emerging intuitional relationships, the focus was always on making the PDS system responsive to the professional knowledge and practice needs of the Network educators and the social and academic needs of the LI/RCLD students.

It goes without saying, but it is important to emphasize, that the Network PDS approach to teaching and learning across the spectrum required profoundly transformed professional roles but it also required transformed relationships with others having key roles in the lives of LI/RCLD children and youth. Professional borders are often barriers to effective communication, and the Network had to work hard to make them permeable; and even more than simply permeable, we tried to make them actively facilitative of dialogue and collaboration. Time and again, the key to making these new relationships and roles effective was the shared commitment to keeping student needs foremost, and as trust was built across professions and with the larger community and other community agencies, these traditional barriers at closely guarded borders broke down. We established a wide range of new and fruitful collaborations: between universities and schools and communities; between colleges of the university and programs within colleges; between programs and grade levels within schools; between schools and district offices; between teachers associations and universities; between universities, schools, and community organizations; between schools and federal agencies; between the university, schools, communities, and funding sources. Despite the powerful advances we made fostering cross-border cooperation among the educational professionals and among others directly tied to teaching and

learning in schools, we had less success overcoming the many obstacles to effective communication with the social workers, probation officers, housing agency workers, adult educators, public health officials, and other professionals who are actively involved with LI/RCLD students and communities. We know that as long as the support for the transformation of the schools and communities of LI/RCLD families remains fragmented, our own work in schools continues to be less effective than could or should be the case.

After more than six years of effort to build the Equity Network and implement its strategies for interrupting the traditions of teacher preparation, of in-service teacher professional development, of reform of LI/RCLD schools, and of instruction and assessment of the LI/RCLD students, *we have learned most of all that to practice engaged pedagogy means to dream big, to act both strategically and focused on making an immediate difference, and to never cease our own critical self-reflection and professional development.* By itself, teaching is a humbling profession. To teach with a commitment to justice for LI/RCLD students and communities is even more humbling. Honesty demands humility as we confront the internal work that comes along with having to give up so many certitudes about who we are and what we know. It demands humility as we confront the persistent inequities and disadvantages heaped upon the children, families, and schools to which we have dedicated ourselves. Honesty demands humility as we confront the limits of our own instructional prowess and the contrastingly huge needs that our students have that must be met for them to be effective learners. Honesty demands humility as we try to remake our profession even as it is being undermined by powerful political and institutional forces that do not share our commitments and values. What sustained us in these seemingly Sisyphean tasks was our relationships, our sense of connection with one another and the children and communities we were working with, and our sense of connection to making a new history that had the power to interrupt the old traditions and establish some new ones.

Engaged pedagogy means a commitment to future generations of teachers and learners to enable them to take their place in the ongoing struggle for a more just and democratic society. Just as we do not expect ourselves, alone or even together, to be able to do all that must be done to transform education for LI/RCLD students and communities, we accept that we must do what we can. Each of us has within the scope of our own reach more than enough opportunity to work to make a difference, enough to last us a lifetime of trying. Part of the attraction of our jobs as educators is that we are naturally tied to the future, and we see our work reflected in the hopes and struggles of those who follow us. What is particularly rewarding for Network educators is to have had the experience of connecting with the students and families themselves in the struggle to make life better in their communities,

recognizing that these are, after all, our communities as well. This shared sense of responsibility for the future is the force that moves history, and transcends the traditions of the past to open up new possibilities.

We are not sanguine about what it will take to achieve our vision. We know that the nearly unrelenting effort to reform public schooling in the United States over the past 100 years to make it more responsive to the needs of LI/RCLD communities has little altered schooling's core structures, operations, and purposes. With the basic "grammar" of schooling intact (Tyack & Cuban, 1995), schooling continues to produce distressingly persistent outcomes that reinforce disadvantages for students from LI/RCLD communities. The dominant reforms of recent decades have made little headway in reversing this trend. The efforts to restructure school governance and management have not become rooted in LI/RCLD districts or made substantive impacts on achievement (Cuban & Usdan, 2003), even when the educational and political leadership of the reforms is based in communities of color (Henig, Hula, Orr, & Pedescleaux, 1999). The demands for stronger standards and the implementation of testing regimes have added to the barriers these students face (McNeil, 2000; Orfield & Kornhaber, 2001), and even undermined the limited capacity building that occurs when schools attempt to respond to these pressures (Barnes, 2002). The market-oriented reforms that claim to provide choices to LI/RCLD students and their families, whether through charters, vouchers, or other mechanisms, neither level the educational playing field nor ensure that no child is left behind (Lipman, 2004; Wells, 2002). Overall, several decades of top-down government driven reforms have not changed the life chances of LI/RCLD students or the conditions of life in their communities (Anyon, 1997).

Just as making an impact on LI/RCLD schools is challenging, so it is difficult to make substantive changes in LI/RCLD communities. However, we can see that our work has laid a foundation for a promising approach that does not treat LI/RCLD schools and communities in isolation from one another. Communities can impact school reform when partnerships are created that share basic value commitments, even though experience has shown that the larger social, economic, and political contexts can severely constrain the achievements of these efforts (Baum, 2003; Williams, 1989). Projects aimed at improving LI/RCLD schools by empowering and expanding the social capital of the parent communities, thus linking school reform to broader struggles to address basic community needs (Shirley, 1997), show even more promise. But even these experiments in democracy have had to face certain sobering realities in the profound challenges and complexities in LI/RCLD communities that have limited their success; it has become undeniable that a broad-based effort to build community capacity is necessary (Stone, Henig, Jones, & Pierannunzi, 2001). We join with those who

argue that a new social movement is needed to make real differences in the lives of LI/RCLD students and families (Anyon, 2005), and that this may be the social justice issue of the century. Grassroots activism linked to collaborative community-based inquiry has been able to challenge some aspects of the prevailing logics of schooling and of school reform in certain limited contexts (Oakes, Rogers, & Lipton, 2006), and these experiments need to be tried more broadly.

These are the next steps that we are trying to take as the Equity Network moves into the next phase of its work. As we travel into our future, we gather inspiration from Paulo Freire's words:

We are surrounded by a pragmatic discourse that would have us adapt to the facts of reality. *Dreams*, and *utopia*, are called not only useless, but positively impeding. . . . I do not understand human existence, and the struggle needed to improve it, apart from hope and dream. . . . One of the tasks of the progressive educator, through a serious, correct political analysis, is to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be. After all, without hope there is little we can do. (1997, 7-9)

Notes

1. The longtime opponents of the politically progressive Children's Defense Fund (CDF) rather cynically appropriated the CDF motto to title this significantly underfunded act, which most observers believe will cause significant harm to LI/RCLD students for a number of years.

2. Goodlad, Sarason, and others are joined in this agreement by prominent organizations such as the Holmes Partnership affiliate, Urban Network to Improve Teacher Education (UNITE), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the Council for Great City Schools.

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