Critical Questions in Education

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Summer 2013
Eric C. Sheffield, Founding Editor
Jessica A. Heybach, Associate Editor

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** Cover design by Jessica A. Heybach

** Our thanks to the cadre of scholars who serve as reviewers without whose services the journal could not exist.

Critical Questions In Education: Volume 4, Issue 3

The Academy for Educational Studies
Missouri State University
Springfield, Missouri

June 15, 2013

Colleagues and Friends of the Academy:

Welcome to Volume 4, Issue 3 of *CQIE*; I think you will find this issue provides some meaty food for thought. Before I get to an overview, I want to update you on a couple of exciting journal matters.

First of all, regular readers of the journal will notice some substantial changes to the look, the format, and the overall layout of this issue and the previous special theme issue, *In Defense of Foundations*. I think you will find that the new look, and journal site, has much more of a print journal feel.

Secondly, relatedly, and most importantly, the credit for these changes goes to my new editing partner, Dr. Jessica A. Heybach of Aurora (Illinois) University. Jess worked diligently behind the scenes of our first special theme issue and as we finished that project several concerns—good concerns—came to mind. The first, how could we make the journal more visually attractive? Well, as you can see by these last two issues, Jess solved that—she completely redesigned the cover; we added a print journal like page about the journal and have made the entire issue downloadable in a pdf format. The second concern that came to mind was what might happen if the special theme issue put *CQIE* on the proverbial peer reviewed journal map? How could I continue to keep up with my editing duties? Well, that success has happened: we have more submissions at this time this year than we had for the entire 2012 publishing cycle! This success led me to invite Dr. Heybach to serve as Associate Editor. She (thankfully) accepted! Welcome aboard Jess…I hope you don't come to regret your decision.

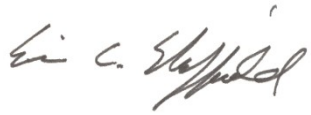
Before getting to the meat of this issue, a reminder that the annual Academy Conference is just around the corner; Steve is once again putting together a great program. The Critical Questions 2013 Conference will take place in October in beautiful San Antonio, Texas. The deadline for proposals is only a few weeks away—get yours in and we look forward to an interesting few days at the old Menger Hotel down by the Alamo.

And with that news out of the way, onto *Volume 4, Issue 3*. The first essay, by Jean Ann Foley of Northern Arizona University, is an invitation to examine what she describes as "Places of Belonging" as the means to "Awaken a Zone of Complacency." Foley explains how she utilizes artistic self reflection in her teacher education courses—artistic self reflection that helps awaken her students to the passion and joys of teaching. Eileen Kaiser follows that in reporting on a study she conducted on "Contextualized Support" that teachers need when utilizing a writer's workshop pedagogy in urban settings.

Following Kaiser, Beth Hurst and Cathy J. Pearman provide a comprehensive overview of reading instruction strategies for teachers who do not teach reading. Our final essay, by Vicki Van Tuyle and John W. Hunt, ponders the question, will the new state mandated Illinois Principal Preparation programs make schools better? The print portion of this issue ends with a review of a new book: *Democratic Transformations: Eight Conflicts in the Negotiation of American Identity* by Kerry T. Burch. Dr. Burch's book is reviewed by Matthew W. Mercer of Missouri State University. We also have our mostly-regular video essay—an open forum on the question of contemporary educational reform featuring Walter Feinberg, David Hough, Steven Kleinsmith, and Norm Ritter that can be accessed by following the link provided.

In closing, I want to extend my gratitude to our peer reviewers: without their thankless work, this project would simply and quickly die on the vine. And, once again, my thanks to Jessica A. Heybach for your previous behind the scenes help, and in advance of all the work to come.

PAX,



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Places of Belonging: Awakening a Zone of Complacency

Jean Ann Foley, Northern Arizona University

Every child born into the world should be looked upon by society as so much raw material to be manufactured. Its quality is to be tested. It is the business of society, as an intelligent economist, to make the best of it.

Lester Frank Ward, *Education,* c. 1872.

Introduction

Although education has seen trends of progressive ideologies that promote student and teacher empowerment (Ayers, 2011; Lyons, Catallozzi, & Benson, 1998; Spring, 2008), the dominant educational discourse mirrors a business model of efficiency expressed by the social economist Lester Frank Ward (1872). Evidence of contemporary education replicating an industrialized manufacturing society can be seen in the recent Race to the Top (2009) incentives, No Child Left Behind (2002) requirements, teacher abilities tightly linked to standardized test scores (Nichols & Berliner, 2007), and courses in the arts and humanities dropped from the curriculum (Slouka, 2008). I argue that these practices can hobble teachers and anesthetize students, in particular teacher candidates who sit in the *zone of complacency*. This is a zone that acts as an impervious field against questions, uncertainty, and risk.

Curriculum and pedagogy that are tightly tied to predetermined products, such as standardized test scores and scripted lesson plans, separate aesthetics from learning and entrap students and teachers within a discourse of sterilized neutrality. In my courses, I use art to challenge the factory model of learning and invite the dispassionate learner to link their understanding to their significance in the world and relationship to others.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest a path that might help reframe curriculum to include personal context and in so doing pierce the zone of complacency. I share my *Places of Belonging* assignment not as a solution to the complex problems in education, but as an offering to call into question the ideologies that emphasize a factory model view of education where student and teacher achievement is measured as a static product (Nichols & Berliner, 2007). My goal is to place emphasis on the human being as teacher and learner.

I begin with my background as an educator and then describe my account of experiencing student examples of *Places of Belonging*. Literature is reviewed throughout the paper and the narrative takes a central position. Following the student examples, I detail the particulars for the assignment including objectives and outcomes. I then discuss the use of art as a tool to integrate the dualism of modern culture, which seeks to separate the aesthetic from the world of ordinary experience (Dewey, 1934). In conclusion, I make an appeal to communities of education to interrupt ideology that casts students as "…raw material to be manufactured" (Ward, 1872, p. 132).

Background

When I began my career as an educator 35 years ago, democracy, empowerment, social justice, and freedom called me to the teaching profession. I fully believed that the purpose of education was to enhance human dignity for all human beings. Greene (1988) captured an essential intention for education that is still part of my educational mission:

> It is through and by means of education that…individuals can be provoked to reach beyond themselves in their intersubjective space. It is through and by means of education that they may become empowered to think about what they are doing, to become mindful, to share meanings, to conceptualize, to make varied sense of their lived worlds (p. 12).

Such a space requires an invitation within a safe environment to articulate multiple perspectives and experiences or realities. This aim for education cannot be fulfilled through a linear perspective that requires one answer reduced to a bubble on an answer sheet.

I teach education courses to students from all content areas (i.e., science, English, history, art, etc.) in their junior and senior years in college. They are interested in becoming teachers in secondary schools. As I look upon the faces of the teacher candidates in my courses each semester, I am convinced that the banking system of education (Frerie, 1970) of teachers depositing information to students as if they were empty vessels is alive and well and thriving on our college campuses. A dominant discourse for teacher preparation that I encounter is one of "tell me how." This desire to only focus on how to teach is represented by recipes for teaching and fits within an efficiency model for education that comes prepackaged.

If we buy into a business model for teaching and learning that is focused on creating consumers and an educational system that is bent on transmitting knowledge, we are culpable in reinforcing a zone of complacency. It appears that our students have been detached from their roots, their curiosity, and their humanity. They are spectators to their own education and are prime targets for complying with fear based educational policies that leverage test scores against job security.

Student Examples

In each of my teacher preparation courses, I devoted the first 5 minutes of class to *Places of Belonging*. This assignment required students to use the arts to communicate to their peers what is their place of belonging. The concept builds off of symbolic narratives that focus on "understanding human experience. Symbols do not represent lived experience, but rather they interpret experience" (Hendry, 2010, p. 76). It was an occasion to honor what makes each of us unique and similar at the same time. Each member of the learning community (which included me as well as the students) was provided the time, space, and challenge to reacquaint and reunite with the contextual experiences of our lives that remind us of who we are.

In my descriptions below, I offer my interpretation of three student examples of their *Places of Belonging*. These narratives were taken from three different mornings in my Methods for Secondary Teachers course and illustrate a discourse that forefronts personal experience.

> ***Claire****—The classroom was quiet. Twenty-five college juniors and seniors sat with vague anticipation as they waited for their classmate's presentation to begin. All eyes*

were on Claire, the student in the front of the classroom, who was laying out artwork, photographs, and other artifacts that represented parts of her life she chose to share with her classmates. She carefully set these items on three tables that formed a rough circle with a small opening like a channel that faced the front of the room. She invited us into the circle to observe the exhibit silently as she narrated a bit about herself. She requested that we stay within the circle as she walked around it.

We learned from her narrative that her position outside of the circle was a familiar detachment from what she identified as most important to her. She explained that this distance from her inner core was something she would like to diminish and be able to integrate with how she reveals herself through daily activity in the world. The 5-minute presentation ended with Claire singing, in an untrained voice, one verse from "Somewhere Over the Rainbow."

***Eugenia**—Eugenia was a Navajo student in a predominately Anglo class. She typically wore contemporary clothing with her long black hair pulled back, low, and held with a rubber band. Today, Eugenia's hair was loose with a shine that reflected the deep hue of the feathers that were tucked behind her ear and curved to the base of her neck. Her long skirt, pleated white blouse, and brown suede moccasins communicated simplicity, beauty, and strength.*

Eugenia delicately placed feathers, photographs, and books on a table in front of the classroom while Native American flute music filled the environment with a faint drum keeping a solid heartbeat. She stood at the front of the classroom. She waited for focus, silence, and respect.

As a hush fell and the attention was locked, she began to read in a strong and reverent voice her original poetry about growing up on the Navajo reservation. She talked about the land and how it might appear barren to an outsider but to her and her family this land represented their roots:

From the midst of the brazen land
Comes a withering smile,
Her smile that accepts
This hostile, barren land.

—Eugenia Sloan, "My Grandmother's Land"

Eugenia smiled gingerly as she collected her things and returned to her seat while the students paused from the reading and then heartily applauded. I sensed a connection between her grandmother's accepting smile and the classroom landscape.

***John**—On this day, there was no music; there were no personal objects. A tall blond athlete on a basketball scholarship stood at the front of the class. He seemed a bit uncomfortable in his lean lanky body wearing baggy shorts and an orange T-shirt. He griped a well-worn spiral notebook that looked as if it had traveled far in a hip pocket or backpack zippered pouch. The paper crinkled loudly as he opened the book and gently turned to a particular page. He disclosed to us that he was a poet and that most people don't know this. John told us that he wanted to share with us the first poem he ever wrote. It*

happened right after a friend of his died in his arms following a drive by shooting near his high school. John talked about choices in his life and then read poems that invited us to understand his experiences vicariously through words.

The language was raw; the cadence was pulsating; his countenance was innocent. He was telling the truth.

The presentations stood alone as an offering to the community of learners as passage for knowing one another as we prepared to learn about relational teaching. There was little or no discussion following these pieces. There were a few questions to the presenter; there was a verbal thank you, and usually applause as acknowledgment and validation.

Places of Belonging Assignment

These examples shared three features; (a) each used art in some form to communicate, (b) each presentation was condensed to 5 minutes, and (c) each illustrated a place of belonging that is important to the presenter. They described connective tissue that colored a context for who the students are and where they come from. The objectives of the assignment included:

- To find connections between self and our ethnicity, culture, and/or gender.
- To explore personal history and experiential background.
- To investigate values and beliefs.
- To create symbolic artifacts or imaginative performance that communicates the essence of who you are.

Claire explained how she has insulated herself from what she identified as her core and how she longs to incorporate what she holds to be meaningful into how she shows up in the world. Eugenia demonstrated a connection with the layers of home place, her beginnings, and her ancestors. John shared the unprocessed fibers of the belongings he carried in his back pocket. These *Places of Belonging* presentations called forward initial stages of understanding and provided an opportunity to publicly acknowledge our beginnings as we related our personal place to our present continuation of being.

The assignment was an effort to begin the process to reunite ourselves with our culture, our reality, and our passion and then enter into a relational bond by sharing this individual knowing with the classroom community. Although these students come from many different content areas, we used some sort of art including poetry, narrative, dance, music, drama and visual arts (photography, drawing, painting, sketches, sculpture, film) to communicate our places of belonging. The outcomes for the project included:

- A receptive community of learners where diverse ideas can be shared and re-vised within an environment of safety and respect.
- Recognition and validation of diverse inner cores.
- Personal grounding as well as contextual grounding for the community of learners.
- Relationality with others.

The outcomes for the assignment were not about objectifying or isolating each student; rather, the assignment was an attempt to unify students with a sense of place and relation. Noddings (2002) explained, "The self is a relation. It is constructed in encounters with other selves and objects and events in the world" (p. 116). Through sharing the presentations, the assignment was an invitation to relate to a pluralistic way of knowing. To identify and share your place of belonging required clarity and conviction. The assignment disrupted complacency by encouraging each student to take a stand on how and where they belong. The classroom became a collective of realities. These realities we shared were not externally constructed but originated from within and emanated outward.

Learning should tap into our streams of experience that move beyond the singular self to include circumstantial and dynamic factors composed of historical and cultural context. Information that is related to our place is embedded in our lives. It is who we are and what we value. Dei (2002) talked about spiritual knowing and transformative learning when he said "education should be able to resist oppression and domination by strengthening the individual self and the collective souls to deal with the continued reproduction of colonial and recolonial relations in the academy" (p. 121). The increasing call for standardization in education is a type of colonization that isolates us from our culture and creates visionless individuals focused on adapting to the dominant.

The incentive for this assignment was to stimulate engaged learning and provoke an educational experience that was relational and meaningful. It was to provide an interpersonal and intrapersonal link for each student and the class as we struggled "to affirm diverse knowledges" (Dei, 2002, p. 122). It was critical to know ourselves before we began to open to another's point of view or reality. An understanding of self was woven into our course work through allowing and validating the personal effects on curriculum. Teacher candidates can evoke their places of belonging in lessons and class environments while encouraging their students to do the same. The cycle of expanding the zone of complacency can be broken.

Use of Art

Dewey (1934) described art as experience "because experience is the fulfillment of an organism in its struggles and achievements in a world of things, it is art in germ" (p. 19). Art sets a tone of safe vulnerability; collective communion through senses and emotion. Art was an important piece of the assignment and was used as an aesthetic to "temporarily restore the significance, value and integrity of sensuality and the emotional power of things, in contrast to the usual indifference of our habitual and obstructed routine of practical living" (Dissanayake, 1984, p. 37). Art lifted us out of the mundane and transformed us to a process of living. It provided a sharing that was both communal and personal.

The assignment used art as a tool to create a learning environment that encouraged and prompted students to self-analyze and discover connections between themselves and the realities of others. Massey (1997) talked about art as a way of knowing. He described the arts,

> as a powerful symbol system, like that of number and language; they are multisensory and engage multiple forms of intelligence; they employ distinctive, nonlinear forms of thinking and problem solving; and they create some of our most powerful forms of symbolic communication (p. 1).

As the rationale for using art as a major component for the assignment, I drew upon Dissanayake's (1988) ethological view of art as "a behavior that has evolved because it was necessary" (p. 34). Her approach to art is "ethological or bioevolutionary" which combined studies of human evolution and the development of culture. Dissanayke (1992) suggested that humans have a biological need for engaging in and responding to the arts. "Recognizing art as a biological need can give us not only a way to better understand art, but by understanding art as a natural part of us, we can understand ourselves to be part of nature" (p. 134). From an ethological view, we as human beings need art for survival. She related art to human nature and speculated that "art is intrinsic to our specieshood—to our humanity…" (p. 225). I used art as a channel to call students home with the prospect to reunite subjective, indigenous knowing with social consciousness. Art delivered us from the zone of complacency by engaging our senses and emotions.

Conclusion

The perspective that embraces a business model for education is committed to efficiency and answers without context. A perspective unencumbered by context breeds a simplistic certainty that offers clarity for sorting schools, teachers, and students into good and bad. I have begun to see the current trends of education as an external authority that reduces the value of personal knowing to a non descript, neutral, and standardized education experience. Learning can rarely be described as an exercise in compliance and contentment.

There are many ways to integrate the complexity of our humanity through curriculum. The *Places of Belonging* is one example. The importance is not in the activity, assignment, method, or strategy. The power and urgency springs from recognizing the need to critique the current educational trends that separate aesthetics from learning and committing ourselves to connecting to education that can transform. Using art in our classrooms to convey places of belonging can move us beyond a zone of complacency to a community with limitless possibilities.

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Jean Ann Foley, PhD., is an Associate Professor at Northern Arizona University in the College of Education. Her research interests are in Professional Development Schools, social justice, and critical pedagogy. With an MFA in acting and directing, she consistently seeks opportunities to infuse her teaching with expressions of art.

Contextualized Support for Urban Teachers Implementing Writer's Workshop

Eileen Kaiser, Northeastern Illinois University

Gladwell (2000) describes context as "the tipping point" for leveraging change. This paper explores how differentiated learning opportunities situated in the school context supported changes in practice for urban elementary teachers during the implementation of Writer's Workshop (Calkins, 2003 & 2006). The teachers in this study were offered an integrated network of support and professional growth options tailored to meet evolving learning needs over time in order to ensure high fidelity implementation in their classrooms. These learning opportunities included demonstration lessons and follow up debriefs, targeted learning walks, and working with a peer partner, university partner and literacy coaches. The key levers for change examined in this paper were dedicating time for teachers to engage in critical dialogue with colleagues, and offering multiple contexts for teachers to lead these conversations.

Review of Related Literature

Passman (2002) reported on the importance of reflective dialogue to support building learning communities within schools. Richardson and Anders (2005) also highlight the importance of critical dialogue among teachers to support reflection and changes in practice. Research on teacher learning has pointed to the benefits of teachers participating in classroom observations and receiving follow-up support with close attention to tailoring learning opportunities to the classroom context. The insights from related research offered guidelines for creating multi-layered support for the teachers in this study (Stallings, Needels, & Stayrock, 1980; Frey & Kelly, 2002). Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birn and Yoon (2001) suggested that both structural and core features be considered in designing professional development. Structural aspects include types of learning opportunities and the duration and degree of collective participation by all teachers. Core features were described as the content focus, opportunities for active engaged learning and coherence of professional development activities. Elmore (2004) and Fullan (2006) highlighted the importance of "learning in context." These streams of research were influential in shaping the diverse and continuous learning opportunities situated in the school context and sharply focused around implementation of Writer's Workshop.

Fullan (1998) argued that "systematic professional development, learning schools and school districts, and success for all students are closely intertwined" (p. 3). The literature on effective professional development has advocated both for teachers identifying the content they need to learn, and embedding learning opportunities in the school setting (Fullan, 2006; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2010; Little, 1998). The principles and conditions for effective teacher learning have been identified in the research, yet these evidence-based powerful practices take time to find their way into implementation in schools. The study reported in this paper illustrates the complex relationship between the conditions for learning shaped and influenced by the

school context and culture, and the responsiveness and participation of teachers when offered a voice and in shaping and leading the conversations.

Methods

Site and Participants

The site was an urban elementary school (K-6) serving 91.9% Hispanic students with 35.2% of those students designated as Limited English Proficient, and 97.2 % classified as low-income. The participants were 10 teachers, two literacy coaches and a university partner. The school leaders included the principal and the assistant principal and they attended all school wide sessions, Instructional Leadership meetings, and Targeted Learning Walks. The teachers included one first grade teacher, two second grade teachers, two fourth grade teachers, one fifth grade teacher and two sixth grade teachers. One second grade and one fourth grade teacher taught in bilingual classrooms. The ten teachers had teaching experience ranging from 2 to 20 years. There are 35 teachers in the school with three to four sections per grade level. All of the teachers in the school were invited to participate in professional learning activities and did engage in self-selected opportunities. All teachers participated in the school wide professional development sessions and grade-level meetings. The ten teachers in this study represented a range of grade levels, experience, and teaching philosophies, and agreed to allow their classrooms and practice to be closely examined throughout the year.

Menu of Professional Development Experiences

The teachers included in were offered a diverse menu of professional learning experiences, leadership opportunities and support throughout the year. The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) was formed at the beginning of the year for the purpose of examining student and teacher data on writing and planning professional learning activities during weekly meetings. Teacher data included observations from the Targeted Learning Walks, teacher surveys and grade-level notes. Student data included the analysis and compilation of scores using the 6+1 Traits throughout the year. The ILT used this information to plan professional development activities including selection of professional readings. At the beginning of the year, the literacy coaches took a strong leadership role during these conversations, but gradually released responsibility for planning and facilitation to the teachers. Instructional Leadership Team participants served as a conduit of information and feedback from teachers at all grade-levels allowing a forum for input from the entire teaching community. Targeted Learning Walks offered participants an opportunity to visit classrooms and observe a designated facet of Writer's Workshop. The areas of focus included classroom environment to support Writer's Workshop, the mini-lesson, and conferencing. In addition, demonstration lessons were scheduled and teachers at primary and intermediate levels offered to teach a mini-lesson, show how they used the classroom environment to support writers, or conference with students. Following these lessons, the observers met with the demonstration teacher to engage in dialogue about the lesson. Teachers were able to work with a peer partner to plan lessons and visit each other's classrooms. Teachers in the study also facilitated the conversation and learning about Writer's Workshop during grade-level meetings. All teachers in the school received equipment and supplies to furnish a writing center and create a meeting

area in their classrooms. Figure 1 provides a description of professional development, leadership opportunities and other types of support provided for teachers throughout the year.

Figure 1: Menu of Learning Opportunities and Support

Event	Description	Administrative Support Provided
ILT Meetings	Weekly meetings focused on planning on-going professional development for staff based on surveys and feedback from grade-level meetings	Participants released from supervision duty
Demonstration Lessons/Debrief	Demonstration Lessons/Debrief sessions offered four times during the year focused on aspects of Writer's Workshop	Release time provided with substitutes covering classes
Grade-Level Meetings	Weekly grade-level meetings facilitated by ILT member focused on professional reading, feedback from teachers on challenges/opportunities offered by Writer's Workshop	Copies of professional books and articles
Peer Partners	Teachers were paired up to observe each other's classes and visit to make note of classroom environment to support Writer's Workshop	Literacy coaches covered classes for visiting teachers
Targeted Learning Walks	ILT members participated in visits to all classrooms four times during the year to observe lessons, classroom environment and look at student work	Release time with substitutes covering classes
Staff Development Sessions	Five meetings throughout the year focused on using 6+1 Traits to analyze student writing and set priorities for mini-lessons. Meetings were collaboratively led by ILT members, Literacy Coaches and the university partner	Copies of professional reading
Coaching and Mentoring	Literacy coaches and university partner worked in classrooms to model, scaffold new practices, and provide feedback for teachers	University partner supported by targeted funds
Furniture, Supplies and Texts for Writing Center	All teachers received storage units, easels, chart paper, texts and supplies to furnish the writing center	PTO funds and school budget

Research Design and Questions

Grounded theory examined through a constructivist lens was the research design for the study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This design allowed for a fine-grained exploration of teacher learning in action as it unfolded throughout the year. Three research questions were explored:

1. What types of support did teachers need in order to implement Writer's Workshop with high fidelity?
2. What types of support did teachers find most effective to support the implementation of Writer's Workshop?
3. What types of changes were evident in teachers' practices and student writing?

Data Sources and Analysis

Rich descriptive data on teacher change were collected including notes from demonstration and debrief sessions, ILT meeting notes, field notes from classroom observations, follow-up conferences, grade-level meetings, and Targeted Learning Walks. Other data sources included student writing, teacher surveys, and notes from planning sessions with the Literacy Coaches. At the end of the year, teachers were given a survey using a five point Likert Scale to measure and quantify how highly they valued the differentiated learning opportunities and support provided for implementing Writer's Workshop. Fidelity of implementation was determined through examining classroom environment, anchor charts, notes from classroom observations and student work.

The data were coded and analyzed for evidence of high fidelity implementation of Writer's Workshop, for emerging themes that offered insight into the changes in teacher practice throughout the year, and for the types of support that teachers reported as essential to changes in their practice. The following data codes were used to categorize the events:

A = Administrative Support: Time, Resources, Maintaining Focus;
DL = Demonstration Lesson: Lesson followed by debrief;
TLO = Teacher Participation in Leadership Opportunities: Instructional Leadership Team; Targeted Learning Walks; Delivering/Facilitating Professional Development Sessions;
CM = Coaching/Mentoring;
SDS = Staff Development Sessions.

Changes in teachers' practice were coded as **CP (**changes in practice) and these changes were documented during participation during classroom observations, demonstration lessons and Targeted Learning Walks. Student writing was also examined for evidence of change over the course of the study and samples were coded as **CSW (**changes in student writing) when changes in quantity or quality of writing were noted.

Findings

The findings in this study were organized around three key themes that emerged from the data: the role of administrative support; the importance of time to engage in critical dialogue;

and, changes evident in teacher practice and student writing. The themes will be discussed and explored in detail and the findings will be summarized to show the frequency of participation in learning opportunities and impact on teachers' practices and student writing.

Administrative Support

The analysis of the survey and field notes indicated that teachers valued the school administrators' commitment to the vision of high fidelity implementation of Writer's Workshop. This finding was consistent across various data sources including surveys, anecdotal conversations, and notes from Instructional Leadership meetings and grade-level meetings. Dedicated time for teachers to meet in a variety of contexts and the fact that teachers facilitated the conversations about topics of importance to them was noted as both important and novel in their teaching careers. The teachers were provided with release time to attend demonstration lessons and debrief sessions following the lesson, and had opportunities to participate in Targeted Learning Walks while a substitute covered classes. One teacher stated

> I really felt so much support from the principal and assistant principal. In the past, most new initiatives were introduced during school wide professional development days and then we were supposed to go back to our classrooms and figure out how to do something new. At most, we had one or two training sessions on new ideas…But this time, it is dif ferent because we are learning about teaching writing by seeing it and reading about it. The best is having time to talk to other teachers about it and figure it out…

At the beginning of the year, only two of the ten teachers in this study had created a designated meeting area for Writer's Workshop. In the other classrooms, paper, writing tools and dictionaries were placed randomly around the room. Calkins (2006) suggests that it is far easier for teachers to engage students when they are consistently clustered close together for a short mini-lesson providing explicit instruction on the skills and tools writers need. Initially, none of the teachers had a designated Writing Center. Data from the Targeted Learning Walks showed that students lacked the necessary tools and a dedicated writing center for revising, editing and publishing their work. The teachers were struggling to build community and fully engage students during the mini-lessons as students sat at their desks. The administration provided the funds to equip each teacher in the school with a rug for a meeting area, storage units, texts, easels and supplies for their Writing Center. By March, all ten teachers had a designated meeting area and a well-provisioned Writing Center. Calkins (2006) highlights the importance of "teachers and school leaders" being intentional in creating a supportive environment by providing the tools for writers to do their important work. The literacy coaches set up a model writing center in a primary and intermediate classroom and videotaped the writing centers including footage displaying the organization and tools in the writing center, students using the writing center and they conducted a brief interview with the teacher discussing the challenges and potential of managing the writing center. This video was shared with the entire staff at a mid-year staff development session. One of the second grade teachers in this study commented after viewing the video "Now I see how the writing center should look and I know how to set it up." The Literacy Coaches also visited classrooms to help teachers set up and manage the Writing Centers.

Data from the teacher surveys, feedback from the Instructional Leadership Team, and informal conversations with the ten teachers confirmed that they recognized how important these resources were for their classrooms and appreciated guidance from the Literacy Coaches in setting up the writing center. At the end of the year, the teachers were asked to rate the level of each aspect of administrative support on a five point Likert Scale with one describing the aspect as " very evident" to five describing it as "not evident." Figure 2 presents a summary of the responses from the ten participants in the study.

Figure 2: Teacher Ratings of Administrative Support

Key Themes	1= Very Evident	2=Evident	3= Undecid-ed	4= Little Evidence	5= No Evidence
Focus	n= 3	n=6	n=1		
Protected Time	n=7	n=3			
Resources	n=10				

The results of this survey illustrate how highly the ten teachers valued the commitment of administrative support for protected time to learn with colleagues, consistency of focus on improving their practice in teaching writing using the Writing Workshop approach, and allocation of resources necessary for implementation. Survey results show administrative focus, allocation of time for learning and allocation of resources were consistently rated by teachers as "very evident" to "evident" with only one teacher reporting ambivalence on this aspect. These findings illustrate a high level of teacher recognition of administrative support for implementing Writer's Workshop.

Time to Engage in Critical Dialogue

Teachers in this study had the opportunity to attend four demonstration lessons followed by a debriefing on the lesson. During the debrief session, the observers reported what they saw during the lesson and asked questions as the demonstration teacher listened. The demonstration teacher responded to the questions and helped the observers think through how they might try it out in their own classrooms. Teachers freely exchanged ideas, asked questions, and in some cases asked for more support from the literacy coaches. Teachers also engaged in dialogue during the Instructional Leadership Team meetings, Targeted Learning Walks, grade-level meetings and staff development sessions. Lieberman and Mace (2010) argued that research has enriched our understanding of the importance of the social aspect of teacher learning that by necessity makes practice "a public contribution to be shared, used, shaped and understood by the community" (P.80). The data around teacher interactions point to the importance of the opportunity for teachers to engage in purposeful conversations with colleagues in the debriefing sessions following the demonstration lessons. Wenger (1998) identified learning, meaning and

identity as the three processes that shape the work and nature of learning communities. These three processes entailed learning in the context of practice, being intentional in learning, and learning in collaboration with others in order to transform teaching practices. All ten teachers noted that in previous years as new practices were adopted, limited opportunities were provided to observe and learn from colleagues and to engage in critical dialogue about teaching practices. Following a demonstration lesson, two teachers commented on the value of watching another teacher deliver a mini-lesson on how to choose a topic and how this validated her own teaching. One teacher went on to comment on the importance of time for discussion following observation of a lesson to meet with the demonstration teacher in order to tease out the planning, classroom culture and context for the lesson. She pointed out "It was like holding a mirror up on my own teaching…" These interactions clarified the rationale for the teacher's decisions in planning and delivering the lesson. Six of the ten teachers requested follow-up coaching or a visit to observe another teacher after experimenting with new practices. As teachers adopted the vocabulary and practices of Writer's Workshop, the data show that seven of the ten teachers asked questions and requested help more frequently in the second half of the year either from the university partner or the Literacy Coaches. The dedication of time for Literacy Coaches to help teachers in improving classroom practice through modeling and scaffolding has been documented as crucial to transforming teaching (Jorissen, Salazar, Morrison, & Foster, 2008).

One area of struggle teachers noted was delivery of a tightly focused mini-lesson. Six of the teachers requested more professional development on modeling strategies during the mini-lesson. Demonstration lessons and professional readings were offered focusing on how to teach a sharply focused mini-lesson on a specific aspect of writing. The professional readings on mini-lessons were discussed during the Instructional Leadership Team meetings and grade-level meetings. The teachers worked with peer partners to plan and critique each other's mini-lessons. Literacy coaches also provided modeling and assistance in planning mini-lessons.

Evidence of Changes in Teacher Practice and Student Writing

Demonstration lessons, Targeted Learning Walks, ILT meetings and school wide professional development sessions provided abundant data around evidence of changes in practice. As noted in the first section, all ten teachers transformed their classroom environments to include a meeting area and a Writing Center. The structure of instruction changed when the meeting area was used to deliver mini-lessons. Teachers posted anchor charts in the meeting area offering guidelines for students in choosing a topic, examples of good leads, and ideas for adding juicy details to incorporate into their writing. The Writing Center provided tools for editing and publishing, such as a thesaurus, multiple dictionaries and books with tips for effective writers as well as various types of paper and markers and other writing implements.

Changes in Student Writing

The data also showed changes in quality and quantity of student writing over time. These changes were noted by teachers, literacy coaches, and the university partner as teachers gathered with students' writing folders and analyzed the writing using the 6 + 1 Traits Rubric. During Targeted Learning Walks it was noted that over the course of the year there were more diverse genres of writing posted and "celebrated" in classrooms as well as increased student engagement during mini-lessons and writing time. Student engagement was one of the focus areas for a

Targeted Learning Walk towards the end of the year and this finding was evident in the classrooms of the ten teachers included in this study, and particularly notable in the 4th, 5th and 6th grades. Examination of student writing also revealed that in every classroom included in this study, teachers allowed students to write in their dominant language. This issue was discussed early in the year and the teachers all agreed to encourage students to write in their dominant language. The 4th, 5th and 6th grade teachers found that some students often used both languages and used "Spanglish" in their writing.

During the final staff development session for the year, teachers reflected on student growth and examined evidence from student writing samples from the beginning to the end of the year. These samples included a beginning, middle and end of year sample on an open-ended prompt, and writing from students' writing folders. The target set in the School Improvement Plan was to increase the quantity of student writing by 75%. Teachers compared writing samples at the beginning, middle and end of the year using features of the 6+1 Trait Rubric (Culham, 2003) and concluded that the goal was met, and even exceeded in the two sixth grade classrooms. Second, fourth and sixth grade teachers identified improvement in ideas, organization and word choice. These three areas had been selected for instructional focus through mini-lessons and conferencing. Very little qualitative change was noted in sentence fluency and conventions. As teachers in the fourth and sixth grade classrooms analyzed writer's notebooks, they found that students produced longer drafts and engaged in some revision around leads, word choice and conclusions as the year progressed. The two teachers in bilingual classrooms noted that when students wrote in their dominant language, they produced more complex and authentic pieces of writing. Several teachers observed that allowing students to choose their own topics seemed to create a space for them to explore issues and challenges in their own lives such as being newcomers to the United States and the educational system, or being raised by aunts, uncles or grandparents when their parents returned to their country of origin.

Discussion

This study highlighted the importance of both the structural and core features in creating a supportive context for teachers as they experimented with changes in teaching practices (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birn & Yoon, 2001). The findings suggest that a shared focus on specific goals including creating a classroom environment that supported writers, teaching a tightly focused mini-lesson, increasing student engagement and the quantity and quality of writing influenced changes in teachers' practices. Administrative dedication of time and resources were noted by teachers as evident and essential in supporting their growth and learning as they implemented Writer's Workshop.

These findings also point to the importance of protected time for teachers to collaborate and engage in critical dialogue with colleagues throughout the school year in a variety of contexts. Providing teachers with time to learn has been recognized as imperative in the research, yet schools still struggle with carving out consistent opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development and critical dialogue to reflect on this learning because they lack the capacity to support these endeavors (Fullan, 2005; Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000). The school portrayed in this study leveraged school and district funds to support the teachers by providing necessary resources and time to learn from experts and each other.

Fullan (2005) argued that change is supported by "the amount of purposeful interaction between and among individuals" (Fullan, 2005, p.17). The data in this study pointed to the key

roles of school leaders,literacy coaches and the university partner in creating and nurturing supportive contexts for teacher collaboration and conversations on a variety of levels. This often meant taking a firm stance to protect this time when competing priorities surfaced and an Instructional Leadership Meeting or Demonstration Lesson could have been cancelled. One important finding is that spaces were created for the voices of the teachers as they shared their concerns and insights and these conversations were facilitated by fellow teachers instead of school-based, or external "experts." These interactions with colleagues following a demonstration lesson, discussing a professional reading, or during an Instructional Leadership meeting served to create a shared language and set of norms for focusing the work of implementing Writer's Workshop.

Implications and Limitations

This study offers insights into some of the conditions that may support and empower teachers as they adopt new ways of teaching and learning. As teachers in an urban school serving a high-poverty population, they faced many challenges including teaching students English and the academic skills and dispositions necessary to support their success. Flexible options for learning allowed teachers to choose opportunities that fit their learning style and schedules and tailor this learning to the needs of the population they served. Teachers also released control of the curriculum by allowing students to choose their own topics, write in their dominant language, and write about the challenges and accomplishments in their lives.

Participation in the Instructional Leadership Team, Demonstration Lessons,Targeted Learning Walks, peer partners, and coaching created an interplay of learning and leadership opportunities for these teachers as they experimented with new practices. The teachers in this study had opportunities to teach others about new practices through grade-level meetings, staff development sessions, and demonstration lessons. Lieberman & Pointer Mace (2010) refer to these opportunities as "making knowledge public, to critique it, and to build on it and pass it on (p. 81).

The role of administrative dedication and participation, resourcefulness and sustained focus needs to be underscored in this study because both human capital and extensive financial resources were dedicated to allocate time to allow teachers to learn together throughout the first year of implementation.

Teacher leaders and administrators can draw lessons from this study as they plan to implement new curricula and explore effective approaches for building capacity to support changes in teachers' practices. The findings here suggest that teachers need to be involved in shaping a focus that is collectively defined and robustly supported by the school leaders. The teachers played a pivotal role in designing and delivering a diverse menu of learning opportunities situated in the school context and in the process, capacity for sustaining change was embedded in the culture of the school and the teachers became a community of learners drawing upon each other's knowledge and skills. Empowering the teachers to be their own change agents created an authentic culture of teaching, learning and decision-making (Little, 1998; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2010). The lessons from this study offer promise for fostering changes in the ways teachers learn and lead together and transform their practice.

The limitations of the study reside in the limited sample size in terms of number of teachers, and the fact that this is only one school and the findings may not be applicable to other schools and teachers. During the implementation of Writer's Workshop, there were optimal,

almost utopian, conditions for fostering change including making funds available to purchase all of the necessary equipment and supplies and using professional development funds to pay for substitutes and release time for teachers from other responsibilities. Other schools may struggle with trying to support teacher learning in the face of shrinking budgets and the need to place a top priority on performance on high-stakes tests. Schools tend to position resources to support the initiatives that will yield the highest return on the investment. This leaves us with questions: What do we value in terms of learning for students? Do curricular changes such as Writer's Workshop yield far greater long-term benefits to students because writing is really manifesting thinking and learning? These are the questions that linger in the mind of this researcher.

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Eileen Kaiser is an Assistant Professor at Northeastern Illinois University. Her research interests include literacy education, preservice teacher training, and building community and sustainability of professional learning for teachers.

"Teach Reading? But I'm not a Reading Teacher!"

Beth Hurst & Cathy J. Pearman, Missouri State University

A critical issue in education today is that many middle and high school students are not able to read on grade level (Alvermann & Rush, 2004; Biancarosa & Snow, 2010; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Houge, Geier, & Peyton, 2008). In an effort to deal with the problem, many schools encourage all teachers, regardless of their subject area, to emphasize reading in their classes, because as Rasinski, Padak, McKeon, Wilfong, Friedauer, and Heim (2005) state, "if our goal is to improve student performance across content areas, then improvements in general reading abilities must be a goal" (p. 26). This is often met with a great deal of resistance because not only have most teachers not been trained in the reading process, but they also do not feel it is their responsibility to teach reading. Heller and Greenleaf (2007) state, "At the secondary level, the responsibility for teaching reading and writing often seems to belong to no one in particular" (p. 15). However, Shanahan (2012) makes the point that the "idea of disciplinary literacy is that students not only have to learn the essential content of a field, but how reading and writing are used in that field" (para. 3). He contends teachers in any field can help students read text critically in the same way professionals in the fields would read the text, instead of merely helping students learn what they need for a test.

The purpose of this article is to provide a structure that any teacher, regardless of content area and training in reading instruction, can use to help students hone the literacy skills necessary to explore, develop, and expand content area knowledge. The suggested structure is based on a review of the literature that states: students need to (a) ***listen to others read aloud*** (Miller, 2002; Rasinski, 2003; Routman, 2003); (b) ***read often*** (Allington, 2006; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Cunningham, 2009), (c) ***practice using reading strategies*** (Beers, 2003; National Reading Panel, 2000), (d) ***interact with texts and each other*** (Routman, 2003, 2005: Vacca, Vacca, & Mraz, 2011), and (e) ***develop a word consciousness*** (Harmon, Wood, & Medina, 2009; Scott & Nagy, 2004).

Students Need to Listen to Others Read Aloud

Hearing others read aloud is an excellent way to stimulate students' interest in reading (Miller, 2002; Rasinski, 2003; Routman, 2003). Trelease (1989), an expert on reading aloud and author of the famed book *The Read-Aloud Handbook* (2006), contends that reading aloud to students is "the most effective advertisement for the pleasures of reading" (p. 201). Vacca et al. (2011) contend, "After hearing a book read aloud, students are much more likely to pick up books on this topic, and related ones, on their own" (p. 383). Additional benefits are that hearing reading aloud helps students develop their reading comprehension and vocabulary (Harris & Sipay, 1990; Routman, 1996). For example, students who struggle to read a content area textbook use a great deal of their cognitive energy on decoding the text with little energy left to devote to comprehension. Hearing the text read aloud relieves these students of the burden of

decoding and allows them to focus on comprehension. Vocabulary acquisition is also enhanced by hearing text read aloud. As the text is being read aloud, the teacher can use think alouds to model the use of context clues to determine the meaning of words, insert synonyms and antonyms, give definitions, or make connections for students to information they have learned previously (Tompkins, 2009).

One way teachers can set up a structure for students to hear others read aloud is to have a signup sheet (some teachers have a calendar posted on the wall) where each student in the class signs up for a day to read aloud to the class (Hurst, Scales, Frecks, & Lewis, 2011). Then each class period begins with one student reading aloud. Students can read any text, within certain perimeters, such as an excerpt from a book or magazine article, song lyrics, jokes, famous quotes, or something from the Internet. According to Hurst et al. (2011), the sign up to read activity gives "students a reason to read; provides opportunities for oral reading, rereading, practice reading, choice in reading selections; and helps students develop prosody" (p. 439).

Before reading, students tell why they chose that particular text. Hurst et al. (2011) believe that by students explaining their "personal connections to the reading, the class has opportunities to become interested in a wide range of reading materials, and it fosters a sense of community as students come to better understand their classmates' interests, likes, and dislikes" (p. 439).

Not only does the class listening to the reading benefit, but the students who are reading aloud are helped too because before they read, they are encouraged to practice reading the text until they can read it fluently. Rasinski (2006) states, "If I were to give an oral reading performance of a passage, I would most certainly have an incentive to practice, rehearse, or engage in repeated readings" (p. 705). It is this kind of practice that helps students become better readers.

Students Need to Read Often

Allington (2006) and Cunningham (2009) believe students need to read volumes (read a lot) and contend this has an impact on student achievement in reading. Just as with any skills such as in music or sports, if there is little practice, there is little improvement. Therefore, to become better readers, students must read often (Anderson et al., 1985; Atwell, 2007). Trelease (1989) contends "Reading is an accrued skill: the more you do it, the better you get at it; the better you get at it, the more you like it; the more you like it, the more you do it" (p. 202).

Perhaps one reason there are so many middle and high school students who read below grade level is because reading instruction typically stops at sixth grade, and once that instruction stops, the reading seems to as well. Heller and Greenleaf (2007) found that in most secondary schools there is very little reading, very little required reading of primary or real world materials, and very little time devoted to discussing what was read. This may be why students do not increase their reading levels as they increase their grade levels. According to Atwell (2007), "The major predictor of academic success is the amount of time that a student spends reading" (p. 107). Anderson et al. (1985) stated, "Those who read a lot show larger gains on reading achievement tests" (p. 26). They further contend that "becoming a skilled reader is a matter of continuous practice, development, and refinement" (p. 18). Therefore, one of the most important components of developing reading skills is time for students to read daily.

Motivating students to read daily can be enhanced by teacher awareness of adolescent sociocultural perspectives. When activating prior knowledge on a topic, cultural diversity must be taken into account. Depending on student experiences, origin, and home beliefs, students may

not share the same viewpoint as their teacher and fellow students and may choose to read materials outside the required reading list. Linguistic diversity may also be a factor if students choose to read in their home language or read materials where their home dialect is featured. A multiliteracy approach is often needed (Moje & Speyer, 2008). Along with the content of the materials the students read, an additional concern is that students are reading material on their ability and interest level. According to Roe (2001), "Students need to read texts that fit their instructional reading level and their interest" (p. 13). School librarians can help teachers find appropriate supplemental texts in their subject area that are low level, high interest for these students that also address their unique sociocultural needs.

Students Need to Practice Reading Strategies

Beers (2003) defines *reading strategies* as the processes we use to read. The National Reading Panel (2000) states that students need practice using reading strategies. Routman (2003) contends teachers need to "teach strategies students need to know to process and understand text" (p. 43). Even though all teachers are not trained in reading instruction, they are most likely fairly good readers since they have college degrees, so they can share with their students what they do when they read a difficult text. They can help students learn what to do to improve their reading by using what Davey (1983) called *thinking aloud*. Teachers can think aloud what they do when they come to a word they do not know or a difficult passage as they read with their students.

Some strategies these teachers most likely use regularly themselves that help students become better readers include: ***rereading*** (Beers, 2003; Samuels, 1979), ***use of context clues*** (Bean, Readence, & Baldwin, 2011; Vacca et al., 2011), ***predicting*** (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Wolsey & Fisher, 2009), ***visualizing*** (Gambrell & Jawitz, 1993; Moje & Speyer, 2008), and ***making connections*** (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000; Keene & Zimmerman, 2007).

Rereading. According to Beers (2003), rereading is "probably the number one strategy independent readers use when something stumps them in a text. It's probably the last strategy dependent readers use" (p. 113). She believes this is because independent readers have learned that rereading can help them figure out text they did not understand the first time, while dependent readers have not yet figured that out. Teacher prompts may be as simple as saying something such as: *That sentence was not clear. Let's read it again*.

Context clues. Vacca et al. (2011) contend the use of context clues is "one of the most useful strategies at the command of proficient readers" (p. 266). Bean et al. (2011) contend there are three types of context clues: definition, description, and contrast. Definition is when the word is defined in the sentence as in this sentence: *Context clues, or using other words in the sentence to figure out an unknown word, are an effective reading strategy*. Description is when the word is described in the sentence as in this sentence: *She knew that because of Starbucks' ubiquitous presence that she would find one on the next corner.* Contrast is when the sentence provides the opposite meaning as in this sentence: *The teacher knew the student was not being deceitful because he had always told the truth in the past*. Teachers can explain these differences to students as they occur during reading.

Predicting. Predicting is when students are encouraged to use their prior knowledge and experiences to guess what might happen in the text. This also provides motivation for them to want to read on to see if they were right in their guesses. It is a way to get students to think about what they are reading. Fisher, Frey, and Ross (2009) contend that predicting "also facilitates use

of text structure as students learn that headings, subheadings, and questions imbedded in the text are useful means of anticipating what might occur next" (p. 339).

Visualizing. Teaching students to visualize what they are reading can help them improve their comprehension of the text (Gambrell & Jawitz, 1993; Moje & Speyer, 2008). We think in images, not words. For example, if students were asked to visualize a basketball, they would most likely think of an orange ball with lines circling it. They might also envision a basketball player, court, or hoop. Rarely would someone envision the letters b-a-s-k-e-t-b-a-l-l. Teachers can encourage students to visualize as they read by asking questions such as, *What do you see in your mind as you read?* It is helpful to have students share with others what they visualized. This can help those students who do not have prior knowledge on the subject create their own visualizations.

Making connections. Comprehension is enhanced when students activate their prior knowledge by "connecting the known to the new" (Wilson, 1983, p. 382). Keene and Zimmerman (2007) recommend students make connections between text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world. Teachers can do this by asking students to make these different types of connections to what they are reading, and when they share these connections with the class, it helps all of the students build on their prior knowledge and comprehension.

Students Need to Interact with Texts and Each Other

Because we are social creatures, it is important to the learning process for students to learn from and with each other (Bromley, 2008; Dewey, 1963; Kasten, 1997; Smith, 1998; Vacca et al., 2011; Wilkinson et al., 2010). Routman (2005) contends "students learn more when they are able to talk to one another and be actively involved" (p. 207). Routman (2003) further contends that "talking with others about what we read increases our understanding. Collaborative talk is a powerful way to make meaning" (p. 126). Almasi and Gambrell (1997) believe "participation in peer discussions improves students' ability to monitor their understanding of text, to verbalize their thoughts, to consider alternative perspectives, and to assume responsibility for their own learning" (p. 152). Providing daily opportunities for students to read and interact with texts and each other is an important component of any class.

It is recommended that teachers provide a wide variety of readings. These readings can be any source of material such as newspapers, magazines, the Internet, or books as long as these texts are both readable and comprehensible for students (Godt, 2008). In addition, variety encompasses not only a wide range of genres, but also includes variety in topics and in reading levels. Students will be less likely to take advantage of opportunities to read if the materials they are provided are too difficult for them to read independently or if the topics hold no interest or connection to their lives (Allington, 2006). Dunston and Gambrell (2009) contend that real world texts and interactions motivate students intrinsically to read.

The following strategies are ways teachers can encourage their students to read and interact with texts and each other. Each class period, after a student reads aloud and another student shares a word, the class will be given a text to read from the subject area currently being studied, and then teachers use a strategy such as the ones listed below to allow students to interact with the text and each other.

Anticipation Guides. Vacca et al. (2011) define anticipation guides as "a series of statements to which students must respond individually before reading the text" (p. 181). The purpose is to get students to draw their attention to what they already know about a topic and to

encourage them to want to read the text to find out if what they knew was right. Students fill out the anticipation guide before reading and discuss their answers with the class. After reading, students refer back to their responses and discuss it as a class again.

Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (Stauffer, 1969). The Directed Reading-Thinking Activity involves the teacher stopping at predetermined places throughout the text and asking students to think about the text in different ways by asking questions such as What do you think? Why do you think so? What do you think will happen next, and why? and by attempting to get the entire class in on the predicting and discussing. Students use their prior knowledge and experience to make these predictions throughout the text.

Fishbowl. The fishbowl strategy involves a small group of students sitting in a circle surrounded by a circle of the rest of the class. After all students have read the text, the group in the inside circle discusses the text while the students in the outside circle listen. After a brief discussion, the students in the inside can switch with students from the outside for a continuing of the discussion.

Found Poems (Hobgood, 1998). Found poems encourage students to pick out the most important words and ideas from the text to create a poem using exact words from the reading. As students read the text, they underline important words or phrases. Then in groups after they read, they write a poem using the words they underlined.

Guided Reading Procedure (Manzo, 1975). As an adaptation of the Guided Reading Procedure, before reading, students brainstorm what they know about the subject of the text they will be reading while the teacher makes a webbing of that information on the board. Then students read the text in groups. After reading, each group adds new information to the web and writes a summary sentence or *moral of the story* on the board. Then each group shares with the class what they added to the board to prompt discussion.

Jigsaw (Aronson, 1978). With the jigsaw strategy, the class is divided into groups. Each group is given a different text, but on the same topic or different parts of the same text. The groups read their text together and discuss the main points of the text. Then new groups are formed with one person from each of the original groups. Each person in the new group tells the main points from their reading. This allows the whole class to learn from different texts.

K-W-L (Ogle, 1986). The K-W-L strategy is where students list what they already *Know* about a topic before they read. Then they make a list of things they *Want* to know, and finally, after reading, they list what they *Learned*. Students share with the class their responses at the different levels to prompt discussion of the text.

Memory Game (Robinson & Hurst, 2007). The Memory Game is a fun way students can read and interact with factual text. Students first listen to the text being read aloud by the teacher while they read along silently. This allows the students to hear and see the text at the same time. Without looking at the text, students individually make a list of every fact they can remember. Next, students are placed in small groups where each group makes a master list of all of the facts they can remember. Once these master lists are completed, the game is played by each group providing one new fact until all facts have been given. A group is out of the game when they repeat a fact already given by another group or when they run out of facts. When a group goes out, the group members become judges in order to keep them actively involved in the game. At this point the judges may look back at the text to help answer any disputes.

ReQuest (Manzo, 1969). ReQuest stands for Reciprocal Questioning in which the students ask the teacher questions. To do this activity, the students and the teacher read the text carefully. Then students get into groups to create questions they want to ask the teacher. The

same process can be used for the groups to ask each other questions.

Oral Learning Logs (Hurst, 1999, 2005). As students read the text on their own, they look for things that interest them or draw their attention. On a piece of paper with a line drawn vertically down the center, students write on the left side what they read that interested them, and on the right side, they write their reaction/reflection or what it was that drew their attention. Then, as a whole class activity, each student shares one thing from his or her learning log with the class, which creates a class discussion with input from each student. Many students find it easier to share with the whole class when they have previously written their thoughts on paper.

Vocabulary Self-collection Strategy (Haggard, 1982). For this strategy, students in groups scan the text before reading to pick out difficult vocabulary words. Each group picks one word and writes it on the board. They read aloud to the class the sentence from the text that contains the word, and then they tell the class what the word means. Then when students read the text, they are more likely to remember the new or difficult vocabulary words.

Students Need to Develop a Word Consciousness

Scott and Nagy (2004) define word consciousness as "an interest in and awareness of words" (p. 202). They contend that developing this word consciousness "can be fun and motivating" (p. 358). Harmon et al. (2009) agree that teachers need to give "attention to raising word consciousness" (p. 357). According to Fisher et al. (2009), "vocabulary is a significant predictor of reading comprehension," and that "increasing vocabulary improves comprehension" (p. 333).

One simple way teachers can help students develop word consciousness in their classes can be done with a signup sheet like the signup sheet for reading aloud—students sign up for a day to present one new word to the class. On the students' turn to present a word, they (a) write the word on the board, (b) tell why they chose that word, (c) tell the class the definition(s) of the word, (d) use the word in a sentence, and (e) ask for a volunteer from the class to use the word in a sentence. Some students put a great deal of thought into the word they want to share with the class. Wherever students go to find a word they want to share, whether in a dictionary, online, through friends, or through reading, they are thinking about words—and that is the point—to get students thinking about words and their meanings. Graves (1987, 2000) believes that through playing with words and language, students will develop an interest and appreciation for words that will last a lifetime.

Pulling it Together

Regardless of content area specialty or training in literacy instruction, this daily structure is one that any teacher can use to support student learning. Five components have been suggested: students 1) take turns reading aloud, 2) read often, 3) practice reading strategies, 4) interact with texts and each other, and 5) develop a word consciousness. Table 1 provides a chart of a daily routine.

Table 1. Suggested Daily Structure

First five minutes of class: one student reads aloud to the class.	Students sign up for a day to read.
Next two-three minutes: one student introduces a word to the class.	Students sign up for a day to introduce a word to the class.
Students read a text.	Variety of ways to read: silently, whole class taking turns, in pairs, in small groups, teacher reads aloud while students read along silently.
Students interact with the text and each other.	Variety of ways to interact: anticipation guides, directed reading-thinking activity, fishbowl, found poems, guided reading procedure, jigsaw, K-W-L, memory game, ReQuest, oral learning logs, vocabulary self-collection strategy.

With this structure, students hear someone read aloud every day, and they are reading and interacting with text and each other every day to deepen and develop ownership of content. They are engaging in the often missing component in most classrooms today—reading. In order to become better readers of content texts, students have to read, and read often.

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Beth Hurst, Ph.D. is Professor of Reading Education in the Graduate Literacy Program in the Reading, Foundations, and Technology Department at Missouri State University where she teaches graduate and undergraduate reading courses for elementary, middle school, and secondary teachers.

Cathy Pearman received her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Arkansas in 2003 and is currently an Associate Professor and Department Head of Reading, Foundations, and Technology at Missouri State University. Her current research focus is on the self-efficacy of educators and teacher candidates, and she is currently working on research linking this topic with a conceptual model regarding the resiliency of people undergoing change. This interest co-exists with her long-term research agenda of exploring effects of technology on literacy skill development and comprehension.

Will New Illinois Principal Preparation Programs Fix Illinois Public Schools?

Vicki VanTuyle & John W. Hunt, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

In July, 2010 Illinois Governor Pat Quinn signed into law Senate Bill 226 requiring new and more stringent requirements for certification and endorsement of Illinois principals. This Illinois legislation followed other states in adopting widespread educational reform measures aimed at improving student achievement, connecting the responsibility for student achievement to the quality of building principals. Illinois institutions offering programs to certify or endorse Illinois principals were required to redesign programs to meet the requirements of the new law and to have new programs approved by the state. The bill charged the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) with drafting the rules by which the institutions would design their new programs. Newly approved principal preparation programs began accepting candidates in the fall of 2012.

The Path to Principal Preparation Reform in Illinois

The redesign of Illinois principal preparation programs was inspired to some degree by authors such as Levine (2005) who conducted a four-year study of the nation's school leadership programs, resulting in the report titled *Educating School Leaders*. Levine asserted No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation had placed demands on educating school leaders. He suggested NCLB increased the need for a number of new administrators to replace those expected to retire, wanting to escape the demands of the new legislation. Also, NCLB presented new legislative challenges: increased accountability, choice for parents and students, possible corrective action and restructuring, and the consequence of reduced financial resources. Levine suggested that administrators replacing the retirees needed to be a new breed of program graduates held to much higher standards of preparation assuring their capability of effectively leading schools and districts through the challenges of NCLB. Levine's study found fault with the preparation administrators had received. His conclusions directed criticism at preparation programs for producing too many administrators, too poorly trained (Levine, 2005). He recommended higher admission and graduation standards (2005). He found poor preparation related to shallow curricula, weak faculty, and limited and meager clinical experiences (2005). While NCLB had focused on student academic outcomes, Levine's report linked the preparation of school administrators and their role in school leadership to that outcome. The question had been posed: would reforming the nation's administrator preparation programs fix the nation's low student achievement levels?

The national attention generated by Levine's (2005) report led to the formation of an Illinois commission to study school leader preparation. The Commission on School Leader Preparation in Illinois Colleges and Universities (2006) examined the quality of school leadership programs and evaluated their focus on ensuring higher levels of student achievement. The Commission's 2006 report titled *School Leader Preparation: A Blueprint for Change,* recom-

mended improvements to the implementation and structure of these programs. What needed fixing in Illinois education was student achievement with more students reaching higher levels of Adequate Yearly Progress. The Commission's (2006) report maintained:

> Several national studies have shown that the quality of school leaders is directly connected to student achievement, which is why increased attention is now being placed on the excellence and structure of training provided to our school leaders. America's administrative preparation programs are under pressure to justify their current practices and programs, transform the way school leaders are prepared, or close. (p. 2)

Following the lead from Levine (2005), The Commission asserted new standards of accountability in Illinois principal preparation programs would lead to improved student achievement. The Commission (2006) found shortcomings in Illinois preparation programs similar to those Levine found in the national study: failure to recruit and admit only the best qualified and committed candidates, "outdated curriculum," and "inadequate clinical instruction" (p. 8).

In 2007 the Illinois General Assembly established the Illinois School Leader Task Force (ISLTF) (Illinois School Leader Task Force, 2008) to detail an action plan for restructuring school leadership preparation in Illinois. Action steps in the ISLTF report included developing formal partnerships between school districts and preparation programs so the best qualified candidates are mutually selected to enter programs and so mutual support is present throughout the candidate's development. The ISLTF report further proposed (a) admission standards described as highly selective focusing on many skills including the ability to analyze data leading to school improvement and academic achievement, (b) a full-time residency or internship with assessment aligned to performance in leadership roles, and (c) state support of the recommendations with increased funding to support residencies, partnerships, and supervisors. The ISLTF recommendations were submitted in February 2008, months before the fall 2008 national economic collapse, a significant blow to an economy in Illinois that was already struggling. State money to support costs related to restructuring school leadership preparation would be unlikely.

These state reports had set the stage for Illinois legislators to propose and pass, in the spring of 2010, legislation to improve principal preparation programs in Illinois. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) began working with the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) shortly after Governor Quinn signed into law Senate Bill 226, the Principal Preparation Act. Final rules were approved early in 2011. The law's purpose was "To prepare individuals *to be highly effective in leadership roles to improve teaching and learning and increase academic achievement and the development of all students"* (Public Act 096-0903, 2012). The purpose followed the assertions made by Levine (2005), The Commission (2006), and the ISLTF (2008): highly qualified administrators will lead to increased student achievement.

All principal preparation programs in Illinois wanting to continue redesigned their programs to meet new rule requirements. The rules included (a) a general program requirement of partnerships between districts and institutions, (b) internships aligned to Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) leadership competencies and monitored by trained mentors, (c) assessments aligned to SREB, to work with teachers of students with disabilities, IEPs, IFSPs, or Section 504 plans, ELL students, and gifted students, (d) coursework requirements, (e) staffing requirements, and (f) candidate selection requirements. New programs needed approval from the Illinois State Board of Education to begin accepting candidates.

Implied Fixes and the Consequences

Reducing Numbers Will Produce Highly Effective Principals

Levine's (2005) report and The Commission's (2006) report noted too many principals were being certified or degreed and not enough of them were of the quality to become the instructional leaders needed for today's schools. Levine found that programs admitted students and produced certified principals based on three enrollment persuasions: to become a principal, to move on the salary schedule, or to become a researcher. He maintained that a program of coursework easily accomplished in order for teachers to gain hours to move on a salary schedule is not rigorous enough to prepare high-quality principals (Levine, 2005). The Commission (2006) identified a "surplus of certified individuals in Illinois (ISBE, 2004; 2005)" (p. 17) to meet market demands for future principal positions. Recruitment and admission of anyone able to pay tuition contributed to this surplus. Levine characterized such programs as "cash cows" (Levine, 2005, p. 24) raking in substantial tuition revenues from candidates of dubious quality who skate through a slipshod program and become members of a large pool of candidates considered to become instructional leaders in schools.

One way to reduce the number of certified principals would be to reduce the number of institutions or programs certifying principals. Illinois' new rules assume that what Illinois had ignored, i.e., shutting down programs that were deemed 'cash cows' or requiring programs producing substandard principals to stiffen entry requirements or to improve program rigor, would be addressed with new program rules and new program approval. The Commission (2006) supported this monitoring failure by noting, "…another troublesome issue is the fact that the IBHE [Illinois Board of Higher Education] cannot easily close ineffective programs…[T]he board can flag them for priority review if significant improvements are needed…" (p. 27).

Perhaps Illinois intended to reduce the number of principal preparation programs as Iowa had in 2003 following statewide reform of the state's principal preparation programs. All programs were to redesign meeting new state requirements and to seek state approval. The result of the reformation was a reduction of Iowa state programs from nine to five (Hackmann & Wanat, 2007, p. 9).

Illinois law may reduce the number of approved principal preparation programs assuming one of three possibilities: (a) poor quality preparation programs would be discouraged by the new rules and not submit a program for approval, (b) poor quality programs would redesign their programs, meet rule requirements, and be approved, or (c) poor quality programs would redesign their programs, fail to meet rule requirements, and not be approved. Prior to the 2010 law, there were 32 approved principal preparation programs in Illinois. Twenty were located in Chicago and the collar county areas. The remaining twelve were located at institutions from DeKalb to Carbondale and from Quincy to Charleston. As of January 30, 2013, twenty new programs have been approved. All programs applications submitted have been approved by the Illinois Licensure Board.

Preparation programs will see fewer candidates enrolling which will result in fewer endorsed principals. As potential candidates learned that university programs were going to change, greater numbers of candidates entered programs to complete certification before the implementation of new rules. This has resulted in fewer candidates enrolling in new programs throughout the state. When program numbers are threatened, admission requirements may be difficult to uphold. Will highly-qualified candidates always be admitted when programs must

admit all that have applied to be able to keep a program going? With much smaller numbers of students will programs be more likely to ensure that highly-effective principals will result? These are questions that will be answered as the new programs evolve.

Partnerships Will Produce Highly Effective Principals

Section 1 of Illinois principal preparation program rules focused heavily on the development of partnerships between preparation programs and school districts. The importance of partnerships in furthering the quality of teacher and administrator preparation dates back to a February 1999 report adopted by the Illinois Board of Higher Education outlining a statewide strategic plan for Illinois higher education. The report titled *The Illinois Commitment: Partnerships, Opportunities, and Excellence* (1999), described the need for partnerships, specifically to support new and experienced teachers,

> To improve the preparation and continuing professional development of teachers, higher education needs to form local partnerships with schools to develop support programs for new teachers and to provide opportunities for experienced teachers to update their skills and knowledge. (p. 4).

Similarly, The Commission of School Leader Preparation in Illinois Colleges and Universities (2006) recommended principal preparation programs "implement programs that create collaborations between preparation programs and primary feeder school districts, enabling them to grow their own leadership talent pool" (p. 9). A most convincing argument for the development of university and school district partnerships was to assure that preparation program courses created linkage "between what is taught in the classroom and what occurs in the field" (Commission, 2006, p. 22). The Commission's report proposed principal preparation programs served the students of Illinois by preparing effective school leaders, but failed to serve students well if robust partnerships did not focus on school-level instructional needs rather than on principal candidate needs (p. 23). The Commission continued this assertion by recommending the Illinois Board of Higher Education (1999) revise its goal to read,

> Higher education will join elementary and secondary education to improve teaching and learning at all levels, and proactively work to improve all programs that train teachers, leaders, and auxiliary staff so that all who receive a certificate have the knowledge and skills necessary to improve student achievement (Commission, 2006, p. 12).

The principal preparation program rules followed the recommendations previously cited, requiring a formal partnership between programs and school districts. Illinois rules stated, "The program shall be jointly established by one or more institutions or not-for-profit entities and one or more public school districts or nonpublic schools" (Public Act 096-0903, 2012). This statement required public school participation and ownership in a university's principal preparation program, which is further outlined in the details of the agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU). The partners will have responsibilities and roles in the selection and assessment of candidates, the establishment of internship experiences and settings, the development and implementation of training for mentors, and the evaluation of the program and the partner-

ship. The rules also addressed non-partnering school districts "where the internship and any field experiences may occur" (Public Act 096-0903, 2012).

It is likely that preparation programs would develop formal MOUs with a few districts where their principal candidates are employed as teachers or where their candidates will most likely become principals. It may also be likely that preparation programs will partner with districts that can provide the support, resources, and time to candidates, to internships, and to program development with the university. The representation of districts in the partnership is critical and may present conflicts of interest. One responsibility and role of the partners in the partnership is in the selection and assessment of candidates. This supports the notion of reducing principal candidates by not selecting candidates to enter a program if they are not 'principal material' or if they are only interested in moving on the salary schedule. The rules are looking for candidates who are committed to being principals and who can do the job of increasing student achievement. Particular attention will need to be paid to partners weighing in on approval of their own candidates vying for admittance to a program. A portfolio providing documentation to assess the candidate's achievements, experiences, and skills in curriculum and instruction, student achievement, and assessment is prepared and submitted as part of the approval process. Again, the diversity of districts who may be partners, can present biases in the assessment of portfolios. What may be an example of acceptable practice in a portfolio from a student in one district may not be so regarded by a partner who represents another district.

Another more practical purpose of the partnership was to ensure that preparation programs are meeting the leadership needs of schools in their area. Seeking the input from principals in the field is important to providing insight into the day-to-day knowledge and skills a principal must have to be effective. School leaders and professors 'at the table' to discuss currents issues, trends, and legislation, would lead to programs with coursework and internships that better meet the developmental needs of aspiring school leaders. The program rules are specific about principal intern work with teachers of students with disabilities, teachers of ELL and ESL students, teachers of Early Childhood students, and teachers of gifted students, a one-size-fits-all throughout the preparation programs wherever they may be located. The partnership requirement does allow programs to develop coursework relative to local district needs, making the development of highly effective leaders for the area more likely.

There are questions for partnerships to consider. Are candidates from schools with fewer resources not likely to become highly effective principals? Are candidates from schools not making adequate yearly progress not likely to become highly effective principals? If schools and districts with fewer resources are not partners represented in the partnership, will candidates from districts such district not be able to compete for admission spots with candidates from districts with more resources? Will partners involved in candidate selection marginalize candidates from districts with fewer resources or opportunities overlooking these districts' urgent needs for leadership development? If a district with fewer resources or opportunities is not a formal partner, are the district's candidates fairly and equitably represented 'at the table'? These will be critical issues for partners to consider.

Qualified, Trained Mentors; Prescribed Internships Activities; and, Rigorous Assessments Will Produce Highly Effective Principals

The new principal preparation program rules required mentors supervising principal interns to meet specific professional standards, participate in training to serve as a mentor, and to

commit to provide interns the opportunity 'to lead' in a number of specific activities in their school. Only persons certified and in the role of principal in a school may serve as mentors for interns, and mentors are limited to supervising two interns. This rule poses a significant issue for large schools with one principal, several assistant principals, and more than two interns possibly from three or four different principal preparation programs wanting to complete an internship. How will a principal determine which interns to supervise? Will the principal's decision be based upon which interns would be best suited to take a position in this district, or in this building, without regard for the intern's suitability to take a position elsewhere, perhaps in another district? Is it the responsibility of the mentor principal to determine which interns should be supervised based upon his/her determination of which will become highly effective as a result of the internship experience?

The rules placed a great deal of responsibility on the mentor principal and require evidence of the mentor principal's success as a school leader. Mentors "shall have three years of successful experience as a building principal as evidenced by relevant data, including data support student growth in two of the principal's previous five years…" (Public Act 096-0903, 2012). While each preparation program may submit a plan for determining principal performance ensuring growth, the requirement may disallow principals at the helm of schools in the midst of performance turnaround from being mentors. These may be precisely the schools that could use the support of a committed intern to lead student achievement reform efforts, and this setting may be the fertile field for growing the effective administrator to meet the needs of such a school.

Internship experiences should be opportunities for interns to experience the world of principal leadership with exposure to the reality of principal day-to-day roles, but without paid, full-time internships the expectation of preparedness will always fall short of the desired goal. Illinois rules attempt to overcome the vast preparedness issue by requiring interns to complete specific activities aligned to three extensive assessment rubrics. One internship assessment rubric is included in program rules and organized around three broad assessment areas: school improvement, hiring and evaluation of employees, and schoolwide management. Each assessment area has focus areas, each with specific processes and products. Interns must "Meet the Standard" in each of the fifty competency areas. In order to "Meet" the first content requirement on this rubric, the candidate will "use(s) media in a compelling presentation format that focuses on the school's vision and mission and its connection to the work of the staff and principal to attain greater student achievement" (Public Act 096-0903, 2012). While the importance of this competency area is not argued, the value of this activity being repeated by the plausible circumstance of two interns each semester over the course of a school year is questionable. The rules, while attempting to 'cover all the bases' leave little room for schools, principals, and interns to create valuable and meaningful activities specific to their environment.

Conclusion

There is no argument that well-prepared principals are important to school leadership that results in higher student achievement. The principal preparation reform effort in Illinois that has resulted in more stringent admission requirements, partnerships between school districts and preparation programs, and rigorous internships was crafted and governed by rules intended to increase student achievement in Illinois schools. It is too soon to tell if the reform package will result in the intended outcomes. Over the next year, as the programs are implemented, there are

other factors that may affect the outcome. Illinois' budget crisis, resulting in cuts to school funding, coupled with the state's teacher pension fund crisis and the threat of increasing the retirement age, may be turning the best and brightest teachers and aspiring principals away from education as a career choice or away from a career in education in Illinois. On a more positive note, recent legislation concerning teacher evaluation has tied teacher retention to teacher performance. The new laws require principals to be trained in teacher evaluation and require teacher evaluation plans to incorporate measures of student growth. These are tools which can certainly help leverage higher student achievement in the hands of highly effective principals.

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Vicki VanTuyle is a retired superintendent of school in Illinois. Since 2010 she has been an assistant professor in Educational Leadership at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Her research interests include rural education.

John W. Hunt spent 34 years as a teacher, principal, assistant superintendent and superintendent, working in Colorado, Missouri, Washington and Illinois. He was also the director of two separate K-12 university laboratory schools. For the past eight years he has taught educational administration courses in the principal and superintendent preparation programs at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. He is currently an associate professor of educational leadership. His research interests are minority and urban education, and principal and superintendent preparation. Since joining the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville faculty, he has published 26 articles in professional journals, four book chapters, and has given 65 national and international presentations.

Democratic Transformations: Eight Conflicts in the Negotiation of American Identity
By Kerry T. Burch

New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group (2012). 195 pp., $35.00.

Reviewed by Matthew Mercer, Missouri State University

Burch issues his book as not so much a cure for America but a vital nutrient that can help America toward becoming all it can be. Without self-examination, without truly learning from the past, the mind's growth is stilted and ignorant. Through examining the fundamental belief systems that govern America's present identity and future growth, Burch urges educators to instill a sense of active democracy in tomorrow's adults.

In the prologue, he references the political scientist, Wendy Brown's, reclaiming of the words *crisis* and *critique* from the Greek etymology of the words and how she shows them to share common meanings. Burch also draws from Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educational philosopher, in taking a public rhetoric approach toward examining America's identity. He finishes setting the stage for his proposal by citing America's premier educational philosopher, John Dewey, and how Dewey recognized that, "Conflict is not only 'ineliminable' in democratic politics; it is essential for the achievement of social reform and justice."

In the first chapter, Burch examines arguably the most defining meme of the contemporary American identity, piecemeal as though it may be, *The pursuit of happiness*. He effectively dissociates that very *pursuit* from the materialistic, capitalistic, and corporate-driven self-satisfaction and reminds the reader of its civic dimension. Making note of the predatory nature of corporate influence in the schools over the past several decades, Burch laments corporations' influence in school reform and bemoans the ever-increasing presence of TV advertising in schools.

These things are important to note because they feed into the devolution of *the pursuit of happiness* from something that intended to maximize the achievement of public good into a slogan that intended to encourage everyone toward maximizing individual satisfaction and pleasure. Burch provides what he intends to be a "conceptual road map" for shifting from the consumer focus to a democratic vision of the future.

Burch briefly examines the ancient Greek and Roman idea of happiness and references Socrates' work. In *The Apology*, Socrates is put on trial for "corrupting" Athenian youth, "no doubt because he was urging them to question popular images of happiness and to take care of their souls," Burch observes. He wrests the term *idiot* from the contemporary pejorative and examines its origin: "Idiot (idios) was invented to describe those who could legally participate in the polis or political community, but instead chose to live a private existence. Idotes is defined as 'a purely private person.'"

Burch goes on to note that Thomas Jefferson's original idea for *pursuit of happiness* had inherent in it a public dimension, and he shows why Jefferson was different than John Locke who held the idea of a possessive individualism. Burch celebrates Jefferson's intent, extols the

value of being an active citizen, and observes, "This desire to care about a common good is paramount, for it works against the reduction of politics to the assertion of one's narrow self-interest."

He instills genuine concern and reason for examining the American identity in the first chapter, and closes by referring to the origins of public education, that from its very inception, it was meant to educate the citizen of his citizenship. Burch assails No Child Left Behind and its curricular bias against civic education, and goes so far as to say that "young citizens' 'unalienable right' to the 'pursuit of happiness' [in the truest sense of the phrase] is being systematically infringed."

Burch's first chapter is a call to arms. He sets up, looks back at, and redefines the nature of the phrase *pursuit of happiness* in order to help the reader understand how vital it is that a shift toward an active citizenry happen and soon. Through addressing how things are and adding the ingredient of an active citizenry, Burch helps the reader see how things could be. He says, "While some may want to cite this absence of self and civic caring as a positive example of a politically neutral education, it would be more accurate to say that it represents a tectonic shift toward the mass production of idiocy."

Throughout the rest of the book, Burch spans time from the concept of Democracy in his second chapter, "The tyranny of the majority," all the way to contemporary climates in his eighth and final chapter, "The personal is political." He examines America's racial history in the fourth chapter, "Forty acres and a mule," America's morality in his fifth chapter, "The moral equivalent of war," and takes a hard look at the culprit for feeding the idea of individualism above all else in his sixth chapter, "The business of America is business." Burch also examines the threat that militarization poses to America's democratic identity in his seventh chapter, "The military-industrial complex."

In each instance, Burch encourages the reader and, hopefully, educators in America to take a focused look in the mirror through the lens that these memes and ideas provide. When educators encourage the youth of today to examine these things carefully, to have civil conversations about different opinions, and to begin to understand what is at stake when public inactivity results in oligarchic rule, the youth are then more apt to harness their indomitable hope and potential to make the world into one where we all want to live.

Burch's writing and thinking are both wonderfully academic, and while the book itself provides the roadmap Burch set out to design, his epilogue gives a destination of sorts. Titled "Educating the *souls* of democratic folk"—a riff on W.E.B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk*—Burch asks directly, "How could we better negotiate our relation to the contradictions, paradoxes, ambiguities and ironies of our history far more honestly than we had to date?" He goes on to utilize jazz as an apropos metaphor for understanding America.

The integrated process of jazz, the unending improvisational quality of the music itself, and the rising gestalt that comes from individuals working toward a common sound are all effective in understanding the idea of America. Still developing and growing as jazz music is even today, America stands to bloom even still through understanding the strength of the component parts of our history and our identity. Burch draws from Duke Ellington's concept of jazz to speculate, "One must be one's own leader rather than being content to take cues from another, an orientation to the world which also holds true for the achievement of democratic individuality."

Like a vital nutrient missing from my diet, this book really nourished in a way I haven't experienced in most of my education classes. Burch's courageous stand against the ignorance

endorsed by the dominant curriculum is necessary and addresses what can be done toward making a better tomorrow. The way Burch is able to present the ideas is both friendly and practical, and I think it will take courageous educators to begin the march he encourages. I look forward to helping my students understand themselves and where they live more thoroughly, and I look with even greater hope to the world they will help to fix.

Matthew W. Mercer is a graduate student working toward certification to teach middle and high school English. He has an undergraduate degree in English with a focus in creative writing and poetry. Matthew believes in the transformative power of stories and looks very forward to working with students toward creating their own stories.