ED 442 920   UD 033 665

AUTHOR	Biggs, Donald; Colesante, Robert
TITLE	The Albany Approach to Urban Youth Development.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	27p.; Cover page reads: Urban Education Reports, Spring 2000. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 24-28, 2000).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adolescents; Black Students; College Students; Community Involvement; High School Students; High Schools; Higher Education; Middle School Students; Middle Schools; Minority Groups; Urban Areas; *Urban Programs; *Urban Schools; *Youth Leaders; Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*African Americans

ABSTRACT
        This paper describes an approach to urban youth leadership
development, the Albany Institutes for Urban Youth Leaders, which validates
urban students' educational aspirations and fosters identification with
academic and prosocial concerns. The program helps strengthen relationships
between students' promotive characteristics and their involvement in school
and community activities. Negative stereotypes abound in the descriptions of
urban youths in the professional and public press. Urban students sometimes
even find that their positive characteristics, such as high educational
aspirations, are seen as at-risk characteristics because they are incongruent
with negative stereotypes. This situation may contribute to the gap between
educational aspirations and achievement among urban students of color. The
Albany Institutes provide experiences that confirm the promotive
characteristics of urban youth and their families and treat them as if they
are gifted and talented. The curriculum and themes for each of the Institutes
are the result of extensive community involvement. The Institutes themselves
offer opportunities for students to participate in democratic decision making
processes that promote their social responsibilities and enhance cognitive
and moral development. The Institutes also offer prosocial peer group
experiences. Evaluations of the Institutes indicate that students especially
appreciate the teambuilding experiences and their relationships with mentors.
(Contains 34 references.) (SM)

Urban Education Reports

Spring 2000

School of Education
University at Albany

[Running Head: The Albany Approach]

The Albany Approach to Urban Youth Development

Donald Biggs
School of Education
University at Albany
Albany, NY

Robert Colesante
Department of Education
Siena College
Loudonville, NY

Abstract

Youths who attend urban high schools in the United States are engaged in a gallant struggle to get a good education. Yet many citizens fail to recognize how important education is to them. Negative stereotypes abound in the descriptions of them in the professional and public press. No one seems to question those who persist in referring to students from urban schools as "at-risk" even though a majority of them don't engage in at-risk behaviors. Indeed, in some cases urban students may even find that their positive characteristics, such as high educational aspirations, are seen as "at risk" characteristics because they are incongruent with negative stereotypes. This situation may contribute to the gap between educational aspirations and achievement among urban students of color. If educators make efforts to disconfirm these high aspirations or make them more realistic, it is not surprising that many of these students disidentify with academics. The focus of the Albany Approach is on providing experiences that confirm the promotive characteristics of urban youth and their families. Instead of treating them as if they are "at risk" we treat them like they are gifted and talented.

Enhancing Youth Involvement in Schools and Communities:

The Albany Approach to Urban Youth Development

Introduction

Students from inner city, urban schools are very often African American and Latino youth who are optimistic about the benefits of achieving a good education (Crocker & Major, 1989; Voekl, 1996). They have more positive beliefs about their abilities, higher levels of self-esteem and higher educational aspirations than do their White peers (Graham, 1994; Wylie, 1979). These students and their parents value education as much as White or Asian students and their parents (Steinberg, Dornbusch & Brown, 1992; Stevenson, Chen & Uttal, 1990). Given these characteristics, one would expect these students to attend school regularly and participate actively in their classes. However, for African American students, in contrast to other ethnic groups, their positive attitudes, aspirations and self-esteem are not related to their attendance or achievement (Stevenson, Chen & Uttal, 1990).

Parenting practices also have been found to positively influence the achievement and attendance of students of color in urban schools. Here again, we find evidence of a lack of congruence between the promotive characteristics and practices of African American parents and the attendance and achievement of their children (Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992). Even though these parents score among the highest on authoritative parenting, school involvement and academic encouragement, their promotive characteristics do not have the same positive impact on student achievement and attendance as they do for other ethnic groups.

We will propose an explanation for the lack of congruence between the promotive characteristics of students of color in urban schools and their attendance and achievement based on cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957). Educators are apt to find the positive educational characteristics of students and their parents to be incongruent with negative social stereotypes about them. As a result, they are likely to make efforts to reduce or avoid this dissonance. They may attend more to the negative characteristics of these students or avoid interactions which could challenge their assumptions. For example, given the promotive characteristics of African American parents, one would expect them to be contacted often about the education of their children. However, they are less likely than their counterparts to be contacted regarding their child's academic performance, academic program, or post high school plans and less likely to be asked to volunteer at school (see "Minorities in Public School," 2000). When these students express high aspirations to their teachers, they are apt to find them discredited as being unrealistic. Take for example the story Malcolm X tells about how a teacher responded to his educational aspirations:

> "He [Malcolm's teacher] told me, "Malcolm, you ought to
> be thinking about a career. Have you been giving it thought?"
>
> The truth is, I hadn't. I never figured out why I told him,
> "Well, yes, sir, I've been thinking I'd like to be a lawyer."
>
> Mr. Ostrowski looked surprised, I remember, and leaned
> back in his chair and clasped his hands behind his head. He kind
> of half-smiled and said, "Malcolm, one of life's first needs is for us
> to be realistic"." p. 43, The Autobiography of Malcolm X)

Malcolm claims that this story was a "shaping force" in his life and that it explains both why he did not choose to become a lawyer and why he did become an important leader of African Americans. This story may also help us understand some of the reasons why African American and Latino students are over-represented in vocational track classes, under-represented in gifted and talented classes (Oakes, 1985) and have limited access to important information about college and career opportunities (Davidson, 1996). The issue has to do with representation, or how educators in urban schools label the high aspirations and self-esteem of African American students. When their high educational aspirations are labeled as "unrealistic," what alternative names are not considered or simply never acknowledged (see Knoblauch & Brannon, 1993)?

The folk psychology or "common sense" knowledge in schools influences how teachers perceive differences between Black and White students (see Berger & Luckman, 1967; Bruner, 1996). This ordinary knowledge of "everyday life" in schools contrasts with theoretical or empirical knowledge about urban students of color. When teachers accept as a fact that there is a gap between the achievement and ability of White students and students of color, it is not surprising that they label high aspirations among students of color as unrealistic or problematic. In the United States press, African American, citizens and their families have had to tolerate popular "pseudo" scientific theories that have attributed their problems in schools to their intellectual deficits, their dysfunctional families and cultural deprivation. DuBois (1903/1969), for example, told about what was like for him to be seen as a problem:

"Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All, nevertheless, flutter around it . . [I]nstead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? They say, I know an excellent colored man in my town . . . or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile or am interested . . . To the real question, how does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word. And yet being a problem is a strange experience" (p. 44).

Instead of viewing the educational optimism and high educational aspirations of African American and Latino urban youth as "unrealistic beliefs," we see them as promotive or positive characteristics that can enhance their attendance and achievement in schools (see Garmezy, 1993). The educational optimism of these students may account for the fact that so many of them persist in schools when the odds seem stacked against them (Bell-Scott & Taylor, 1989; Children's Defense Fund, 1991). What may be needed are programs, activities and persons who provide an environment that validates these positive educational aspirations and safeguards these students from the negative social stereotypes about their abilities (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Rutter, 1987; Steele, 1997). These environments should allow for urban youth to identify with their aspirations and explore the significance of them in their lives.

In this paper, we describe an approach to urban youth leadership development that validates their educational aspirations and fosters identification with academic and pro-social concerns. The program is intended to strengthen the relationship between the

promotive characteristics of the students and their involvement in school and community activities and programs. We asked ourselves what kinds of programs would enhance or support the promotive characteristics of these students? Our answer was to focus on programs and activities that have been found to be effective with gifted and talented youth and to avoid programmatic activities that are associated with "at risk" programs. First we describe the organization of the Albany Institutes for Urban Youth Leaders, characterize the local context, and provide an overview of their history. Next, we describe the assumptions about effective programs for urban youth that guided our efforts. In the third section, we provide examples of programmatic experiences in democratic education, planning and problem solving, and pro-social school and community involvement. Finally, we summarize evaluations of the programs and end with observations or lessons we have learned over the years.

The Albany Institutes for Urban Youth Leaders

The first Albany Institute was held in the summer 1995 and it was designed to increase youth involvement in community planning and development. Our assumption was that such involvement would promote students' participation in school and encourage identification with pro-social leadership roles in their communities. Participants included graduate and undergraduate students as well as high school students. With the exception of one university graduate student, all participants were persons of color. Since that time, we have held six Institutes for Urban Youth Leadership

Most of the high school students were drawn from one public high school in northeastern New York. The school enrolls about 700 freshman and graduates about 350 students with about only half of these students receiving a New York State Regents diploma. Typically, 50 percent of the freshman are students of color, the overwhelming majority of whom are not enrolled in courses leading to a Regents diploma. Less than 10 percent of the freshman students of color typically graduate from this school four years later with a Regents diploma. We have also included students from two public middle schools in which a majority receive free or reduced price lunches and 70-80% have serious academic deficiencies.

High school and middle school students received Youth Employment stipends to participate. Priority for enrollment was given to those student who resided in three inner city neighborhoods. The overwhelming majority (80 to 90%) of the high school students were African American or Latino. The university students were enrolled in a State supported University or a private Liberal Arts College associated with the Roman Catholic Church. They were all enrolled in either undergraduate or graduate level fieldwork courses concerned with issues in urban education. A majority have been persons of color (65 to 75%).

The curriculum and specific themes for each of the Institutes were the consequence of extensive community involvement. Each year, we hosted a community roundtable discussion on urban youth development. Participants were representatives from a broad range of stakeholders in the community including teachers, administrators, parents, ministers, coordinators of boys and girls clubs and other community based programs as well as adolescents from the urban community.

In the spring 1996, the theme was "Peer Power." The students received training in peer helping skills and they worked in teams to design a set of recommendations for a summer 1996 orientation program for middle school graduates. The high school and college mentors encouraged middle school graduates to get involved in high school and work together to succeed in their classes. In the summer of 1997, the program was structured to follow the Essential School Principles. The participants investigated the contributions of Africans and African Americans to daily life in the United States and they investigated the experiences of children who grow up in inner city neighborhoods. At the conclusion, they presented exhibits and a play. In 1998, students investigated a variety of issues that impact children and youth in urban communities and advocated for changes that would improve the lives of children in their neighborhoods. They developed recommendations about improving the health of children, the physical and social environment in their neighborhoods, the schools, and recreational programs. These were presented to community leaders through Internet exhibitions, theatrical productions and Community Speak Outs. In the summer 1999, students taught elementary age children about the persons in their neighborhoods who have worked hard in schools, churches, and community organizations.

<u>Assumptions about Effective Programs for Urban Youth</u>

Studies of effective youth programs for students who attend urban schools similar to those in our summer programs are few and far between (Jessor, 1993; Finn, 1989). However, recent efforts, including the work of Heath and McLaughlin (1993) and McLaughlin, et al. (1994), provide a number of suggestions for developing effective youth programs and clubs. Somewhat surprisingly, youth leaders and organizations that

were judged most effective were not directly linked with schools. Inner city youth who

successfully manage high risk conditions in their communities were often linked in some

ways with neighborhood based organizations that fostered active participation, which was

often a requirement for membership. They helped youth identify collective goals that led

to "visible victories" and they fostered a commitment to the mission of the organization

and a sense of belonging that encouraged youth to return everyday.

Contemporary inner city youth are more apt to take advantage of programs if they

provide opportunities for them to shape their self-expectations and provide them with

linkages to education and work opportunities (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993). They resist

joining programs that try to control their behavior and label them as deviant or deficient,

ignore their culture and life context, offer them little in the way of personal

accomplishments and skills, or hold them to low levels of expectations and

accomplishments. They also resist joining youth organizations that attempt to convince

them that ethnicity should be the sole criteria used to define their identities or those that

are identified with naïve messages about sexuality and drugs.

Based on these findings about effective youth programs we used the following

guidelines for the Albany Urban Youth Leadership programs. First, they should include

opportunities for students to participate in democratic decision making processes which

promote their social responsibilities and enhance cognitive and moral development

(Mosher, Kenny & Garrod, 1994). Second, they should include activities that engage

youth in problem solving, decision making and action planning about salient issues in

their schools and communities. Third, they should provide experiences that involve

students in pro-social peer groups in which they can teach others, care for others and advocate for others.

Democratic Decision-Making Skills

Democratic education offers a straight-forward prescription students become more responsible when they are given responsibilities (Mosher, et al. 1994). Even though participatory democratic methods of working with youth can stimulate development, it is not a recipe for "peace and quite." Town meetings provided opportunities for students to discuss problems and to make suggestions for new or additional activities that might improve the quality of their experiences.

Once, a student proposed that we move the location of our activities from a middle school to the University. The students discussed whether the move was feasible, or whether it would just be confusing for them. The issue was first debated solely in terms of individual benefits. The pro side wanted to go to the University because it was air-conditioned and the con side argued that the change of site would make it necessary to "get up" earlier in the morning. After debating the costs and benefits of moving the Institute out of their neighborhood school, they concluded, "Let's keep it in the hood because that is our community!" In another instance, several high school students wanted to have a picnic at a local park. They developed a plan for transportation, a list of recreational activities and a budget for food and admission tickets. Students who were not able to take advantage of other special excursions had the first chance to sign-up for their picnic.

Students who were involved in verbal disputes met with a Fairness Committee which consisted of high school and college mentors. The committee followed guidelines

based on the "Just Community Model" (Power, Higgins & Kohlberg, 1989) to structure

their procedures and set goals to: 1) achieve a collective understanding of the problem

situations that gave rise to the verbal disputes; 2) identify individual and Institute goals

and resources for resolving the dispute; 3) recommend appropriate actions that would

prevent the dispute from occurring in the future; 4) establish agreements about how each

of the disputants would act in the future and recommend sanctions if they failed to meet

the terms of this agreement.

Planning Skills

The Urban Youth Leadership programs provided experiences in problem solving

and action planning. Students defined problems, identified goals and selected methods for

achieving these goals. In the first Institute, teams assessed the need for a youth

organization that could increase their involvement in the community. Each team

evaluated existing programs to determine their effectiveness. Next, they examined

alternative models for community youth organizations and listed the costs and benefits of

each. Finally, they constructed their own model for a youth organization and identified

the steps needed to successfully establish the organization. The teams announced their

new organization at a Town Meeting in the Albany Common Council Chambers.

In each subsequent Institute, students progressed through a series of planning and

problem solving tasks. They learned about the present conditions in their communities'

and schools, identified how these could be improved and described the steps that they

would follow to achieve specific outcomes. They developed action plans for improving

the physical environment in their neighborhoods, improving community services for

children and youth, improving health services for children and adolescents, and

increasing school attendance and lowering the drop out rate.

A student described the purpose of a Web site they designed as part of the their

action research in the following way:

> *The purpose of this Web page is to advocate for better recycling in*
>
> *the city of Albany. I believe that the city of Albany does not*
>
> *effectively recycle its plastic, paper, and aluminum. It also does*
>
> *not adequately dispose of its city's garbage. For example, the*
>
> *trashcans on the corners are not emptied often enough. I feel that*
>
> *the people in our environment would like to see the garbage*
>
> *picked-up as often as possible. I also feel that people want the*
>
> *things they recycled to be picked-up and put to use. This is*
>
> *basically what the web page is about: What we think people in*
>
> *Albany feel about garbage and recycling.*

One summer, the high school and university students were organized into two

action research teams that focused on the question, "How can we help elementary school

students be successful in middle school?" One team interviewed citizens and asked them

what "good advice" they would give students about "making it" in middle school. The

other team interviewed citizens and asked them to identify improvements that they would

like to see made in their schools. The two action research teams then jointly sponsored a

Community Speak Out in which about 75 citizens were invited to "come and tell the

urban youth of today about how to make it in life and at school." The high school

students acted as moderators for the focus group interviews. They used audio and video recorders as well as written notes to keep records of these discussions.

When the citizens were asked about their advice to students, they cited maxims, proverbs and wise sayings about the benefits of working hard in school and in their communities. An elderly citizen told about losing the use of his legs. Students asked him if he subsequently turned to God in despair and he responded quickly, "God is up there, I am down here." Then he went on to say that he "always took care of himself." Students talked about the "good advice" that they would give the elementary students. A lively debate ensued when one student offered the following advice, "Take care of yourself because you come into the world alone and you leave the world alone." Other students challenged him and he replied that he did not want the students to be selfish, but he did want them to take care of themselves and their families.

A student who was trying to identify improvements that were needed in their schools observed, "School today is very complex because of the shooting in [Colorado]. People made a few threats toward [the high school] and made a lot of people scared. One day there was a rumor going around that people were going to be shooting in front of the school which made a lot of people nervous to walk home." Another observed that, "It is good to make students feel safe, but bad to make them feel like prisoners. I also think that they have too many cops around. I went outside of school and a policeman stopped me for no reason. I know that they are doing their job, but it gets me upset when they stop people too much." Students also brain stormed about the ideal school, "students would not have to worry about children carrying guns to school," "there would be no cameras in school" and hall monitors would only need to "show parents around the school. After

discussing their own views about needed improvements in schools, they developed a set of questions, identified sites in the community and conducted interviews with residents of a nursing home and a public housing complex.

Skills for "Getting Involved" in your School and Community

Community and school involvement can play a major role in promoting the cognitive, social and moral development of urban youth (Nettles, 1991; Wentzel, 1991). Involvement in school and community activities may counteract the effects of risk factors in the school and community. The failure of students to participate in school relevant activities can contribute directly to their truancy and the possibility of dropping out of school (Finn, 1989; Finn & Cox, 1992; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). If left unchecked, these feelings of alienation foster a number of problematic behaviors that make it difficult for these students to continue in school.

An initial goal of teambuilding was to familiarize team members with each other. This was often accomplished through games and class interviews. One student described the first day of the program in the following way:

> *I can remember on the first day of class, we had an icebreaker activity. We had to write down one thing on an index card that no one else knew about us. We each got a different card, and had to go around the room, find someone, introduce ourselves and see if the card we had belonged to the person we were talking to. We had to ask questions pertaining to what was on the card, but we couldn't just straight out ask the person if it was their card. This gave everyone a chance to meet new people.*

A second goal was to improve communication skills and develop leadership within the team. A student described a series of progressively more challenging activities that helped their team improve their communication and leadership skills.

> *The first activity was a communication game, but we couldn't talk to each other. The object was to line-up from shortest to tallest. Seeing that we couldn't talk, we had people take it upon themselves to become "leaders," and they guided everyone in the right direction. We finally got it done . . . [Then] we went up into the Gym. where we had to blindfold ourselves. Everyone grabbed a piece of a big rope. The object was to make a square with an even number of people on each side. Everyone kept shouting and telling each other to shut-up. It took us about forty-five minutes, but we finally got it. Afterwards, we sat where we were and talked about why it is important to have leaders. I thought the leaders did a good job, even though some were a bit bossy.*

Most importantly, these experiences developed an appreciation for positive interdependence. Students were expected not only to take responsibility for themselves, but for the consequences of their actions on others and on the quality of life in the Institute. They had the experience of being on the same side and understanding how gains for one of them were associated with gains for others.

Evaluations

Evaluations of the summer Institute have included a combination of qualitative and quantitative indicators. Program evaluations have asked high school and college

students to identify beneficial aspects of the programs. Teambuilding experiences were consistently given more positive evaluations than democratic "governance" experiences (Campbell, 1998; Newman, et al., 1996). A majority commented that these were among the most memorable moments in the programs. Stories of "teambuilding follies" appear throughout students' journals and in the various summer newsletters. Democratic experiences were viewed more positively when they were connected with solving real problems in their schools and communities. Speak outs that provided opportunities for students to express their views about youth issues in front of community and school leaders were taken very seriously. One student described the Institute as follows: "Here, we work with people, do different things – not just clean-up. We do presentations, projects and make videos. We made a video commercial to have another community center. We also made web pages about youth issues in our neighborhoods. We learn to get along and do things as a team." Students also reported that they improved their communication and leadership skills as well as their reading and writing skills.

A very important aspect of the program was the climate and personal qualities of the mentors:

> Interviewer: *Anything else about the program?*
>
> Student: *Yeah [He names a program coordinator] is mad cool. I like him. I think he should be president of the United States.*
>
> Interviewer: *Why's that?*
>
> Student: *Because [he's] a cool person. not like most people, you know what I'm sayin', not to get on the racial thing, but most people when they White, they won't, you know what I'm saying,*

give as much love as [he] be givin' out to us. [He] show everybody

love. He don't care if you Black or White. But if you Black, he

show you more love because he tries to get you, you know what I'm

saying, not good in with you, but he just tryin' to be your friend.

That's what I like about him, you know what I'm sayin'. He won't

look at me and think I'm somebody different, you know what I'm

sayin'. He's just mad cool.

College students have also responded positively to the programs, although their

reports show that the Institute was not just fun and games. One student commented on

how he changed his views of urban youth after working closely with them during the

summer program:

Throughout the course of this program, I have learned a great

deal. I have been exposed to an environment that I had no real

contact with before. I was able to meet people I probably would

never [have] had the pleasure of meeting. The environment that

these kids face is an unfortunate one, but just like everything, there

is always some good. When we [outsiders] talk about the

neighborhood or ghetto, we automatically associate it with

negativity. We assume that all of its inhabitants want to leave it. I

don't think this is the case. Some people who live in urban

neighborhoods do not want to leave it and do not associate it with

negativity. There is a sense of community. For most kids, I feel

that this sense of belonging and having something in common does

much more good than it does harm.

Another student told of how he struggled with his role as a mentor in the project.

I could not help but be angry, I could not help but hold a grudge. I

could not help but be frustrated with myself, the students, and, in

truth, the entire program. On Monday, I spoke with [a program

coordinator] about what had happened [on a mentoring trip]. He

told me two things that will stick with me for the rest of my life.

One, that I am not a hero . . . He also told me that the students do

not hold a grudge and neither should I . . . During the last few

days, I feel like I had a break through. I began to recognize the

individuality of the students. I now saw which ones needed me to

be their babysitter, which needed an older friend to listen, and

which just needed a ride to go somewhere out of the projects.

Fun, frustrating, rewarding - these words appear frequently in students' journal entries. As these words and the stories that go with them indicate, students experienced some stress during the program, but overall they felt a great deal of pleasure being part of a team. Our college students discuss stress in their journals more frequently than the high school or middle school students and often it is related to conflicting role expectations. When they tried to be a friend, they found that this could easily conflict with their need to be authority figures. When they tried to lecture the high school or middle school students, they often confronted passive resistance from them. For the most part, the college students learned to question the stereotypes they had about urban youth.

Concluding Comments

Many of the problems in creating effective programs for Black and Latino urban youth stem from issues of representation. This problem has to do with discussions about how these youth are named, who does the naming, what motives are involved, what consequences follow the use of certain names, and what possibilities for alternative names for urban youth have gone unrecognized or been ignored (Knoblauch and Brannon, 1993). Naming often appears straightforward and obvious because it reflects the common sense knowledge of a culture that is assumed to be true and not open to question. However, when the culture of a country such as the United States includes a long history of race and color rhetoric as part of the folk psychology, there is a real risk that the terms used to describe Black and Latino youth may reflect these racial stereotypes.

During all of our Urban Youth Leadership Programs, we experienced glaring examples of miscommunication when we simply didn't understand each other and misinterpreted messages and actions. In our early programs, the students told us that the programs did not make any sense to them and they did not see any need to get involved in them. They presented themselves as disinterested observers in most activities and challenged us to get them interested. As a result, we became increasingly concerned about assuring high levels of participation in our programs.

Still, we wanted more than just their "participation." We wanted students to do a "good job" and learn to use high standards to judge their efforts. Our desire to increase participation often conflicted with our desire to enhance the role expectations for the students. On the one hand, we were very pleased to have an overwhelming majority of

students participate in our early theater production. But when members of the African American community pointed out to us that our program paled in comparison to similar programs in the African American Churches in their community, it became clear that "participation" was not enough. The next summer, we employed a distinguished African American scholar in theater to help us increase the quality of our theatrical programs. Our process goals were not completely abandoned, but the message to students was that the final production of the play was more important than how students felt about doing the production. The adults in the community had many good reasons for choosing a play about Harriet Tubman, but the students felt marginalized and not part of the decision-making processes. They had many reservations about a play that included so many slave roles and they simply did not want to be limited to them. Although the quality of our second theater production was superior to the first, the quality of student involvement in the first was clearly superior to the quality of their involvement in the second production.

The Albany Urban Youth programs provide an environment in which students' positive educational attitudes and beliefs as well as their educational aspirations are "taken seriously" and treated "respectfully." We used the principles of authoritative parenting to define our role expectations for undergraduate and graduate mentors (Baumrind, 1971; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992). They were to encourage self reliance and independence with the students, yet maintain an open dialogue always providing reasons for discipline. Most importantly, the mentors were told to park their negative stereotypes about urban youth at the door and to encourage, support and promote the educational aspirations of the youth. The well known but often poorly

understood concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy, as coined by Merton (1948), provides a

succinct rationale for our approach to urban youth development.

References

Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. Developmental Psychology Monographs, 4, 1-103.

Bell-Scott, P. & Taylor, R. L. (1989). Introduction: The multiple ecologies of black adolescent development. Journal of Adolescent Research, 4, 119-124.

Berger, P. & Luckman, T. (1967). The social construction of reality. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Bruner, J. (1996). The culture of education. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Campbell, K. A. (1998). An Evaluation of the 1998 Urban Youth Leadership Development Institute. Report submitted to the Superintendent of Schools, Albany City School District.

Children's Defense Fund (1991). Preventing adolescent pregnancy: What schools can do. Washington, DC.

Crocker, J. & Major, B. (1989). Social stigma and self-esteem: The self protective properties of stigma. Psychological Review, 96, 608-630.

Davidson, A. L. (1996). Making and Molding Identity in Schools. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

DuBois, W. E. B (1969). The Souls of Black Folks. New York: Signet (Original work published in 1903).

Festinger, L. (1957). A theory of cognitive dissonance. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson.

Finn, J. D. (1989). Withdrawing from school. Review of Educational Research. 59, 117-142.

Finn, J. D & Cox, D. (1992). Participation and withdrawal among fourth grade pupils. American Educational Research Journal, 29, 141-162.

Garmezy, N. (1993). Children in poverty: Resilience despite risk. Psychiatry, 56, 127-136.

Graham, S. (1994). Motivation in African Americans. Review of Educational Research 64, 55-117.

Heath, S. B., & McLaughlin, M. W. (Eds.) (1993). Identity and inner city youth. New York: Teachers College Press.

Jessor, R. (1993). Successful adolescent development among youth in high-risk settings. The American Psychologist, 48, 117-126.

Knoblauch, C.H. and Brannon, L. (1993). Critical teaching and the idea of literacy. Plymouth, NH.: Boynton/Cook.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. American Educational Research Journal, 32, 465-491.

McLaughlin, M. W., et al., (1994). Urban Sanctuaries. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Merton, R.K. (1948). The Self-fulfilling prophecy. Antioch Review, 8, 193-210.

Minorities in Public School (2000). In F. Schultz (Ed.), Annual editions: Education, 00/01 (pp. 138-142). Guilford, CT: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill.

Mosher, R., Kenny, R. & Garrod, A. (1994). Preparing for citizenship: Teaching youth to live democratically. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Nettles, S.M. (1991). Community involvement and disadvantaged students: A review. Review of Educational Research, 61, 379-406.

Newman, D. L., et al. (1996). An evaluation of the Goals 2000 Institute 1996: Focus on Developing the professional educator. Report submitted to the Superintendent of Schools, Albany City School District.

Oakes, J. (1985). Keeping track: How schools structure inequality. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Power, C.F., Higgins, A., & Kohlberg, L. (1989). Lawrence Kohlberg's approach to moral education. New York: Columbia University Press.

Rutter, M. (1987). Psychosocial resilience and protective mechanisms. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 37, 317-331.

Steele, C. M. (1997). A threat in the air. The American Psychologist 52, 613-629.

Steinberg, L., Dornbusch, S. M. & Brown, B. B. (1992). Ethnic differences in adolescent achievement. The American Psychologist, 47, 723-729.

Steinberg, C.M., Lamborn, S.D., Dornbusch, S.M., & Darling, N. (1992). Impact of parenting practices on adolescent achievement: Authoritative parenting, school involvement, and encouragement to succeed. Child Development, 63, 1266-1281.

Voekl, K.E. (1996). Measuring students' identification with school. Educational and Psychological Measurements, 56, 760-770.

Wehlage, G. G & Rutter, R.A. (1986). Dropping out: How much do schools contribute to the problem? Teachers College Record, 87, 374-392.

Wentzel, K.R. (1991). Social competence at school: Relationships between social responsibility and academic achievement. Review of Educational Research 61, 1-24.

Wylie, R.C. (1979). <u>The self-concept</u>. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

ERIC®

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

UD033665

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title:

The Albany Approach to Urban Youth Development

Author(s): Donald Biggs and Robert Colesante

Corporate Source:	Publication Date:

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) **1**	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA· FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) **2A**	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) **2B**
Level 1 ↑ [X]	Level 2A ↑ [ ]	Level 2B ↑ [ ]
Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) *and* paper copy.	Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only	Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here,→ please	Signature:	Printed Name/Position/Title:	
	Organization/Address:	Telephone: 44͞3 - 5044	FAX:
	Unv@ Ulban	E-Mail Address:	Date:

(over)

ERIC® Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation

May 8, 2000

Dear AERA Presenter,

Hopefully, the convention was a productive and rewarding event. As stated in the AERA program, presenters have a responsibility to make their papers readily available. If you haven't done so already, please submit copies of your papers for consideration for inclusion in the ERIC database. We are interested in papers from this year's AERA conference and last year's conference. If you have submitted your paper, you can track its progress at http://ericae.net.

Abstracts of papers accepted by ERIC appear in *Resources in Education (RIE)* and are announced to over 5,000 organizations. The inclusion of your work makes it readily available to other researchers, provides a permanent archive, and enhances the quality of *RIE*. Abstracts of your contribution will be accessible through the printed and electronic versions of *RIE*. The paper will be available through the microfiche collections that are housed at libraries around the world and through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service.

We are gathering all the papers from the **2000 and 1999 AERA Conference**. We will route your paper to the appropriate clearinghouse. You will be notified if your paper meets ERIC's criteria for inclusion in *RIE*: contribution to education, timeliness, relevance, methodology, effectiveness of presentation, and reproduction quality.

Please sign the Reproduction Release Form enclosed with this letter and send **two** copies of your paper. The Release Form gives ERIC permission to make and distribute copies of your paper. It does not preclude you from publishing your work. You can mail your paper to our attention at the address below. Please feel free to copy the form for future or additional submissions.

Mail to:
AERA 2000/ERIC Acquisitions
University of Maryland
1129 Shriver Laboratory
College Park, MD 20742

Sincerely,

Lawrence M. Rudner, Ph.D.
Director, ERIC/AE

ERIC is a project of the Department of Measurement, Statistics & Evaluation