

The Center for Research  
on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy

Exploring Urban Literacy  
& Developmental Education

*Dana Britt Lundell  
Jeanne L. Higbee  
Editors*



UNIVERSITY  
OF MINNESOTA





*Exploring Urban Literacy  
& Developmental Education*

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CRDEUL

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# *Introduction: Why Should We Discuss “Urban Literacy” in Developmental Education?*

Dana Britt Lundell

Jeanne L. Higbee

Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy  
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**I**n June 2002, the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy (CRDEUL) celebrated its six-year anniversary at the University of Minnesota-General College. As a means of honoring the first years of the Center’s existence, we developed the theme for this monograph, “Urban Literacy and Developmental Education,” as a way to articulate a concept of access for developmental education programs that includes a focus on issues impacting students who come from, or enter higher education in, urban settings. It is important to recognize, reflect on, and continue to do research that further describes the nature of these students’ social worlds, academic learning environments, and cultural backgrounds that shape their own perceptions of what “college” really is and what it means for them to pursue higher education. As researchers, advisors, and teachers, we must also consider our own role in creating learning opportunities that both engage and challenge the range of activities and cultures in which students live.

For the field of developmental education, it is crucial that we begin to address the interaction of students’ worlds at the level of research and practice. For example, the concept of “urban literacy” describes a way to expand traditional conversations in the field by placing this work in more specific, local contexts—asking and pursuing questions that arise from and are particular to each site where we and our students work and learn. By defining the term “literacy” as the ways students think and navigate between and across their worlds, the definition becomes more broad than traditional reading, writing, or skills development. We can further develop definitions and models of developmental education by more centrally addressing issues of access, including different kinds of literacies

as they relate to students’ gaining of access to social, academic, political, and economic worlds beyond the institution. Specifically, this notion includes a focus on contradictions that are inherently part of this developmental process, something that may not be overtly addressed in a traditional curriculum or subject matter. For example, why is pursuing higher education itself a personal contradiction or outright struggle for some students? Why are these same activities less rocky and more congruent for other students? Issues of class, race, ethnicity, culture, disability, language, and gender are some of the factors that influence how students and their instructors create meaning out of the assignments in their classrooms and workplace settings. How can classroom spaces invite all students inside while simultaneously acknowledging and encouraging these variations in personal experience as a means for more active critical thinking and engagement with institutions of higher education? Finally, what do students themselves say about their experiences in higher education, and what role do they see developmental programs playing in their transition?

These questions that are relevant both to research and practice help us to identify some ways to examine these themes and further develop the notion of “urban literacy” as part of the developmental education continuum. In this monograph, several authors have written about these themes from their own vantage points in theory and practice—across disciplines such as sociology and biology, from within different programs such as a research center or professional development grant, and through varying research and teaching methodologies such as service learning and qualitative research.



The monograph begins with Lundell's piece describing the "History of the Development of the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy: 1996-2002," which discusses a new center doing work on access issues for higher education. In "The Traveling City: The Hudson's Store, Urban Literacy, and Access in Detroit, Michigan," Kinloch uses the demolition of the downtown Hudson's store as a metaphor for the erosion, or to use her term "implosion," of education in the inner city. Taylor's piece titled "Race and the Politics of Developmental Education: The Black Student Take-over of Morrill Hall" defines the ways in which students worked in the 1960s at an urban campus to redefine higher education to include students of color, a history that is still relevant today across the nation as we continue to define notions of access at the university. Barajas' article on "Changing Objects to Subjects: Transgressing Normative Service Learning Approaches" addresses pedagogical questions about the ways students and their communities can engage one another through civic engagement activities. Another vantage point is revealed in Moore's piece "Science Education and the Urban Achievement Gap," focusing on why issues of access and developmental education are still critically important for the science community. Moore, Jensen, Hsu, and Hatch continue to develop raging debates over the problems of access, discrimination, and test scores in "Saving the 'False Negatives': Intelligence Tests, the SAT, and Developmental Education." Fox and Higbee's piece "Enhancing Literacy Through the Application of Universal Instructional Design: The Curriculum Transformation and Disability (CTAD) Project" discusses how a model developed as a more inclusive approach to serving students with disabilities can improve access and retention for all students.

The monograph also includes three important pieces of research defining urban literacy issues for students in developmental education. First, we have reprinted a qualitative article by Valeri-Gold, Callahan, Deming, and Mangram titled "Reflections: Experience Commentaries by Urban Developmental Studies Students." This kind of qualitative research, specifically that which describes students' transition experiences from their standpoint, is critical to understanding what students want and need in higher education programs. Similarly, Beach, Lundell, and Jung's article "Developmental College Students' Negotiation of Social Practices Between Peer, Family, Workplace, and

University Worlds" further defines the social and academic literacies that students negotiate as they make the transition from high school to higher education through a developmental college of an urban university. Finally, a research report from CRDEUL addresses access issues and experiences for African American males, as discussed in Taylor, Schelske, Hatfield, and Lundell's "African American Men from Hennepin County at the University of Minnesota, 1994-98: Who Applies, Who is Accepted, Who Attends?"

For making this monograph possible, the Editors want to express their thanks to David Taylor, Dean, and Terence Collins, Director of Academic Affairs, at the General College, University of Minnesota, for continuing to support the Center and its publications. We also thank our Assistant Editors, Holly Choon Hyang Pettman, Devjani Banerjee-Stevens, and Jennifer Kreml. Karen Bencke from General College Technical Support Services continues to help us immensely with layout, cover design, formatting, and printing. We also thank all the authors who contributed to this monograph and the editorial board members who support this publication.





# *History of the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy: 1996-2002*

Dana Britt Lundell, Director

Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy  
General College, University of Minnesota

*This chapter provides a brief history of the development of the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy (CRDEUL), General College, University of Minnesota. In June 1996, the Center established itself as a local, regional, and national presence in the field for the development and promotion of postsecondary developmental education and urban literacy issues in higher education. CRDEUL's current programs include publications, national meetings, visiting scholars, a resource library, grants development, and a variety of initiatives that encourage multidisciplinary perspectives and future directions for developmental education. Its unique research focus on urban literacy additionally promotes the examination of access and literacy issues for students in urban settings who are making the transition to higher education through postsecondary developmental education programs. By emphasizing the intersection of developmental education and urban literacy in its mission, CRDEUL offers a new perspective for researchers and practitioners interested in access research.*

**T**he Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy (CRDEUL) was established in June 1996 and recently celebrated its sixth anniversary in the General College (GC), University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Although the Center is relatively new in the field of postsecondary developmental education, it is situated in General College, which is one of the oldest developmental education programs in the country. Additionally, CRDEUL's location within the University of Minnesota, the only Big Ten public research institution situated in its state's major urban site, has been influential in extending the University's outreach within and beyond the metropolitan area, actively promoting access research, professional development, and innovative curricular initiatives. The establishment of CRDEUL within the General College has also been a catalyst for the formation of significant research partnerships among faculty and staff across institutions. At this point, it is important to outline the history of the Center to celebrate and highlight its present goals and future programs, particularly in the unique areas of urban literacy and access research.

Presently CRDEUL, in partnership with GC, has the following mission:

The Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy promotes and develops multidisciplinary research, theory, and practice in postsecondary developmental education and urban literacy. The Center identifies future directions in the field locally, regionally, and nationally by bringing together faculty, students, and community organizations for research and professional development.

It is housed in 333 Appleby Hall, General College, on the East Bank campus of the University of Minnesota and features a variety of programs relevant to a regional and national audience. Its present mission statement continues to evolve, emphasizing the importance of access research for all students and instructors in higher education.

The Center's history and presence at the University of Minnesota are marked by three phases—the local



planning and start-up (1996–1998), regional implementation (1998–2000), and national implementation (2000–present). During this time, CRDEUL established its current mission, developed its programs, assembled an Advisory Board, and positively expanded its local, regional, and national presence in the field. CRDEUL has additionally gained a high level of visibility in a variety of national professional organizations with its commitment to interdisciplinary research in postsecondary developmental education and urban literacy.

### **Phase One (1996-1998): Local Planning and Start-Up**

In its first two years of pilot funding (1996–1998), the Center was founded as a collaboration among faculty, graduate students, and staff in the General College, the College of Education and Human Development, and the University’s Office for Students with Disabilities. Its primary funding source for this phase was a small, formative grant (\$10,000 per year) from the University’s Graduate School through the Program for the Support of Interdisciplinary Research and Postbaccalaureate Education. During this phase, the Center established a broad base of local and regional affiliates, launched a web site, hosted monthly research forums, conducted collaborative grant writing activities, initiated a longitudinal qualitative research study in General College, and sponsored the first Visiting Scholar, Dr. Shirley Brice Heath, an expert on language research and literacy education. The successful activities of the planning phase helped establish the Center as a viable and visible resource in the University for promoting, defining, and developing new research in developmental education and urban literacy.

### **Phase Two (1998–2000): Regional Implementation**

As a result of the successes achieved in phase one, the Center received a continuation grant for full funding to expand its presence and programs at the regional level. Phase two (1998–2000) was supported by a larger annual grant (\$50,000) from the Graduate School, with additional support from General College. During this phase, CRDEUL successfully continued to promote the visibility of its work at the local and

regional levels. The Center also began to expand its mission to make this work more highly visible at the national level. For example, the Center hosted the first Intentional Meeting on Future Directions in Developmental Education in October 1999. This forged important national collaborations and resulted in a nationally distributed proceedings outlining the field’s future theory and research.

### **Phase Three (2000–Present): National Implementation**

The Center, having surpassed its founding goals in the first two phases, received an internal monetary commitment from the Dean of General College to sustain its future work with ambitious expansion goals set for the Center’s increased presence at the national level. Phasing out the Graduate School’s external funding, General College became the Center’s primary funding source with an annual budget to sustain present initiatives, program development, and a staff including a full-time Director, a full-time Program Associate, and a part-time Faculty Chair. This phase also provided support for starting an in-house resource center in General College.

In addition to the continuation of past programs, new developments in the Center during this phase have included launching an annual monograph series, hosting a second and third national Meeting on Future Directions in Developmental Education (April 2001 and November 2002), developing an in-house resource research library and online reference database, writing grants for national research, supporting a Visiting Scholar Program (featuring Dr. James A. Banks, Professor and Director of the Center for Multicultural Education, University of Washington-Seattle, in May 2001), funding annual research Mini Grants and the Henry Borow Award for graduate student doctoral research, updating a web site (<http://www.gen.umn.edu/research/crdeul>), and founding an Advisory Board with regional and national members. Ongoing work in this phase has included grant development and research studies, such as the Multicultural Awareness Project for Institutional Transformation (MAP-IT) Survey and the qualitative General College student study, “Developmental College Students’ Negotiation of Social Practices Between Peer, Family, Workplace, and University Worlds.”

## CRDEUL Programs

The Center's agenda includes a range of ongoing programs that continue to evolve in response to its current base of affiliates and feedback from Advisory Board members.

### *Visiting Scholar*

CRDEUL sponsors a Visiting Scholar featuring a national scholar with expertise on issues in developmental education and urban literacy. The program includes a free public lecture, public roundtable discussion, and related workshop activities to encourage and develop regional work by faculty, students, and staff.

### *Meeting on Future Directions in Developmental Education*

Two national meetings, and a third one occurring in November 2002, have been hosted by CRDEUL to stimulate the thinking of national leaders related to future directions in the field of postsecondary developmental education. These meetings include representatives from major developmental education professional organizations and editors of related publications, as well as scholars with extensive research backgrounds in the areas of access and higher education. Topics include policy, grants, future research, best practices, professional development, multicultural education, and collaborations. Proceedings are available on the CRDEUL web site (<http://www.gen.umn.edu/research/crdeul/publications.htm>).

### *Publications*

The Center publishes an annual monograph related to specific themes in postsecondary developmental education. The first two monographs, *Theoretical Perspectives for Developmental Education* (Lundell & Higbee, 2001) and *Histories of Developmental Education* (Lundell & Higbee, 2002b), are the direct result of issues raised at the Future Directions Meetings. The third monograph is titled *Exploring Urban Literacy and Developmental Education* (Lundell & Higbee, 2002a). Additionally, the Center publishes occasional research reports (e.g., Taylor, Schelske, Hatfield, & Lundell, 2002) and proceedings from the Future

Directions meetings (Lundell & Higbee, 2000, 2002c). Calls for submissions and downloadable copies of all CRDEUL publications are available on the web site.

### *Resource Center*

CRDEUL's main office in General College has developed a resource center available to the General College community. The library includes academic journals, books, reports, and newsletters. The resource library also includes a bulletin board with related publications, conferences, and events.

### *Forums*

During the academic year, the Center hosts free forums on research and practice in postsecondary developmental education and urban literacy. Projects by faculty, staff, students, and community groups are featured in these forums, including information related to research publication in the field. Past forums have included such topics as: "Writing in APA Style for Research and Publication in Developmental Education," "African American Men Research Project at the University of Minnesota," and "Student Perspectives on Disability and Higher Education."

### *Grants and Awards*

The research center develops and supports grant activities related to research in developmental education and urban literacy. The annual Henry Borow Award supports outstanding graduate student dissertation research by granting \$1000 to one student per year. The Mini Grants program also offers annual monetary awards for faculty and staff research proposals, providing a maximum of four awards of up to \$1500 each per year. Recently funded Mini Grants include the following topics: assessing English proficiency levels of Sudanese Lost Boys residing in the Fargo-Moorhead, Minnesota area; qualitative study on oral histories of developmental education and learning assistance professionals; and assessing literacy levels of students in a Reading Seminar curriculum designed for attaining the GED. The Center also develops grants for future research in the field and currently co-sponsors the Curriculum Transformation and Disability (CTAD) project in General College (<http://www.gen.umn.edu/research/ctad/default.htm>).



## Web Site

The Center's web site (<http://www.gen.umn.edu/research/crdeul>) highlights current information and archives from past programs, including events, publications, grants and awards, resources, and professional development.

## Staff and Advisory Board

Since its inception, Dana Britt Lundell, Ph.D., has been CRDEUL's primary Coordinator and in January 2000 became the full-time Director. Since 1999, Jeanne L. Higbee, Professor of Developmental Education in GC, has served as Faculty Chair. Drs. Lundell and Higbee are also Co-Editors of the CRDEUL monograph series. Holly Choon Hyang Pettman is the Program Associate. The Center initially formed an Advisory Board to provide consultation and research expertise, including several Founding Advisory Board members of the Center from 1996–2000: Terence Collins, Fred Amram, Robin Murie, Richard Beach, and Rosemarie Park. Presently Board members include four individuals from General College, two from regional community colleges, and three representing national programs.

## Urban Literacy Research

In addition to its commitment to developmental education, an important aspect of the Center's mission includes a focus on "urban literacy," a term that encompasses a range of access issues relevant to students entering higher education within primarily urban settings, including workforce transition, disability, race, ethnicity, gender, first-generation, language, and socioeconomic issues. The term "literacy" is used here broadly to expand the focus of postsecondary developmental education research to include social and cultural factors as part of the dialogue around students' educational transitions. For example, students' learning of new "Discourses" (Gee, 1996; Lundell & Collins, 1999; Reynolds, 2001) in college includes more than traditional skills development and disciplinary-related academic learning. This notion includes gaining a type of cross-cultural understanding and a set of tools for navigating academic institutions for all students—a kind of academic literacy that ties skills and disciplinary learning more closely to social, political, cultural, and

personal domains (Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, 1998). Central to this is also the work of multicultural education (Banks & Banks, 2001; Banks et al., 2001), which is highly relevant for higher education and access research as well because it addresses issues of diversity across the continuum of education from K-12 to higher education.

Ultimately, the Center's emphasis is holistically related to promoting access research as a way to define and further develop overlapping areas for developmental education, urban education, and academic literacy. By centrally addressing the work and definitions of developmental educators (National Association for Developmental Education, 1995) and by promoting further theoretical development in the field (Lundell & Higbee, 2001), CRDEUL's mission has developed in response to multidisciplinary initiatives that will enhance student learning and access programs.

## Future Work in the Center

In addition to the continued development of the Center's ongoing programs, CRDEUL's future plans to develop its presence as a national leader in the field include pursuing grants for regional and national research; continuing work from the Future Directions in Developmental Education meetings; and providing professional development for faculty, staff, and students pursuing developmental education and urban literacy research and practice. As the Center celebrates its sixth year at the University of Minnesota, General College, we continue to pursue productive collaborations across institutions that result in enhanced access and excellence for all students transitioning to higher education.

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# *The Traveling City: The Hudson's Store, Urban Literacy, and Access in Detroit, Michigan*

Valerie Kinloch, Ph.D.

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*This chapter examines how theories of literacy and writing often work to exclude discussions of the rhetorical practices of public space. The author draws on Gregory Clark's (1998) metaphor of writing as travel from his article, "Writing as Travel, or Rhetoric on the Road," to explore how public spaces like the imploded Hudson's Department Store in Detroit, Michigan, are socially produced to be restricted in use and access, specifically to people of color. The goal of this chapter is to examine space and its politics as travel in relation to writing instruction and the literacy practices of students who live in and are products of such spaces.*

In his recent article in *College Composition and Communication* titled "Writing as Travel, or Rhetoric on the Road," Gregory Clark (1998) challenges our assumptions that writing instruction, or composition studies in general, is ubiquitous, or universal, in its effort to establish discursive group collectivity. He challenges these assumptions by addressing our understanding and use of terms like public sphere, discourse community, and public participation, terms that question issues of territorialism. "Writing as Travel" highlights how composition studies as a discipline, English studies more specifically, has used such terms to define writing as rhetorical when, in fact, our understanding of and engagement with these terms are enculturated with our own sense of territory and public sphere. We teach writing to enact social change so long as that change benefits our own space or discourse community: we have developed "a critique of the general notion of a public sphere that provides the implicit blueprint we have used to build our concept of discourse community. And that concept is fundamentally territorial" (Clark, p. 10).

In his call for a "discursive collectivity" (Clark, 1998, p. 12) established through rhetorical interaction within and then across demarcated boundaries, Clark contributes to a "territorial" and "spatial" study of composition by asking us to re-imagine the profession from being rhetorically territorial (i.e., fixated, limited, bounded) to being expansive, public, and boundless,

essentially a space that travels through the experiences of writing. He illustrates how writing travels "by exploring the possibility of locating the kinds of collectivities that are formed by interacting writers and readers in a concept of expansive space through which, in their interactions, they travel" (p. 12). Clark uses the process of writing and the experiences of student writers to expound upon historical commentaries of writing as enacting social change (Cushman, 1996; Dewey, 1916; Foucault, 1972, 1980) across discourse communities, outside of classrooms, and within public spheres deemed, by Mary Louise Pratt (1991), as "contact zones" (p. 37). The process and experiences of writing allow scholars to witness how writing travels through and between different spaces for different people, and this is important because writing as a process that travels between and beyond territorial spaces is a primary function of the work of composition and writing instruction: to teach students how to read and write, according to Clark, "as if they were embedded in an expansive social space where they must confront and account for relationships of agency, obligation, and interdependence" (p. 23). And this is the goal of "Writing as Travel," as it should be a primary goal of composition studies: to propound an ideology of space in classrooms, communities, and research that accounts for the implicit notion of composition as universal by taking into consideration how space constitutes individual and group differences that inevitably get ignored in our work and thus in the work of our students.

I participate in and extend Clark's (1998) discussion of "rhetorical territoriality" (p. 12), or what I call traveling space, by using concepts that describe the process of postmodern gentrification in exploring how public spaces are socially produced to be restricted in use and access, specifically for people marked "poor" or "at-risk" or "unprepared" or "remedial." Postmodern gentrification demands that we question the relationship between rhetorical practices and the material realities of those practices in understanding and confronting the dynamics of institutionalism, segregation, and suburbanization in public spheres. These dynamics contribute to a politics of space that allows me to examine gentrification as travel in three ways: by using narratives of space to investigate territorial spaces of power in the city of Detroit; to illustrate the effects of territorialism in writing instruction so as to promote writing as an act of change; and to argue for a politics of space in writing instruction that supports the public spaces where our students work and live. I do these things by examining the physical space and representational place of the J. L. Hudson's Department Store in downtown Detroit. Using Clark's metaphor of writing as travel, I show how the spatial writings of public spaces like the Hudson's store work to write out, or exclude, certain groups of people based on race, economics, and geography. The process of writing out people from the daily functions of the city based on factors deemed "material culprits" (e.g., color, gender, ethnicity, poverty) has caused the place of Detroit, according to Thomas Sugrue in *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (1996), to be "plagued by joblessness, concentrated poverty, physical decay, and racial isolation" (p. 3). Thus, the way people tend to write about places like Detroit becomes representative of demarcated boundaries, unpoliced spaces, and battered landscapes that fit into Clark's argument of rhetorical territoriality.

I define rhetorical territorialism as a method that works to write out certain groups of people from certain spaces designated as private, or privately public. In particular, rhetorical territorialism works to promote certain spaces as privileged, certain social acts as more significant than others, and certain people as more accepted than others. Rhetorical territorialism, as Clark (1998) warns, happens everywhere; the most obvious space is inside classrooms where the writings of students are overwhelmingly monitored by teachers

and writing professionals already affiliated with a discourse community, and who, for the most part, encourage students to write and experience their writings in ways that ignore writing as a social act grounded in experiential learning. As Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede (1996) write in their essay, "Representing Audience: 'Successful' Discourse and Disciplinary Critique," there are many territorial claims underlying the functions of writing:

The dual moves toward exclusion and successful persuasion tend to hide from view any value that misunderstanding, resistance, or similar "failures" might have in complementing and enriching our notion of "success" by opening up spaces for additional voices, ways of understanding, conversations, and avenues of communication. (p. 174)

In their argument on the functions of writing, Lunsford and Ede (1996) identify "audience" as an apparatus of exclusion and persuasion, where exclusion has no value because it is grounded, hypothetically, in misunderstandings. Therefore, audience serves as a rhetorical agency of authority and the voice of the discourse community in which the student is awaiting affiliation; the space and location of the student are insignificant. Agreeing with Lunsford's and Ede's analysis of the social and spatial dilemmas caused by audience as it pertains to composition studies, I contend that audience is established and located in spaces of territorialism. That is, spaces of territorialism, like writing classrooms, become so demarcated with struggles over power, voice, and authority that the classroom turns into an inhibiting space, a space of constant battle over who can best replicate the instructions, ideology, and pedagogical practices of the teacher. In discussing this inhibition, it is important to note Clark's (1998) comment on the ethical issue of audience and the responsibility and representation of student writers further discussed by Lunsford and Ede. Clark's remark, "I find in this statement a call for a conception of the act of writing that prompts people to rethink the kinds of social identities they enact when they write" (p. 11), becomes lost in the battle to become a member, or the audience, of a certain space of privilege (e.g., classrooms, libraries, writing centers, conferences, cafeterias, airport terminals, shopping malls, and department stores). This same inhibition, while



defining our success or failure with student writers, occurs in public spaces of interaction. We should learn to write about and develop arguments on social issues in the writing classroom; we should be allowed to experience our various social identities when we write; and we should be encouraged to use our writings and arguments to promote social change in our communities. Essentially, educators

must fulfill the task of educating citizens to take risks, to struggle for institutional and social change, and to fight for democracy and against oppression both inside and outside schools. Pedagogical empowerment necessarily goes hand in hand with social and political transformation. (Giroux, 1988, p. 202)

Yet pedagogical empowerment often gets paired with spatial privilege where many teachers preach, “I am the teacher, these are my beliefs, and this is my classroom.”

## The University and Geography

In “Importing Composition: Teaching and Researching Academic Writing Beyond North America,” Muchiri, Mulamba, Myers, and Ndoloi present the argument that the relationship between the university and society is defined based on geography: universities are often separated from the rest of society, and thus, the work of the two entities appears separable. This relationship is another example of rhetorical territorialism in the sense that the space of the university, and its work, are viewed as being more privileged than the rest of society, and thus the geographical dimension between university and society does not promote Giroux’s (1988) belief, “pedagogical empowerment necessarily goes hand in hand with social and political transformation” (p. 202). To establish a link between the two and to participate in a nonterritorial space of interaction, Giroux and Clark (1998) individually argue that our existing model for rhetorical culture (e.g., patterns, conventions, identities) must become transient. One way for the predominant paradigm of rhetorical culture to become transient as opposed to territorial is by bringing the work of the rest of society into our universities. Muchiri et al., as well as Cushman (1996), recognize the need to confront space as a social dynamic that defines, alters, and reshapes one’s sense of belonging and level

of participation in spaces deemed as unprivileged. Using Clark’s argument against rhetorical territorialism and Muchiri et al.’s and Cushman’s belief that space affects one’s sense of belonging, I believe the writing classroom must draw upon the work of the rest of society by using narratives of space to locate a rhetorical culture that privileges, as opposed to alters, location and levels of literacy and literacy acts in and out of classrooms. I do this by first providing a narrative of the recently imploded Hudson’s Department Store in downtown Detroit, a historic landmark and an implosion that represent rhetorical territorialism, geographical authority, and spatial decay.

## The Narrative

Saturday morning, October 24, 1998 was a day in the life of Detroit’s history that many people will probably not forget. It was all over the news and on radio programs: “Today, the J. L. Hudson’s Department Store in downtown Detroit will be imploded.” After years of abandonment, the city of Detroit decided to remove the age-old structure and begin the city’s revitalization process again. By imploding the Hudson’s Department Store, city officials rationalized that new space would become available to build and nurture profitable businesses in downtown Detroit. This meant that the old space of the Hudson’s store, known for its days of glamour and for its reasonably priced clothes, hats, toys, and appliances, would be replaced by Campus Martius, a 1000 square foot structure with restaurants, stores, corporate offices, and a hotel. It is imagined that downtown Detroit will once again be a city of ingenuity, creativity, and public recognition.

Campus Martius, the magnificently designed structure to eventually exist in the space of the imploded Hudson’s store, is where the reawakening of downtown space will occur. In the heart of downtown, adjacent to Bank One’s local headquarters, blocks away from the Renaissance Center in one direction and State Theatre, the Fox Theatre, and the new Tiger Stadium in the other direction, Campus Martius is intended to revitalize Detroit. Despite the surrounding neighborhoods, the homeless people standing, sitting, and sleeping at the bus stops, and the lack of a proper and sufficient transit system, Detroit is said to be returning to its 1920s position: a city of global recognition and financial success where civic life reigned high in the streets. Yet the implosion of

the Hudson's store does more for Detroit than provide new developmental space. It reopens the space of Detroit to public scrutiny by questioning the dedication of city officials and prominent investors to repair abandoned, battered, and burned neighborhoods in and around Detroit's business areas. Specifically, the implosion of the Hudson's Department Store calls into question the importance of the surrounding neighborhoods that sit in isolation to Detroit's empowerment zones, neighborhoods that sit off of Rosa Parks Boulevard, 24th and 25th Streets, and Cass Corridor, just to list a few. On one level, the implosion signifies the lack of concern for the removal and rebuilding of houses and stores that have been standing abandoned before Hudson's closure in 1980. On another level, the implosion implies where the emphasis will be placed in Detroit's gentrification process. Despite the levels and the reasons, the downtown Hudson's Department Store symbolized all that Detroit was, all that Detroit lost, and all that Detroit wants to be: public, accessible, busy, thriving, and profitable, essentially a place of global consumption. It is this characterization of Detroit as a place of consumption that establishes its rhetorical territorialism.

Detroit and its imploded Hudson's Department Store represent rhetorical territorialism by attempting to reopen old space that will be censored and monitored by economics, accessibility, and privilege. Although the actual implosion itself represented publicity (people from everywhere, regardless of race, gender, income, and social and religious beliefs, interacted in the streets of Detroit on the day of the implosion), the implosion quickly became symbolic of overly ignored attempts to erase the present conditions of Detroit in manifesting a new Detroit that nobody wants to admit mimics the old Detroit (heaps of businesses, stores, duplexes and complexes, streets cluttered with cars and buses and people, and so on). In mimicking the old, or the past, both the city and its historic Hudson's landmark exist as spaces of demarcation: we have marked spaces in the city that are abandoned and battered; we have designated certain areas as empowerment zones simply because those spaces have become overcrowded with Black people and other people of color. In the words of Clark (1998), we have developed "a critique of the general notion of a public sphere that provides the implicit blueprint we have used to build our concept of discourse community. And that concept is fundamentally territorial" (p. 10).

Clark (1998) is aware of the damage that can result from rhetorical territorialism: the exclusion of groups of people from certain spaces, the formulation of discourse communities that sit in isolation to other spaces not viewed as "communities." In terms of the space of the Hudson's Department Store, Detroit is becoming a new city with new territorial marks. For years, Detroit has been synonymous with urban decline, racial strife, and joblessness. Suddenly, according to city officials, these characterizations are vanishing in part because of the Hudson's implosion, in part because the city believes that the once vacant buildings in downtown are being renovated into lofts and galleries, and for the most part, this seems to be enough for Mayor Dennis Archer, who believes Detroit's renaissance signifies the coming back of other American cities. But what are they coming back to?

The belief that cities like Detroit are coming back was shared by many people who stood on the streets of Detroit hours before the implosion of the Hudson's Department Store on October 24, 1998. People parking their cars and walking blocks and blocks to get one last look and photograph of the Hudson's store turned into a moment of nostalgia. As I stood on the corner of Woodward Avenue and Gratiot Avenue, just having returned from Library Street where bulldozers and men in construction hats were preparing for the demise of this longstanding site, I was bombarded with more people gathering in anticipation. Men, women, and children from far and near gathered on Woodward Avenue and on neighboring streets in utter amazement of the awaited implosion. Despite the mixed feelings that people brought with them, most of the well wishers recalled the memories gained and the experiences shared inside of the 2.1 million square foot structure. In these shared experiences, the Hudson's store became an agency of rhetorical practices that animates the mind and the body by invoking a common language shared by the strangers on the streets. It was like the Hudson's store now existed on the streets of Woodward and Gratiot, for everyone began talking about the price of furniture, the furniture and articles they still owned, the crowd of Saturday morning shoppers, and the mass of people walking up and down downtown Detroit. Suddenly most of the conversations changed from the happy memories in and of the Hudson's store to the painful memories and realities brought upon by industrial closings, the riot of 1967, and, to extend the list, the closing of downtown J. L. Hudson's Department Store.

Indeed, it was amazing to see so many human bodies standing in the streets of downtown Detroit, but even more amazing was how the Hudson's implosion enabled a discourse of civility and access to occur. The Hudson's store became more than a physical structure; it became a cultural and rhetorical structure that shaped and molded how people used a common language to narrate their own experiences with the store itself. It defied the premise of rhetorical territorialism, of excluding people based on their lack of mastery of rhetorical conventions, by enabling people "to cross the many boundaries that territorial conceptions of identity and rhetoric prompt them so persistently to draw" (Clark, 1998, pp. 11-12). For me, this discourse of civility began when an elderly Black woman awaiting the implosion uttered, "the closing of Hudson's did more damage to the city's high caliber of interaction than probably anything else." Her comment opened the way for a rather interesting conversation, particularly when a White man standing next to her replied, "Closing Hudson's was painful for everyone. Although we all knew it was coming, no one wanted it. After it happened, it just seemed like that was the end of Detroit." And no one disagreed with the two commentators; instead, people began talking about "what went wrong," and "remember when Black people initially felt a sense of alienation," and "remember all the White people trying to take over a city they left."

This discourse of civility paid no tributes to race or age; it allowed people to appreciate a rather large and abandoned location, downtown Detroit, by way of making their experiences and narratives of space significant. In this discourse, rhetorical exchanges occurred through reciprocity, or in the words of Paulo Freire (1970) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, "knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (p. 53). The people awaiting the implosion used language to express their feelings of betrayal ("I don't know why Hudson's left anyway"), animosity ("Create a city to only kill the city"), and love ("... But we had fun, and we were able to love the fun we had"). These experiences illustrate how the curious onlookers made use of a discourse of civility to understand location, "the world," and to associate and share their experiences with other people, proving that "... Only through

communication can human life hold meaning" (p. 58), and only through narrating the presence of the Hudson's store were people able to narrate the physical destruction of its (Hudson's) civility.

## The Hudson's Building and Composition Studies

The rhetorical practices of civility implicit in the Hudson's Department Store, representing reason and desire, righteousness and hard work, diversity and error, constitute a language, a story, and a discourse that many Detroiters cannot forget. This discourse is shaped in language, and according to Freire (1970), language plays an important part in constructing our experiences in the world by allowing us "to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation" (p. 64). Yet to see the world in transformation is to be taught that the world changes, which does not readily begin in spaces of implosion like Woodward Avenue, but in classrooms conceived of as democratic public spheres (Dewey, 1910, 1916; Giroux, 1983, 1988). In classrooms, students should be taught the importance of making use of a discourse of civility by experiencing writing as an act of social change through the appreciation of their various social identities, their geographical locations, and their experiences outside of the classroom. Doing so would allow the world to be viewed, in the words of Freire, "as a reality in process, in transformation" (p. 64), as well as the act of writing itself and the diversity with which writing in the world represents. Therefore, public spaces, writing instruction, and the act of writing would come to represent the American promise of democracy: freedom of speech through reciprocity (i.e., sharing and associating), power to promote adequate change in the absence of exclusionary prowess, and the skill to practice inalienable rights in spaces of diversity such as classrooms, communities, libraries, and even in our homes.

The freedom of democracy, during the implosion of the Hudson's store, presented itself in the discourse of civility used by onlookers in a way that held no tolerance for rhetorical territorialism and spatial authority. What tends to be judged as uncivil in our daily and public interactions appeared civil on this October day in Detroit: women wearing head scarves and men begging for spare change in downtown Detroit stood next to people wearing posh clothing and

driving luxury cars. Groups of people, obviously from different locations, stood unbothered by diversity, for they were all joined by the need to narrate the space of downtown Detroit at a time when the Hudson's store represented civic pride. It was this civic pride that even forced many people to speak in protest of the Hudson's implosion, as if keeping the decayed structure would refurbish the surrounding areas that have endured decline. It was as if allowing another decade to pass without removing the abandoned structure would bring more people, homebuyers, tourists, and businesses back to downtown Detroit, and as if keeping the structure would weaken the strain of past issues with race and racism. Over 10 years of housing an abandoned structure with no definite plans for its renovations amounted to the loss of viable, economically profitable business and community space. This loss, particularly endured by the people living in and around it, has aided in the concentration of poverty and the rise in unemployment in Detroit. Since the Hudson's store closed, "other stores have either closed or moved, leaving lots of people jobless," according to a woman awaiting the implosion. In particular, the closing of the Hudson's store and of other businesses led, in part, to the abandonment of Detroit: "everyone and everything moved to those far away places: Livonia, Dearborn, Warren, and Troy," according to the same woman. It was the poor people who, for obvious reasons, were left behind; over 55% of the remaining Motor City population lived below the poverty line (Sugrue, 1996; Wilson, 1987). The neighborhoods previously occupied by workers, owners, and consumers quickly became abandoned as the polarization of wealth and poverty continued to increase and as the feeling of civility continued to decline.

Iris Marion Young (1990), in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, chronicles the conditions of contemporary urban life as productive of civility:

As a normative ideal, city life instantiates social relations of difference without exclusion. Different groups dwell in the city alongside one another, of necessity interacting in city spaces. If city politics is to be democratic and not dominated by the point of view of one group, it must be a politics that takes account of and provides voice for the different groups that dwell in the city without forming a community. (p. 227)

Young argues that democracy must be envisioned through the constant negotiation of civility or civic agency in terms of social differences. What becomes important in Young's critique of city spaces and democracy is the way that certain critiques of space, like many student writings, are excluded from the work of our profession, and ultimately exist as accounts of misunderstandings, forms of miscommunication, and evidence of what "failure" looks like. The community ideal of civility then fails to understand how different narratives of space are equally important and how these narratives encourage people to come together through texts, experiences, and language.

Echoing Young's (1990) critique of city life as normative, Pratt (1991) locates complex, discursive encounters in "contact zones," which she defines as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" (p. 40). bell hooks (1998) situates such encounters in "homeplaces," which she envisions as places "of safety, of arrival, of homecoming" that protect against "white power and control" (p. 69). The normative ideal, contact zones, and homeplaces, although necessary, are still fixated, limited places marked by rhetorical territorialism: people compete over territory, whether for power, authority, and access or for comfort and safety, and this competition excludes other people based on economics, geography, education, and race.

Just like contact zones and homeplaces unintentionally exclude people, so do classrooms. The problem here is that some people, who teach writing instruction specifically, and education generally, tend not to acknowledge how writing classrooms are agencies of exclusion. I am suggesting that the social function of writing classrooms is quickly becoming individualistic in pedagogy and method, and in turn, is preventing rhetorical situations of open group collaboration, the sharing of student ideas and opinions, and the development of responsible student writers capable of critical inquiry from occurring. The extent to which talk of classroom exclusion remains abstract from student experiences is similar to Young's (1990) confession that her own view of city life is an "unrealized social ideal" (p. 227). Here, the classroom and the city go hand in hand: in both spaces, people are excluded, social differences are denied and repressed, and autonomy is prohibited all because of

a social ideal that limits differences in thought, writing, race, gender, and so on. We have become so consumed with our own work, our theories, and our practices that we have lost touch with the actual power of a discourse of civility in which all students, particularly developmental students and basic writers, take part.

One strategy for representing a discourse of civility in writing instruction would be to relocate the civility, or civic agency, present on Woodward Avenue on October 24, 1998, to our own classrooms. The most obvious way of relocating this civility is by allowing students to talk about and write about their environments, which would be grounded in theoretical works that promote the power of location: “One way to do this is to encourage students to use the unfamiliar language of the academy to describe and analyze familiar aspects of everyday language use and cultural experience, as for example through ethnographic projects conducted within students’ communities or on the college campus” (Soliday, 1996, p. 87). Mary Soliday, in “From the Margins to the Mainstream: Reconceiving Remediation,” shows how there is privilege in the places where students live, work, and attend school by enhancing students’ awareness of language and writing. From this point, reconceiving the writing classroom to adopt a discourse of civility involves rethinking the role of writing instruction, the function of writing itself, and the role of students in the making of their knowledge through language use.

Certainly Soliday (1996) is right in reconceiving the place of students in writing instruction in terms of geographical narratives of space. In her reconceptualization of the writing classroom, we need not look too far to see that the work of writing instruction can radically change our perceptions of space, whether of cities, communities, or classrooms, and the material conditions of space, whether abandoned, communal, or culturally sophisticated, if we are taught to publicly talk about and narrate our experiences. For example, it is obvious that the Hudson’s Department Store altered the national consciousness of cities and raised an awareness of urban prosperity, despite the fact that it left the city in much the same way that it found it, empty and torn asunder; and despite the fact that it brought jobs to the city, it did not holistically cater to its African American inner city population, the largest group of people in the city. Still, narratives of the Hudson’s store

are important if educators are to better understand the social and political functions of space, and if we are to encourage our students to value their communities by first valuing their levels of literacy gained from their communities.

Although it is one thing to say that narratives of space are as diverse and complicated as the places that people call home, it is another thing to admit that the language of those narratives is unavailable to the community ideal of democracy as a rhetorical agency. As a mark of the territorial space of downtown Detroit for almost 100 years, the Hudson’s store represents spatial interactions of civility as well as a contested physical terrain on which will always be written people’s desires for freedom, access, democracy, and a realized city ideal. The Hudson’s store and implosion perfectly illustrate how the work of writing instruction and the ideal of city life inhabit each other.

## The Social Functions of Hudson’s and of Writing Instruction

In 1980, it was announced that the J. L. Hudson Corporation would permanently close its downtown store and relocate inside of America’s first mall, Northland. Located near the intersection of Greenfield and Eight Mile, the relocation of Hudson’s made the promise and success of the northern part of Detroit and its suburban neighborhoods successful. In response to the store’s closure and move, Detroit resident Johnnie Mae Barber believes the following:

Closing down and moving Hudson’s caused major turmoil for Detroit. We no longer had a place to hang out ‘cause our meeting place was gone. Hudson’s was a city in a city: everything you needed was there like clothes, food, furniture, lots of restrooms, restaurants, and elegance. It was the central part of the city where the richest to the poorest, the ordinary to the well known could be found. Everything was dependent upon that one place that occupied almost all of Woodward and downtown. When they decided to close, they left everyone high and dry. They could have at least done something with that building instead of leaving it to die. Coleman Young [former Mayor] wanted to do something with the building, but like always, nobody supported him.

Anyway, I still remember how people did not care that they had to wait in long lines during the holidays to make a purchase or to see Santa Claus; we did it because we wanted to and because Hudson's catered to family life. When it moved, the essence of Detroit was lost, and in a way, it will always be lost. And people wonder why we Black people yell over access. (J. Barber, personal communication, September 22, 1999)

Most responses to the closing of the Hudson's store mimicked Barber's reaction primarily because of what it meant to the people of Detroit. The department store was overvalued as "the" landscape of Detroit that marked Detroit's achievements in putting to use public space. The implosion temporarily marked the end of Detroit's achievements, reminding people of how bleak, barren, and abandoned any large city like Detroit can be.

This immensely large store in Detroit that hovered down and beyond blocks and blocks of city streets quickly became a mark of abandonment in 1980. The abandonment of both the Hudson's store and of downtown Detroit became symbolic to the abandonment of city residents' notion of place, particularly for Black people. Prior to 1980, Black people in Detroit as well as natives, migrants, and immigrants alike, came to associate place with the experience of living in a prosperous urban city like Detroit. Their new history was to be written based on city ideal insofar as "Black" would come to signify the urban experience in cities: job opportunities, financial leverage, and a level of social privilege. As Stephen Haymes (1995) notes in his study, *Race, Culture, and the City: A Pedagogy for Black Urban Struggle*, the social decline of cities, the dialectic of place and space on Black consciousness, and the theory of a "culture of poverty" became the overemphasized determinants of the Black urban experience in the sense that the categories "race" and "urban" are too often reappropriated by "mainstream white consumer culture . . . to signify the pleasures and dangers of blackness, controlling and regulating black cultural identity and how blacks define and use urban space" (p. 111).

For Haymes, the reappropriation of Black culture aestheticizes the experiences of Black people such as Northern migration, unemployment, the effects of the

riots, and loss of rental spaces in the postmodern city by "mask[ing] white privilege and corporate power in the city" (Haymes, 1995, p. 111; see also E. Wilson, 1991, p. 150). The masking of White privilege and corporate power in the Black urban struggle distances groups of people from one another, specifically people of color, immigrants, and White people who are often characterized as wealthy; this distancing reinforces the polarization of wealth and poverty. This polarization, according to Haymes (1995), Cross and Keith (1993), and E. Wilson (1991), further reappropriates the categories race and urban by establishing class differences, power dynamics, and economic privileges in the city.

To address this reappropriation of Black culture, Haymes (1995) calls for a pedagogy of place for Black people that situates their communities in the popular memory of the past. In other words, a pedagogy of place for Black people would allow them to reclaim the categories race and urban by using urban space to renegotiate their identity in their communities and in the city in which they live and work. It is this pedagogy of place that calls attention to the past, that knits the past with the present, and that allows the Black urban experience to resist the "jungle" or "ghetto" motif (Haymes, p. 114). More important, this pedagogy of place argues that people of color and the larger society cannot sustain silence and erasure of the past if progress is to be made. And progress will only occur when a critical pedagogy that accounts for the disfranchisement of all people of color and the upward mobility of businesses and homeowners from urban spaces to rural and suburban spaces is implemented.

In using a critical pedagogy to theorize place and access, Henry Giroux (1983) in *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition* argues that critical pedagogy must "have an important role in the struggle of oppressed groups to reclaim the ideological and material conditions for organizing their own experiences" (p. 237). In the context of urban life, critical pedagogy, as with Stephen Haymes' (1995) call for a pedagogy of place, must allow urban "minorities" to examine the dominant paradigms of language, discourse communities, a White consumer culture and its values, which have altered or controlled their identity and relationship with location. This examination allows for the reappropriation of the categories race and urban to occur by positioning the

city as a place of survival, meaning, and belonging. For Haymes (1995), “it is these ‘spaces of survival’ that serve as public spaces where black people develop self-definitions or identities that are linked to a consciousness of solidarity and to a politics of resistance” (p. 117).

“Spaces of survival” (Haymes, 1995, p. 117) are often painstakingly categorized as areas where “the dual moves toward exclusion and successful persuasion tend to hide from view any value that misunderstanding, resistance, or similar ‘failures’ might have” (Lunsford & Ede, 1996, p. 174). So instead of urban space, or the city, holistically being understood as a mechanism of defense against inequality, a space of survival, our professional narratives of space as empty, chronic, and decayed work to overpower the narratives of space of the people who actually live in the city. For example, the Hudson’s store, before closure and implosion, gave hope to the city’s minority population by developing their space, providing jobs in their communities (however few), and making their place more resourceful by bringing opportunities into their “hood.” Essentially, the idea of the Hudson’s store, and not the actual physical building, served as a “site where one could confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist, . . . where all black people could be subjects, not objects, . . . ” (hooks, 1998, p. 42). Clearly, the mere idea of the Hudson’s store encouraged city residents to view place as important while they scripted their own definitions of community, space, civility, and survival.

Scripting definitions of such terms represents a discourse of civility through which people can take from their own experiences and write new meanings of space; where the people who are deeply affected by traveling space can actually voice their concerns. Hudson’s forced people, specifically people of color and inner city residents, to locate and understand the significance of their own space despite abandonment. It also forced Black people to investigate how terms like access and urban contributed to upward mobility of city businesses. Although the movement of the Hudson’s store, in one way, represented the failure of city space, it also represented the power of people’s location because location was now based on survival and not on the material and physical realities of a department store. To put it a different way, the Hudson’s movement was a reflection of a community

struggling to occupy meaningful city space in ways where stories of urban survival and literacy could be told and shared.

In terms of writing instruction, the Hudson’s store once again represents the struggle of many students to use their writing as an act of social change and progress. It represents how students are refusing to be passive victims of an arbitrary academic system that encourages them to adopt the conventions of academic writing for entrance into academic discourse communities that narrate their own experiences. As a civic agency that brings to the surface issues of location and the narration of experiences, the Hudson’s store comes to embody the struggle and resistance, fears and hopes of democratic citizens (e.g., people of color and inner city residents in Detroit, students in the classroom), and so the urban landscape of Detroit gets inscribed as a space of promise, literacy, and democracy as opposed to being a space of violence, decline, and fear. This is why a democratic theory of space would work to promote location and identity as significant.

A theory of democratic discourse in urban space would not constrict the city of Detroit, or any other urban city for that matter, to only the narratives of a professional discourse. It would not reduce it to excuses over upward mobility such as the Black Migration, the influx of immigrants, or unemployment. For such a reduction would prevent alternative narratives of space and place from occurring while only reiterating urban space as distressful. A theory of democratic discourse in urban space would highlight and make important the dynamics of spatiality, textuality, and geography in cities, classrooms, libraries, and in other spaces and places that are essential to the development of active citizens in scripting their own narratives. The point of such a theory is to implement strategies for understanding why certain spaces and rhetorical practices get misunderstood and ignored in the work of the profession, or in writing instruction, and in the work of the community. In implementing such strategies, labels of student inferiority (e.g., at risk, underprepared, remedial) must be replaced with strategies of intervention and interaction that actually work.

We must understand that the city ideal occurs in our classrooms almost as much as it occurs in spaces

like the Hudson's Department Store. Such an understanding depends on reappropriating categories of race and urban and abandoning perspectives of the urban experience as solely remedial, illiterate, and poor. To do these things is to maximize the spatial and textual practices of urban space, opening up room for the proliferation of narratives of space that may not resemble one another. This is the type of work that I engage in with my diverse developmental students, my first generation college students, and my advanced students at the University of Houston-Downtown, and this is the type of work I intend to contribute to writing instruction in order to "develop a formal plan by which the celebration of our history is an ongoing activity through the development of historical narratives and oral history projects" (Stahl, 1999, p. 13).

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# *Race and Politics of Developmental Education: The Black Student Take-over of Morrill Hall*

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*This is a brief history of the 1969 take-over of Morrill Hall at the University of Minnesota by a group of approximately 50 to 60 Black students. They presented a list of demands and concerns about the campus climate, education, and policies for African Americans at the University. This historic action resulted in the development of systemwide changes and an overall improvement in the institution for all students. More than 30 years later, the University is still examining, prioritizing, and reflecting on these concerns for African American students, faculty, and staff. The General College remains one of the most positive influences in these efforts.*

**O**n January 14, 1969, at the conclusion of an unsuccessful negotiation session with then President of the University of Minnesota, Malcolm Moos, a group of between 50 to 60 Black students took possession of the Admissions and Records Office in Morrill Hall, the University's administration building. Earlier during the spring quarter of 1968, students representing the African American Action Committee (AAAC) had presented the administration with "Seven Demands." Although the administration had set up task forces to explore these concerns, by January of 1969 the students became frustrated with the apparent lack of progress. During their meeting with President Moos on the afternoon of January 14<sup>th</sup>, the students presented three more demands and requested a simple yes or no. The President was either unwilling or unable to respond. The students decided to take direct action ("Report of the Investigating Commission,").

The take-over of Morrill Hall lasted for 24 hours. The event was one of the seminal events in the history of the University in the 20th century. Out of the demands, judicial hearings, and task forces that followed the event emerged an institution that grew to be more sensitive and supportive in principle of all its students.

The University, during the decade of the 1960s, did little or nothing in the way of recruiting minority or disadvantaged students. It did not express any

interest in their success or failure. As one student later testified before the Investigating Commission, "...the University was just there. If you wanted to attend and could make it, well and good. If not, forget it." ("Report of the Investigating Commission," p. 22) A considerable number of the Black students protesting were enrolled in the General College, an open admissions program with a general education curriculum. The college offered two bachelor of arts degrees, an associate of arts degree, and certificate programs. It was also the host for unique programs designed to meet the needs of disadvantaged students. The General College admitted students who were less academically prepared. Most Black undergraduate students who matriculated at the University began in the General College. They seldom transferred into other colleges of the University or graduated.

It was this seeming indifference or insensitivity of postsecondary institutions of higher education to the needs of Black students that energized Black students across the nation. Black students at the University of Minnesota felt marginalized and subjected to condescending behaviors and attitudes of faculty and staff not associated with the General College. The larger university was viewed as an attempt at acculturating them rather than accommodating their educational needs. There were very few Black faculty, staff, or administrators as role models to assist them. The concerns of the Black students were summarized

in the last two demands presented to the administration in the spring of 1968: “We want representation of Black students on all major University policy determining groups,” and “We want the educational curriculum at the University to reflect the contributions of Black people to the commonwealth and culture of America.” (“Report of the Investigating Commission,” p. 28).

More than 30 years after the Morrill Hall incident, Black faculty, staff, and alumni involved in the incident have planned a retrospective to commemorate the event. They were moved to action by two concerns. They observed that Black students presently enrolled at the University of Minnesota did not know or could not identify with the past struggles for multicultural awareness. The experiences of former Black faculty, students, and staff had not been captured on paper or subjected to critical analysis. Secondly, in previous published histories of the University of Minnesota, Black people specifically, and people of color in general, were not credited with having any influence over the course of the University’s development. James Gray’s (1958) *Open Wide the Door: The University of Minnesota 1851-1951* did not recognize the pluralistic nature of the campus community, such as it was. It was a history of the founding fathers and great leaders that led the institution through periods of growth and transition. A more recent history written by Ann Pflaum and Stanford Lehmborg (2001), *The University of Minnesota 1945-2000*, and commissioned as part of the University’s sesquicentennial celebration, was more inclusive. As a socio-cultural history of the institution, the book attempted to capture the movements and individuals that influenced the course of the University’s history during the last half of the 20th century. Although the book did reference the take-over of Morrill Hall and its impact upon the subsequent history of the University of Minnesota, it was not a substantive treatment. Also absent from the treatment was a discussion of the historical antecedents that led to an expression of student dissatisfaction in 1969.

In February of 2000 an advisory committee was formed for the express purpose of initiating scholarly research into the history of African Americans at the University of Minnesota, particularly the take-over of Morrill Hall. The advisory group was concerned that those individuals involved in the take-over were now approaching middle age, and the sesquicentennial

events may be the last opportunity to gather and record their collective memory. The interviews and historical documents generated from this project would form the basis for (a) the publication of articles, essays, and research reports by scholars that capture the essence of this history; (b) a conference to commemorate the presence of African Americans at the University and explore related events and issues at other major universities; and (c) a video documentary that would render this material useful for instructional purposes. Also of interest was the exploration of the connections between the Twin Cities African American community and the University and the role that the General College played in promoting and supporting the concerns of African American students. It was agreed that the history project would be supported by the General College and administratively housed in its facility.

Although not the primary focus of the history project, the relationship between the General College and Black student unrest should be the subject of closer examination. During the decade of the 1960s more students of color were admitted to the University through the General College than any other academic unit. During the period of the middle to late 1960s the college was very active in the issues surrounding civil rights and social justice. It was a supportive educational environment for students of color who were enrolled in large numbers. It was the most diverse of the University’s colleges, and therefore, not intentionally, provided a critical mass for the expression of discontent. The College was host to the first Upward Bound grant in 1965-1966. Upward Bound, a federally-funded program, was geared to assist low income, first generation high school students to prepare for college matriculation. The General College also supported the H.E.L.P. (Higher Education for Low-Income People) Center. Established in 1967, the H.E.L.P. Center assisted low-income students and those on public assistance, primarily adults, in their quest for education and training at the University, by facilitating their transition to student life. Under the aegis of H.E.L.P. were three programs, the Progressive Education Program (PEP; 1967), New Careers (1969), and the Working Incentive Program (WIN; 1969). The PEP Program was essentially an advocacy and support program for students of color. The counselors worked very closely with students to assist them in adapting to the collegiate environment. New Careers provided career exploration within the context of a liberal arts curriculum. More than half of the program



participants were Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients. The WIN Program focused on long-term development of employability skills, including college, and training for AFDC recipients. These programs provided financial support for students (Moen, 1969, 1980).

Programs sponsored by the H.E.L.P. Center were funded in part out of resources provided by the federal government under the aegis of the War on Poverty. As such, these programs enjoyed relative autonomy and often operated outside of the usual constraints applied by the University. Faculty and staff were passionate about their role as advocates for these students. Often times their role of advocate puts them at odds with policies of the central administration. The General College also had pioneered in the development of ethnic studies related courses before the establishment of formal ethnic studies programs at the University. Courses in “Afro-American” history, Chicano history, Native American literature, and Asian literature predate the founding of ethnic studies academic departments. In an attempt to meet the educational needs of its diverse constituency, courses in the General College provided meaningful educational spaces in an academic institution relatively devoid of diverse cultural expression (Moen, 1982).

Established in 1932, the General College was an educational experiment. Its program was conceived as a solution to high rates of attrition being experienced by the University. Its general education curriculum and equally revolutionary focus upon student counseling were designed specifically for the underprepared student and those uncertain about a career focus. From its inception its admissions policy, curriculum, and student focus were challenged, if not openly criticized, by more traditional scholars, educators, and administrators. It was considered a junior college. Although its innovative courses and approaches to instruction garnered national attention in the 1940s and 1950s, the question remained whether or not this college and program were appropriate for the University of Minnesota.

During the 1950s and 1960s the General College enrollment continued to grow as women and people of color began to take advantage of expanded educational opportunities. As the college and its faculty and staff embraced the social imperatives of the civil rights movement, their advocacy on behalf of

perceived disenfranchised groups rekindled tensions within the academy. Could the college, having taken a position on social justice, continue to provide a positive educational experience for all of its students? Should the University remain neutral in a rapidly changing socio-political landscape?

Some critics began to argue that the General College had lost its focus, its curriculum was outdated, its degree programs were better suited for emerging community colleges, and its students were not successful in graduating. This experiment in social engineering in the guise of education was expensive, and the expense was being borne by beleaguered taxpayers. The subtextual observation was that these underprepared students were engaged in organized student unrest that could potentially undermine the social fabric of the University. The college became the symbolic Trojan horse with its cargo of subversives. This developmental education program was deemed the antithesis of what a higher education should be.

In some respects the critics of the college had good reason for concern. The admissions policy of the General College did permit the enrollment of students who became catalysts for change. These students resisted acculturation and assimilation and demanded that the university recognize the legitimacy of their perspectives and educational needs. Unable to broker such a detente, they essentially went on strike. The take-over of Morrill Hall in 1969 was unprecedented. Never before in the state of Minnesota had students seized public property and made such significant demands upon an administration. The Black student unrest was followed by anti-war demonstrations and the feminist movement in the 1970s. Each of these movements progressively challenged the University to move beyond its insular posture and institutionally embrace social activism as a vibrant heritage of a land-grant institution.

The decades of the 1960s and 1970s were transformational for the University of Minnesota. It is important for African Americans to explore their role in helping to reinvigorate our understanding of the role and educational responsibility of a land-grant institution. It is equally important to underscore the role that the developmental education program in General College played in a larger historical process.



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# *Changing Objects to Subjects: Transgressing Normative Service Learning Approaches*

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*This chapter observes the taken-for-granted versus a universal application of a particular instructional design, service learning. Some of the most dynamic ideas about the relationship of student learning and the curriculum appear in the research and application of Universal Instructional Design (UID). Information about UID is relatively new as a postsecondary education concept, and the application of and publication about UID in postsecondary education is limited. In addition, UID to date is exclusively tied to addressing the needs of students with disabilities in a comprehensive way. A paradigm shift that places UID into the instructional methodologies in the higher education classroom suggests many kinds of access issues may be addressed, including multiracial and ethnic concerns. However, thinking through these relationships is a necessary step to intentionally integrating racial and ethnic access needs into UID. Through observation and student writings, the author considers the experiences of different racial and ethnic students and a specific instructional design of service learning. In addition, several suggestions from Ira Shor (1987) are considered in creating a service learning component that addresses a multicultural student classroom for students learning and working in a multicultural world.*

**S**ome of the most dynamic ideas about the relationship of student learning and the curriculum appear in the research and application of Universal Instructional Design (Silver, Bourke, & Strehorn, 1998). Universal Instructional Design (UID) emerges from the architectural concept “universal design” that emphasizes meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in both public and private spaces by developing “comprehensive plans that would be attractive to all the individuals who use that space” (Silver et al., p. 47). In like manner, Silver et al. state that universal design strategies also apply to the development of postsecondary instructional design accommodations formally set aside for students with a variety of disabilities. Rather than focusing on modifying instructional approaches on a case by case basis, UID encourages instructors to concentrate on the development of instructional strategies that “most students can use to gain knowledge and skills related to the specific content areas” (Silver et al., p. 48). In other words, UID suggests accessibility issues are an integral part of instructional development, and accessibility benefits multiple students in multiple ways.

When I hear the words “universal design” I tend to cringe just a little. My most recent work in gender and race relations in education (Barajas, 2000; Barajas & Pierce, 2001), along with notable work by Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996), and Nina Eliasoph (1999), has convinced me that students of color are consistently negotiating a “universal” space that we call school. The problem for these students is that an assumed element of educational spaces is neutrality. Although we may recognize that diversity in an institution that inherently privileges White, middle-class, male characteristics and ideology creates some “climate” issues for students of color, we still maintain that the institution’s policies and practices are essentially neutral, and in place for the fair and equal treatment of all students (Barajas; Barajas & Pierce). Put simply, we continue to see educational institutions as racially neutral, with problems experienced by students of color explained as cultural deficiency on the part of the student, an inability to “fit” the educational mold. Our focus is still on the universal assumptions of assimilation.



Historically, assimilation has been a central concern of American social life (de Anda, 1984; Feagin et al. 1996; Gordon, 1964; Park, 1950; Rumbaut & Portes, 1990) and has been seen as both positive and negative. Originally, assimilation, or the acceptance of the dominant culture's norms and values, comes about through an immigrant group's contact with a new culture (Park). A large body of sociological research suggests that racial ethnic groups in the United States gain educational success through assimilation, learning to "do school" in the normative ways. Several assumptions inform this understanding of student success. To begin with, success is predicated on assimilation. Students who do not conform will fail. Such an assumption precludes other possible definitions of success. Students may be successful academically and strongly tied to a culture and an identity that is not White, middle class, and individualistic. In addition, giving up one's cultural values and group identity for a new one is assumed to be an inevitable outcome, and also a desirable one for racial ethnic minorities.

My research on Latino students suggests that involvement in community activities through service learning breaks the normative pathway and positively impacts individual racial ethnic minority students by helping them maintain positive definitions of themselves and their group. Unlike their White peers, who most often do not perform service in their own community, service learning provides an environment in which racial ethnic students can reinforce positive self-definitions through supportive relationships with other people in the community. Latinas in particular navigate successfully through and around negative stereotypes of Hispanics by maintaining positive definitions of themselves and emphasizing their group membership as Latina through community service learning. Re-entry into communities similar to their original home communities affects the development of a positive racial identity, promotes personal efficacy, and provides a safe space in which group membership may be maintained (Barajas & Pierce, 2001).

What has this got to do with Universal Instructional Design? Information about UID is relatively new as a postsecondary education concept. Likewise, the application of and publication about UID in postsecondary education is limited. In addition, UID to date is exclusively tied to addressing the needs of students with disabilities. However, a paradigm shift that places UID into the instructional methodologies

in the higher education classroom suggests many kinds of access issues may be addressed, including multi-racial and ethnic concerns. Recognizing the relationship between multiracial and ethnic access and general access, and the application of UID, strengthens the general usefulness as well as appeal of a universal model. However, thinking through these relationships is a necessary step to intentionally integrate racial and ethnic access needs into UID. For this purpose, the definition of UID benefits from the expanded concept presented by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST, 2001) definition of universal design for learning (UDL):

The central practical premise of UDL is that a curriculum should include alternatives to make it accessible and appropriate for individuals with different backgrounds, learning styles, abilities, and disabilities in widely varied learning contexts. The "universal" in universal design does not imply one optimal solution for everyone. Rather, it reflects an awareness of the unique nature of each learner and the need to accommodate differences, creating learning experiences that suit the learner and maximize his or her ability to progress. (pp. 1-2)

What better time to work from a more inclusive and specific framework than at the development stages of UID as a concept? To observe the taken-for-granted versus a universal application of a particular instructional design, I consider the experiences of different racial and ethnic students and a specific instructional design of service learning.

Although formal research provides important empirical examples of students' educational processes, we as educators sometimes forget to connect what we know to what we do in the classroom. I intuitively have always believed that most any subject may be learned in a more meaningful way through experiential processes provided by community service learning. However, adding service learning to the syllabus does not necessarily insure we attend to the multicultural needs of our classroom. Adding an alternative learning component like service learning may simply become an enveloped part of a mechanical, normative education because the assumption of "neutral" institutions is that all students will participate in the new component in much the same way. In order to find a truly universal model, we need to transgress.





## Service Learning as Universal Design: Different is Good

Current research in the area of service learning indicates that overall, service learning has a positive effect on student development, including personal identity, spiritual growth, and moral development (Astin & Sax, 1998; Boss, 1994; Driscoll, Holland, & Gelman, 1996). However, large numbers of student surveys about service learning and personal development, almost without exception, have been collected and analyzed without directly addressing issues of race and ethnic differences in the service learning experience. This is due in part to the few qualitative studies that are more likely to describe the *process* of student development involved in service learning. Furthermore, these studies tend to be about White, often middle-class students entering service sites that have a large racial ethnic minority population and are considered disadvantaged (Dunlap, 1998). Although important research in itself, this qualitative work traces the personal development of White student attitudes about racial issues; interpretations of how these students regard specific race-related, gendered, or classed incidents; and how the experience affected their view of the larger social world. What this literature does not do, however, is examine or at times even acknowledge the differences between students experiencing the service learning site as an outsider, or as a student who is a member of the community, or as performing service in one very similar to their original community.

The consequence of not thinking about differences seriously is that marginalized students spend their educational careers responding and reacting to normative classroom practices that tend to focus on the transfer of authoritative information and obedience rather than respecting and inviting their view of the larger social world. In less tempered words, bell hooks (1994) suggests normative classroom practices that ignore differences treat marginalized students as though they do not belong, and represents “the difference between education as the practice of freedom and education that merely strives to reinforce domination” (p. 4). Although hooks’ statement is decidedly political, it is also accurate. Ira Shor (1987) argues that “alienation in school is the number one learning problem, depressing academic performance

and elevating student resistance. Student resistance to intellectual life is socially produced by inequality and by authoritarian pedagogy in school” (p. 13). Shor also suggests that a Freirean (1970) pedagogy that is multicultural, critical, student-centered, experiential, research-minded, and interdisciplinary needs to replace mechanical (i.e., normative) learning (Shor, p. 22). I would argue that differences among students require us to approach learning and teaching differently, as Shor and hooks suggest.

Service learning is a valuable approach for teaching and learning in a multicultural classroom as part of a multicultural world. In a true liberatory sense, however, a universal approach to education through the use of service learning would acknowledge and encourage marginalized students to see themselves, and the community they serve, as the subject of work and not as the object that we observe. The difference between the two may not be considered in a taken-for-granted application of service learning for mainstream students. To use service learning in a teaching situation where students with varied identities come from varied communities, our “paradigms must shift but also the way we think, write, speak. The engaged voice must never be fixed and absolute but always changing, always evolving in dialogue with a world beyond itself” (hooks, 1994, p. 11). In so doing, students would be seen in their particularity as individuals, and we would value everyone’s presence with the ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes, and that these contributions are resources (hooks, pp. 3-8).

Any time an educator suggests something as complicated as a paradigm shift, the rest of us often translate that into “more planning, more time, more work.” Although any change demands at least one of the dreadful “more” requirements, we do not need to reinvent the wheel. We already have a Freirean paradigm available through which we can model an effective service learning component in our classroom. In particular, Shor (1987) offers a model for teacher education that he describes as a “Freirean agenda for the learning process” (p. 23). Several of his summarized points are very useful in creating a service learning component that addresses a multicultural student classroom as opposed to supporting the “myth of a neutral, shared, national history [that] reduces



the critical and multicultural potentials of education” (p. 17). Moreover, building service learning from this particular framework is imperative to the task of creating a Universal Instructional Design methodology that is sensitive to multicultural sensibilities.

## The Learning Process: Setting the Goal

The first goal is for teachers to “situate learning in the students’ cultures – their literacy, their themes, their present cognitive affective levels, their aspirations, their daily lives” (Shor, 1987, p. 24). One advantage to integrating service learning into a course is the ability to connect the academic to the concrete circumstances of life. However, we cannot assume what those circumstances may be. Shor asserts that regardless of the discipline, grounding the learning in student life will “insert these courses in the *subjectivity* [his emphasis] of the learners” (p. 24). This can be accomplished in several different ways. One is to provide a dialogue method of teaching suggested by Freire (1970). Students more often than not offer personal information along with their opinions. This helps the teacher get a sense of the various communities students bring with them to the classroom.

A more specific understanding of students’ lives and literacy can be gained through reflective writing. Ask students how specific issues in the course relate to their social location in the world. For example, ask the students to write a one-page opinion about a specific question or topic. Next, ask the students to write a one-page reflection about *why* they answered the way they did. Do their family, religious, or educational backgrounds affect their perceptions? Does where they live, or their gender, play a part in their perceptions? Be prepared for a variety of answers. For example, at the beginning of the semester I asked students to write about the existence of gender bias in the classroom. One White male college freshman wrote:

Gender-bias in the classroom. We hear about it everyday on the news, in magazines, in our own classrooms. So, is it as big of an issue as we hear it is? Like all normal people I know, I would have to say no.

I have observed that often students from marginalized groups have thought about the connection between

what they think and their particular social location. On the other hand, mainstream students tend to respond at the beginning with words such as “normal” or phrases like “everyone knows that” or “I am just a common person who thinks like everybody else does.” To contrast, one African male college freshman wrote this about gender:

In my country women are not treated as equal. They cannot get the same education or jobs that men do. They are considered best at staying home and taking care of children, and so sometimes can teach young children. But I think that is unfair. Now that many of us live here in the United States, women are working very hard to become educated and face more difficulties than men getting the education they want. They also work very hard to support their family. It is better that all people, men and women can get the education they want so they can be the best people they want to be.

Of course, not all marginalized students are self-actualized and not all mainstream students think their experience is identical to everyone else’s experience. What is important to recognize is that both answers are valuable for understanding student lives, and in understanding the degree to which they connect the academic world to concrete circumstances of living. Furthermore, a surprising response at the beginning as to the universal normalcy of his opinion on gender made what the same White male college freshman wrote in his final paper even more of a surprise. Here are a few of his comments after observing gender differences at his service site:

After seeing the differences in the ways boys and girls were treated in the classroom I observed, boys being rewarded for action and girls for inaction, what I saw was supported by a channel \_ news report on separate classrooms. The channel \_ news reported single gender classrooms resulted in improved grades and more interaction between students and teachers. Does this mean that gender separated classrooms are the way to go on this issue? The problems children face—loss of self esteem, decline in achievement, and elimination of career options (particularly for girls) are at the heart of education’s problems, *and not normal at all*. [my emphasis]



There is a problem with reflective writing. On the practical side, if we have a class of 45, reading reflective papers is not a problem. On the other hand, a class of 175 is more time consuming. Reading and commenting on each paper offers students the optimal learning situation. However, the goal of the exercise is to situate learning in the students' cultures and daily lives. The goal is accomplished by the teacher allowing the students to think about and write about themselves and their communities as the subject of the conversation, an exercise that may help mainstream students recognize their position as subject is taken-for-granted, and helps marginalized students position themselves as subjects rather than objects. How much we learn about our students, and how much students learn in the process, is not totally dependent on reading and commenting on each paper, but rather on the quality of the discussion that is driven by the process. Discovering part of their own social location, students are better able to understand their attitudes, perceptions, and interpretations of their service learning experiences. For example, one White female college freshman wrote:

The reason that I chose the service I did is because I come from a fairly wealthy area with no evident poor people. Since I have been a student here at \_\_\_\_\_ I have encountered the issues that effect [sic] and people who are affected by poverty and homelessness. I also figured I could learn about people who are struck by poverty and homelessness and social issues leading to these individual situations . . . what I found is not at all what I expected when I started this class. I guess that you could say I was being closed minded about the experience, that I had stereotypes about homeless people. I think that my nights at \_\_\_\_\_ homeless shelter broke down my feelings of bias towards these individuals.

Recognizing her own privilege allowed this student to observe her own biases and stereotypes about the homeless and to reconsider her attitudes and perceptions of the social issue as well as the people involved. Without considering her own social location and recognizing her attitudes and perceptions as the subject of her experience, this student would likely objectify the homeless, allowing a "closed mind" full of negative stereotypes about individuals to perceive

the situation as an individual problem without considering the social issues surrounding homelessness.

Another student, this one a Vietnamese college freshman, also selected a service learning experience because of her social location. She wrote:

To forget their language is to forget their own culture. These were the words I brought with me when I came for [sic] VietNam to the U.S.A. Today, the Vietnamese children who are born in the United States, 80 percent do not know how to speak Vietnamese. It is hard for them to communicate in their own society. Some feel left out because they do not understand what others are saying. This is why I decided to teach Viet in a program at \_\_\_\_\_ for children 7 and up. The culture is important to each and all of us. If we value and maintain the culture then it will be always in the heart, and will help kids when they are out there in the world not have that "left out" feeling.

Given the opportunity to situate her learning in her life experience, this student was also able to make her attitudes and perceptions the subject of her experience. Although the examples are very different, both students made choices about their service learning sites, and both students interpreted their sites through acknowledging their social relationship to the service experience. If service learning had been approached as an experience *external* to the student's individual social location, the interpretation of that experience could very well be different. The first student may not have considered anything beyond the individual. The second student may never have felt comfortable exploring her own community, fearing normative interpretations of that community; therefore her own experience would be negative or reinforce the value of assimilation to English only. In both cases, these young women benefited from situating their learning in their particular cultures and everyday lives. Doing so allowed difference to be valuable, both personally and academically.

Another goal Shor (1987) discusses that is useful in creating a service learning component that addresses a multicultural student classroom is the need for cross-cultural communications. Shor suggests two strategies to accomplish this goal. First is the use of "nontraditional literatures outside of the official canon, from labor



culture, ethnic groups and women's writings" (p. 25). Although many educators have for some time used varied literatures in their classroom, and some publishers have made more nontraditional literatures available, the sad truth is that we still have to make an effort to gather these materials not generally available in traditional texts. In addition, we must be flexible and persistent in our efforts to continually update materials that relate to our changing student populations. If we do not, the marginalized student's life and community is made the object of discussion, and our efforts to situate service learning in the students' cultures will be expropriated by the academic materials we present. This is not to say that varied viewpoints cannot be presented, including the traditional canon. Having both is in fact important to dialogue teaching, allowing all student viewpoints to come forward.

The second strategy is for teachers to use ethnographic methods in order to familiarize themselves with their student population, as well as the community sites surrounding their institution. Instructors who visit and study community service sites, or who volunteer on a limited basis, are more likely to be successful in situating learning in the students' lives. In addition, teachers need experience communicating in various cultural situations. As Shor (1987) indicates, "experience in cross-cultural communications will be valuable for teachers who are likely to lead classrooms with diverse student populations" (p. 25). The reality of participating and observing in a community site first hand facilitates the dialogue that takes place in the classroom, and gives the teacher a more realistic picture of what students are experiencing. The idea is that the service learning experience improves for students if teachers also participate as learners in the service learning component they construct for the class (Williams, 2001). This should be considered part of the preparation process, much like constructing a test or preparing a lecture. The difference is that for the teacher, the quality of the activity becomes as important as the quality of the information, just as the activity becomes important for the student.

The idea of learning cross-cultural communication through community service experience may seem unnecessary. After all, we educators are in the business of communicating the knowledge of a discipline to students, many of us having done so for years. The

problem with explaining away this opportunity to learn more about cross-cultural communication is that what we think is communicating in the classroom may not be received by students with the same enthusiasm. bell hooks (1994) recalls of her educational experience as a Black female that the

vast majority of our professors lacked basic communication skills, they were not self-actualized, and they often used the classroom to enact rituals of control that were about domination and the unjust exercise of power... I wanted to become a critical thinker. Yet that longing was often seen as a threat to authority. Individual White male students who were seen as "exceptional," were often allowed to chart their intellectual journeys, but the rest of us (and particularly those from marginal groups) were always expected to conform. Nonconformity on our part was viewed with suspicions, as empty gestures of defiance aimed at masking inferiority or substandard work. (p. 5)

As painful as hooks' words are to hear, we must hear them. I have always maintained that most teachers really want to teach, and want to teach in such a way that all students' needs and potentials will be reached. We are, however, also products of an imperfect educational system, one in which we must be willing to continually be reflective about the way we teach, just as we need to continually update the books we use for our courses.

The last goal Shor (1987) discusses that is useful in creating a service learning component that addresses a multicultural student classroom is the promotion of a critical literacy, a literacy that generates critical awareness more than basic competency. Shor suggests critical literacy requires "all courses to develop reading, writing, thinking, speaking, and listening habits to provoke conceptual inquiry into self and society and into the very discipline under study" (pp. 23-24). For students, critical literacy encourages students to problematize or question all aspects of their learning, moving beyond memorizing facts or simply stating opinion. Critical literacy also encourages the integration of experience, empirical data, activities, and discussion. One Somali male college freshman writes about his experience with critical literacy this way:

It is incredible and remarkable how much knowledge and experience I have gained from service learning since I started. What is even more interesting is how the readings and class discussions made sense to me . . . although doing community service has been in my thinking for a period of time, taking this course has opened a clear vision of how to be involved or do community service in my own neighborhood. Before this, one obstacle for me to do service was knowing where to go. Most of all I am well delighted to use the concepts and theories I have learned in class to help me make practical decisions about the best service I can do for my community.

Simply sending students into a community to participate and observe will not necessarily integrate academic knowledge with the real world. What glues the two together is the development of student learning through critical literacy. In order to create a service learning component that addresses a multicultural student classroom, we must do our best to situate learning in the students' cultures and their daily lives. Just as we must continually develop as teacher-learners, students must also be allowed to experience a process of learning, rather than just building skills or meeting competency. The first step is for us as educators to realize the possibility of helping students develop all areas of learning regardless of the discipline we teach. To do so effectively, we may take on the role of student by attempting to develop cross-cultural communication skills and by performing ethnography through a service learning project to familiarize ourselves with our student population and surrounding communities. As foreign as it seems to think of developing writing and listening in a math class, or speaking and reading in an economics course, it is possible. What it takes is a shift in the way we may have been taught to think about our disciplines to a more universal approach to learning.

### Shifting: The First Step to Transgressing

I am reminded how difficult it is to shift our thoughts about the specific disciplines in which we have been trained by a recent conversation with a colleague who completed a Master's in sociology, took time away from that discipline to complete a law

degree, and is now completing a Ph.D. in sociology. This very bright and school-wise individual struggled with the differences between reading, writing, speaking, and listening as a sociology student as opposed to a law student. She did not lack skills in any of these learning areas, but found that the two disciplines were so different, she was surprised by the time and effort it took to figure out how "to do" each discipline and to eventually work smoothly between the two. Imagine what this means to undergraduate students who are not nearly as developed academically or as school savvy. Then, imagine how differently this would look if classrooms engaged in critical literacy.

We need to transgress what we know about our disciplines, how we approach teaching, what we think about students, and learn to see teaching as a valuable aspect of the academic profession. Although many academics do take teaching seriously, we suffer from our experience in an academic model where we have learned that teaching is duller, less important than other academic pursuits, and disconnected from research. And, we suffer because we do not understand that

the classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy. For years it has been a place where education has been undermined by teachers and students alike who seek to use it as a platform for opportunistic concerns rather than a place to learn (hooks, 1994, p. 12).

We suffer from thinking of our intellectual selves as particularly rather than universally valuable, just as we teach particularly to our discipline rather than universally to learning. My thoughts on this crisis for both educators and students is reflected in hooks' (1994) collective call

for renewal and rejuvenation in our teaching practices. Urging all of us to open our minds and hearts so that we can know beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable, so we can think and rethink, so that we can create new visions, I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions—a movement against and beyond boundaries. It is that movement which makes education the practice of freedom. (p. 12)



The inclusion of a service learning component specific to the needs of a multicultural classroom is one step towards teaching and learning as a practice of freedom. For now, I focus on freedom from the institution's marriage to an assimilationist model that is a taken-for-granted part of the everyday workings of academic life. Educational institutions continue to define universal as students fitting a mainstream experience. We need to change our definition of universal, beginning with the idea that centering our classroom activities and requirements around what we used to consider "special needs" students in reality creates a classroom that simply promotes student centered learning for all students. It is simpler to shrug off teaching, viewing it as peripheral to our academic careers. But think, when we are able to shift instead of shrug, the value of all kinds of knowledge, including knowledge brought to us through the academic canon, will explode the possibilities of teaching and learning, begin to meet the needs of a multicultural classroom, and begin to erase the boundaries between the academy and the communities we serve. Shift, don't shrug.

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# Science Education and the Urban Achievement Gap

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*Urban schools in the United States educate most low-income students and almost half of all ethnic minority students. However, these schools are characterized by a dramatic achievement gap in which students learn significantly less than their suburban counterparts. These academic disparities are especially dramatic in science. To close the urban achievement gap, we must address inequities involving resources, funding, and the quality, diversity, pedagogy, expectations, and courses offered by urban science teachers.*

**M**ore children now live and attend school in urban settings than at any time in world history (Barton & Tobin, 2001). This is especially true in developing countries, where urban populations are growing three times faster than rural ones. Urban environments house nearly half of the developing world's population, and 7 of the 10 largest cities in the world are in developing countries (United Nations Development Programme, 1999). Whereas at the beginning of the twentieth century only 10% of people lived in urban settings, more than half of humanity—that is, more than three billion people—lives there today (Barton & Tobin, 2001; Lynch, 2001; United Nations, 1999).

In the United States, more than 75% of the population resides in urban settings (Tobin, Roth, & Zimmerman, 2001; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2001b). These urban settings are home to large numbers of ethnic minorities. For example, minorities account for 57% of the population of New York City (the nation's largest city), 60% of the population of Houston (the nation's third-largest city), and almost 80% of the population of Detroit (the nation's tenth-largest city; Barton, 2001; U.S. Census Bureau, 1998). These urban populations also include large numbers of immigrants. About 10% of the U.S. population is foreign-born, and most of these immigrants live in urban areas in California, New York, Florida, and Texas (Lollock, 2001). Immigrants comprise 38, 59, and 28% of the total populations of Los Angeles, Miami, and New York City, respectively (Barton, 2001).

## Urban Schools

Urban education is important in the United States because large urban school districts educate 25% of all school-age children, 30% of all English-language learners, 35% of all low-income students (i.e., students from low-income families), and nearly half of all ethnic minorities (Hewson, Kahle, Scantlebury, & Davies, 2001; Pew Charitable Trust, 1998). More than 40% of U.S. students are culturally, linguistically, or ethnically diverse (Darling-Hammond, 1997). This diversity—most of which occurs in the nation's largest 20 cities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001a)—produces striking racial and socioeconomic differences in the populations of urban as compared to suburban schools. Indeed, most Black students attend urban schools, whereas most White students attend largely suburban schools (Norman, Ault, Bentz, & Meskimen, 2001).

Urban schools have significantly higher truancy rates, higher dropout rates, and lower graduation rates than suburban schools. The highest dropout rates occur for low-income, urban Black (17%), and Hispanic (23%) students (Fine, 1991; "Graduation rate," 2001). Most ninth-graders in central city schools do not complete high school in four years (Barton, 2001; Education Trust, 1995), and the dropout rate for the poorest 20% of students is 600% higher than the dropout rate for the wealthiest 20% of students ("Graduation rate," 2001). The gap in college-going rates between students from low-income families and



high-income families is 32 percentage points, the same as it was in 1970. This gap persists despite large governmental expenditures (e.g., Pell Grants) to help students from low-income families attend college. More than 80% of high school graduates from families earning more than \$75,000 per year go to college, but only about 50% of graduates from families earning less than \$25,000 per year do so (Burd, 2002). Each year, between 80,000 and 140,000 qualified students from low-income families do not pursue college degrees because they believe that they cannot afford to do so (Burd).

Poverty and low socioeconomic status are defining features of students who attend urban schools in the United States. Indeed, 21% of all urban students live in poverty, and 50% are near the poverty line at some time in their lives. Although children comprise only 26% of the total U.S. population, they comprise 39% of urban poor. More than 40% of urban students attend high-poverty schools (Barton, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 1996). The overall poverty rate for Whites is 8%, but for Hispanics and Blacks it is 26% (U.S. Census Bureau, 1998). These data are even more troubling when one considers young people: whereas 16% of White children live in poverty, 40% of Hispanic children live in poverty. For Blacks, the percentage is even higher, 46% (Barton, 2001). This poverty is often centered in urban settings (Tobin et al., 2001).

## Urban Education's "Achievement Gap"

Students in urban environments face a variety of unique challenges (e.g., increased rates of poverty). These challenges have produced a dramatic "achievement gap" that characterizes urban schools. For example,

1. Most urban students score below average on national achievement tests (Counsel of the Great City Schools, 1994; Hewson, et al., 2001; Olson, 2001; Tobin, Seiler, & Walls, 1999; Waxman & Padron, 1995).

2. The urban poor score disproportionately lower on standardized tests in all academic subjects and in all school grades (Anyon, 1997; Barton, 2001). Graduates of urban schools are often unprepared for the rigor of college courses and must enroll in developmental education programs (Moore, 2001).

3. Almost one-third of White kindergartners later graduate from college, but only 16% of Blacks do (Borja, 2001).

4. According to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress, 26% of urban fourth graders are proficient readers, compared with 36% of suburban and 32% of rural fourth graders. Although 40% of White fourth graders read at or above the proficient level, only 12% of Blacks and 16% of Hispanics perform as well (Paige, 2002).

5. More than 40% of Asian American tenth graders and 34% of White tenth graders take college preparatory courses, but only 26% and 23% of Blacks and Hispanics do (Borja, 2001).

These academic disparities are especially pronounced in science. For example, Berliner (2001) discovered in a recent study of scores on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study assessment that in science,

The scores of white students in the United States were exceeded by only three other nations. But black American school children were beaten by every single nation, and Hispanic kids were beaten by all but two nations. A similar pattern was true for mathematics scores. (p. B3)

The urban achievement gap in science between White, Black, and Hispanic students has long been a major concern of many educators (Moore, 2001; National Center for Educational Statistics 1999, 2000), yet science has remained a hostile neighborhood for most minorities (Moore). For example,

1. Although African-Americans and Hispanics comprise almost 25% of the U.S. population, they earn only 13% of the U.S. science and engineering bachelor degrees, and only 7% of the doctorates (Rey, 2001). Despite some improvements, minorities remain underrepresented in graduate and undergraduate education in science and engineering (National Science Foundation, 2000; Rosser, 1995).

2. Young White males have significantly more positive attitudes toward science than do women or African Americans. Once enrolled in science programs, the confidence of White males increases whereas that of others decreases (Moore, 2001; Moore, Jensen, & Hatch, 2002; Vasquez, 1998).



Although there has been modest (at best) progress in reducing the achievement gap in selected inner city schools (“Inner-city students,” 2001), none of the repeated “reforms” of science education—for example, the system-wide status of science teaching (Weiss, 1977, 1987), the professional development of science teachers (Graham & Fultz, 1985), the roles of state and federal policies in shaping science education (Blank, 1988), and the “systemic reform” of science teaching (Champagne, 1988; Zucker, Shields, Adelman, & Powell, 1995)—have eliminated the achievement gap among underrepresented, underserved students (e.g., ethnic minorities, students from lower socioeconomic classes). That is, the achievement gap persists despite more than 40 years of study and several trillion dollars of investments in public education (Paige, 2002). Indeed, a study of trends on the National Assessment of Educational Progress from 1990 to 2000 showed that

1. In reading, there have been almost no significant gains on closing the achievement gap that separates minority and nonminority students (Olson, 2002).

2. In mathematics, about half of the states for which data were available made some progress in closing the achievement gap between Black and White students. However, those gains were so small that it would take decades to eliminate the achievement gaps in those states. Moreover, much of the progress was due to the exclusion of scores of students with disabilities and students who speak limited English (Olson, 2002).

In some instances the achievement gap between White and Black students has actually widened. For example, the 15-point gap separating White and Black students rated as proficient in 1990 on the 300-point National Assessment of Educational Progress widened to 29 points in 2000; this gap represents approximately three years of learning (Fletcher, 2001; “New test scores,” 2001). Although science educators have repeatedly promised to eradicate the urban achievement gap in science with phrases such as “science for all” (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1989), huge Black-to-White and Hispanic-to-White disparities remain (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1989; Lynch, 2001). The one-size-fits-all approach to science education has not worked (Lee, 1999; Lynch, 2000,

2001; Lynch et al., 1996; Rodriguez, 1997), and we are still in the midst of a crisis (Tobin, 2000). Science education in the United States has never been for all—and still is not, especially in urban schools.

## Lessons of History: Can Achievement Gaps Be Closed?

Today’s urban achievement gap in science and other subjects exists primarily as a rich-poor, minority-White problem that is strongly influenced by distinct historical experiences and cultural values, many of which are the consequences of sociocultural position. An appreciation of history can help to understand and “deracialize” this gap and, in the process, recast it as a common challenge facing marginalized groups in general (Norman et al., 2001). This approach to understanding the urban achievement gap makes the problem solvable and frees us from the temptation to dismiss it until society improves (i.e., “blame society”) or until we can correct supposed behavioral and cognitive deficiencies of marginalized learners (i.e., “blame the victim”).

What happens when a particular minority resides in several societies, in which differences in academic achievement depend on how the minority is viewed by the majority? In Japan, Koreans are marginalized and their school performance is significantly lower than in the United States, where their performance is comparable to other Asian groups (Norman et al., 2001; Ogbu, 1978). Similarly, Burakumin are ethnic Japanese who perform poorly in Japanese schools where they are marginalized, but perform comparably with Japanese and other Asian groups in the United States (De Vos & Wetherall, 1974). These data suggest that the academic performance of various ethnic groups is strongly influenced by factors such as the group’s sociocultural position (Benson, 1995; Lynn, Hampton, & Magee, 1984; Ogbu). A corollary of this conclusion is that an understanding of these same factors can help eliminate the urban achievement gap.

Similar conclusions come from historical studies of achievement gaps in the United States. For example, there were a variety of achievement gaps when Italian, Polish, Jewish, and other immigrant groups began arriving in the United States near the beginning of the twentieth century. These immigrants lived



predominantly in urban settings and usually did much worse in school than their European American peers who were born in the United States (Lieberson, 1980). European immigrants and European Americans born in the United States had a low academic profile that correlated with their occupying a lower socioeconomic position in society (Fischer et al., 1996), which, in turn, meant that they were poor, segregated from mainstream society, and generally viewed as inferior. As these immigrants began to be assimilated into society, they did better in school and the achievement gap disappeared. This assimilation into society and improved academic performance correlated positively with their move from urban to suburban settings (Norman et al., 2001). During the same time, Blacks in the northern United States, most of whom lived in urban settings, often did *better* in school than White immigrants (Lieberson; Norman et al.; Sowell, 1977, 1995).

The achievement gap that now separates urban minorities from Whites has not always existed as it does now. For example, after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, Reconstruction prompted many schools to admit Black students. In these schools, the attendance by and per capita spending on Blacks was about the same as for Whites (Lieberson, 1980; Norman et al., 2001). These trends correlated positively with Blacks having higher enrollments and attendance in schools than newly-arriving European immigrants, and in some cases doing better in school than native Whites (Norman et al.). However, when most of the remediation efforts associated with Reconstruction ended in the 1880s, per capita spending on Black schools fell to 70% of that for White schools (Church & Sedlak, 1976). This change in the allocation of resources and educational opportunities ushered in a period of declining school attendance and academic performance by Blacks that continues today (Lieberson; Norman et al.).

## Urban Education and Cultural Diversity

An oft-stated goal of science education is "science for all" (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1989), but what happens when our particular view of science is not compatible with students' cultural identities and values? The diversity that characterizes urban classrooms produces cultural

interfaces in which students, administrators, and teachers from differing cultural backgrounds interact in the pursuit of a common goal. In urban science classrooms, these interfaces involve students' and teachers' different cultures as well as the often foreign "culture" of science (e.g., the practices, policies, history, and expectations of science). These cultural interfaces often involve power imbalances (e.g., the overwhelming majority of scientists and science teachers are White). These imbalances often alienate minority students and cause them to resist science, thereby making their inclusion in school science classrooms and science learning-communities impossible (Brickhouse & Potter, 2001; Knapp and Plecki, 2001; Norman et al., 2001; Ogbu, 1978). This helps explain why minorities often avoid science courses and science careers (Moore, 2001).

Urban students' attitudes toward, interest in, and motivation to learn science, as well as their willingness to consider particular scientific explanations, do not depend only on the "facts" of science. On the contrary, they also depend on community and cultural beliefs, acceptable identities, the consequences of these explanations for a student's life inside and outside the classroom, and how students respond to teachers' efforts to direct their learning. That is, learning about science involves much more than merely whether students can understand a scientific explanation; it also depends on how their social and cultural options affect their interest to do so (Lemke, 2001). Contrary to the implied suppositions of conceptual change, constructivism, and more traditional approaches to science education, language and culture cannot be separated from the learning of scientific content (Lynch, 2001). This is especially true in urban settings, where linguistic and cultural diversity is great. The mismatch between this diversity of students and the homogeneity of the students' teachers often alienates students and impedes learning.

If, as is claimed by Bodley (2000), cultural differences can be subject to negotiation, and therefore negotiated agreements, how can we transform cultural conflict into cultural cooperation? How can teachers use these differences to maximize student learning? Cultural conflicts in urban science classrooms often arise at interfaces of the normative culture of science and the community cultures of ethnic and socioeconomic minorities (Aikenhead, 1996; Allen & Crawley, 1998; Atwater, 1994; Barba, 1993; Cobern,



1996; Costa, 1995; Lemke, 2001) and are most dramatic when neither teachers nor students can effectively navigate the cultural disparities that inevitably arise in classrooms having culturally diverse students. Students cannot simply change their views on one topic or in one scientific domain without addressing the need to change anything else in their lives or identities (Lemke; Norman et al., 2001). This is a major reason why students from different cultural backgrounds often have very different experiences within the same science classrooms. This, in turn, often results from teachers who consciously or unconsciously reflect their society's notions of who or what is privileged, qualified, and appropriate in science, and who or what is not. This cultural aspect of science education is important because it conveys powerful messages to students about inclusion and success. As noted by Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998),

Even in situations where all students are admitted to the arena of learning, learning is likely to become unevenly distributed in its specifics. Teachers will take some students' groping claims to knowledge seriously on the basis of certain signs of identity. These students they will encourage and give informative feedback. Others, who they regard as unlikely or even improper students of a particular subject . . . are unlikely to receive their serious responses. (p. 135)

These behaviors by teachers often disengage students, who lack confidence, don't expect help, don't know how or where to ask for help, and feel uncomfortable in schools (Rhem, 1998).

This scenario contrasts sharply with the relatively homogeneous populations of students from upper and upper-middle class suburban families. These students often are confident about academic experiences and have a greater cultural advantage for success in science and other subjects than do urban students (Rhem, 1998). This advantage results from the fact that schools tend to reward students who demonstrate the knowledge and appreciation of upper and upper-middle class culture (Bourdieu, 1992; Sahlins, 1976; Tobin et al., 2001; Willis, 1977). The upper-middle class model of academic success is the primary cultural norm in schools; students who do not fit this model are

often devalued when they deviate from expected patterns (e.g., they are told that they don't try, do not want to learn, etc.; also see Eckert, 1989; Marriott, 2001; Rothstein, 1993; Tobin et al.). Because most urban students do not fit this model, it is easy to understand why many of them see school as hegemony (Apple, 1979; Clarke, Hall, Jefferson, & Roberts, 1976; Tobin et al.).

## Eliminating the Urban Achievement Gap

Today, the lower academic achievement of urban Blacks and other minorities correlates positively with urban schools having fewer resources, fewer opportunities, fewer qualified teachers, and an atmosphere that is often based on low expectations. These factors help explain why urban students underperform on achievement measures compared to those in more affluent suburban settings.

If we are to eliminate the urban achievement gap in science, we will have to eliminate the various other gaps that coalesce and intensify to create the achievement gap (Tobin et al., 2001; Tobin et al., 1999). Specifically, we will have to aggressively address (e.g., with legislation, financial incentives) the following inequities involving resources and teachers that have long characterized urban schools (Cohen, Raudenbusch, & Ball, 2000; Knapp & Plecki, 2001).

### *Resources*

Much of the urban achievement gap in science results from the fact that urban students disproportionately attend schools with fewer or inferior resources (Clewell et al., 1995; Day, 1989; Kozol, 1991; Necochea & Cline, 1996; Peevely & Ray, 1989). Students in low-income urban schools usually have access only to outdated books, no laboratories, little or no scientific equipment, and few science-related extracurricular activities (Barton, 2001; Oakes, 1990). Similarly, teachers tend to include less technology into classes for lower-track students than in classes for high achievers (Reid, 2001). This is important because the use of computers in classes correlates positively with improved grades and increased learning; these gains occur regardless of the economic make-up of a school (Hoff, 2001).



The solution to these inequities involves money, which depends on funding mechanisms for public schools. In most states, public schools are funded by taxes on local residents. Poverty and low family incomes are disproportionately concentrated in urban areas, so urban schools will continue to have less money, and therefore fewer resources, than other schools. To close the urban achievement gap, the per-student funding in urban schools must be made similar to that of suburban schools. Attempts to accomplish this by integrating schools by wealth rather than race have often been academically successful but politically controversial (Richard, 2002).

## Teachers

*Qualifications.* Teachers are the most important ingredient for academic success, but in low-income urban school districts the percentages of uncertified and unqualified teachers often exceed those of certified and qualified teachers (Barton, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1999). This means that schools having the greatest need for good teachers are those with either the least experienced or least qualified teachers (Viadero, 2002a). A major cause of this is that most teachers in science as well as other subjects consider urban schools to be less desirable than suburban schools (Viadero, 2001a; 2001b; 2002a; 2002b). The resulting teacher shortages that typify urban schools are especially critical in science (Tobin et al., 2001). This is important because increased academic performance in science and mathematics correlates positively with students having experienced, qualified science and mathematics teachers (Fletcher, 2001; Henry, 2001a; Hoff, 2001). Clearly, the recruitment of qualified teachers is one of the biggest problems facing urban schools (Lewis, Baker & Jepson, 2000). To close the urban achievement gap, we must require that urban schools are staffed by competent, qualified teachers.

*Diversity.* Students who are taught by a teacher of their own race often score higher on standardized tests (Borja, 2001). However, the diversity of science teachers has not kept pace with the diversity of students (Lynch, 2000). Whereas students in urban classrooms are increasingly diverse, the population of teachers remains overwhelmingly White and middle class (Norman et al., 2001). Minority students account for 40% of the enrollments of K-12 education, but only 13% of their teachers are minorities (Borja, 2001).

The mismatch of teachers and students often creates cultural conflicts that inhibit learning (Madsen & Mabokela, 2000; Norman et al., 2001). To close the urban achievement gap, we must ensure that the diversity of urban teachers more closely matches that of urban students.

*Pedagogy.* In urban schools more than in suburban schools, the dominant teaching style is the monologue-like lecture that forces students to be passive learners rather than active users and producers of knowledge (Hewson et al., 2001; Lemke, 1990; Seiler, 2001). Instead of critical thinking and experiential, hands-on inquiry, the emphasis of these classes is usually repetitive drills and the recall of memorized facts and definitions. This pedagogy—that is, one that focuses on teachers and in which there are few opportunities for developing higher-order thinking skills—is what Haberman (1991) has called the “pedagogy of poverty.” The disconnect that occurs between most teachers and students in these lecture-oriented urban classrooms can be minimized by attitudes and activities that engage students and lessen or eliminate cultural conflict and the devaluation of students (Norman et al., 2001; Spindler & Spindler, 1989). A further discussion of these attitudes and activities is provided by Moore (2001). To close the urban achievement gap, we must demand that teachers use effective teaching techniques and strategies (Moore).

*Expectations.* Although nearly 75% of minority students have high expectations for their futures, most teachers and principals do not (Galley, 2001; Seiler, 2001). Many urban teachers consider low-income urban families to be generally deficient (Davies, 1987). Students sense these low expectations by teachers (Galley). The unintended indignities that accompany this culture of low expectations restrict students’ ambitions and produce a deficiency model that contributes significantly to urban students’ poor academic performances and high drop-out rates (Tobin et al., 2001; Valencia, 1991). This deficiency model often expresses itself through a cycle of blame; teachers blame parents for inadequately prepared students (Cullingford, 1996) as parents blame schools and teachers for their children’s poor grades (Barton, 2001). The deficiency model also invariably involves “dumbing down” the academic content of courses, leaving graduates unprepared for college. This is common throughout the country. For example:



1. In several urban public colleges, many students need remedial courses even though they have successfully completed college preparatory courses. In New York, only 13% of City University of New York (CUNY) community college students pass academic skills tests that measure 11<sup>th</sup> grade proficiency. Many students fail high school courses, but somehow get a C on their report cards (Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001). Not surprisingly, these students have trouble when they enroll in college. For example, most of the freshmen in the California State University System who flunk the English placement exam had B averages in high school English (“Many freshmen unprepared,” 2002).

2. Nationwide, almost 30% of all freshmen need remedial education at four-year colleges and universities. At community colleges, the rate exceeds 40% (Ignash, 1997). College remediation rates for students are 46% in Maryland and 60% in Florida. In the California State University System, 47% of its 23,000 freshmen take remedial English, and 54% take remedial math (Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001). At some California campuses, 80 to 90% of freshmen need remedial education, despite the fact that the system is supposed to accept the top 30% of the state’s high school graduates (California Community Colleges, 1995; Hoyt & Sorensen). These students pay more than \$12 million per year for courses that do not count for graduation. These courses, in addition to being expensive, are time consuming and contribute to college drop-out rates; students often get discouraged that non credit “remedial” courses increase their debt and lengthen their college careers (“Many freshmen unprepared,” 2002).

The deficiencies of low expectations help explain why urban students are disproportionately routed into low-level classes (Oakes, Gamoran, & Page, 1992). The low-track science courses that many urban students take, if they are not told to avoid science altogether, focus on behavioral skills and static conceptions of knowledge and often include no science whatsoever (Page, 1989, 1990). To close the urban achievement gap, we must increase our expectations of urban students by offering more rigorous and relevant courses, integrating all students into content-rich courses, ensuring that all students have an equitable opportunity to learn, and requiring students to learn before they can graduate.

*Curriculum.* Less than 25% of minority students describe their school’s curriculum as challenging (Galley, 2001). They are correct; today’s urban students encounter curricula that include many lower-track courses and virtually no advanced math and science classes (Ingersoll, 1999; Viadero, 2001a, 2001b). If we are to expect urban students to learn as much as their suburban counterparts, we must expose them to a rigorous curriculum. When urban students have increased their academic performance, the increases have been correlated with more rigorous courses, increased instructional time in science and mathematics, and the presence of more qualified teachers (Henry, 2001b). *All* students benefit from taking more rigorous courses (Adelman, 1999). This is why urban students improve their academic performances when they are exposed to a challenging curriculum (Henry).

*Professional development.* Improving the rigor of the curriculum must involve professional development programs that help teachers improve not only their content knowledge of science, but also their abilities to teach inquiry-based science education and understand the importance of cultural and linguistic aspects of urban science education. Programs that have emphasized these aspects of professional development have decreased the achievement gap that characterizes urban schools (“Inner-city students,” 2001). This type of professional development is critical, for most science teachers in urban schools do not know how to work effectively with students having special educational needs, limited language skills, or culturally different backgrounds. Nevertheless, these are the topics that are least common in current professional development activities for urban science teachers (Wengling & Educational Testing Service, 2000). To close the urban achievement gap, we must offer urban students a challenging curriculum.

## Summary

Despite good intentions and decades of educational reform, there are huge inequities in the education of low-income urban students (Barton, 2001). Many of these inequities in urban education are rooted in the struggle for racial equity, socioeconomic opportunity, and a more equitable distribution of resources (Barton). Thus, our work to remedy the inequities that now characterize urban science education must be based



on a larger commitment to social justice. If the oft-touted “science for all” (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1989) is ever to be an achievable commitment to equity rather than pious, abstract, and often fictitious platitudes, we will have to change our policies, priorities, and funding mechanisms for urban schools. We cannot afford to continue to accept the fact that many large urban high schools are “pathways to nowhere” (Wear, 2002, p. 16).

The crisis in urban science education requires results-oriented action because it is crucially important for society. Indeed, our nation cannot continue to prosper if we do not create a generation of educated citizens who more closely represent the demographic of American society.

“Science for all” (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1989) begins with equitable access and opportunity for all. As noted by Robert Moses, a former civil rights activist and current president of the Algebra Project (Moses & Cobb, 2001),

The most urgent social issue affecting poor people and people of color is economic access. In today’s world, economic access and full citizenship depend crucially on math and science literacy. I believe that the absence of math [and science] literacy in urban . . . communities throughout this country is an issue as urgent as the lack of registered Black voters in Mississippi was in 1961. (p. 5)

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# *Saving the “False Negatives”:* Intelligence Tests, the SAT, and Developmental Education

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*The unequal opportunities that often typify public K-12 education produce many students who are “false negatives”; that is, students who are capable of succeeding in college but who are denied a realistic chance to do so. The current use of the SAT, a dominant force in college admissions, is often a primary means of denying a realistic opportunity to these false negatives because it strongly favors students who attend well-funded schools and who can afford SAT preparation courses. Developmental education programs that focus on identifying and nurturing false negatives, the many students who are capable of succeeding in college despite poor SAT scores, can increase the graduation rates of these students.*

**I**ntelligence tests were invented in 1905 by French psychologist Alfred Binet. Binet wanted to use the tests to improve people’s potentials by determining whether an individual needed remedial education (Perdew, 2001). Binet feared that his tests would be misused if the scores were used to pejoratively label rather than identify students needing help (Gould, 1981; Owen, 1985). Almost immediately, those fears were realized when a variety of people began using Binet’s tests to label people, promote racism and eugenics, and exclude “undesirable” people from opportunities. The following are examples of realizations of Binet’s fears:

1. Henry Goddard, who translated Binet’s work into English in 1910, and other eugenicists used intelligence tests to label people as “morons” and “feeble-minded.” Goddard argued that low test-scores were permanent, hereditary, and linked to immorality, delinquency, and crime, stating that “every feeble-minded person is a potential criminal” (Freeman, 1926, p. 427). He believed that people with high test scores should have better homes than people with low scores (Owen, 1985). Goddard also believed that a person’s intelligence was hereditary, that people with low test

scores should not be allowed to reproduce, and that society needed “to protect itself against the feeble-minded” (Pintner, 1922, p. 153; also see Freeman; Goodenough, 1949; Gould, 1981).

2. Stanford University professor Lewis Terman, another eugenicist, believed that people who scored low on intelligence tests were poor workers and irresponsible citizens who should not be allowed to reproduce (Gould, 1981). Terman, Joseph-Arthur Gobineau, who has been referred to as “the grandfather of modern academic racism” (Gould, 1995, p. 12), and others used intelligence tests to argue that there are innate, unchangeable differences in intelligence and morality in various races (Gould, 1981, 1995). Hitler used Gobineau’s ideas to support his ideas about race. Like Goddard, Terman later recanted his claims.

3. Army Mental Tests were developed by Terman, Goddard, and others during World War I (Owen, 1985). Scores on the tests were used to argue that women and minorities had unchangeably lower intelligence than White males (Freeman, 1926; Whipple, 1922).

4. Princeton psychologist and eugenicist Carl Brigham also believed that test scores indicated unchangeable levels of intelligence. Brigham used test scores to argue in 1923 that immigration should be stopped to end “the propagation of defective strains in the present population” (Owen, 1985, p. 178). In 1925, Brigham used Army Mental Tests as a basis for developing the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for the College Entrance Examination Board. Brigham’s use of Army Mental Tests also led to the passage of the Immigrant Restriction Act in 1924, which limited the number of immigrants (Gould, 1981). By 1930, however, Brigham had renounced his claims.

5. Henry Chauncey, the first president of the Educational Testing Service, believed that intelligence tests should be used to regulate people’s access to institutions and professions, and thereby help deserving people succeed and undeserving people fail (Gould, 1981; Owen, 1985).

6. More recently, Hernstein and Murray (1994) have claimed in *The Bell Curve* that SAT scores, among other data, link ethnicity to intelligence.

Although such uses of intelligence tests to support racism and other societal ills are not as blatant as they once were, they continue in more subtle ways. For example, the SAT is often used to block the access of many capable students to college, and thereby to a realistic chance at obtaining college degrees. We call these blocked students “false negatives” because they are capable of succeeding in college, but are often denied a plausible chance to do so by standardized tests such as the SAT.

## The SAT

The debate about the use of standardized tests in education was reignited in early 2001 when University of California president Richard Atkinson recommended that the University of California no longer require the SAT for its 178,000 students (Marklein, 2002a). The SAT was first used in 1926 (Crouse & Trusheim, 1988), but became the dominant measure for college admissions in the 1960s when the University of California, the nation’s largest public university system and the SAT’s largest market, became frustrated with the unreliability of high school transcripts and began requiring SAT scores from all of its applicants. Other colleges and universities soon

followed. Admissions officers accepted the claim that the SAT identified the most intelligent students.

Today, the SAT, which is owned by the College Board and created by the Educational Testing Service, is a dominant force in college admissions. Whereas 33% of high school graduates took the SAT in 1980 (Henry, 2001b), 45% (i.e., 1.3 million) of college-bound seniors took the SAT in 2001. Many others took the somewhat less popular ACT (Draper, 2001; Gehring, 2001a). More than one third of these students in 2001 were ethnic minorities (Smetanka, 2001). The overwhelming majority of the nation’s 2,083 four-year colleges and universities make the SAT a requirement for some or all applicants (Cloud, 2001).

The SAT was originally a modification of the Army Intelligence Test. Unlike the American College Testing Program (ACT), which purports to measure students’ mastery of subject matter (i.e., English, mathematics, natural science, and social studies), the SAT claims to measure innate intelligence and aptitude (Lemann, 2001). According to its advocates, the SAT’s idiosyncratic questions of students’ verbal and mathematical reasoning skills mark merit and thereby enable college admissions officers to identify promising students. It is the SAT, an IQ test that measures students’ ability to learn, that often determines who gets the chance to enter the four-year college of their choice.

## Do the SAT’s Claims Match the Results?

Although the College Board tells parents and students that colleges use SAT scores “to help estimate how well students are likely to do” in college (“Can the SAT,” 2001), the validity of the SAT as a predictor of college success is controversial. Some studies report that SAT scores are good indicators of how students will perform in college, but other studies report that they are not (Draper, 2001; Freedman, 2001; Gehring, 2001b; Kohn, 2000; Kozol, 1991; see review in delMas, 1998). There are many “false positives,” that is, students who do well on the SAT but do not graduate from college. Similarly, there are also countless “false negatives,” that is, students who graduate from college despite the fact that their SAT scores are low. These observations have led several critics to conclude that SAT scores are poor predictors of how well students will perform in college, or, in fact, how they will do



in even their first year of college (Kohn). Moreover, many critics claim that our current emphasis on SAT scores diverts attention from the many social, economic, cultural, and political factors (e.g., family background, familiarity with English) that condition academic performance (Kozol). An SAT handbook admitted in 1999 that the SAT has a lower predictive accuracy for success in college than a student's high school grades (Freedman). Others have reached similar conclusions (Perez, 2002).

There are several other problems associated with emphasizing the SAT as a primary criterion for admission to college. For example,

1. The SAT apparently discriminates against women, ethnic minorities, and nontraditional students; that is why these students score lower on the SAT than do traditional students. For example, in 2001 males outscored females by 42 points on the combined verbal and math portions of the SAT, up from 38 points in 2000, despite the fact that females outperform males in high school (Gehring, 2001a; "SAT gender gap," 2001). Similarly, African Americans who took the SAT in 2001 had an average score of 859, down 13 points since 1991, whereas White students averaged 1060 on the exam, a 39-point increase since 1991 (Gehring, 2001a). For comparison, students who identified themselves as Asian American or Pacific Islander scored 1067 on the exam ("SAT scores," 2002). Although the large gap in SAT scores between African Americans and Whites is statistically significant, it is not always predictive of collegiate success. Indeed, SAT scores are not associated with the success of African-American students in college (Boylan, Saxon, & White, 1994; Moore, 2002). As Sacks (2002) concluded, "The SAT and similar college entrance exams . . . are sorting devices for the bureaucratic convenience of college admissions officials, tests that sort viciously by class and race, and tests that aren't particularly good predictors of college performance" (p. 32).

2. The SAT is a good measure of a student's ability to take the SAT. The SAT is coachable; that is, taking the SAT is a skill that a student, depending on his or her bank account, can learn in an SAT coaching class (Gladwell, 2001). No one, not even the College Board, claims any longer that the SAT measures aptitude. That is why its name was changed; the College Board quietly announced a few years ago that the A in SAT no longer

stood for Aptitude. Today, SAT is no longer an acronym; the letters do not stand for anything (Kohn, 2001).

3. When faced with varying grading standards in different high schools, many university admissions officers have claimed that the SAT provides a fair and common yardstick for judging students. However, many people who have examined the evidence disagree with this claim. For example, William Hiss, the former dean of admissions and financial aid at Bates College, argues that standardized tests do not provide such a measure, but instead "significantly under-represent the potential of up to a third of the applicants. It is what a statistician would call a 'false negative,' causing colleges to deny admission to students who will succeed" (Hiss, 2001, p. 10).

4. For at-risk students, only the student's high school grade point average correlates significantly with the student's first-year academic success (delMas, 1998).

5. The tremendous emphasis that college admissions officers place on SAT scores truncates applicant pools (Hiss, 2001) and causes many students to endure much stress and spend inordinate amounts of time preparing for the test (e.g., taking preparation classes for years, taking various early versions of the SAT, visiting SAT storefront "learning centers," studying for the test, etc.). This distorts educational priorities by taking students' time away from their regular assignments. Stress can be a strong incentive for diligence, but, as Atkinson notes, "America's overemphasis on the SAT is compromising our educational system" (Kohn, 2001, p. B12).

These concerns have prompted more than 300 colleges and universities to drop their SAT requirement. Doing this has made little difference in the academic quality of the schools' students. Moreover, schools that no longer require the SAT (e.g., Bowdoin, Bates, Mount Holyoke Colleges, Connecticut) report that "applicant pools and enrolled classes have become more diverse without any loss in academic quality" (Hiss, 2001; Kohn, 2001, p. B12).

## SAT Scores and Minorities

The current use of the SAT tests seemingly discriminates against African Americans and Hispanics, who score significantly lower than White and Asian



American students (Gehring, 2001a; Selingo & Brainard, 2001). For example, only about 1.7% of African American students who take the SAT score above 600 on the verbal part of the test; the percentage of White students who score above 600 is 9.6%. These data suggest that differences in SAT scores between Whites and African Americans are not due to socioeconomic status alone; on the contrary, the tests may also be culturally biased. However, others claim that the unequal outcomes report unequal opportunities. For example, College Board president Gaston Caperton believes that the gap in test scores results from “different educational opportunities these students have had” (Cloud, 2001; “Is the SAT fair,” 2001). This conclusion is consistent with the observations that (a) all students (i.e., males and females across all racial and ethnic lines) score better on the SAT if they have taken advanced-level courses (Gehring, 2001a); (b) minorities and students from low-income schools seldom have access to such courses because these courses are often expensive (Cloud, 2001); and (c) low-income and minority students often do not take advanced courses even if they have a chance to do so (Viadero, 2002). Thus, these students’ lower scores on the SAT may simply reflect decreased opportunity rather than lower innate intelligence. This also helps explain the many false negatives, as well as why these students, when they are given a realistic chance, can often succeed in and graduate from college. As Caperton has noted, “These differences are a powerful illustration of a persistent social problem in our country: inequitable access to high-quality education” (Gehring, 2001a, p. 17).

Instead of contributing to the diversity of the student population, the ranking associated with current uses of SAT scores often obscures the social forces that help some entire populations succeed while helping others fail. As a result, the testing system validates systems of privilege and endorses entrenched patterns of discrimination. As noted recently by Maria Blanco, an administrator with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the SAT “has turned into a barrier to students of color” because “it keeps out very qualified kids who have overcome obstacles but don’t test very well” (Kohn, 2001, p. B13). Clearly, our educational system does not provide all students with the same chance to excel on the SAT.

The many established rituals associated with testing and ranking make the successes of the largely upper-class populations who occupy the highest and most influential positions in education appear to result only from individual achievement and prowess rather than social privilege. This allows admissions officers and other administrators to ignore troublesome questions about inequitable distributions of resources, unequal access, and unequal opportunity. Yet the facts remain: African-American students score significantly lower than White students on the SAT, just as African-American students in grades K-12 (a) are classified as needing “special education” courses significantly more often than are White students; (b) are less likely to be mainstreamed after taking “special education” courses than are White students; (c) are significantly more likely to be labeled as “mentally retarded” than White students (Fine, 2001); (d) are almost two times more likely to be taught by ineffective teachers than are White students (Henry, 2001a, 2001b); and (e) are significantly more likely to drop out of school than White students (Boylan, Saxon, & White, 1994; Moore, Jensen, & Hatch, in press).

### SAT Scores, Labels, and Money

The SAT is often a better measure of resources than aptitude or innate intelligence. There is a strong correlation between a student’s family income and the student’s SAT score; that is why real-estate values in suburbs vary with SAT scores at local high schools (Lemann, 2001). When test takers are grouped by income as measured in \$10,000 increments, SAT scores increase with each jump in parents’ income (“1999 college bound seniors,” 1999). That is, when income goes up, SAT scores go up. This is why even the strongest supporters of requiring all college applicants to take the SAT begrudgingly admit that “class has some relationship to SAT performance” (Crouse & Trusheim, 1988; McWhorter, 2001, p. B12). These results support Owen’s (1985) claim that test scores are “little more than camouflage for class” (p. 198). The SAT may be a good measure of the size of a student’s house, but it does not measure student intelligence or mastery of a subject. African Americans, who are three times more likely to be poor than Whites and 2.4 times less likely to have annual incomes exceeding \$75,000 (“Why are Blacks,” 2001), score significantly lower on the



SAT than do Whites. Nevertheless, SAT scores are not associated with the success of African American students in college (Boylan, Saxon, & White, 1994).

The economic disparities that accompany differences in SAT scores result partly from a sprawling \$200 million industry that—for a hefty price—helps affluent students score better on the SAT (Freedman, 2001). About 10% of students who take the SAT sign up for commercial coaching programs, which cost \$700 to \$3000 per course or up to \$450 per hour for an individual tutor (“SAT prep courses,” 2001). A course that costs \$2700, such as the one offered by the Huntington Learning Center, consumes about 10% of the total annual income earned by the average African American family in the United States (“SAT coaching costs,” 2002). Kaplan Educational Centers, whose SAT preparation course lasts three months and costs \$800 to \$900, claim that their courses increase students’ SAT scores by an average of 120 points (“SAT prep courses”), and that more than a quarter of students increase their scores by at least 170 points (“SAT coaching costs”). Similarly, the Princeton Review claims that its SAT preparation class improves scores by an average of 140 points (“SAT coaching costs”). Even the College Board admits that SAT pre-classes improve students’ scores (“Is the SAT,” 2001); that is why more than half of the people who take the SAT take it again, often after taking an SAT prep course, and why the College Board sells its own SAT preparation materials marketed with the tag line “Test Prep from the Test Makers” (“California and the SAT,” 2002; Freedman, 2001; Gose & Selingo, 2001). The “new” and more expensive SAT, which will include a writing sample and is scheduled to be implemented in the spring of 2005, will almost certainly increase the demand for SAT preparation courses (Hoover, 2002). On average, students who cannot afford SAT prep courses do not do as well on the SAT as students who can.

Students from affluent schools, which are usually suburban and enroll disproportionately small percentages of ethnic minorities and students from low-income families, score higher on the SAT than do students from less affluent schools. As has been noted by Duke University admissions director Christoph Guttentag (Galley, 2002, p. 10), “The students in school districts with more resources will be more equipped”

to succeed on the SAT. For example, (a) students in poorer schools are also much more likely to believe that their schools are not clean, safe, and quiet enough for them to concentrate; and (b) poorer high school students “believe that their schools are not helping at all to prepare [them] for a successful future” (Galley, 2001, p. 10). Moreover, low-income schools and low-income students can seldom afford the added expenses that accompany Advanced Placement (AP) courses; AP tests cost \$78 each (Harrington-Lueker, 2002). This is why (a) schools’ offerings of AP courses decrease as the percentages of minorities and low-income students increase (Cloud, 2001), and (b) African Americans comprised only 4% of the students who took the AP tests in 2000 (Henry 2001a). The decreased levels of academic opportunity at schools serving large percentages of low-income and minority students produce disproportionately large percentages of students who score “below basic” on standardized tests (Kozol, 1991; Olson, 2001). *All* students benefit from a rigorous curriculum and advanced courses (Adelman, 1999), but many students, especially ethnic minorities and students from low-income families, do not get the chance (Borja, 2001).

Students, and especially ethnic minorities, who attend poor schools and who come from low-income families, often score poorly on standardized tests such as the SAT. To many, these students comprise an academic underclass who are labeled “at risk,” “not ready for college,” and in need of “remediation” to correct the alleged “learning problems” that caused their low scores. This prejudicial stigmatization of at-risk students does more than rationalize the privileges of the economic and academic elite; it also interferes with students’ learning and produces a variety of damaging and undeserved misconceptions—for example, that the students do not try, do not participate in class, have uncaring parents, are dumb, cannot be helped (e.g., “we can’t save them all”), and should be put in “special ed” courses (Marriott, 2001; Valeri-Gold, Callahan, Deming, Mangram, & Errico, 1997). Placing these labeled students in remedial courses often worsens the problem because such placement is often accompanied by the instructors being poorer teachers, by the teachers and students having lower expectations, and by the students having low self-esteem (Atwater, 1994; Lavin, 1996; Samuda, 1986). This is especially true in K-12 schools having large populations of

minority students. In such schools, (a) only 40% of the teachers and just over half of the administrators have high expectations for students' futures, and (b) only 25% of secondary school students believe that their teachers have high expectations for them (Galley, 2001).

The placement of students in remedial classes is especially damaging to minority students because it perpetuates the ethnic and socioeconomic segregation and imbalance of many educational programs (Atwater, 1994). Samuda (1986) refers to this ability grouping (i.e., including the mindset that all students must be judged according to the same standards, procedures, and values regardless of cultural or class differences) as structural racism. It is difficult to see how labeling and placing students in remedial courses can be a better alternative to the opportunity to succeed in a traditional content course.

### What Happens to At-Risk, "False Negative" Students?

The false negatives that we are concerned about are disproportionately ethnic minorities and students who are from low-income families. These students attend four-year colleges, including those having open enrollment policies, at about half the rate of higher-income students. Once there, these students graduate at significantly lower percentages than do their richer classmates (Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 2001). Similarly, African American and Hispanic students in developmental education programs at four-year colleges are retained at significantly lower rates than other students in developmental education programs. For example, more than 40% of White students at four-year institutions are retained, but only 37% of Hispanics and 33% of African Americans are retained at these institutions. At two-year institutions, 31% of Whites are retained; the retention rates for Hispanics and African Americans are 22% and 17%, respectively (Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1993; Moore, 2002; Moore, Jensen, & Hatch, in press).

Often unable to enroll in four-year colleges where they have the greatest chances for success (Moore, 2002), false negative students are often routed to community colleges and two-year technical schools.

This is why enrollments of African American and Hispanic students in remedial courses at two-year schools are disproportionately high (Roueche & Roueche, 1993). Although the segregation of at-risk students in community colleges is a popular recommendation of administrators and faculty at four-year colleges, it is often "used by the four-year institution to avoid its responsibilities" (Carter, 1978, p. 97). Elite schools and others wanting to be elite schools do not want at-risk students on their campuses.

Community colleges provide training, continuing education, and potential access to higher education, all of which are critical to the success of students and communities. Indeed, community colleges educate 44% of all undergraduates taking courses for credit in the United States, 47% of all college students with disabilities, 51% of all first-generation college students, 46% of all African American, 55% of all Hispanic, and 46% of all Asian American and Pacific Islander college students (Briggs, 2001). However, community colleges and technical schools are often educational dead ends for low-income, at-risk students; there is a disproportionate elimination of Hispanic and African American students in developmental education programs at two-year institutions (Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1993; Moore, 2002; Moore, Jensen, & Hatch, in press). This is why Hunter Boylan has noted that relegating developmental education students to community colleges "is not an educationally sound idea" (Stratton, 1998, p. 27). Students often cannot access four-year colleges through community colleges, and therefore have a significantly lower chance of graduating from college than do other students (Moore, 2002). As is true at four-year institutions, African American and Hispanic students in developmental education programs at two-year institutions are retained at significantly lower rates than White students (Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1993). As a result, the odds of graduating from college are greatly reduced for students who score low on the SAT, come from low-income families, attend urban schools, or who are ethnic minorities. For example, in 1999 the nationwide college graduation rate for African-American students was 38%; whereas for Whites it was 59% ("Why aren't there," 2001). This denial of a realistic chance to obtain a college degree often consigns these students to low-paying jobs with declining real wages, and the cycle continues (Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 2001).



The disproportionate “weeding out” of ethnic minorities and low-income students—first by the SAT and then by the colleges that these students attend—contributes to the startling lack of diversity in many professions. For example, ethnic minorities have long been marginalized from science, and especially from disciplines such as engineering, physics, and computer science (Moore, 2001). Even the “best and brightest” minority students often avoid or are driven away from careers in science. Many of these students are discouraged from pursuing degrees and careers in science by counselors, parents, teachers, and scientists themselves, who, after seeing that the students scored poorly on the SAT, convince the students that they are not qualified for a career in science. Many of the remaining minorities and low-income students then suffer the same fate when they are, in effect, denied access to quality college educations by their ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or the low SAT scores that often result from the lack of opportunity that accompanies the students’ ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

## Providing Opportunity for False Negatives

Our experiences and research have convinced us that there are many students who are capable of succeeding in college, but who are inhibited from doing so by low SAT scores. We do not believe that all of these false negative students should be guaranteed a college degree, but they should have access to a realistic *chance* for success in college. A student’s SAT score should not be destiny; a low score on the SAT should not necessarily mean that a student must give up on graduating from college, or that a chance to graduate from college should involve additional and unnecessary challenges such as a mandatory routing to a community college where the odds of success are very low (Moore, 2002).

A growing number of programs have been designed to help, rather than label and segregate, false negative students wanting a chance to succeed in college. For example, Texas, Florida, and California now admit large numbers of students to public institutions based on the student’s high school rank; for these students, SAT scores are not considered (Gose & Selingo, 2001; Kohn, 2001; Marklein, 2002b; Selingo & Brainard, 2001). Students who strive are rewarded, and factors such as service and leadership (e.g., service

as a class officer), adversity, and family history (e.g., being a first-generation college student) are also considered. Similarly, for more than two decades New York has used its Educational Opportunity Program to offer admission preferences along with developmental education programs to low-income students of any color (Freedman, 2001). Another promising approach involves the “Strivers” score, which is an adjustment to the SAT based on the taker’s race and socioeconomic background. The ACT is developing a similar adjustment, but these adjustments are controversial (Glazer & Thernstrom, 1999).

Another successful program based on giving developmental education students access to college is the General College (GC) at the University of Minnesota. About half of the admissions into GC are based on an individual review process that considers test scores among several other performance indicators. As one would predict, the percentage of students of color in General College (i.e., approximately 32%) is almost triple that of the rest of the main campus (Smetanka & Baden, 2001), and these students’ admissions scores are lower than are those of students in other colleges at the university. In GC, credit-bearing courses having traditional disciplinary expectations of content and rigor also include pedagogical approaches that emphasize and develop academic skills such as writing, reading, and critical thinking. These courses are supported by a network of academic advisors who work closely with faculty to anticipate students’ problems and, when necessary, intervene. Also available in GC are academic services in which individualized help with writing, mathematics, and technology is available every day for students. Faculty in GC sponsor a research center (Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy) and publish their research about developmental education.

GC’s success rate is good. For example,

1. Almost half of the students who entered the University of Minnesota as new College of Liberal Arts students in Fall 1995 had received a bachelor’s degree as of Summer 2000; for comparison, 49% of students who first entered General College and subsequently transferred to the College of Liberal Arts in Fall 1995 had received Bachelor’s degrees from the University of Minnesota as of Summer 2000 (General College, 2002).

2. More than 75% of students who began in GC in Fall 1999 were still enrolled in the University of Minnesota in Fall 2000 (General College, 2002). Those retainees are disproportionately students of color. More than half of GC's students transfer into other colleges and graduate within six years (Smetanka & Baden, 2001; Wambach & delMas, 1996b).

3. Whereas 35% of GC freshmen transfer within the university, only about 8% of full-time community college students in Minnesota do so, suggesting that GC provides a higher rate of access to the university for at-risk students (i.e., students who score low on the standardized tests) than the state community college system (Wambach & delMas, 1996a, 1996b).

Clearly, GC has shown that developmental education and developmental education students can thrive at a research university, and that credit-bearing, first-year courses can promote skill development without lowering academic standards.

## SAT Scores, Standards, and Access

Many elitists and elite institutions claim that ignoring SAT scores is equivalent to lowering standards (e.g., McWhorter, 2001). As Texas A&M University president Ray Bowen says, "I'm concerned that people who want to come to school here, who have high SAT scores, don't feel that they are diminished" (Selingo & Brainard, 2001, p. A22). Others have worried that eliminating the SAT will reduce standards because it represents "sort of an across the board access" to higher education (Selingo & Brainard, 2001, p. A22). However, critics have noted that the use of test scores to deny opportunity "is eugenics by other means" (Owen, 1985, p. 199) that propagates Goddard's belief that people with high test scores should have better homes than people with low scores.

The GC model that we advocate is not flawless; many of our students fail, despite our best efforts. However, the same is true for students in traditional programs who are not initially at-risk. Our success in identifying false negatives, including those having low SAT scores, is especially important because it enables large numbers of ethnic minorities, economically disadvantaged students, and first-generation students to graduate from college. This approach is based on the conviction that access to a first class education

should not be reserved for the richest, brightest, and whitest students, or those who score highest on standardized tests such as the SAT. Yes, replacing the SAT requirement with Atkinson's "more holistic" approach to admissions *will* broaden the access of many students, especially ethnic minorities and students from low-income families, to a college education, but it will not diminish access for those now enrolled in college or reduce the quality of current academic programs (Marklein, 2002b, p. 1).

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