ABSTRACT
        This study documented the learning outcomes of preservice teachers who
participated in a service-learning program for professional development on
understanding the academic and social needs of students attending urban schools in a
low-income northern California community. Eight preservice teachers participated for
periods from 1 to 2 years. Pretests and posttests, designed to measure end-of-the-year
academic growth in mathematics and reading competence, were administered to 102 sixth
graders to compare achievement outcomes between the intervention group and their
comparable sixth grade peers. All eight preservice teachers engaged in personal and
pedagogical generative work, leading to transformative educational consciousness and
practices, while making statistically significant academic differences for their
students. (Contains 2 figures and 15 references.) (Author/SLD)

Challenging the Mainstream Paradigm for Teacher Education:
A Service Learning Model for
Future Teachers of African American Students

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This study documents the learning outcomes of pre-service teachers who participated in a service- learning program for professional development on understanding the academic and social needs of students attending urban schools, in a low-income northern California community. Eight pre-service teachers participated for a period from one to two years. Pre-post tests, designed to measure end- of- the- year academic growth in math and reading competence, were administered to one hundred and two sixth grade students to compare achievement outcomes between the intervention group of sixth graders and their comparable sixth grade peers. All eight pre-service teachers engaged in personal and pedagogical generative work, leading to transformative educational consciousness and practices, while making statistically significant academic differences for their students.

Background

The need for augmented focus on teacher preparation is reflected in the consistent academic gap between students attending urban public schools and their counterparts attending independent or parochial schools, and secondarily reflected in the lack and loss of teachers each year.

Fueled by mandates for reduction in class size, and consistently increasing student enrollment, many San Francisco Bay Area East Bay school districts are forced to hire less experienced teachers to fill the wide gaps. However, few school districts are experiencing the lack of teachers like the flatland schools of the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD). This district loses approximately 200 teachers each year (Mercado, 1999). The problem, extending over a decade, has generated a need to find replacements that are increasingly less experienced. With lower salary offerings than other districts in the S.F. Bay Area, positive change is most unlikely (Mercado, 1999).

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Research points to a number of important factors leading to successful outcomes for all students. Among these are well-prepared teachers who are genuinely interested and prepared to work toward changing the educational outcomes for students of color (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Delpit, 1988). Issues of incongruency contribute significantly to the disillusionment and eventual loss of teachers, including: a) distress about how to teach students who are culturally and ethnically different, b) low expectations of the students coupled with consistently poor academic outcomes, and c) lack of preparation, support, or guidance (Rosenthal, 1994). These teachers may also experience distress about how to connect with students whose families are encountering social and economic problems due to inequities in the social structure.

Purpose

The 2001-2002 Urban Teacher Apprenticeship Project (UTAP) effort focused on expanding, developing and testing an effective pre-service teacher training model to challenge the mainstream paradigm of teacher preparation. The Urban Teacher Apprenticeship Project (UTAP) functioned under a "service-learning" design, whereby Making Waves Education Program served as the community-based partner. Service learning is a pedagogical approach whereby students learn and develop though active participation in organized service experiences within community-based projects or organizations. This learning and service meets community needs while enabling students to problem solve and maneuver work within the specific needs of the community organization. John Dewey's idea that educational institutions should develop the social intelligence of their students through service, has been adopted by colleges and universities throughout the U.S. He adds that service learning is "distinguished from community service or volunteerism by its emphasis on the growth or development of the service provider and its direct connection to the academic mission (Zlotkowski, 1998). Root, (1997) characterizes service learning as experiences in educational learning in which:

1) Students learn course content as a result of the community service that they perform;
2) Students apply course content in a community setting;
3) Students are provided time and opportunity for reflection on the experience;
4) The relationship among participants is collaborative and the benefits are reciprocal;
5) The service is with, rather than for, the community partner;

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6) Community partners reap benefits from the program, while student participants gain valuable knowledge and skills; and

7) Service learning is done in an area of one's expertise (Root, 1997, p 42).

The service learning model at Making Waves is modified to include a modest salary for each of its teacher participants. This is important because of the extensive number of work hours necessary to fulfill the teaching, training, and research requirements. Furthermore, payment has worked as an incentive to retain teachers in the program.

Implemented as a "pilot" action research project in the 2000-2001 academic year, the effects of the project in its first year showed positive results for generating an increase in classroom readiness for the pre-service teachers. Based on pre and post diagnostic tests in math and language, student outcomes suggested that those receiving academic support under this model would benefit academically. Academic year 2001-2002 research outcomes are presented in this evaluation report.

Theoretical Framework

Influential to this study's framework is the work of Dewey (1916, 1990). Dewey's attention to social action and education urged that philosophy should focus itself on human problems in an ever-changing world. He adds that education should free our activities, enhancing our capability to direct our own lives.

Also influential to the framework used for this research is the philosophy of Ladson-Billings (1994) and Foster (1997) who examine holistic pedagogy to understand the essential values, beliefs and experiences of teachers and why they must parallel those of the students they teach. In accordance with the principle of culturally-relevant teaching and learning, Ladson-Billings's framework for teacher-student relationships in the culturally-relevant classroom encourages self- efficacy for all students, while Foster's work focuses on the value of Black education, including the craft of Black teaching, and the social and political advantages of Black education for Black youth.

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The historical aspects of Black education asserted by Dubois (1973) and Anderson (1988) help us to understand the ideologies and social-political structure that, through schooling, have developed a politically powerless, disenfranchised, and economically underdeveloped group of people. These structures have undergirded the imbalance of education and power in the U.S. for African Americans in the past two centuries. Anderson (1988) asserts that the "self-sustaining" behaviors of African Americans in the struggle for educational access and social inclusion, pre and post-Civil War, demonstrate their belief that formal education and literacy was a means to liberation of mind and body.

Freire's educational philosophy-conscientizacao, or "education for liberation" is taken into account for its theme of permanent liberation. This stage of liberation first requires revealing to the oppressed that, through their struggle, they must find the way to life-affirming humanization. Those being educated, the poor, oppressed, and marginalized-"must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform" (Freire, 1973, p. 31).

Finally, A. Wade Boykin's Talent Development Model, which aims at ensuring the academic success of children historically "under-served", asserts that all children can learn in settings which have high expectations and are academically demanding (Boykin, 1986).

Methodology

The research questions for the 2001-2002 academic year were:

1. Do pre-service teacher trainees feel better prepared to work effectively in urban public school classrooms after participating in the Urban Teacher Apprenticeship Project, at Making Waves, in terms of their:
   a) pedagogical knowledge
   b) understanding, attitude and awareness of issues within the communities of the students being served; and
   c) classroom readiness.

2. Using the UTAP model of academic support, do students show greater academic improvement at the end of the school year than their counterparts not receiving support under this model?

At the time this study was conducted, the principle researcher was the Co-Investigator of UTAP and the Director of Program Operations at Making Waves Education Program. Her interests include (a) social and cultural influences on learning, (b) teacher education, and (c) African American student needs. The UTAP Investigator was Percy D. Hintzen, Ph.D., Professor of African American Studies, University of California, Berkeley. Catherine Njoroge, M.P.H., Kaiser Permanente, Division of Research, provided the data analysis for the experiment on student academic growth.

Sample

Teacher Participants

Seven recent college graduates and one undergraduate were recruited for UTAP, for the 2001-2002 year, totaling eight participants. Four of the eight participants were second-year UTAP participants. The majority of the participants were college/university undergraduates or recent graduates who had planned to enter a career of teaching or who were exploring teaching as a possible career.

Student Participants

One hundred and eighteen (118) students were selected to participate in the study, initially. These participants were sixth grade students attending public schools in the WCCUSD. The students represented the sixth grade classrooms at Making Waves Education Program (experimental group), Helms Middle School, Peres Elementary School, and Verde Elementary School. The participating schools were selected purposefully to ensure comparability of diversity in academic skills, race/ethnicity and income, to the control group. Due to issues beyond the control of the researcher, only 112 of the original 118 provided data for the language experiment. Fifty-three percent were boys, and 47% were girls Approximately 51% of the participants were African American; approximately 36% were Latino, and approximately 11% were Asian American.

Ninety-two students participated in the math experiment. Of this group, approximately 59% were boys, and 41% were girls. Approximately 49% were African American, approximately 37% were Latino, and approximately 12% were Asian. As confirmed by classroom teachers of students participating in this study, a large number of these sixth grade students were active participants in after-school tutoring programs sponsored by the school or outside organizations, such as churches, or community centers.

Design

A triangulation approach utilizing varying forms of data collection provided for a balanced account of the research model being studied. These sources included participant observation, surveying, dialogic interaction, and diagnostic testing. Also, ethnographic methods were established to support the extensive time required with the participants to observe and engage in dialogic interaction. McMillan (1997) states that ethnographic research is mostly exploratory or discovery-oriented, thus aiding in the process of understanding peoples' views of their world.

A one-group pretest-posttest design was utilized for the student experiment to compare the academic growth of the student participants over one academic year. The treatment group consisted of sixth grade students in the Making Waves Education Program. The control group consisted of comparable sixth grade students within the WCCUSD.

A one-group posttest-only design was utilized to capture the learning outcomes of the teacher participants. Having worked previously with the pre-service teacher participants, the researcher generally understood the level of knowledge, attitudes, and skill of the participants previous to this year's work.

Methodology

During eleven months of the 2001-2002 academic year, UTAP teacher participants taught at the Making Waves Education Program, in Richmond, California. Each teacher participant was

placed at a teaching site that served age-comparable students enrolled in the program. Making Waves students range in age between 11 and 18.

In addition to teaching between 20-30 hours each week with assigned groups of age-comparable students, these participants attended monthly workshops, lectures, and discussions; visited numerous independent and public school classrooms to "shadow" their assigned students; communicated with parents; assisted tutors with student academic and behavioral needs; and attended local and out-of-state educational conferences.

Student participants were grouped (1 to 5 ratio) with teacher participants to receive after-school and Saturday tutoring in all disciplines, for nine academic months. Teacher participants were also responsible for assisting in the learning process of all students at their assigned site, between 30 and 45 students. This included helping tutors with their assigned students, communicating with parents (as needed), and grading tests).

Instruments

A UTAP Self-Assessment/Evaluation Questionnaire was developed to ascertain the attitudes, values, and learning related to the teacher participants' pedagogical knowledge, classroom readiness, and understanding and awareness of issues within the students' communities.

A 3-hour dialogic interaction, held in July 2002, was videotaped to capture the participants' learning and perceptions on issues important to teacher preparation. The questions covered five topics: 1) the role of research; 2) classroom management; 3) attributes of positive/negative change in students; 4) important discoveries that broadened understanding of school problems; and 5) underutilized or overlooked elements of learning.

Math and language diagnostics were developed to measure the academic growth of the student participants.

Data Collection

Students:

Math and Language diagnostic pre-tests were administered in September and October, 2001 to all of the 6th grade participants. The post-tests were administered in June 2002. The two teacher participants assigned to the MWEP sixth grade class administered the pre and post tests to the MWEP group; the researcher administered the pre-test and post-test to the 6th grade students at Helms, Peres, and Verde Schools.

Teachers:

The researcher held a 3-hour dialogic interaction session with the teacher participants (held in July 2002). This session was videotaped, and reviewed for content and clarity. The session was then edited and submitted for review by the participants to confirm that the content was within its intended context.

A self-assessment/evaluation questionnaire was distributed to each teacher participant to complete. This questionnaire specifically focused on the study's research question regarding teacher preparedness.

The researcher benefited from numerous "reflection" and training sessions, held with participants during semi-monthly group meetings, and as needed to discuss important topics. Thus, participant observations were made during these meetings and written accounts of the discourse could then be included as part of the final data collection.

Bias Avoidance

Because of the researcher's administrative position at MWEP, her role in the study was that of participant-observer. In this role, she used objective sensitivity and recorded the phenomena as truthfully as possible, making conscious efforts to avoid errors in judgment. The researcher's work in this study was to honesty observe and report what was evident in the research, searching for truth versus socially acceptable anecdotes. Every attempt was made by

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the researcher to use her "in-group" status to her advantage for accessing participants and to collect relevant information, without negotiating her objective viewpoints.

Findings

Academic Growth in Language Skills:

Using the UTAP model of academic support, do students show greater academic improvement (growth) at the end of the school year than their counterparts not receiving support under this model

A chi square test, performed to determine whether the pre-test scores were the same among the two groups, indicated that there was a significant difference between the groups ($p<0.0018$). Figure 1 shows that students attending Helms Middle School had the highest mean language scores overall at the beginning of the year. However, the MWEP group showed the greatest amount of growth over the academic year compared to the other groups: Significant growth at MWEP ($p<0.0001$), no significant growth at Helms ($p=0.4962$), significant growth at Peres ($p=0.0171$) and significant growth at Verde ($p=0.0059$).

Results also indicated that there was no significant difference ($p=0.0731$) in gender among the pre-test scores as well as the post-test scores ($p=0.4768$). Furthermore, there were no significant race/ethnicity differences in the pre-test scores ($p=0.0731$) and in the post-test scores, ($p=0.4768$).

Academic Growth in Math Skills:

To determine whether the pre-test scores were the same among the groups, a chi square test was performed which indicated that there was a significant difference ($p<0.0001$). Paired comparisons were performed to check whether the mean changed positively (from pre-test to post-test) by group. The results showed no significant change at Helms School ($p=0.3078$), a significant change at Peres School ($p=0.0391$), and a significant change at Verde School ($p=0.0214$). However, as can be seen in Figure 2, MWEP mean raw scores revealed the greatest growth in math skills compared to their peers ($p<0.0001$). No significant race/ethnicity differences were noted in the pre-test scores ($p=0.7505$) or in the post-test scores ($p=0.6556$).

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Also, there were no significant race/ethnicity differences found between pre and post-test scores overall, PCTMATHDIFF (p=0.3662).

Results also indicated that there were no significant differences in gender among the pre-test scores (p=0.9230) or post-test scores (p=0.9234). Also, no gender differences were found between pre and pos-test scores overall, PCTMATHDIFF (p=0.3662).

Figure 1. Mean language test scores of sixth grade students in Richmond, California, by school
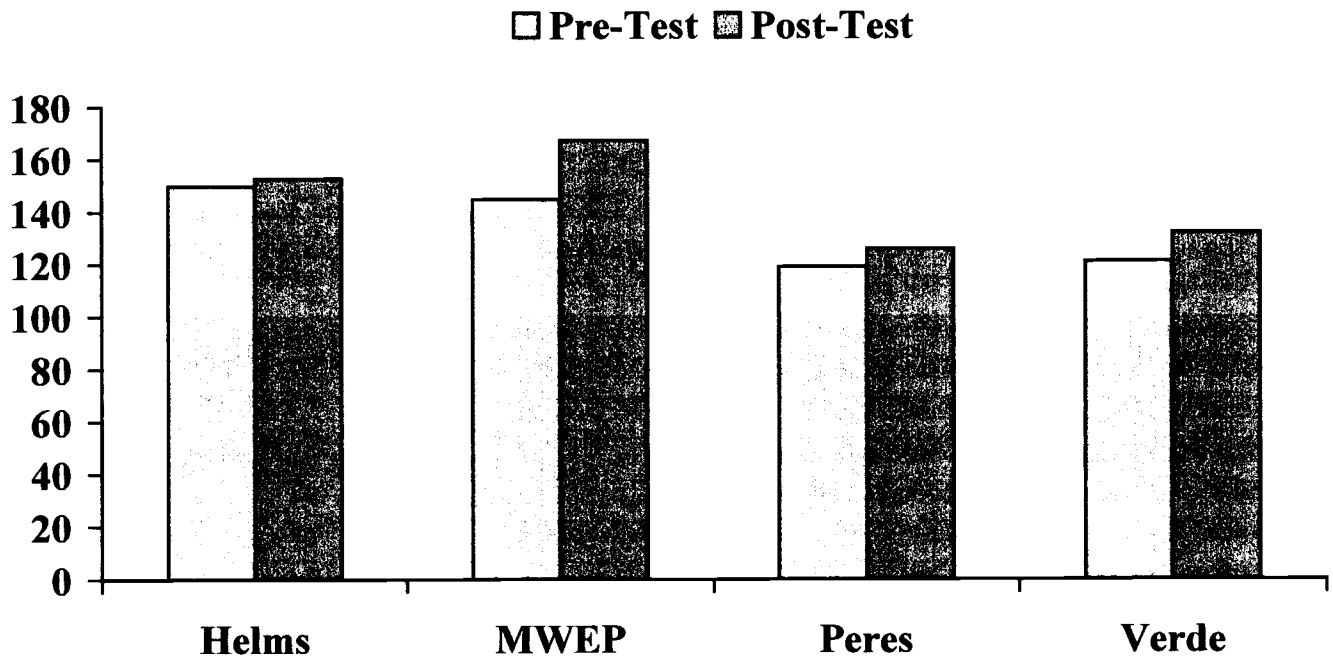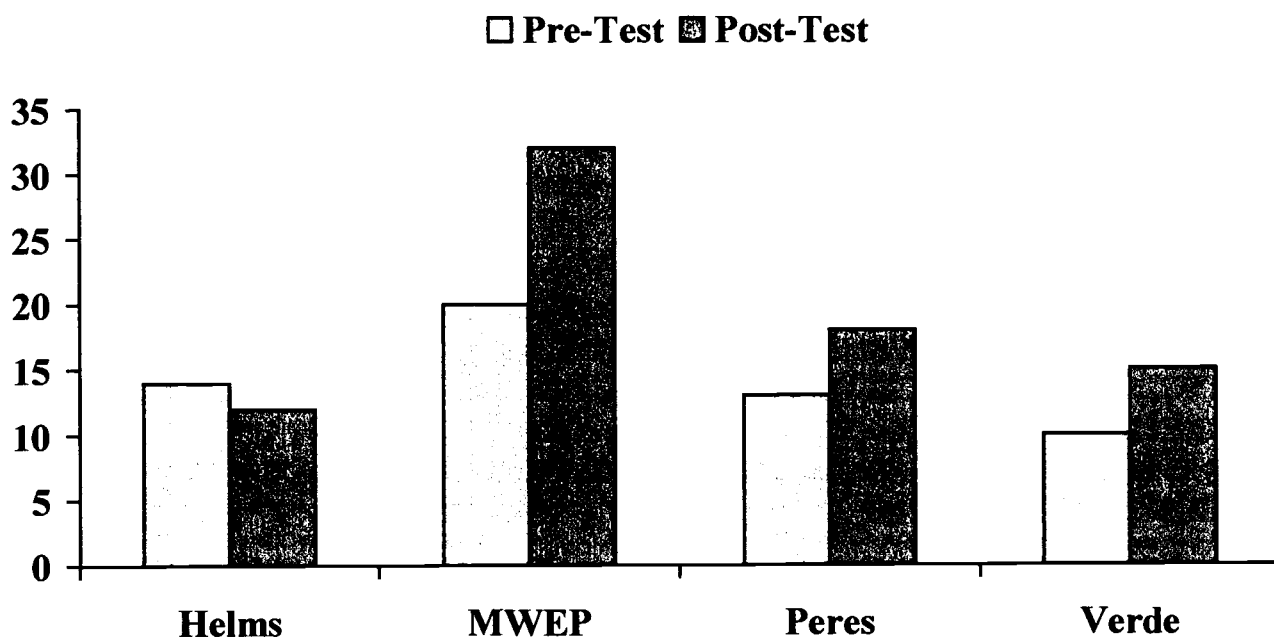
□ Pre-Test ▨ Post-Test

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Figure 2. Mean math test scores of sixth grade students in Richmond, California, by school.

☐ **Pre-Test** ▨ **Post-Test**

Discovery and Application of Service-Learning:

Do pre-service teacher trainees feel better prepared to work effectively in urban public school classrooms after participating in the Urban Teacher Apprenticeship Project, at Making Waves, in terms of their: a) pedagogical knowledge, b) understanding, attitude and awareness of issues within the communities of the students being served, and c) classroom readiness?

Numerous themes emerged from a collection of data from the teacher participants during the academic year. Pre-service teachers demonstrated problem-solving skills in numerous settings throughout the year. As witnessed by the researcher, evidence of problem-solving skills reflecting a sense of cultural understanding were appropriately applied to the classroom setting throughout the academic year, in numerous situations. Two video presentations documented important discoveries and invoked new questions, including questions about socio-cultural influences on education within the broader context.

Dialogue at the three-hour dialogic interaction session, held at the end of the year, was guided by the most prominent of these themes; a) research, b) classroom management, and c) student development. Three additional questions were posed to learn more about the learning throughout the year. A summary of the participants' perceptions are listed below following the questions asked:

In what ways can <u>research</u> be used to change or improve how children in public urban schools experience learning?

Five of the eight participants attended educational conferences, during the academic year. These individuals, in particular, responded with concern that researchers do not perceive practitioners as resources to change educational outcomes. Several stated that the bridge between research and practice remains wide.

Teresa acknowledged that "teachers are in the trenches and they don't have access to the research… we're the ones that will put research into practice… Universities really need to work with schools, professors need to work with teachers". Belen stated that the world's largest educational research conference is held each year in April. She asked, "how can teachers [or principals] be expected to attend this conference and benefit from the learning if they are needed in their classrooms during this time?"

Sharon discussed what she learned about the Berkeley High School action-research project funded by U.C. Berkeley, called The Diversity Project. She acknowledged that this is one positive way that research had been put into practice in a school, with positive outcomes. She informed us, however, that continued funding of this project is uncertain.

Sharon also remarked about the seminar on hip-hop pedagogy, presented at the American Educational Researchers Association (AERA) "was one excellent way to teach students to critically analyze the literature." She added that this is one good example of how research can be put into practice to positively effect learning outcomes. She summarized by stating that "the policy-makers are more focused on the standardized testing research – they use <u>that</u> research all the time."

What have you learned this year about classroom management? How will the new learning be applied to your future work?

In essence, participants benefited from numerous hours of classroom observation during the year. During these hours they were able to assess diverse learning atmospheres while shadowing their assigned students in various schools.

In general, participants stated that an engaging curriculum is the best classroom manager. "When students have a divested interest in what they're learning, you will keep their attention", confirmed Belen. Amanda spoke of the need for adequate physical space along with an environment that is conducive to learning. "Some classes that I would go to would have thirty-six kids in a little tiny room – they wouldn't have space, they would talk a lot and be rowdy. It was a reaction to the space that they were in."

Other participants added that students having trust and respect for the teacher would coincide with another important element – developing positive personal relationships. Belen acknowledged that classroom management has a lot to do with how prepared she is to teach someone and knowing what she is going to teach, rather than "flying by the seat of her pants" from week to week.

Catherine described her method of classroom management as being grounded in her ability to create a "presence" that her students all respected, because of the personal relationship that had been created. Amanda affirmed that being able to boost the students' confidence by showing appreciation, respect and personal interest in them makes a difference. She added that this translates, to a certain degree, to their schoolwork. Meeting their parents, and having their parents accept you also fosters a sense of trust. In addition, the presentation of new and exciting topics to learn was expressed as another element that could motivate learning in a broader sense, while capturing the attention of students. The UTAP participants recognized all of these elements as essential to fostering classroom management.

Describe a student in your classroom who has gone through the most change (positive or negative) in his/her learning this year? What do you believe attributed to the change? What methods do you plan to implement to help him/her to achieve?

Participants' viewpoints were in accordance with the belief that teachers must use patience and perseverance to witness academic change in their students. As an example, Amanda stated that one of her students produced very little during the year, however, at the year's end, she demonstrated her ability to compile an anthology of her personal writings she had completed. It was of good quality and very expressive. She stated:

> "I worked with her, like pulling teeth, to get her to do some of this [work] and to show her that she could do it. Being below grade level, with projects you have to complete, can be so overwhelming…. The first two or three [projects] we did together. Finding ways to make her feel like she could do it without me was important."

Discuss a discovery you made this year that broadened your understanding of the problems in public school education?

Overall, participants expressed their understanding of the large structural problems within our society that contribute to the continuing issues of education. They stated that the public school problem is very complex and that there is no panacea. The participants elaborated on the negative outcomes of living in a nation that has such class, economic and educational disparity among its groups.

Participants also reflected on the academic training differences between students they worked with. Those students who attended independent schools were being trained to think more critically and had more engaging curriculum, while those who attended public schools lacked stimulating curriculum and were given lower expectations to excel. This revelation helped to reinforce the importance of the work that needs to be done to change public school education, to ensure that all children will have life success.

Teresa reflected on the research topic discussed at the AERA conference that related to teacher retention. She stated that the research revealed the most important reasons that teachers stay at a school. Among these reasons were 1) a level of professionalism at the school (not just pay). When teachers are given novice status at a school they are assigned a mentor teacher and other support to ensure their effectiveness as teachers; 2) good physical environment, i.e. good lighting, safe building, etc; 3) access to resources, i.e. paper, books, etc; and 3) being respected as an intellectual who is making a contribution. She stated that these are recognized as important elements for retaining good teachers.

Jennifer affirmed that "people always want to look at one problem that they can fix"... When it relates to education, people like to find one problem that they can fix. There are different things that effect society as a whole, and there are so many ways to approach each different problem." She added that she gets frustrated about the perceptions that people have about what the problem is, and how she can teach them about the real problems in education. "I'm just realizing that I'm at that step and I don't know how to take it to the next level – how to teach this to others."

Belen declared that "after going to the [AERA] conference, I have so much food for thought." She added that "until huge structural inequalities are addressed we can't even begin to think about "quick-fixing". Belen declared that homelessness, poor healthcare and other problems exacerbate the problems of education. "We cannot expect a child with a toothache to do well in class. Poor access to healthcare is only one issue many urban school students face".

Ines acknowledged that she has always known that there is a difference in the quality of education between private and public schools, but most recently that reality has affected her in more personal ways while working with her students. Fifty-percent of them attend private schools, the others attend a local public high school. "Those attending the private schools have wonderful insight on the literature they read. The others struggle to get through the literature... There was such a huge difference in working with the two groups... I know that my students can think critically, but because they [public school students] are not asked what they think... they

just want to know the right answer." The reality is that the public schools are not preparing them for college. It was a whole new revelation for me."

Jonathan, a second year participant stated that, this year, he has become more aware of how large a task changing the quality of education at public schools is. "We must move beyond the traditional views of what constitutes education and the traditional methods of solving educational problems. Everyone has an opinion, but everyone is not willing to share in the work. It will take our whole society to improve education."

Discuss one element of learning that has been overlooked or underutilized that would especially benefit students of color?

Some participants expressed the need to utilize pop culture, i.e. rap music, as a means to teach. They posited that students are then able to learn via information that links with their cultural frame of reference and interests.

In reference to the "hip hop" pedagogy presented at the AERA Conference, Belen affirmed: "hip hop music is clearly a genre of music and something that is valued. For them [teachers] to bring it into the classroom and use it as a way to get the students to analyze classical canonical text - is really amazing, and something that teachers should do more of." She added that this approach to analyzing literature helped the students to discover that the information really talks about "us" and the larger society.

Sharon, a second year participant felt that knowledge on the how the brain develops should be made more common. She recently learned that one must stimulate the brain at a very young age, and that children must have all their senses stimulated to inspire increase their learning capacity. The phrase "it take a village to raise a child" took on a new meaning for her. "It is not just the teacher or parent, it is truly all of the child's society that makes learning happen", she declared. Her most pressing question is "how can we inspire parents to do things that prepare their children, regardless of where they live or how they live?

Jonathan, however, expressed that students must be taught that "learning for the sake of learning" will broaden their capacity to navigate the world. Connections will not always be made, initially. He added that students must experience success as a learner of new and unfamiliar information. This unfamiliar information invokes students to ask questions about phenomena that effect everyone's lives.

Ines expressed the importance of informing students about the truths of power and politics. She found that when her students were taught about our nation's political structure and the historical documents and codes that support a process of oppression and racism, they became more interested in researching the information, and they were inspired to learn more about the topic. This new information provided a framework to better understand yesterday's and today's social conditions while inspiring the students to seek additional information to answer questions about how it has effected their lives and the lives of their ancestors.

<u>Self-Assessment/Evaluation Questionnaire</u>

In August 2002, all participants completed a self-assessment/evaluation questionnaire that specifically focused on the study's research question. A summary of answers to the questionnaire's three-part question follows:

Do you feel better prepared to work effectively in an urban public school setting after this year's work, in terms of:

A. <u>Pedagogical Knowledge</u>

An analysis of responses to this question revealed that, in general, after the year's work, all participants felt they had gain pedagogical knowledge that would make them more effective teachers, including learning how to become better leaders and applying newly learned research to classroom teaching. One participant realized that she could better serve the needs of her students if she were bilingual. She recognized that the language barrier made it more difficult for students to excel, even when they had strong family support.

Another participant cheered for the usefulness of the information provided at the AERA Conference, stating that it directly related to her work at Making Waves. "… I had a wealth of information to draw upon when interacting with my students and their parents. I found myself more conscious of my speech and actions while I worked with my students, as well as more reflective at the end of the day when my students had gone.

B. *<u>Understanding, attitude, and awareness of issues within the communities of the students being served</u>*:

An analysis of responses to this question revealed that, in general participants gained easy access to the neighborhoods, schools, and families to understand the dynamics of day-to-day issues, values and culture of the students. One participant stated that learning about the sharp contrast between her own childhood and those of her students forced her to see "too many inequities". Jennifer stated: ".… I see teachers who could care less whether or not a child needs

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their help. I see 50 year old schools falling apart while the city decides to put tax money elsewhere. I see these things and understand them." She added: "I don't know how to solve it… I just know it's there and that it exists. I think all I can do at this moment is to lead by example and to offer my services in any way possible.

Amanda, who joined UTAP very late, stated that: "Seeing the negatives and positives of my students' lives has made me realize that, while I cannot change their individual circumstances, I can help them believe in themselves…. I can show my children that they have options…I can show my kids that I love them and always be honest with them….I do not feel I have the power to make their world seem any less harsh".

Teresa, one of the AERA attendees, affirmed that her best source of access on information about the economic/social/political conditions and challenges of her students, this year, was provided mainly in the form of books, journals, and papers shared at the conference. All participants felt they were better prepared after this year's work, however, they felt that more study would be needed to broaden their knowledge and understanding in this area– to make an even greater difference.

C. Classroom Readiness:

In general teacher participants felt positive about the year's learning in this area. Ms. Villaseñor stated that, while not lowering her standards, she changed her discipline strategies once she knew more about her students' backgrounds. Another participant stated learning more about the challenges of classroom teaching and the need to take it more seriously. While all participants described their ability to work more effectively with their assigned students by the end of the year, each spoke of the level of preparedness they saw as necessary to effectively fulfill a teacher's role in the public school classroom. Belen declared that she is happy to have come to this realization and to reevaluate her work as a tutor/teacher. She added that "Making Waves has provided me with invaluable experience when it comes to working with students. I have learned when to push and when not to push a student; how to approach various situations with poise and confidence, and that there is no easy answer when it comes to solving the m any problems that plague education."

Three of the participants expressed that immense knowledge was gained by participating in local and out of state conferences on education, particularly the American Educational Researchers Association (AERA) Conference, held in New Orleans, Louisiana, in April 2001. A video recording was made of the one-hour presentation on educational research by three of the participants who attended the 2001 AERA conference.

Study Limitations

Student Participation Attrition:

A total of 118 students were selected to participate in the study, initially. However, due to a number of factors beyond the control of the researcher, only 102 students provided pre and post-test data for language that could be used for the study. Also, only 92 students provided sufficient data for the math post and pre-tests, administered in June. These factors include family migration in search of employment, housing, and improved living conditions. Another factor of student attrition during the month of June is decreased motivation to attend school during the last weeks of the academic year. One teacher stated that parents may retain their children because of increased violence at the end of the year. This same teacher noted that students lose interest in school by the end of the year. Furthermore, he attributed the "September 11th attack on the U.S." event as having a direct economical effect on many of these families. Thus, his classroom lost several students by the end of the year 2001 year.

Conclusions

For pre-service teacher participants, this model provided opportunities to challenge theories and myths about teaching students of color in urban schools, while concurrently providing a basis for committed action for social change. More importantly, these service-learning participants became a vital part of the community in which they worked, helping to strengthen the connection between school, family and community. The outcome of this research assumes that, under this framework, a learning service model supports an ethical approach to realizing one's own abilities, biases, and strengths in a supportive setting where scholarly ideas can be exchanged to enhance action research.

The primary benefit of this community immersion approach was that the participants were able to access authentic community issues, and practice teaching using culturally congruent approaches, while contributing to each student's academic growth and level of efficacy. Moreover, these participants were able to self-assess their knowledge on issues such as community and family needs and values, while closely examining and making sense of the behaviors of their students. This process helped to transform previous assumptions, and beliefs with practical knowledge and understanding.

At the end of the year, some of the teacher participants recognized that, although helpful, the new knowledge only generated the need for deeper understanding of public school problems and how to break down the barriers their students were facing. This realization provided a framework for facing the tasks at hand and a truer sense of the level of commitment and action necessary to change the inequities in education.

Recommendations

The researcher suggests that a more extensive observation period is necessary to fully test the effects of this model as one that promotes increased satisfaction and longevity in the field of teaching. The findings of this study suggest the need for the implementation of long-term service learning programs for teacher preparation.

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