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Abstract

This article argues that economic exclusion, standardized testing, and racially biased definitions of teacher quality continue the exclusion of teachers of color from the urban teaching force. The authors highlight two urban programs designed to address such barriers and situates such efforts within a critical race theory framework that identifies ways urban communities can increase control through local teacher development. The article concludes by presenting a teacher evaluation model that integrates school, district, and university perspectives with urban students, families, community-based organizations, and teacher self-perceptions to redefine teacher effectiveness.

Keywords

urban education, teacher education, teacher development, teacher candidates

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I was excited to meet my son's kindergarten teacher on the first day of school. As we walked onto the public schoolyard and saw many colorful faces, I was glad that I decided to send my child to a neighborhood school. As diverse faces lined up in front of an all White female staff, I became nervous. The nice bulletin board showed faculty and staff, but there were only two adults of color: the custodian and the secretary. Was my son, an African-American male, about to spend the next six years of his life seeing only White women in positions of leadership?

—African American educator

As a direct result of U.S. educational policy that has maintained school segregation (Knaus, 2007a; Orfield & Eaton, 1997), racially isolating experiences are often common for urban parents of color. Urban¹ families pay local taxes to fund school districts which often ignore local hiring opportunities in favor of recruiting a predominantly White teaching force from outside the city, thereby reducing the exposure of children of color to teachers who look like them and come from their local neighborhood (Epstein, 2006). As a result, many urban children attend schools that employ adults of color in low paid positions that are not framed as educationally relevant; as one urban principal lamented, “the only Black and Brown folk at the school when I arrived were custodians, paraprofessionals, and secretaries.” The lack of local role models adds to a racially biased curriculum taught by educators unprepared to incorporate local context into classroom lessons. Meanwhile, only half of African American children graduate (Stillwell, 2010). This article thus attempts to frame, for district administrators, teacher educators, and those concerned about urban education reform efforts, how barriers to teachers of color entering the urban classroom can be addressed by critical race theory-framed efforts.

In the midst of dramatic failure rates for urban youth, Arne Duncan, the Secretary of Education, has called for more teachers of color as a strategy to reengage urban students. Speaking at North Carolina Central University, he reminded the audience that while in Chicago, he “visited too many elementary schools that did not have a single Black male teacher, though most of the students were Black and grew up in single-parent families” (Duncan, 2010). He continued: “The underrepresentation of African American men in the teaching profession is a serious problem” (Duncan, 2010).

Such calls for diversity are newsworthy, but not substantive. Although most educational organizations value “diversity, equity, and social justice” (UCEA, 2011), there is little public recognition of the barriers to achieving a

diverse educator workforce (Branch, 2001; Jacullo-Noto, 1991). Educational organizations, districts, and states have advocated for more diverse teaching forces for years (e.g., American Educational Research Association, National Association for Multicultural Education, and the National Education Association), yet steps to address racial barriers rarely accompany such arguments.

In response to these calls for teacher diversity, this article begins with a brief history of racial exclusion of African American teachers. This is followed by an overview of identified barriers that keep teachers of color from urban classrooms. After clarifying three key barriers, two programs designed to recruit and retain local urban teachers are highlighted. The article then situates these programs within a framework of critical race theory, demonstrating how such efforts must be committed to purposeful, sustained action that challenges the dynamics of racism. The article concludes with a 360° evaluation model developed by Teach Tomorrow in Oakland (TTO, a comprehensive urban educator pipeline program clarified later in this article), which shifts recruitment conversations to the retention of teachers through providing professional development, feedback, and relevant support for the skill sets as urban teachers need to be of a high quality and effective in urban schools.

This article is based in part on observations and interviews of urban teachers, prospective teachers, teacher educators, and district administrators, and is part of a larger study assessing effective teaching and leadership in urban settings. Quotations are taken directly from interviews, and whereas all administrators requested confidentiality, and thus are not listed by name, most teachers are referred to by their first name.

A Brief History of Excluding African American Teachers

The history of dismantling educational pipelines for African American educators while closing schools that were tailored to African American learning styles and cultural contexts in the South has been well documented (Fairclough, 2007). Prior to *Brown v. Board of Education*, African American communities created schools, developed teachers and school leaders, and created pathways into Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), with notions of service to communities as a component of degree attainment (Futrell, 2004; Walker, 1996). With the implementation of desegregation, Black schools were closed, Black children were sent to White-led schools, and Black educators lost their jobs (Fairclough, 2007; Futrell, 2004; Morgan, 1995). As Delpit (1997) argued, “The resulting misguided and racist paternalism

[from the implementation of *Brown v. Board of Education*] was responsible in part for the mass closures of Black schools and the mass layoffs of Black teachers during the integration process . . . ” (pp. ix-x). Michele Foster (1997) clarified that “Whereas in 1974, historically Black colleges, which had prepared the majority of Black teachers, graduated approximately nine thousand teachers, ten years later they were graduating only half as many” (p. 48). Foster continued: “Their numbers were declining at exactly the same time that Black students comprised the majority in many urban school districts” (p. 48). The commitment of locally-run schools to develop socially just, community-minded graduates dissipated with integration as White educators did not share the same commitment, expertise, or familiarity with the community context of racism and poverty that Black students lived in (Delpit, 1997; Fairclough, 2007). Formal schooling was no longer seen as a process to learn how to serve and improve local communities, much less become a teacher, partially because there were no longer accessible models of culturally responsive, community-based teachers, and partially because African American students were now required to learn a White-framed curriculum taught by White teachers.

Some 50 years later, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) intended to create a highly qualified teaching force, in part to address the shortage of permanent, certified teachers in urban schools (Sunderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005). Instead, the federal policy denied the historical context of education within African American communities by focusing on a top-down definition of teacher qualification that did not take into consideration what African American parents might want from teachers of their children; instead, NCLB allowed parents to remove their children from failing schools (Knaus, 2007b; Thompson, 2003). In short, NCLB continued the conditions that lead to teacher turnover, particularly in high poverty and urban schools (Deniston & Gerrity, 2010; Hill & Barth, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001). Rather than address previous barriers to remaining in the urban classroom, and ignoring previous failed attempts to integrate public schools, NCLB required a series of standardized teacher assessments, despite extensive research documenting the negative impacts such tests would have on people of color, low-income people, and English learners (Cornbleth, 2006; Knaus, 2007a; Hall & Parker, 2007; Lewis, 2006). These additional barriers directly favor potential teachers whose culture and socioeconomic status mirrors that of the majority of teachers and professors, not the majority of students of color urban teachers will be placed with (Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010). NCLB was effective at shifting the national conversation toward student failure, but the federally mandated solutions at best simply measure the impact of unequal schools,

without providing alternative strategies for combating unequal funding, historical exclusion from education, nor the lack of local educator hire opportunities.

Barriers That Maintain a White Teaching Force

Despite increasing calls for educators of color, many urban districts rely upon national recruitment partners to place temporary teachers. Such partnerships compete with placement of local teachers because most of the nationally recruited teachers are, by definition, not local. Although these partnerships are relatively recent, they continue the structural trend of excluding African American teachers that began with desegregation. Foster (1997) argued, “Throughout the nation, state policies are regularly implemented to ensure the reduction in numbers of African American teachers” (p. 10). Such policies are often framed as requirements to ensure “quality” teachers, but the impact of state and federal policies on teacher qualification leads to racial disparities among urban teaching forces (Epstein, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Madda & Schultz, 2009). In this article, the authors argue that economic exclusion, a regimen of standardized testing, and racially biased definitions of teacher quality serve as barriers that maintain a predominantly White teaching force by contributing to the placement of temporary teachers who foster instability among urban schools and students, while increasing local unemployment rates.

Barrier #1: Economic Exclusion

The most immediate barrier for many urban adults wanting to become teachers is economic. Many teacher education programs require anywhere from several months to a year of unpaid student teaching (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). Given that the median White family has 10 times the net assets of the median African American or Latino family (Oliver & Shapiro, 2006; Shapiro, Meschede, & Sullivan, 2010), the possibility of working a year for free is an obvious deterrent to prospective African American and Latino candidates. Thus, in addition to tuition and difficulties balancing a full-time job while earning a credential, test fees, test study guide fees, tutoring fees, college application fees, fingerprinting fees, and other required fees become financial barriers that extend the wealth gap.

Consider Jason, an African American teacher candidate unable to attend an interview because of transportation issues. He clarified, “I got to the bus stop an hour early; after three buses went by, I knew I might miss it. But I didn’t

have cab fare.” Jason informed the interview panel but was not offered a makeup interview. His experience reflects the poor state of public transportation and is not unique. At recruitment meetings for an urban educator recruitment and retention program, potential applicants argued that transportation and child care were significant financial barriers to enrolling in university-based programs.

The structural impact of violence and mass incarceration adds additional economic barriers for urban residents, including having to raise family members’ and neighbors’ children. Ricki, an African American high school teacher in Oakland, argued that, “it took me years to become a teacher, ‘cause I had to take care of so many of my siblings’ kids. My two older brothers have been in jail since forever, and both had children. And since I was the only one with a job, I had to feed and clothe them.” When Ricki became a full-time teacher, her principal derided her for leaving school at 4 pm, particularly when the two new White Teach for America teachers stayed until 7 or 8 pm. “I had to remind him that I had 6 children to care for, and that two of them were at the school. But he didn’t care—he just wanted those test scores up.” Ricki’s experience highlights an additional tension: many urban teachers must care for extended families and thus their salaries are forced to go further than the salaries of temporary teachers, who are intentionally recruited while still in college (e.g., www.teachforamerica.org).

Institutional denials of the wealth gap lead to inaccurate comparisons between White privilege and urban struggle, such that candidates who have the luxury of being full-time college students are compared with those who work full time while raising families. Additional urban realities such as a lack of nearby grocery stores, high rates of drug use, unemployment and underemployment, and health related issues (such as high rates of asthma, cancer, and untreated diabetes) add to the context of barriers. Such issues point to a need for educators who understand the structural barriers that low-income urban residents face, both as children in underfunded schools and as adults trying to become teachers in under-resourced communities.

Barrier #2: Regimen of Standardized Testing

In addition to barriers that privilege those with money, schools also reinforce a limited definition of cultural intelligence that has increasingly been based upon standardized test scores (Dance, 2002; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Ferguson, 2000; Knaus, 2007a; Noguera, 2003; Sacks, 2001). Standardized tests repeatedly have been shown to be biased against people of color (Cornbleth, 2006; Hilliard, 1990; Santelices & Wilson, 2010;

Steele, 2003), and the achievement gap is “created by standardized tests that were designed specifically to segregate society” (Knaus, 2011, p. 57). College entrance exams, like IQ tests, and many nationwide multiple-choice exams used to assess student learning, were initially based upon ideas of intelligence that originated with the Eugenics movement (Epstein, 2005; *Larry P. and Lucille P. v. Riles*, 1979; Selden, 1999). As precursors to these methods of measuring aptitude, intelligence, and specified content knowledge, the initial use of standardized exams was intended to segregate society into those who were educable and those who were not, based almost entirely on racist assumptions (Karier, 1972; Stoskopf, 2002). Wayne Au (2009) argues that the purpose of standardized testing is essentially to replicate and reinforce social control over historically excluded communities: “[Standardized tests] establish universal norms or standards through which to categorize, make comparisons, mark deviance, and hence, sort human populations under the guise of scientific objectivity” (p. 39). The purpose of this sorting process has not changed throughout the history of the tests: some 100 years into the mass testing experience, so-called achievement gaps are ever present.

One way these gaps are created is through a testing process that denies “local conditions or specific contexts that impact, affect, and shape student performance” (Au, 2009, p. 43). Thus racism, poverty, violence, and other factors shaping children’s lives, not to mention access to books, computers, and familiarity with the language being assessed by standardized tests, are all deemed irrelevant. In addition, research has demonstrated that test scores are biased based on student perception of ability, such that students who believe they are good at math actually test higher than those who question their abilities (Steele, 2003; Steele, 1997). Claude Steele refers to this notion of stereotype threat, and the importance here is that increases in test score performance can be directly attributed to student self-perceptions of academic ability, which have also been shown to be related to race, class, and gender (Steele, 1997). White students are taught to believe in themselves academically, whereas many African American students demonstrate decreased academic self-efficacy; these racial differentials are reinforced through studies suggesting that teacher expectations also differ based on race (Irvine, 1990; Rist, 2000; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). In short, standardized test scores reflect teachers with lower expectations of African American students, who then internalize such expectations and score lower on such tests.

Standardized assessments also limit the diversity of teachers through simplification of measurements of academic ability. Kohn identifies the irrelevance of what is often measured by standardized tests: “The fact is that

[standardized tests] usually don't assess the skills and dispositions that matter most. They tend to be contrived exercises that measure how much students have managed to cram into short-term memory" (Kohn, 2000, p. 7). In much the same way that standardized college entrance exams do not accurately predict collegiate success (Crouse & Trusheim, 1988; Fleming, 2000; Robinson, Uryasz, & Anderson, 1996), teacher assessment tests do not accurately assess content knowledge, much less the skill sets required of teachers to actually teach such content (Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010). Yet urban residents wishing to become teachers must navigate this racially biased filtering process.

Shelby, an African American educator who graduated from Oakland schools and Oakland colleges, decided she wanted to teach music in Oakland. She was asked to work with the choir, and shortly thereafter, the principal offered to hire her full time. As a music major and performing artist, she was confident she would be successful and her professors vouched for her excellence based on classroom observations and demonstrations of student singing ability. In addition to her effectiveness, one professor remarked, "You won't have any problem with management because you look like your students' mothers and aunts."

When Shelby took a subject competency test, however, she faced barriers that had nothing to do with her ability to teach vocal performance within an urban context. She reflects that, "90% of the music on the test was written by dead White men," and that, "90% of the test was instrumental." Yet Shelby was a vocalist, would be teaching within her area of specialty, and was being tested for content she would never teach. In short, the content was culturally and artistically biased against her field. There were no questions about spirituals, gospel music, world music, or any type of question about "changing four-part harmony into the three-part harmony most commonly associated with urban churches." Shelby further argues that, "not one of the questions asked how to deal with the children in my classes whose mothers were addicted to crack and who had to take care of their younger siblings so they couldn't focus on homework." The lack of subject matter coherence and measurement of relevance limits who can teach urban children, based on culturally inappropriate knowledge and irrespective of effectiveness.

In California, candidates must also pass the following standardized tests to become teachers: California Basic Education Skills Test (CBEST), California Subject Examination Test (CSET; Multiple Subjects or Single Subject Versions) and the Reading Instruction Curriculum Assessment (RICA; Multiple Subjects candidates only). These represent teacher certification examinations with demonstrated biases against people of color and low-income

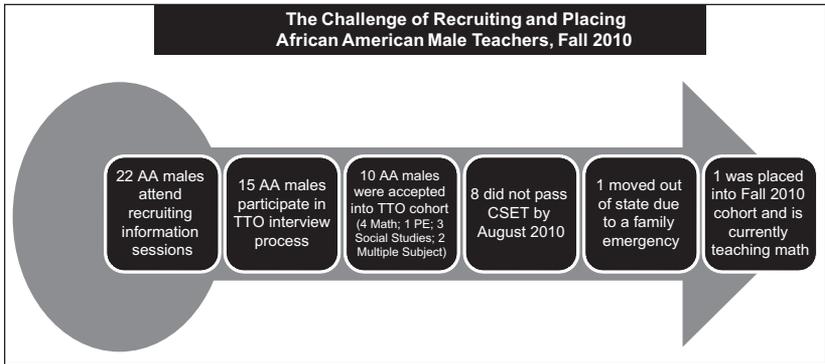


Figure 1.

communities (Bennett, McWhorter & Kuykendall, 2006; Berlak, 1999; Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010). Standardized teacher assessments have also corresponded with the explosion of national recruitment pipelines, which often intentionally prepare educators to teach the standardized curricula that many urban school districts adopt. Because such national recruitment programs selectively recruit in elite predominantly White universities, their efforts have exacerbated the racial, cultural and linguistic imbalance in schools (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Heilig & Jez, 2010).

This imbalance can further be seen in the lack of African American males in the teacher pipeline (Lewis, 2006). As seen in the figure below, 22 African American men interested in teaching attended an orientation session for TTO. Of the 22, 15 had demonstrated significant experience with urban children or schools and were granted interviews (TTO, 2011). Ten of the 15 were offered positions as teachers, pending passage of required state tests. Eight of the 10 failed these tests, despite test-preparation support and completion of required coursework. In the end, only one African American male was placed as a teacher.

Marc’s experiences further illustrate testing barriers. An African American male who graduated with an English degree from an HBCU that did not offer an undergraduate teaching credential, Marc relocated to Oakland (where he grew up), and upon realizing he had to pass the English CSET, began preparing for the test. Marc worked full time to support his family while taking (and failing) the test three times. He was told he would need an additional two years of undergraduate coursework in English to accumulate the units

required to meet the test equivalency. Instead of paying for two additional years of courses (that replicated his previous coursework), and then having to take additional teacher education courses for his credential, he chose to attend law school and focus on race and educational law. He figured if in three years he could become a teacher, he might as well switch fields and become a lawyer in the same time. "All I needed," Marc clarified, "was a bit of support to get me over that test. I got a great score on the LSAT, but couldn't pass the damn test to become a teacher? Really, that's not some sort of test bias?" Marc graduated near the top of his class in 2011, and is now a practicing attorney.

Justine, however, was not willing to let go of her dream to be a teacher. After graduating from Oakland Public Schools, Justine remained in Oakland, and spent the past four years struggling to earn her credential. Justine finally passed the CBEST, enabling her to serve as a substitute teacher and enroll in a credential program. Justine excelled through the credential program and had positive recommendations from her university supervisors and the mentor teachers at her school. Yet she failed the content-based CSET and could not be hired as a full-time teacher, despite that several principals eagerly wanted to hire her.

Barrier #3: Racial Biases in Definitions of Teacher Quality

Because notions of intelligence and academic success are deeply intertwined with performance on standardized tests, definitions of teacher quality tend to reflect the same biases as standardized assessments. Thus, racial biases, based on how educators define knowledge, conceive of evaluation processes, and limited exposure to and valuing of culturally responsive approaches, shape operational definitions and measurements of effective or quality teaching. These biases reflect long held beliefs about the inferiority of African American students and educators (Delpit, 1995; Fairclough, 2007; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Definitions of "quality" that deny the experiences, strengths, and capacity to engage and model effective teaching strategies *and* navigation through a system of racism for urban students, in turn, limit the numbers of African Americans who enter, and remain, within the classroom through a range of additional related barriers.

Given that the vast majority of teachers and administrators are White, cross-cultural issues in assessments of teachers also play a role. Delpit (1995) clarifies that "diversity means that the actions of teachers who differ in worldview from those who seek to assess them can lead to misinterpretations about competence, quality, and intent" (p. 138). Thus, even when African

Americans become teachers, biased notions of teacher quality, partially due to multiple, conflicting definitions of the purpose of education between many African American and White educators still limit professional opportunities (Hill & Gillette, 2005; Hopson, Hotep, Schneider, & Turenne, 2010; Jean-Marie, Williams, & Sherman, 2009).

Underlying these cultural conflicts is an assumption that “good” African American teachers will have the resources to successfully navigate the systemic job reservation system created to privilege White people. This job reservation system is generally couched in terms of qualifications that are framed as attainable by everyone, but in reality, are based upon access to education and training that coaches potential candidates. Research has demonstrated that those with stereotypically “White-sounding” names are often given jobs, scholarships, or other professional opportunities over those with stereotypically “Black-sounding” names (Levitt & Dubner, 2005; Parker & Mease, 2008; Wise, 2005). Similarly, resumes that include high school leadership opportunities are afforded more support, scholarship, and college admissions than are those without, (McDonough, 1997; Steinberg, 2002), devaluing high school students who work full time. Research also documents the impact of peer-similarity in terms of job offers; interviewees whose racial context aligns with those of the interviewers are more likely to receive employment offers (Neckerman & Kirschenman, 1991; Shih, 2002). Given that the majority of urban educators are White and that the majority of urban residents are of color, a disjoint has been created that systematically advantages White applicants in all fields (Wise, 2005).

These racial barriers reflect hidden assumptions that elite-educated White teachers more effectively teach urban children than locally educated residents of color. This assumption is seen in district set-asides for national recruitment partners, who intentionally recruit at elite predominantly White universities. Each year, many urban districts that suffer from high teacher turnover set aside a number of estimated teacher openings and secure those positions with *guaranteed* job positions for national recruitment partners. These processes, clarified by one urban superintendent, suggest that, “when the time for hiring comes, experienced applicants from other districts and recent local graduates are overlooked” to honor the previously agreed upon number of teachers the national recruitment partner might supply. The district prioritization of candidates from national recruitment partners is reinforced by what one principal argued was “preference for easily manageable new teachers who have the privilege of working longer hours” than local residents who already have families. Another principal in Oakland noted: “While I’d rather hire a teacher who grew up here, who still lives here, I know that I

can get more hours out of the younger teacher, even though she'll only be here for two years. But I can count on her to stay 'til 9 pm. The other teacher has to leave when school ends because she has children of her own."

The preference for a predominantly young White teacher pool is rarely stated so clearly, but instead often expressed in side comments. One colleague, for example, has been asked repeatedly by White district administrators, in reference to programs that specifically recruit educators of color, "do you think White people can't teach urban children?" (R. Rogers-Ard, personal communication, May, 2011). In addition to White educators feeling slighted by a focus on educators of color, many administrators question the need to recruit people of color. One district administrator, a woman of color, revealed: "we'd like to have teachers of color—sure! But what [this district] really needs are quality teachers." Distinguishing "teachers of color" from "quality teachers" reflects an underlying assumption that hiring teachers of color would somehow decrease the quality of teachers. In that same conversation, one of TTO's administrators was asked to "reframe" the way TTO "messed" the need for teachers of color; she was told that [the district doesn't] want to "send a message that we aren't looking for quality" (R. Rogers-Ard, personal communication, May, 2011). This conversation suggests higher expectations for teachers of color than for White educators, particularly with regards to teaching students of color (Ladson-Billings, 2005), despite evidence that suggests African American teachers may be more effective with African American students (Dee, 2004; Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Obidah, Buenavista, Gildersleeve, Kim, & Marsh, 2007).

The authors argue that although all educators may learn to teach urban students effectively, children of color also need to see and learn from educators of color who know the local context, and who define effectiveness with an awareness of the racism urban children live. Such awareness is particularly important in urban schools and districts in which only half of the African American student population graduates from high school. Students leave for a variety of reasons, but teacher effectiveness is formally measured by standardized test performance, not a range of academic indicators, and not whether or not children want to go to school. Limited definitions of teacher effectiveness fail to address dropout rates, relevance of education to student life, and overall purpose of education in urban schools.

Thus, although the ways in which teacher quality and teacher effectiveness are defined become structural barriers to local educators of color, the authors argue that definitions that expand effectiveness and quality to include student and family perspective, language, racism, sexism, classism, culturally responsive approaches, and a broadened array of academic achievement

should frame district recruitment and retention programs. Indeed, urban educator preparation programs have intentionally used (and/or developed) such broadened definitions. After presenting two such programs, this article argues that expanded definitions, informed by critical race theory, can directly shape teacher practice through integrated evaluation models.

Previous Efforts: Historical Foundation

Michele Foster argued that in the aftermath of desegregation's impact on African American teachers, and "to offset the growing racial imbalance in urban student populations and the White teachers who taught them, numerous programs were being developed and launched to recruit more Black teachers into the profession" (p. 49). This was particularly important given growing demand for Black educators in the South, which had already been high prior to desegregation (Fairclough, 2007). Race conscious efforts were often central to local teacher preparation strategies at African American training colleges (often called "normal schools"), which specifically intended to develop generations of Black educators who were committed to development of local Black communities (Fairclough, 2007; Walker, 2001; Watkins, 2001).

Although HBCUs have been affected by state and federal teacher preparation regulations, such colleges and universities still recruit and prepare thousands of African American teachers each year, in part due to their historical legacy and continued commitment to African American educators (Fairclough, 2007; Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). In areas without access to HBCUs, local educators and activists have developed pipeline programs to ensure the development of local teachers within predominantly White educational structures. The Portland Teachers Program (PTP), in predominantly White Oregon, for example, has direct ties to local community advocates of color, and was specifically created to ensure that local educators of color have access to teaching in their own communities. In 20 years, the PTP has developed hundreds of educators of color committed to social justice and equity, with augmented support to ensure development of culturally responsive skills (D. Cochrane, personal communication, May, 2011). Similar such programs exist in Chicago, New Jersey, and across the U.S. (Hill & Gillette, 2005; Mada & Schultz, 2009).

Previous Efforts: Oakland Partnership Program

The Oakland Partnership Program (OPP) was designed to recruit and retain racially diverse teachers in the 1980s and 1990s. The directors, both local

educators with ties to Oakland's communities of color, worked with the district to place program participants into teaching positions, relying upon intern credentials that enabled participants to teach full time while being concurrently enrolled in teacher credential programs (F. Ellis, personal communication, November, 2010). The OPP's flexibility allowed local residents access into the teaching profession; many participants had families and could not support themselves through the required year of volunteer student teaching.

The program recruited locally, specifically seeking adults who had served in roles as educators, but not formally as teachers, including paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, afterschool providers, and faith leaders. Many of these adults required additional academic support because they had gone to local schools, which did not adequately prepare them to pass the required standardized tests. Thus, the program directors introduced a personalized test-preparation system, where educators spent nights and weekends in libraries, coffee shops and in the directors' homes studying both content and test-taking strategies (F. Ellis, personal communication, November, 2010). The OPP's theory of action was to recruit educators with an already demonstrated commitment to the local community and there was an explicit expectation of learning culturally responsive approaches.

This program was made possible by a responsive school board, a supportive community, and the beginning of the alternative certification movement. The OPP was credited for Oakland's then relatively large proportion of teachers of color; over the duration of the program, approximately 300 diverse teachers were placed in Oakland schools (ARC, 1999). Many of the OPP teachers are still in the classroom and many have received local and national awards. Others have gone on to leadership positions, such as principals, district leaders, teacher's union leadership, and community-based roles, thereby continuing local leadership of community schools.

DiShawn provides an example of a typical Partnership educator. DiShawn grew up in an urban context, and after graduating with a psychology degree and a minor in ethnic studies, moved to Oakland and began working at a group home with severely emotionally disturbed Black boys. Because of the paltry pay, DiShawn augmented her salary with retail jobs. After working multiple jobs, and at the suggestion of her mother, DiShawn took the CBEST, and began substitute teaching in nearby Alameda. On her first placement during summer school in Oakland, the principal, impressed by her command of student attention, approached DiShawn and asked her to join the staff full time. DiShawn immediately enrolled in the OPP: "Oakland was the only district that allowed folks to be on Intern credential, and I couldn't afford to not work full time."

DiShawn taught at that school for 10 years, leaving only when the school was reconstituted into a charter; in short, she left when the school was taken over by White leadership that immediately instituted a test-preparation regimen. DiShawn went to another nearby elementary school, and began her preparation to become a school leader. She applied to a principal certificate program, which told her she “probably shouldn’t enroll while she was pregnant.” Several years later, she applied again and was told she was “too solution oriented” and was not “theoretical enough.” Frustrated by the mixed messages and clear sexism, DiShawn found a program that reflected her commitment to culturally responsive schooling, completed her master’s degree, and was recently hired as an elementary school principal in a nearby district, after having a solid presence in the same neighborhood for 16 years.

The Next Wave: Teach Tomorrow in Oakland

The State of California took over the Oakland School District in 2003, in a politically motivated move that was justified by continual trends of overspending and budget failures (Epstein, 2006). The locally elected school board no longer had formal authority and teacher diversity was deprioritized; under state receivership, the OPP was quickly disbanded. To address growing teacher vacancies at the beginning of each school year, which had resulted largely from low pay and terrible school conditions (Corcoran, 1988), the state administrator developed relationships with national recruiting partners. But because national recruiting partners recruited temporary teachers who planned to leave, a revolving door of teachers was created, which led to the perpetual need for new teachers. The Whitening of Oakland’s teaching force was thus reinforced by state practice. Presently, 92% of Oakland Unified School District students are Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, and African American, whereas 56% of the teachers are White (Ed-Data, 2011). Many schools in Oakland’s predominantly Latino or African American neighborhoods have just one Latino or African American teacher; some have none.

To address the context of barriers associated with becoming an urban teacher, Oakland Mayor Ronald V. Dellums convened an Effective Teachers for Oakland Taskforce to provide recommendations to diversify the teacher workforce. Teach Tomorrow in Oakland was developed out of this community taskforce to ensure local, culturally responsive educators were hired and supported. TTO had a community charge: to recruit a diverse, permanent teaching force for Oakland schools by finding undergraduates, recent graduates, and career changers who will become effective educators, particularly in the Latino, African American and Asian communities. Charged with “growing its own”

teaching force, TTO develops and supports middle and high school education academies, follows graduating seniors through undergraduate work, and supports multiple pathways into Oakland classrooms. The entire framework is geared toward nurturing local Oakland residents to become culturally responsive teachers with a solid foundation in academics and community.

TTO formed alliances with a range of stakeholders to address the many identified barriers to placing teachers of color. A steering committee was formed, which included the Mayor's Education Director and the chair of the education department at a partner university. The partnership with the Mayor's office provided political feasibility to make small demands of the school district. The steering committee quickly recognized the need for additional outside-the-district funding, and a collaborative team ultimately secured federal grants to recruit and retain local, diverse, permanent teachers committed to Oakland schools for at least five years.

Critical Race Theory at the Core

With the help of the steering committee, which included critical race theory scholars as well as practitioners, TTO developed foundational philosophies to guide program activities, evaluation processes, and accountability both within the district and local Oakland communities. This guiding framework was based on an integrated operational definition of critical race theory provided by Solorzano and Yosso (2002) and Ladson-Billings (1999). TTO thus has four central principles: (a) racism is standard operating procedure for schools and society; (b) addressing structural racism begins by developing local educators of color; (c) the development of educator, student, and community voice must frame the purpose of urban schools and definitions of effective teaching, and (d) successful programs designed to prepare and retain local educators of color must be vigilant about hostile takeover and cooptation by White interests while maintaining cross-sector collaborations. These principles not only shape program efforts to nurture educators of color who model culturally responsive approaches by engaging urban students in inclusive processes, but also remind the steering committee of the collective purpose of reflecting critical race theory and multicultural education scholarship.

The first principle is often cited as the core critical race theory tenant: Racism is a normal, everyday reality for people of color (Delgado, 1995). As Tatum (1997) clarifies, "racism is like smog in the air. Sometimes it is so thick it is visible, other times it is less apparent, but always, day in and day out, we are breathing it in" (p. 6). Urban communities like Oakland are dynamically impacted by racism in overwhelming ways; TTO highlights the

lack of hiring opportunities for local communities of color as an employment issue for adults and an educational issue for students. Oakland's students are underprepared, do not have access to sufficient social services, and live within a context of violence, poverty, and parent underemployment. Rather than approaches that teach adults about communities they are unfamiliar with (Bales & Saffold, 2011; Bell, 2002; Hill & Gillette, 2005), TTO's recruits adults with demonstrated awareness of and previous experience working with urban youth prior to the interview process. TTO also provides teacher training on how urban issues shape student capacity to engage in school, and prepares teachers to tap into families and communities to help students navigate such barriers.

Ladson-Billings (1999) argues that critical race theory "strategy becomes one of unmasking and exposing racism in its various permutations" (p. 12). While identifying racism as the key to educational research and policy circles, practical programs must move beyond identification to address the "various permutations" of racism. TTO's second principle frames the development of local educators of color, who in turn become long-term employed community leaders. TTO's recognition of racism means that prospective teachers must be nurtured and those preparing local educators of color must be cognizant that local adults likely attended under-resourced schools and may have been taught by temporary teachers themselves. Additional preparation of academic skill sets may be required to help potential applicants become ready; TTO has a pipeline that spans several years and includes educators who have been academically underprepared (particularly in math and science). Local residents in the pipeline are offered support services, career counseling, academic and test preparation, as well as potential part-time jobs as afterschool providers (through placement with city and nonprofit employment partners). Throughout this pipeline, efforts are made to strengthen partnerships with providers of color; in short, preference for tutors, mentors, coaches, and afterschool providers of color reinforces a systemic commitment to develop all areas of educational support while providing potential teachers with access to a support network of professional educators of color. This is based on the notion that "those who understand a system, by virtue of having lived in the system and learned to deconstruct that system, (insiders) are in the best position to use their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to improve that system" (Hill & Gillette, 2005, p. 44).

TTO's third guiding principle sees the development of educator, student, and community voice as the role of urban schooling. In recognition of the historical purpose of U.S. schools as silencing communities of color, TTO works toward a vision of schools as vibrant, community-centered, and

community-led. Ladson-Billings (1999) clarifies how teachers of color have long since been “left out of the dialogue about how best to educate children of color” (p. 16). TTO aims to empower educators of color to lead the conversation around urban education because, “without authentic voices of people of color (as teachers, parents, administrators, students, and community members) it is doubtful that we can say or know anything useful about education in their communities” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 58). Part of the role of TTO, then, above and beyond teacher development and support, is to nurture the voice of urban educators. TTO’s educators of color are encouraged and provided forums to present their work, share their insight, and express their perspectives within district, community, and national conference venues, as a way to address the barriers to (and silences of) urban educators of color shaping urban schooling (Epstein, 2006; Lewis, 2006; Loder, 2005; Stanford, 2001).

Such a commitment to developing voice requires expanding the definition of teacher effectiveness within schools to include culturally responsive approaches that are critical to local hiring measures. There are ongoing efforts to expand definitions of quality teaching to include multiple measures of teacher effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Obidah et al. (2007), clarify that, “. . . it is critical that present methods of measuring teacher ability and content knowledge be reconsidered and restructured to ensure that such measures are not culturally biased and actually serve the purpose of measuring ability” (p. 49). TTO frames teacher effectiveness to include multiple measures of content knowledge, capacity to plan, develop, and implement culturally responsive curriculum, and ability to work well with urban communities and parents. Through developing and integrating a 360° model of evaluation, TTO centers a collaborative process to nurture each teacher within a context of community need, student experience, academic outcomes, and coaching models integrated with school/district norms and university preparation programs. This 360° model is presented in the final section of this article.

TTO’s fourth guiding principle is a commitment to remain vigilant about hostile takeover and cooptation by White interests. Critical race theorists argue that programs and policies that benefit urban communities of color ultimately will only be accepted and validated when such efforts reinforce White interests (Bell, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1999). Marc, the previously mentioned attorney, argued that “intentional barriers continue White control over urban schools” because, to become a teacher, one has to “excel through these White universities and colleges to become a teacher.” According to critical race theory (and Marc), efforts that challenge White control over urban schools will be resisted, and programs that place teachers of color that *do not challenge* the inequality of urban schools might actually be elevated

by district or state policy; hence national recruitment partnerships that do not threaten the status quo are prioritized over programs that recruit and retain local educators of color (who might alter the face of a local teaching force).

TTO's model of collaboration assumes that to resist White efforts to control urban schools, local multiracial coalitions must reenvision schools as communities. TTO developed an advocacy board specifically to maintain pressure on the district and partner universities to focus on recruiting and retaining local teachers of color. The advocacy board includes a range of partners, including faculty from three local universities, City of Oakland representatives, and numerous community-based organizations that focus on youth and/or parent engagement. "Diversity-focused" efforts and programs are often framed for the benefit of the institutions that host such efforts, and such programs often only exist, like the OPP and TTO, through the advocacy efforts of a small population. Even in the face of these efforts, the TTO Program Director (an educator of color) is constantly battling district officials who want to dismantle the program in an effort to coopt TTO's best practices. Having a team of well-placed colleagues to advocate from multiple perspectives limits the capacity of any one entity (the district, a college of education, or a school) from shutting down program efforts.

360° Model: Developing Culturally Responsive Urban Educators

The 360° model specifically aims to document teacher effectiveness along criteria that matter to local urban communities as a way of demonstrating the varied impact local educators of color can have on students and their families. Prior to placement within the classroom, TTO candidates undergo a rigorous screening process, panel interviews, and demonstrate culturally responsive lessons to urban youth. The hiring process involves faculty from several local universities, district and school personnel, education-focused community-based partners and present OUSD teachers. After selection into the program, candidates enroll in an intern credential program at one of several partner universities, and are provided summer intensives, augmented professional development lessons, a cohort of urban-focused peers, and classroom-based coaches of color who have previously taught in Oakland schools.

To evaluate teacher effectiveness, TTO implemented several stages of a 360° model designed to address the limitations of both teacher preparation programs and district-offered professional development. The model includes multiple stakeholders to mitigate the dominance of the status quo, ensures continual critique of educator approaches and outcomes, and promotes

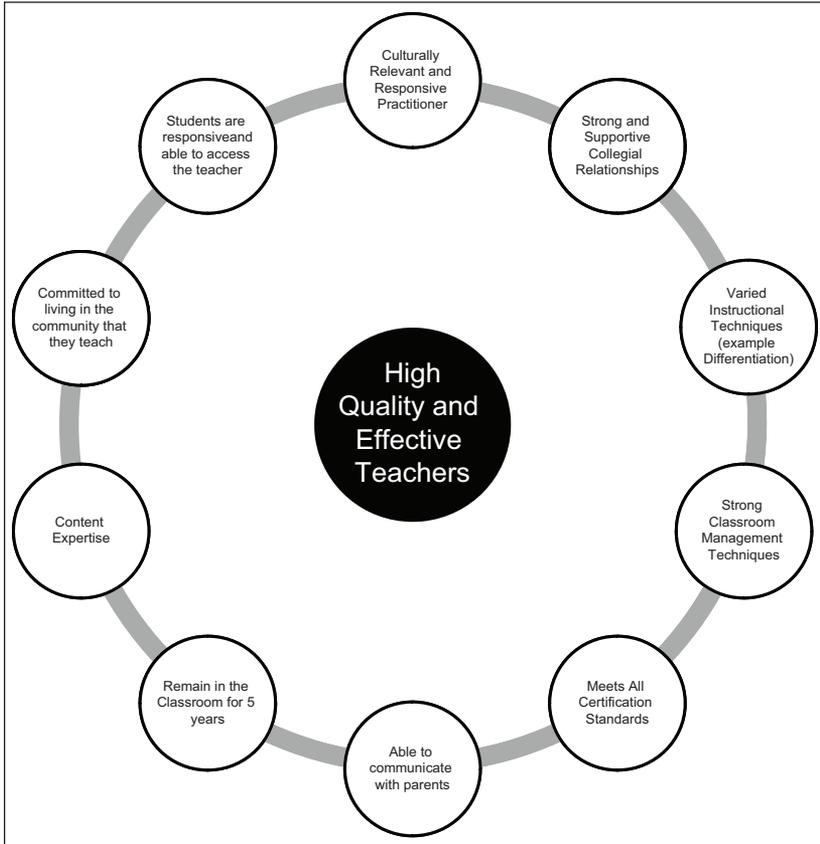


Figure 2.

individual and collective effectiveness based on the experiences of those structurally excluded from urban education (including families, community organizations, students, and educators). The 360° model is TTO's tool through which a broadened definition of teacher effectiveness is used to guide the development and evaluation of local urban teachers. This integrated model of teacher effectiveness aligns support mechanisms to community values and student growth by ensuring a range of participation in the evaluation process (See Figure 2).

Benchmarks are set by teachers who rate perceptions of their facility in implementing the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. Each

teacher is then observed and videotaped to guide follow-up coaching; the observation team includes professional educators, coaches, university faculty, and urban youth who attend local district schools. Observation data are centrally compiled, allowing TTO to align the sometimes-conflicting coaching teachers receive from the school district, university partners, and site-based instructional leaders. In addition to school-based data, parents and families assess teacher communication styles, whereas students assess perceptions about caring and engagement in the classroom. Multiple data entry points are then entered into an online tool that coaches and other stakeholders use to directly inform teacher practice. This information is accessible to TTO staff, who tailor support mechanisms based on student academic outcomes, parent and family experiences, university and district supervisor input, principal and peer teacher evaluations, and the teacher's own self-perceptions of needs. The 360° model thus provides a comprehensive, dynamic tool to develop concrete teacher skills, not only from within the classroom, but from the perspective of the urban families and children being served. The evaluation process provides a collage for each teacher and allows for identification of larger trends in each teacher cohort, thereby further augmenting support mechanisms and providing a feedback loop on the effectiveness of teacher educators.² In this way, the needs of the entire community are taken into consideration and ultimately inform the ways in which local teachers are developed.

TTO's 360° evaluation model is a systematic and ongoing process of inquiry for investigating, understanding, and improving effectiveness of TTO activities and future programming. Accordingly, TTO uses a framework that accomplishes the aims of: (a) documenting and refining TTO's logic model, (b) measuring incremental service and performance outcomes that are aligned to (and account for) TTO's logic model, service delivery capacity, and the environmental context in which the program operates; and (c) assessing the performance and perception outcome data compiled from program participants.

TTO's data collection strategies blend survey, observation, focus group, and document review into the operation of service activities whether they are linked to strategic planning, professional development, presentations, fundraising, or accountability reporting. In addition, evaluation efforts are inclusive and involve a variety of TTO stakeholders. TTO uses participatory and rapid response evaluation methodologies intended to aide development and management decisions as well as monitor the reliability of data. Each of the evaluation models emphasize collaboration, consensus building, joint development of assessment tools, transparency in relation to data collection and analysis, and routine, empowered, and informed use of data to improve

service delivery. This evaluation cycle is flexible, sustainable, and infused into TTO's normal operations.

Conclusion

Although many extol the virtues of a diverse teacher workforce, few policy-makers have been willing to trumpet transformative educational practices, much less acknowledge the barriers that limit educators of color from becoming teachers. A healthy society would not deprive school children of the wisdom of the adults from their own community. TTO, resting upon the shoulders of previous efforts, is a collaborative response to the charge put forth by Jacqueline Jordan Irvine when she said, "My hope is that teacher educators will be motivated to implement, design, and evaluate teacher education programs that address the needs of children whom the schools have failed" (as quoted in Ladson-Billings, 2005, p. 74).

Yet TTO is only one such program. The authors argue that although much can be learned from such efforts, systemic reform in urban education is required to transform the purpose of schooling for students of color. This article identified a number of research-based strategies to implement community-centered educator preparation programs. Critical race theory provides an ideological framework as well as guiding principles, yet policy makers, school districts, and colleges of education must allow local educators the flexibility to respond to local community needs. Through developing advocacy boards, through key partnerships with employment, city officials, community advocates, and educators, and through defining effective teaching within a context of urban needs, programs that focus on placing and retaining urban teachers of color can successfully reclaim local control of urban schools.

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Notes

1. The term 'urban' is used in this paper to refer to both geography (cities) and the resulting racial diversity of cities (which, due to segregation, has been predominantly African American, Latino, and other communities of color).

2. Ongoing research is documenting the impact of the 360° model on teacher development, practice, and student outcomes.

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