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# **Making the Rhetoric Real**

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**Winter 1996**

On a Thursday afternoon in April of 1992, the faculty of the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA sat squabbling in its usual fashion over its agenda of bureaucratic minutiae at its regular faculty meeting. Because our building—historic Moore Hall at the center of the campus—was undergoing seismic renovation, faculty had relocated to the 17<sup>th</sup> floor of a high rise at the busy commercial intersection of Westwood and Wilshire Boulevards. A spacious corner office, formerly occupied by a mega corporation CEO, now enhanced faculty meetings with its spectacular, sweeping view of the city. As we met that Thursday, someone noticed the first fire—a small bright spot to the south and east—and then another, and another, and another. We sat stunned as we watched our city’s tenuous social contract go up in smoke just hours after the jury delivered its not guilty verdict in the Rodney King beating trial. Then we rushed to our cars and crawled slowly through the traffic toward our homes that were mostly far from the trouble.

I will not claim that we changed dramatically after that Thursday, but some things have not been quite the same. It has not been so comfortable since then for some of us to look past our city as we focus our educational research nationally and internationally. It has not been so easy to claim that our research and teaching interests rightfully claim a larger purview than schooling in our hometown. Some of us started feeling a bit foolish as we boarded planes for Washington, New York, Chicago, and elsewhere to struggle

with issues of race, poverty, and inequality in schools. Some of us began to consider how we might bring our work closer to home.

In a very real sense, then, Center X (Where Research and Practice Intersect for Urban School Professionals) at UCLA actually began on that Thursday afternoon in April 1992. But, of course, we didn't know it then. And it wasn't until three years later in the Fall of 1995 that we welcomed our first cohort of teacher candidates who had signed on to our teacher education program expressly committed to social and educational justice for low-income children of color in urban Los Angeles.

Our discussions about what we might do in the months following the Rodney King verdict were premised on our understanding that, typically, the structures, cultures, and pedagogies practiced in schools (and rarely challenged or disrupted by university research and teaching) work to exacerbate the inequalities in the rest of our society. With seemingly neutral, sometimes even scientific, technology and language, schools compound the disadvantages of children who have less outside of school. Many with meager economic prospects, often racially diverse and bilingual and limited-English proficient students, are judged to be disabled, "not ready," lacking social capital, or, most pernicious, simply not as intelligent as their most advantaged peers. The upshot is that even though it's disappointing when children don't achieve, it's not really unexpected in urban schools. Everybody says that "all children can learn," but few really believe it. Too often, the one institution that low-income, racially diverse, bilingual and limited-English proficient and immigrant families count on for access to a better life simply helps perpetuate the cycle of discrimination, poverty, and hopelessness.

This paper skips over the three years of reading, thinking, worrying, arguing, hesitating, persuading, waiting, and hoping that led to Center X—our effort to reshape UCLA’s professional education programs in ways that could acknowledge, and perhaps even confront these conditions. Suffice it to say that we gobbled up Jim Banks, Jim Cummins, Antonia Darder, Carl Grant, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Marlin Cochran-Smith, Christie Sleeter, and Ken Zeichner to get a handle on linking teacher education, social justice, and multiculturalism. We wrestled with the ideas of Henry Giroux, bell hooks, and our own Peter McLaren about helping teacher become critical pedagogues. We sought counsel from Luis Moll, Roland Tharpe, and our own Ron Gallimore and Kris Gutierrez to better understand the implications of Vygotskyian sociocultural learning theory for diverse Los Angeles schools. We looked to Nel Noddings, our own Lynn Beck, and to the Macdonalds’ work to help us struggle with helping teacher become caring advocates for students without reducing them to dependent clients. We kept in mind my tracking work as we thought about the power of structures to shape expectations and limit opportunities. And we considered the ideas of Sol Alinsky and his intellectual/activist descendants regarding the power of person-to-person organizing. We re-read John Dewey. Suffice it to say that we wrote lots of proposals and attended lots of meetings.

What I’d like to do here is to describe what we’re actually trying to do in teacher education at UCLA to make our rhetoric about social justice and multiculturalism real.

## **Center X**

### **The Power of Many**

Center X brings together under one mission and organizational umbrella a number of programs that were formerly quite separate, and it has dramatically changed the nature of those activities. Center X is UCLA's Teacher Education Program (formerly the Teacher Education Laboratory) that grants California CLAD/BCLAD (Cross-cultural Language and Academic Development/Bilingual Cross-cultural Language and Academic Development) elementary and secondary teaching credentials and M.Ed. degrees. It is also six of the state-sponsored California Subject Matter Projects, the UCLA Principals' Center, and other professional development projects for practicing educators. It is also the Graduate School of Education's Ed.D. program in Education Leadership.

We thought that by building on the synergy of these enterprises and developing long-term, positive, interdependent connections with schools and districts, Center X could integrate preservice teacher education, teachers' induction into the profession, and the continuing development of seasoned professionals. We also thought that we could blend our programs for professional educators with the training of our aspiring Ph.D.s. Finally, we thought that by bringing all these people together, Center X might also itself be able to become what we want schools to be—caring, ethical, racially harmonious, and socially just.

Actually, we're a pretty motley crew. Some of us are faculty with programs of research and teaching to be attended to—both junior and senior ladder faculty, as well as visiting faculty and postdoctoral scholars. Some of us are what we call “clinical faculty”

(although only the medical school is allowed to use this job title officially) with doctorates who teach courses in the M. Ed. program for our teacher candidates, provide non-degree, professional development activities for practicing educators, and administer our credentialing process. Some of us are practicing K-12 professionals who lead Center X programs and courses on campus or in schools and district offices. Some of us are graduate students hoping to use UCLA educations to launch career as teacher educators, researchers, or educational leaders. Some of us are teacher candidates with ambitious goals for ourselves in urban schools and high hopes that the Center X teacher educators won't lead us into waters deeper than we can swim. We are Anglo, African American, Latino, and Asian. Some of us speak only English, but many of us also speak Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Armenian, and other languages. We are old, young, and in-between; male and female; gay and straight; and who knows what else.

### **Some Non-Negotiables**

We knew that many forces would conspire against our ambitious social and educational agenda. Not the least, we'd be pressed to be reasonable, to use our common sense, to be a bit less idealistic. We worried that unless we established a solid principled grounding for our new Center, we'd soon find ourselves on the slippery slopes of efficiency and expediency. So, when we were ready to go public with Center X, we began with a set of "non-negotiables"—things about which we would not compromise. These are our core values, and these would be the measuring stick by which we would measure our progress:

- Embody a social justice agenda—The racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity of our Los Angeles community is its strongest asset, and we will act on this by constructing extraordinarily high quality education for all children and particularly for low-income, children of color in Los Angeles’ schools. We seek to turn policymakers’ attention, educational resources, and teachers’ talents toward those in our city who have the least outside of school.
- Treat professional education “cradle-to-grave”—Education is a seamless process that connects efforts to attract young people into teaching, with learning experiences for teacher candidates, with learning experiences for novice teachers, and with learning experiences for seasoned professionals. Further, it is a process that is focused on serving students—of all ages—and their families and communities.
- Collaborate across institutions and communities—Collaborative efforts provide the best means to address the entire ecology of settings and institutions that contribute to children’s education. Center X is committed to develop and sustain long-term, positive, interdependent connections and equal status partner-ships among K-12 schools and community colleges, UCLA, and the diverse communities of Los Angeles.
- Focus simultaneously on professional education, school reform, and reinventing the university’s role in K-12 schooling—Center X must help new



and experienced educators acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for social justice and educational quality in urban schools. At the same time, the Center's work must press schools to develop cultures that encourage and support putting new knowledge and skills into practice. Moreover, UCLA itself will need to change as it crafts new roles and responsibilities for the university in these collaborative research/practice efforts. We all have much to learn.

- Blend research and practice—Center X will combine opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills, with research aimed at creating new knowledge, and the practical application of that knowledge in schools. UCLA scholars must formulate and conduct their research and teaching in ways that reflect the realities of children, educators, schools, and communities. School professional, in turn, must guide their practice by a process of critical inquiry, reflection, and social responsibility.
- Bring together educators' and students' need for depth of content knowledge, powerful pedagogies, and school cultures that enable serious and sustained engagement in teaching and learning—We view these three domains of teaching and learning as inextricably connected. Our core work is to better understand this complex relationship and promote reform efforts that approach all three domains.

- Remain self-renewing—View change and problems as “normal” conditions that require a flexible, responsive, non-static, learning organization. Center X must resist efforts to shape its activities into a traditional control-oriented, bureaucratic organization. Rather it must remain a commitment-driven entity whose structures organize people around important problems, interests, and goals.

## **A New Culture of Teacher Education**

Once we'd gone public with these principles, we decided that we'd better get a bit more concrete. We were going to educate our novice teachers in schools where most students are poor and non-white. We were going to send them into neighborhoods they may have only seen before on the nightly news. We knew that no matter how committed to our ideals they might be, we knew that being committed wouldn't be enough. We needed to develop and deliver a curriculum that would help them withstand their own and their families' anxieties—as well as their friends' puzzlement—about what they'd chosen to do. We needed to deliver on our promise to educate teachers who could transform urban schools and classrooms. To do this, we'd need to translate our “non-negotiable” principles into a pretty specific set of knowledge, skills, and experiences that would allow our novice teachers to see themselves as grounded and prepared, as well as committed. Following Henry Giroux's notion of “transformative intellectual” we wanted them to have “the courage to take risks, to look into the future, and to imagine a world that could be as opposed to simply what is” (Giroux, 1988, 215). But we also wanted them to have the capacity and confidence to act on what they could imagine.

How have we attempted to translate our principles into a teacher education program? We identified our four interrelated roles that we thought students should learn to be transformative and efficacious urban teachers, and everything we do with our students—our curriculum—aims at their developing these roles. These are what we help Center X teachers become:

- Caring Advocates for All Students
- Reflective, Inquiry-Based Practitioners
- Community Builders
- Generative Change Agents

### **Caring Advocates**

We knew we'd get no argument from our novice teachers when we shared James B. Macdonald and Susan Colberg Macdonald's view of the importance of educators having a fundamental commitment to a just and caring society: "Human life is experienced in the way we live our everyday lives, our relationships to ourselves and others, our sense of personal belonging in society and the cosmos. We believe this demands a human condition characterized by freedom, justice, equality, and love" (Macdonald & Macdonald, 1988, 480). But we also expected that our mostly-middle class novices would have had little experience with acting on such sentiments, particularly when they were confronted with the staggering increases in the numbers of Los Angeles children growing up in the physically, medically, and emotionally hazardous conditions that increasingly prevail in our inner city.

Frankly, we were worried that, like so many bright, idealistic, middle-class young people, they would approach this ethic of care with a missionary-like zeal for rescuing people who they saw as unable to rescue themselves. We had seen in our research too many well intentioned educators who, because they felt such sympathy, tried to make schools safe and comfortable places that didn't add to their disadvantaged students' burdens. As such, they expected very little of them.

Rather, we wanted to foster an ethic in which care would be expressed as high expectations, confidence in students' capacity, and support for persistence and high achievement. This meant, we believed, that our novice teachers must rethink such fundamental notions as "intelligence," "motivation," "a value for education," "parent support" and "sense of responsibility," that have acquired common-sense meanings that work against those who aren't white and middle class (or, at least, don't act like they are).

We also believed that caring advocacy meant that our teachers needed to learn to use the racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity of their students as a resource for constructing rich and meaningful learning opportunities. We also decided that new teachers must have opportunities to approach learning, teaching, and curriculum from constructivist perspectives that reflect the diversity of our society in all its aspects: gender; race; cultural, linguistic and ethnic identification; multiple intelligences; socio-economic status; family structure, and others. We also decided that they needed to learn about socio-cultural approaches that could promote literacy and make content knowledge accessible to students from a range of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, particularly those who have limited English proficiency. In addition, we thought they should connect with emerging research in the area of cultural congruence and culturally democratic

pedagogy that suggests the importance of connecting students' school experiences to their home culture, in effect, making them congruent. Furthermore, this ethic of caring meant that all our teachers must learn bilingual and primary language instructional strategies and have a great deal of practice using them. It also meant that they needed to become familiar with the social supports that are available in Los Angeles communities, and they must learn how to help children and their families—not out of kindness alone, but because such supports enable learning and persistence.

### **Teachers as Reflective, Inquiry-Based Practitioners**

We decided that we needed to enable our novice teachers to be questioning and reflective about everything—even the wisdom we thought we were imparting. It would do little good, we decided, if they simply “learned” a new set of things that we thought were important in place of the old convention. In particular we wanted them to become ever mindful of how our culture and institutions seem to easily distort well-meant ideas and actions in ways that perpetuate discrimination and inequality. During this time at Center X, we decided the teacher candidates must engage in an ongoing process of reflection and critical inquiry that connects theory, current research findings, scholarship, and practice. So, we decided to make inquiry our own primary pedagogical tool—and, importantly, to model teachers-as-inquirers with regular “inquiry sessions” of faculty and staff where no “business” could be conducted, only a serious consideration of the meaning of our enterprise, and a careful scrutiny of the beliefs, values, and assumptions that inform our decisions.

We also decided that reflective Center X teachers must remain actively engaged in the disciplines they teach, as well as learn about teaching. Writing teachers should write, history teachers should conduct original inquiries into historical topics, science teachers should do scientific investigations, and art teachers should perform. That way, they could learn how their disciplines create knowledge, have opportunities to reflect on the equitable dimensions of that knowledge, and more effectively understand the school and classroom contexts that permit teachers and learners to engage in creating discipline-based knowledge.

We charged the Directors and Teacher Leaders of the UCLA Subject Matter professional projects with this task, and they have completely reconstructed our “methods” courses, and engage the novices in professional development in the content areas with the Los Angeles’ basin’s most talented teachers.

### **Teachers as Community Builders**

We knew that our teachers’ knowledge, skills and dispositions must not only extend beyond the classroom walls, but also beyond the schoolyard. Children grow up in the ecology of institutions and activities that educate—for good or for ill. While schools may be the “official” and most formal of these educational agents, they are not necessarily the most powerful or influential. Particularly in low-income, racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse neighborhoods, the influence of teachers and schools may pale in the face of countervailing informal educational agents, such as alienated peer groups and discouraged families. Consequently, we decided that Center X novice teachers must engage with the communities they serve, not so much to “educate” parents

in the conventional meaning of the term, but rather to connect what children do in school to their experiences in the community. By engaging children and their families in finding and solving real problems that matter to them outside of school, we thought that they could help make schoolwork less abstract and detached (and thereby more likely to be learned) and that they could enhance the power and well-being of the larger educational ecology for children.

Furthermore, we wanted our teachers to know how to include parents and other community members in adult-centered inquiry into school practice and beliefs. We wanted them to learn that community members can inform discussion around curriculum and extra-curricular issues and in this process develop more democratic relationships with the professional staff. Working with a range of community resources, such as public health, social welfare, and psychological support systems, we wanted our teachers to support programs that deal more comprehensively with the range of issues facing low-income, urban children, and schools. Toward this end, we knew that Center X teacher candidates must participate in community projects and connect with neighborhood organizations, head start programs, and engage parents in inquiry and discussion about their children's schooling. Some have mounted Social Justice Community Nights in their school communities.

### **Teachers as Generative Change Agents**

Finally, we realized that even exceedingly well prepared teachers are not likely, through classroom practice alone, to counteract the impact of the deadening structures and cultures of most urban schools. Given this grim reality, we thought that we must

prepare our Center X teachers to develop the commitment, capacity, and resilience to participate effectively in efforts to fundamentally reconceptualize, change, and renew urban schools. And we agreed with much of the current educational reform movement that suggests that fundamental change will require teachers who are willing and able to engage in continuous examination of every aspect of their structures and activities.

Consequently, we decided that novice teachers in Center X must undertake an activist role in school reform that goes beyond the familiar search for “what works” to make conventional school practice “more effective” and “just” and even “visionary.” Our program must engage perspective professionals in generative processes for implementing change that fundamentally challenges, reconceptualizes, and transforms now decaying urban schools into places of hope and opportunity for all students. Furthermore, our teachers must be prepared to view change and problems as “normal” conditions that require flexible, generative responses. They must have a life-long commitment to professional growth as part of their ongoing commitment to reaching the needs of all students. Toward these ends, we decided that Center X teachers must have the opportunity to work collaboratively in teams to initiate change projects in their school and/or communities, and to see this work as a “normal” part of the job of teaching.

### **A New Structure of Teacher Education**

Our first bold step toward a structure that had a prayer of helping novice teachers learn these four teaching roles was to announce that the standard UCLA 15-month teaching credential and master’s program was insufficient, and that we were adding another year of scaffolded coursework and field experiences. (Remember, we’re in



California where teacher education doesn't begin until graduate school.) To our surprise, nearly everyone agreed! Where we thought we'd have battles, there were none. Even the California Teacher Credentialing Commission supported our application for "experimental" status to allow us to waive the state regulation that teacher education programs must permit students to become credentialed within one year.

We needed the extra year to accommodate three essential program components. The first is the M.Ed. core curriculum that integrates research-based methodologies with classroom practice by providing advanced study in such areas as multicultural foundations, instructional decision-making, and curriculum development. The second is the course sequence that guides students toward the development of instructional strategies and pedagogical skills needed to satisfy the state's credentialing requirements. The third component of the program prepares candidates to develop their knowledge and skills in methods and strategies of teaching students from diverse cultural and language backgrounds. This third component prepares teachers to provide (a) instruction for English language development and (b) specially designed academic subjects content instruction delivered in English. It also qualifies our teachers for the state's CLAD (Cross-cultural, Language, and Academic Development) Emphasis credential. The bilingual emphasis (BCLAD) that many of our students also complete provides students with methodology for primary language and content instruction delivered in Spanish and Korean. A two-year Center X program, we argued, would permit students to complete all three components and provide enough time for them to see themselves as Center X teachers.

During their first year, our students complete a program integrating theory and practice to fulfill the requirements for a basic credential. In addition to their coursework, during the fall of their first year, each team of novice teachers has a range of opportunities to observe schools and classrooms in a variety of urban settings that have racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students. Throughout this period of observation and initial participation, students analyze effective strategies for achieving learning for all students, including constructivist instruction, socio-cultural approaches, cultural congruence, and educational technology. A key component of this phase is the students' active engagement in reflection on issues in the schools they are observing. In the Winter and Spring of the first year, students are assigned to an urban school site with a racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse student population for "student teaching." Throughout the student teaching period novice teachers will plan, implement, and assess daily lessons and units with the assistance of a mentor teacher. Key components of student teaching are the novice teachers' active engagement in reflection on issues in the schools in which they are teaching and their involvement with the larger school community.

During their school year, students take jobs in school districts to teach as teaching residents in school sites with low-income, and racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse student populations. During this time, they attend weekly seminars at UCLA, meet with fellow residents and Center X faculty at their school sites, and work in cooperative teams to initiate a Change Project in their local school and/or its community and complete a case study on the project. These teaching residencies continue the scaffolded university-field residency during the critical induction into teaching, as well as

allowing the second-year “residents” additional time to complete their final CLAD/BCLAD-Emphasis credential requirements and Master’s degree in Education. At the end of this second year, students complete a portfolio assessment process that synthesizes their theoretical and practical experiences and defend it for their M. Ed. at the end of the second year.

### **Cohorts**

The Center X program is collegially-based so that the students move through the combined academic and field work program in a cohort. Each year, a total of 90 first-year students are admitted to the program and assigned to teams determined by either an elementary or secondary focus. Each team is composed of approximately 15 first-year students and 15 second-year students. These teams are coordinated by team leaders who are both ladder and clinical faculty members. Because the university curriculum and field component are comprehensively and sequentially designed, students must complete the entire program as full-time, UCLA students.

Some of our friends and probably lots of others predicted that we’d never get students to sign on to such an ambitious program. Our Office of Student Services was convinced that we wouldn’t attract a large enough applicant pool to fill our enrollment targets. Frankly, we were a bit nervous ourselves, even though we thumbed our noses at the skeptics. In fact, we received as many applications as we had in years before with our high status, conventional, 15-month program, and we had more than four applicants for every available slot. The applicants had grades, scores, and letters that matched any in previous years. But they were also different in important ways. Many wrote passionately

about their commitment to social and educational justice in Los Angeles; many had significant experiences working with diverse groups of low-income children in the past. We chose carefully, sifting through this embarrassment of riches, and wound up with a cohort that was about half students of color, and nearly a third bi- or tri-lingual. This first cohort is now working as teaching residents in Los Angeles urban schools. Our second cohort—every bit as talented and committed as the first—has begun its novice year.

### **Partnerships**

Because we are committed to integration of theory and practice, Center X has worked hard to develop a novice-mentor model of student teaching within university-school partnerships. These partnerships with local urban districts provide candidates with a rich and varied set of novice teaching experiences in racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse school sites, especially in classrooms with bilingual and limited-English proficient students. Each student begins his or her induction into the profession as a “novice teacher,” rather than a student teacher, and each teacher in the field primarily responsible for working with a novice teacher assumes the role of “mentor teacher,” rather than the traditional role of master or supervising teacher. The mentor teachers responsible for mentoring novice teachers work closely with other teachers at their schools, administrators, and clinical and ladder faculty members to redefine their roles in this new collaborative relationship. Through university-school partnerships, we work to operationalize the idea that “It takes a whole school to educate a teacher.” Center X works with school site personnel to develop site-based approaches for mentoring novice teacher that will encourage them to become part of the larger school community. As part

of these partnerships, Center X provides clinical and ladder faculty support for novice teachers in the field. Expert practitioners serve as UCLA lecturers in curriculum and methods courses. I teach my multicultural foundations course in a classroom at a partner middle school.

Of course these partnerships are difficult to initiate and sustain. While most local school systems are enamored by the idea of partnering with UCLA, the details of working together are not so glamorous. Much has been written about the problems of bridging the cultures of schools and universities. Our efforts are no different. Moreover, because we won't negotiate away our commitment to schools with low-income children of color, we may have lost as many partners as we've won. We have war stories of attacks by angry school administrators convinced that we were insulting them and abandoning our commitment to "all children" by not placing our students in their whiter and wealthier schools.

### **Center X: A Program of Research**

The need for teachers with commitment, knowledge, and skills we claim to be fostering is well established, and Center X believes that its program design will enable students to develop them. However, we actually have little empirical evidence about the impact of efforts such as ours. Consequently, we have designed a strategy to document the implementation and test the efficacy of our work over the next five years.

The research component of our work examines the extent to which the Center X Program actually does prepare teachers to have the commitment, capacity, and resilience to provide depth of content knowledge, literacy, powerful pedagogies, and engaging

school cultures for all students, especially those from racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It investigates the extent to which our teachers actually assume the four interrelated core values of transformative professionals described earlier: 1) a caring advocate for all students, 2) a reflective, inquiry-based practitioner, 3) a community builder, and 4) a generative change agent, to serve students from racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse communities. This research is being carried out by ladder faculty, clinical faculty, and graduate students, in collaboration with educators in our partner schools.

### **Our Questions**

For the research side of our work, we're trying to answer the following hard questions:

1. How does our Center X program—oriented as it is toward issues of social justice, caring, and instructional equity—nurture and sustain novice teachers' commitment to become transformative professionals? Or does it?
2. How does our Center X approach to teacher education that more closely connects students' coursework and field experiences with racially, culturally, linguistically diverse students and communities help connect theory to their own practice? Or does it?
3. How does participation of novice teachers in collaborative and responsible learning communities both in the university and in the field

that construct, use, and share knowledge build program graduates' commitment and capacity to work with communities to effect change in urban schools? Or does it?

4. How does the Center X supported residency in an urban school during the second year build teachers' efficacy and commitment to low-income racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse children and prepare teachers who will choose to teach in those children's schools? Or does it?
5. How does the Center X focus on the challenges and rewards of teaching low-income racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students enhance new teachers' commitment, capacity and resilience to teach in those children's schools? Or does it?
6. How does students' sustained engagement with the Center X program ease their transition into teaching, including an on-going commitment to change in professional development and renewal in the urban teaching profession? Or does it?

### **Our Design and Methods**

Our study began with a baseline year of data collection in 1994-1995, before we instituted our two-year program, and it will extend over the next five years. In alignment with Center X's commitment to social justice and caring, the study is socially responsive research within the paradigm of critical inquiry (Sirotnik, 1991; Sirotnik & Oakes, 1990; Stringer, 1993). As critical inquiry, our data analysis and interpretation will be

continuously subjected to reflection, discussion, and debate within the Center X community and serve as the basis for ongoing changes and renewal of the program. The study design is a longitudinal, multi-method research design based on qualitative and quantitative data. It attempts to understand the dynamics of the teacher education process in context and its impact on students.

We are following four two-year cohorts of teacher education credential and M.Ed. candidates, who have entered or will join the program respectively in 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1998. A series of interconnected data collection and analysis strategies will enable Center X to track novice teachers' development: Initial surveys of incoming students and follow-up surveys (both paper and pencil and interviews) of graduates, evaluation of key program elements through portfolios and portfolio defenses, and targeted case studies. The first two strategies involve the entire cohort of each entering class, and the last one focuses on sub-sample of students from each entering cohort. The first two strategies aim to tell us what we've accomplished; the latter can help us understand how and why, and where we have rethinking to do.

### **Surveys**

We began our data collection with a survey adapted from the instrument developed by John Goodald for his national Study of the Education of Educators, and we administer annual follow-up surveys. These surveys provide longitudinal data on novice teachers' socialization into teaching. To get greater depth of understanding of what our students mean by their responses to the survey questions, we supplement this paper and



pencil survey with interviews about how students conceptualize teaching and social justice for children in central city schools.

### **Portfolios and Portfolio Defenses**

The impact of our program elements will be assessed through the students' M. Ed. portfolios, which include components that specially address CLAD/BCLAD credential and our M.Ed. requirements. The portfolio, based on student work, is a product that provides rich, in-depth data to determine the efficacy of the program. The portfolio is based on an integration of academic course work and field-based experiences and will focus on how each credential/M.Ed. candidate integrates his or her philosophy of teaching, theories of teaching, learning, language acquisition, culture, inquiry, community, change, and classroom practice. The portfolio will include three components: Theory to Practice, Practice to Theory, and Philosophical Perspective. In the Theory to Practice component, students will include a case study of a Change Project they implemented in their resident year in a racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse school or its community. The credential/M.Ed. candidate sits for a defense of his or her portfolio before a panel, consisting of academic, clinical, community and student members. At the end of the defense, each candidate has the opportunity to assess the Teacher Education Program's strengths and weaknesses. A recorder will provide a record of each portfolio and defense, based on an established rubric.

## **Targeted Case Studies**

Targeted in-depth initial and exit interviews and case studies of select students will provide rich, explanatory narratives of the context in which our students have learned to become teachers.

Importantly, our primary research goal is not to document and “prove” that we’ve figured out how to produce teachers who can make center city schools rich, rigorous, socially just, and caring learning communities where all children learn extraordinarily well. We know that we haven’t figured it out, and that maybe we never will. Our research goal, rather, is to document the struggle of teacher educators and novice teachers who’ve decided that they can’t not try.

## **Asking for Trouble**

Using our powerful symbolism of the university and the extraordinary talent of the educators in the university and the schools, the staff at Center X have committed to the view—however idealistic—that schools and teaching for low-income, racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse children can change. We’ve also asked for a whole lot of trouble, and in fact, we’ve gotten lots. As I read what I’ve written here, I realize that sentences and paragraphs strung together make our efforts sound far tinier than they are. We’re struggling to do something we really don’t know how to do. We’re asking questions we don’t know how to answer. We frustrate many of our partnering educators who want more clarity and definition of our program than we can provide. We worry some of our colleagues who think we’re too ideological. We anger some of our students

when we won't give them a safety net of classroom management strategies and structured lesson-planning procedures that we think will create more problems that they will solve. We ask everyone to tolerate our ambiguity. We're not being realistic. We work too hard. We work our students too hard. We expect too much.

Frankly, we wouldn't have it any other way. We don't expect to stop the fires from coming again to Los Angeles. But next time, we'll know that we tried.

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#### Note

1. For a fuller explication of these ideas, see Paul Heckman, *The Courage to Change*, Newbery Park, CA: Corwin.