DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 370 736 RC 019 629

AUTHOR Schmuck, Patricia A.
TITLE Invisible and Silent along the Blue Highways.
PUB DATE 25 Oct 93
NOTE 20p.; In: Challenges & Changes: Strategies for Rural Education & Small Schools. Proceedings of the Annual Rural & Small Schools Conference (15th, Manhattan, Kansas, October 25-26, 1993); see RC 019 628.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Attitudes; *Change Strategies; Disadvantaged; Educational Change; Educational Practices; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Education; Leadership Qualities; Racial Bias; Rural Education; *Rural Schools; School Policy; Sex Bias; *Small Schools; Stereotypes; *Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Diversity (Student); School Culture

ABSTRACT

Visits to 25 small rural school districts in 21 states revealed three prevailing myths about equal education held by teachers and administrators: (1) some children can't learn; (2) providing the same education to all students is providing equal education; and (3) "we have no problems" in providing equal educational opportunities. Counteracting these myths entails changing the belief systems of teachers and administrators; describing inequality with the appropriate language; meeting inequality head-on by confronting ethnic and sex stereotypes that children bring to school; establishing equity as an ongoing institutional practice; and moving school administrators away from authoritarian leadership and toward developing leadership skills that are empowering, facilitative, and participatory. Most important, teachers and administrators must acknowledge and work with students who have little or no privilege in society, and who have not received unearned advantages as a condition of birth. To be successful in providing an equal education and addressing the "silent and invisible" students in schools, teachers and administrators must believe that all children can learn, understand that same is not equal, and acknowledge that there are problems with respecting diversity in schools. (LP)

INVISIBLE AND SILENT ALONG THE BLUE HIGHWAYS

Patricia A. Schmuck

Lewis & Clark College

Center For Rural Education And Small Schools

Manhattan, Kansas

October 25, 1993

In 1989 Dick Schmuck and I visited 25 small school districts in 21 different states. We traveled over 10,000 miles for six months along what William Least Heat Moon called the Blue Highways of America, those two-lane roads marked blue by the cartographer's pen. We interviewed over 500 people: teachers, administrators, students, clergy, custodians and citizens. Our experience is reported in several articles and a book, Small Districts: Big Problems (1992). One question we asked of all administrators and teachers was, "tell me how you provide equal educational opportunity for your students?" Let me give you three examples of responses. These three examples illustrate the pervasive myths about diversity in our small-town public schools.

In a small Louisiana town on the Mississippi Delta, where bald cypress trees grow bunched together in the lake that separates the white and the black community, we visited one school district. This town was perhaps the most economically devastated we saw on our trip. The 1960s federal order for racial desegregation resulted in an all-white private academy being formed, which still exists. The north side of the river has middle-class homes and green lawns that run to the lake. The south side of the river holds the town--such as it is--amidst boarded-up stores and run-down houses. The previously small farms had been sold to corporations, and those who were sharecroppers and tenant farmers moved to the center of town. The public school is

about 90 percent black. The public schools struggle for tax funds, and the white community is struggling also -- not only to pay the tax funds but to support the all-white academy. It's an economically bereft and spiritually bankrupt community. We visited an elementary school just outside of town; the principal was a white male. He said--now listen to the assumptions behind his words--"colored kids who do well in school have mixed breeding." Let me repeat, "colored kids who do well in school have mixed breeding." This is a school leader, one who helps form a belief pattern in schools. Yet he believed a white blood strain was necessary for "colored" kids to succeed in school. While this was perhaps the most directly racist statement we heard, we did hear from other teachers and administrators in the midwest, and in the north about Hispanics, about Indian children, and about children from poor homes: statements that echoed the myth that some children cannot learn. That's important myth 1: <u>some children cannot learn</u>. Do you believe that some children cannot learn?

In northern Texas where the flat land stretches on forever, where small towns dot the flat landscape, and flashing neon signs light the liquor stores lined outside of dry towns, we visited a high school. The high school was antique--wooden lockers, without locks, lined the halls on the old wooden floors where students gathered, like they do in all high schools, to meet each other, to talk about their concerns. The vast majority of students in this school were white; they were bussed from the small ranches surrounding the small town where the local businesses were mostly boarded up as a new Walmart had been created in a nearby community. One index of a dying small-town community may be the distance it is from the local Walmart. In response to our question, "how do you provide equal educational opportunity for your students," the high school principal responded, "students are students. I don't care if they are girls or boys, black, yellow or green, they all ride the same bus, eat the same food, have the same classes." This sentiment was repeated by others: "we're so small here, kids are scheduled for all classes, there is no choice, it's the same for everyone." Here is the

second myth: same is equal. Do you believe if you offer the same educational opportunities, you are providing equal educational opportunity? Do you believe same is equal?

The third example was the most prevalent response. We heard this in the south, in the north, in the midwest. When asked, "how do you provide equal educational opportunity for your students," the majority of the responses was "no problem." Comments such as: "we don't have any blacks here so we don't have to worry," or "we don't go out of our way," "we don't do anything here," "there are no barriers here," or "that used to be a problem 20 years ago but now girls can do everything boys can do," or "I don't do anything special because students can be whatever they want to be." This is the third myth: there is no problem. Do you believe you have no problem? If you do, I think you are sticking your head in the sand so you don't see problems of inequity.

Let me address those three myths:

Some children can't learn.

Same is equal.

We have no problem.

I will address these myths by addressing four topics that address these myths:

1. The belief systems of teachers and administrators: knowing the language of equality.
2. Developing a school culture: meeting equality head-on.
3. The patterns of school administration: the "Mom and Pop" of school administration in small-town schools.
4. Finally, I will address those who are "invisible and silent" in our schools.

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1. **The Belief Systems of Teachers and Administrators: Knowing the Language of Equality.**

Since the federal court rulings of 1954, Brown vs. Board of Education position

that separate cannot be equal, the passage of Title IX in 1972 stating schools receiving federal funds cannot discriminate on account of sex, and the mainstreaming mandates requiring education in the least restrictive environment, our language has changed considerably. In the past few decades, during your lifetime, we have developed new words and concepts which we did not have before.

You probably are familiar with the work of the linguist, Whorf, who argued that language creates our perceptions of the world. His famous example is the 20 or so words for snow in some Indian languages in Alaska. These twenty different words for snow differentiate the kinds of snow; with such distinctions in language, people SEE different kinds of snow. Skiers need adjectives such as wet, dry, packed, or fluffy to describe snow. Our language helps form our concepts of the world. Words are powerful constructs. Our words and our constructs change over time. With new words we construct new meanings; language constructs the reality we see.

Just listen to how our language has changed with regard to race--nigger, Negro, colored, black and African American. In your own lifetime you have seen the different labels we give to someone whose ancestors came from Africa. These words have different meanings constructed over time. "Nigger" is offensive; it carries meanings which are offensive. We now use the word "racist" with understanding what it means. That would not have been the case even 30 years ago.

Sexism. That's a word we use today. We didn't use or understand that word just 20 years ago; it was not part of the regular lexicon. Although some people still think that sexism is about sexual relations, the way we use it refers to the differential experiences of what it means to be male and female. You can identify a sexist joke; someone is being demeaned for being female. Probably some of you are replacing the word "sex" with "gender," and you say this is a person of the male or female gender. Gender has become the new word. Technically sex is about biology; one is of the male or the female sex. Gender has come into our vocabulary to separate biology from social

phenomenon. That is, gender is the social meaning given to a person of the female or male sex. GENDER, such as RACE, is a concept that is socially constructed. It is based on sex, but the meaning changes. For instance, it's only 150 years ago that women could not teach, because it was not a job for a respectable woman. It was only about 150 years ago that psychologists and doctors argued that females should not go to school because too much brain activity would destroy their reproductive capacity. We hold such ideas as hogwash today, but it's been fairly recent in our history that being female had such gender meanings. Gender is the study of what it means to be male and female in the society, and that meaning changes.

So what does language have to do with providing your students equal educational opportunity? I go back to the interviews with teachers and administrators we had on our travels. The ONLY administrators and teachers who could give a thoughtful answer to our question, "how do you provide equal educational opportunity for your students?" had the language and the concepts to answer the question. Let me give you a few examples.

A vocational education teacher said, "I'm glad when girls take welding and boys do home economics, but it's hard for them. The stereotypes are so ingrained in our society. There is a feeling in our community that girls will become housewives only. There is more pressure on traditional roles from the community than there is from the school."

A female high school vice principal said, "awareness about sex stereotyping needs to begin early, probably at the elementary level. It's asking high school students too much to buck the system of stereotyping at this level. They are dealing with so many things."

A male student said about his male principal, "Mr. Jones tries real hard I know. But he grew up at an earlier time. He's a real male chauvinist; I see how he treats the female teachers but he's just unaware." This is a student who could see how Mr. Jones

treated female teachers. Evidently Mr. Jones could not see that.

These are thoughtful teachers, administrators and students. They had the language to express the concepts of inequality. They used words such as stereotype, bias, and the "isms--racism, sexism, chauvinism," which we didn't have available to us just 20-30 years ago. They had a language to express, and they had conceptual constructs to see the differential experiences of males and females

The majority of educators who could give a thoughtful answer to the question about equal educational opportunity were those who had attended some workshop about issues of equal educational opportunity. GESA (Gender Expectations and Student Achievement), developed by Dea Grayson, in Des Moines, Iowa, was the most prevalent response. HOW? How many of you or any of your teachers have attended a GESA workshop or another workshop on providing equal educational opportunity? It requires learning how to see, to make aware what is unaware.

In regard to Title IX, we surmised 37 percent of superintendents saw no problem, 28 percent reported full compliance, and 35 percent expressed concerns. I guess at least one-third of the districts were not in basic compliance with the legal mandate to not discriminate on account of sex.

What about YOU? Do you have the language to see inequality? Does your faculty have the language to see inequality? If you don't have the language you will not see it. Having a language helps construct how we see the world.

2. **Developing a School Culture: Meeting Equality Head-on**

There are differences that exist between students. Even peas in a pod, if you look carefully, are different from pea to pea. You have more variation in your school than peas in a pod. Maybe some of you do have obvious ethnic or racial diversity. When you think of diversity you think of someone who is not white, since white is the majority culture in our society. Maybe you have blacks or Hispanics who have been here for generations. Maybe you have some of the new immigrants to our shores:

Vietnamese, Russians and others who come to the "land of liberty." Even if you don't have such obvious racial or ethnic diversity, you have diversity. You have girls and boys; you have students who come from homes where family has been first teacher (and we have always done well by these kids where parents have prepared them to enter school); and you have lots of kids where family has not been a first teacher--or the kind of teacher that prepares them well for school. You have students who are athletic, kids who are "nerds," students who operate from their right brain only when we demand mostly left-brain activity. YOU HAVE DIVERSITY.

How can a school meet such diversity? How can we satisfy the needs of such a diverse population? That is a problem in American schools. It has always been a problem, and it is a problem today.

Let me go back to language and how we communicate our respect for diversity. We have laws on the books that say we will "not discriminate" on the basis of sex, race or special needs. There are those of you who say, "what is the big deal," this is merely the big hand of the federal government telling me what to do. I know how to manage compliance--or circumvent compliance--with the federal government. One of the enduring, dear and perverse attributes I give to educators in small-town and rural districts is the individualism which has been the forefront of this country. Small-town and rural school administrators do NOT (I repeat), do NOT like to deal with the bureaucratic mentality of the federal government. But let me try to turn this around for you. IF you truly want to provide equal educational opportunities for your students, the laws are there to help you.

Certainly we have seen a narrowing of those laws since 1980 and the Reagan administration I talked to a superintendent of a small district in Oregon in the late 80s; he said he called the Region X office to provide him with some help about inequities in athletic opportunities for males and females. He was told, "Don't bother about it, we're really not investigating these cases." In fact, there has never been a school district in the

United States called on the carpet for noncompliance with Title IX. Perhaps we will see a new era; maybe some of you will hope that the next 12 years will eek out like the last 12 years, and you will not really have to deal with gyms already crowded for boys' practice, to include girls' practice, or that you will not really have to look at classes which are predominately one sex and have to develop strategies to include more girls in shop, boys in home economics. Interestingly, most small-school administrators did not report a difference in girls and boys in academic achievement such as advanced math and science classes; in fact, the girls predominated. Girls in small-town schools are more likely than boys to be academic achievers.

You say you have no problem. I say unless you hit the issue of inequality head-on, you have a problem. After all, kids today are not recluses; they have seen TV, and they see who does what in this society. They already know the "isms" in our society. Kids bring the "isms" to school.

I will tell you a story about how students bring the "isms" of society to school. When our son, Allen, was in kindergarten, he had a masterful teacher, Elga Brown. She knew how to confront the "isms" students brought with them. Elga was talking to the children about what she should show about their kindergarten to the parents who would be visiting school for a parent meeting that evening. The children responded, "You should show our fathers the shop, and you should show our mothers the kitchen area." Elga then confronted their stereotypes. "But how many of you have seen your mothers with hammers and screwdrivers fixing things in your house?" Of course, most children raised their hands. Elga concluded, "then your mothers would be interested in seeing the shop too." They agreed. Then she asked, "How many of you have seen your fathers in the kitchen cooking family meals?" Again, most children raised their hands. At which point Allen called out, "My dad cooks, he makes bananas and whiskey!" We heard this story from Elga that evening as she invited herself to our home for this famous dessert.

IF you are to achieve equal educational opportunities, you as educational leaders, must be the people who confront the stereotypes; you must be the leaders who deliver the rhetoric of equality. If you don't deliver it, no one will.

I have lived abroad and worked with schools in many different countries. In most countries in the world there is no rhetoric about providing equal educational opportunities; therefore there is no policy. While I have always been a critic of our public schools because we do not achieve the equal educational opportunities we aspire toward, at least we aspire toward them. Your rhetoric about providing equal educational opportunity to your staff, to your community, and to your students is critically important. If you have no rhetoric, you probably have no policy. If you have no policy, you are probably among those who say, "we have no problem." If you have no rhetoric, or policy, you are not using the laws, on the books, to assist your schools toward equal educational opportunities. If it is not part of our rhetoric, how could we dream toward it to make it policy? If is not part of our policy, how can we use the law? If it isn't in our rhetoric, policy and law, how could our dream for educational equality ever be achieved?

There are schools which MAXIMIZE OR MINIMIZE the differences between students who enter their doors. There are schools which have the spectrum of a rainbow of color of students. There are schools which have only one ray of the rainbow, but nevertheless they are diverse. In a study I did with Jane Schubert (Schmuck, Schubert, 1994), we investigated the equal opportunities provided by the schools. These were all schools with female principals. We categorized three responses to the question, "how do you provide equal educational opportunity?" The three categories were:

1) Equity as a Single Event. A role model invited to class, or there is a day, a period, a special bulletin board emphasizing equality. This is only one teacher doing something on one day.

2) Equity as a School Add-On. This was a school event, but a one-time event

only, such as celebrating Martin Luther King Day, celebrating Women's History Week in some way. It was a day devoted to a celebration of those "silent and invisible" in our history.

3) Equity as Institutional Practice. This is ongoing practice; it's part of the "way we do business." It's keeping data on disciplinary practices that may differentiate on sex, race or ethnic lines; it's looking at curriculum and exploring bias in text books. As someone who has equal educational opportunity as a goal, you look at test scores: are there discrepancies on the basis of sex or race--and you develop plans to deal with that. You investigate how you offer equal educational opportunity and when you find a problem of inequity, you tackle it. On the Blue Highways we saw no school that treated equity as institutional practice.

You probably are all familiar with that line of research called the "effective schools research." Ron Edmonds started that research in inner-city black schools. He found some schools did a more effective job of addressing and ameliorating the racist assumptions in our society. You know the research—effective schools are those with high expectations, clarity of goals, safety, have an ethos of caring. Those effective schools in the inner city, primarily black neighborhoods, did not believe that some children could not learn; they believed that all children could learn. And they did it. Today there are exemplary examples of schools, such as Debbie Meiers, Central Park East in New York, who have turned things around. Kids who were not generally expected to achieve, did so. You are not administrators or teachers in the inner cities of our country; yet you can learn something from this research. There was a pervasive culture of caring, and these schools met the hidden myths of our society head-on. They believed all students could learn, and they created a school culture on this premise. Those effective schools hit head-on the racist assumptions in our culture.

Rural and small-town schools are different than urban schools, than suburban

schools. Your school is your community; we refer to the small-town school as vortex. Unlike urban or suburban communities, you hold the lead. You do not compete with other athletic events or theatrical offerings. When something happens in your town it usually is in the school. The school is the center in many rural and small towns. And you as educators, as administrators and teachers in small towns have an important community role.

Your school is influenced deeply by the community norms and morals. One of the problems emerging most recently in the research is about sexual harassment in the schools. Have you addressed the problem in your school? If you say no, you are hiding your head in the sand. Let me tell you about two incidents in rural schools, both in Oregon.

In one small school district in Oregon a female student reported to a female teacher that she had been harassed by a student at a school party. The student happened to be the student body president. The teacher encouraged her to report the incident to the administration, and the girl did. She was called to a hearing to "investigate" the charges; attending the meeting were the male student body president, the male principal and two male vice principals. Facing all these men at her hearing, she recanted her story. She became "invisible and silent".

In one other small school district a female student reported the unwanted advances of a popular male teacher in the high school. She reported it to the female vice principal, who reported it to the male principal, and a hearing ensued. It received publicity in the local community, and many community members called the school incensed that such charges had been brought. The community sentiment was, "we know he makes advances to female students--she should have known better and stayed away from him." It suddenly became her responsibility; the teacher was dismissed from school amidst the objections of parents.

What do you do to provide a school culture to meet the "isms" of society? Equity

as a single event, equity as an add-on, or equity as institutional practice? If you report "no problem" and do nothing, you are the problem. Unless you confront the "isms" in our society you are not providing equal educational opportunity. SAME is not equal. Because same does not account for the "isms" in our society.

3) **School Leadership**.

In 1973 I was gathering data for my doctoral dissertation, "Sex Differentiation in Public School Administration." By the way, I was the second female ever to receive a doctorate from the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Oregon. Now at least one-half of the student body is female. My question was, why were there so few women in school administration? At that time there were about six percent in Oregon. I traveled the state and talked to women administrators, and when there were no women I talked with men administrators about why there were so few women administrators. Let me give you a few quotes I heard in those interviews from male administrators. Frankly, I was shocked that they would say such things to me, as a woman, exploring the topic of women in administration. I remember one male superintendent who cautioned me, "most women Ph.D.'s end up divorced--their husbands just can't stand brainy women." I'm pleased to announce I am not divorced, and Dick loves a brainy woman.

One male superintendent said, "It's easier to work without women. Principals and superintendents are a management team. We need each other for survival. I wonder if we could hang together so well if some of us were women? Could we talk together? I don't have that concern with a guy; he talks the same language. I can count on him. I don't have to take a risk."

Another male superintendent said, "If a woman goes into administration she must understand the workings of a man's mind. So when things are said, they should not be taken from a woman's angle but from a man's angle."

In 20 years perhaps some things have changed; we have seen some behavioral

changes from such Neanderthal thinking about women as school leaders. Maybe there are some of these dinosaurs still in existence, but they probably wouldn't say such things out loud anymore. Maybe they do.

Major happenings in the last 20 years are new concepts and constructs of educational leadership. It is an interesting corollary that the change from top-down, authoritarian, head-boss concepts of leadership is to leadership that is empowering, facilitative and participatory as more women move into administration. In fact, Sally Hegelson calls this "The Female Advantage." She argues that the new call for leadership is the kind of training that women have received in this society--a call for relationship-building rather than bossing. Some argue that women are more able to meet the call for the new kind of leadership because of their experiences of being in a female culture. Yes, you say. But I know women who outdo the male stereotypes; they are authoritarian, top-down and see themselves as boss. Yes, unfortunately I know some of these women too. And these women often don't take their responsibilities for providing equal educational opportunity either. One woman high school principal told me, "I bend over backwards not to give preferential treatments to girls and women on my staff. I want to be an effective administrator, not an effective woman." Yes, there are women who try to become what they consider to be the model of school leadership. The old models don't work; they reject the gender female stereotypes and model themselves after the old models of leadership. But I am hopeful that we will not only achieve some parity in educational administration, but that the kind of leadership women--and men will bring--will encourage, support and empower teachers and students to live up to their potential, that they will lead school organizations toward greater realization of our human potential.

In a recent book I edited with Diane Dunlap, Women Leading in Education (1994), Michelle Collay wrote a chapter about a small rural school in North Dakota, called the "Mom and Pop of School Administration." This is a story where social gender

roles are transported to the school setting. The superintendent/principal is male. The head teacher of the Elementary school is female. The male superintendent/principal plays the traditional "Pop" role – what is referred to in the old literature about families as the "instrumental role." He makes pronouncements, deals with paper work, attends state meetings and spends most of the time in his office. The head teacher, a female, plays the "Mom" role -- what is referred to in the old literature about families as the "expressive role." She mediates between the pronouncements of the superintendent and the practices of teachers; she organizes the faculty meetings, always with food, to set the stage for the pronouncements from "Pop." She is the one teachers go to with their problems; she is the one who deals with parents--primarily mothers; she is the one who listens, who consoles, who offers help. It is the traditional family roles of "Pop" and "Mom" set into the context of the school.

You may say, this sounds like a good arrangement; they compliment each other. Yes, it works. BUT, this arrangement perpetuates the old stereotypes of males playing the instrumental role and females playing the expressive role. I believe this is not only limiting to individuals who unconsciously accept the gender messages of the society, it communicates to teachers and to students about "proper" roles. What of those girls and women who would like to play a more instrumental role? What of those boys and men who would like to play the more expressive role? Just because the gender stereotypes call for girls and women to be expressive, it does not mean that role fits all girls and women. Just because the gender stereotypes call for males to be the authoritarian boss, does not mean that role fits all boys and men.

The educational leader we write about today calls for strengths in both the traditional male and female roles. The old models of pronouncement making and bossing do not work today, if they ever did. The old model of being the authoritarian boss is being replaced by a call for leaders who can be tough and tender, who operate with their head as well as their heart, who can build relationships with people by

listening, facilitating, and empowering.

The predominant leadership style we saw along the Blue Highways was primarily authoritarian. Of the 28 secondary principals and 12 elementary principals we categorized as authoritarian, all were male. Thirty-eight of the 40 had been coaches, and from our interviews we surmised most of them conceived of communication and decision-making as hierarchical, more like the military than the new calls for leadership. When we asked teachers, "what voice do you have in the operations of this school," most teachers reported they had little voice, such as the teacher who said, "What kind of voice do we have? Ha. None. We have a dictatorship in this school. This principal is just like my dad; that's the age they learned this stuff. If you don't like the captain, get off the ship."

We categorized 10 of the high school principals and 15 of the elementary principals as democratic. There were 10 women in our sample; nine of those were categorized as democratic. They exemplified democratic leadership; teachers had a voice; they solicited feedback and information from teachers and from students; they ran effective meetings where people had a voice.

Rural and small schools seem to be mimicking a model of bureaucratic governance that so many of our urban and suburban schools are trying to eliminate. Too many schools were characterized by distant and superficial relationships, yet they are in the context of close, personal communities. What small and rural schools have as their advantage, the close lives that people live, we saw many administrators not taking advantage of the school as a community of learners. This is what many urban or suburban schools are trying to do. You as school leaders can set the agenda so that people truly believe all children can learn. You, as school leaders, can build a school culture that rejects the "isms" of society students bring with them; you can determine you have a problem in providing equal educational opportunities. If you are not openly confronting it, you are not dealing with the inequities in your schools. You have a

problem; if you are providing the same education for everyone, you are not providing an equal education. Our students do not come to school as equals; they come to school as unequals–primarily as an accident of birth. SAME is not equal.

4) The New Agenda

Finally let me address what I see as our challenge as educators for the future: how to make the invisible visible, and how to listen to silenced voices. You are all privileged people in this room; I am a privileged person. By privilege I mean unearned advantages. By the condition of your birth you have privileges. Most of you are white; that is a privileged position in this society. Many of you are men; that is a privileged position in this society; these are unearned privileges. Then there are earned privileges. All of you are educated; that is a privileged position. You are generally economically secure; economic privilege is important in this society. As a privileged person in this society you can more than less have access to all the places you wish to go; you can more than less meet with people you wish to meet; you can belong to organizations and feel connected, not alienated; you can raise healthy children; you have access to medical care and support systems in your lives. Many doors open for you. Compare your privilege with the students in your school. They don't yet have any earned privileges; some have unearned privileges. Many have no unearned privilege. Many face no open doors.

Peggy McIntosh has an article called "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" (1989). She argues there are privilege attributes in our society and we, who are privileged, carry an invisible package of unearned assets. Our privilege is unacknowledged; it is a condition of our birth; it is invisible, yet it gives us an advantage over people who do not carry such privilege. You need to understand your privilege if you are to work with students who have little or no privilege in this society.

We, as educators, silence the voices of many of our students if they do not fit into the mainstream of unearned privilege, and then discount the voices of those who are

silenced; we move them to the margins and ignore them. Our public schools were created originally for those who were privileged: white middle-class and upper-class boys. White girls were "smuggled" into the high schools at the turn of the century, but the curriculum didn't change. It's only since 1954 that we have a desegregated public system. I argue schools still are institutions which perpetuate the unearned privilege in our society. We discount the experiences of those who do not have privilege, the unearned advantage. What a study of the "isms" has done in twenty years is move us to the margins--to see those who are on the margins, who have been invisible and those who have been silenced. We need to listen to the voices of students in our schools, of lesbian and gay students who deal with assaults, of young women and young men in lower-class communities who struggle for an identity and a job in a transforming global capitalist economy. We need to hear the voices of African American students and African American teachers trying to make sense of a public educational system with deeply fractured lines along race and class. We need to hear the silence of abused young girls as they struggle with their identity. These are not the privileged in our schools or our society, yet these are our students. If we deeply believe that schools are the democratic sphere of our society, that in them and through them we will continually build toward a greater democracy, a greater sharing of privilege, we need to move to the margins. We need to make visible the invisible, and we need to hear the silenced voices of students in our schools. You need to understand your privilege; you need to make it visible to yourselves so you can work with those without privilege.

In order to address the "silent and invisible" in our schools we need to attack the three myths; we need to believe that all children can learn; we need to understand that same is not equal; and that you have a problem--there is a problem of respecting diversity in your schools. Finally, you in leadership positions, as administrators and teachers, are the standard bearers in your communities. If you do not take on the task of providing equal educational opportunities for your students, then we may expect no

one will do it in your community.

Do you believe all children can learn? How can you communicate that belief? If you don't believe that all students in your charge can be taught to be effective contributing citizens in our democratic society, then you are in the wrong business. This must be a fundamental belief--you cannot write students off because they are not privileged like you--you cannot write them off when they are five, nine, or fifteen years old. There must be a fundamental belief that all children can learn, an understanding that same is not equal, and an acknowledgment that we have a problem in respecting diversity in our schools.

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