

Teacher Burnout in Black and White

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Causes of Teacher Stress and Burnout

Scholars define teacher burnout as a condition caused by depersonalization, exhaustion and a diminished sense of accomplishment (Schwab et al. 1986). A psychological model of how stress leads to burnout describes it as a syndrome resulting from teachers' inability to protect themselves against threats to their self esteem and well being (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe 1978). In this model, teachers' coping mechanisms are activated to deal with demands. When those coping mechanisms fail to stem the demands then stress increases and threatens the teachers' mental and physical well-being ultimately leading to teachers quitting or burning out. Because many of the conditions which determine teacher effectiveness lie outside of their control and because a high level of continual alertness is required, teaching is a high stress job. Haberman uses a behavioral definition of burnout and defines it as a condition in which teachers remain as paid employees but stop functioning as professionals. They go through the motions of teaching with no emotional commitment to the task and no sense of efficacy. They have come to believe that what they can do will make no significant difference in the lives of their students and see no reason to continue caring or expending any serious effort. Burnouts remain in teaching as "strong insensitives" who are able to cope with the debilitating problems faced by their students and the negative conditions of work in dysfunctional bureaucracies because they no longer take their failures as a sign of any personal inadequacies. They have become detached job-holders who feel neither responsible nor accountable for students' behavior, learning, or anything else. Their only goal is to do the minimum required to remain employed (Haberman, 1995). While "work appears as a major source of stress for working people, teachers appear to experience more stress through work than non-teachers" (Cox and Brockley 1984). In-depth studies have established a clear linkage between prolonged stress and burnout (Blasé 1986).

At the other extreme from the "strong insensitive" who stay in teaching after experiencing burnout are the idealists who are significantly more likely to leave teaching (Miech and Elder 1996). The explanation for the departure of idealists is that because they are deeply committed to serving children they are more easily frustrated by the working conditions in dysfunctional school bureaucracies which prevent them from doing what they deem best in the teaching of their students. In 1963 the Milwaukee Intern Program became the model for the National Teacher Corps. In the ten years (1963-1972) of the Corps' existence approximately 100,000 college graduates with high GPAs were prepared nationally for urban teaching. These were idealistic young, white college graduates who set out to "find" themselves by "saving" diverse children in poverty. When they actually encountered the realities of how teachers have to struggle against their school bureaucracies in order to serve children, over 95 percent of them quit in five years or less (Corwin 1973). Since this was the largest, longest study ever done in teacher education the notion that altruism can be the motivation of teachers serving diverse children in poverty should be problematic.

The average length of a teaching career in the United States is now down to eleven years (Stephens 2001). One quarter of all beginning teachers leave teaching within four years (Benner 2000). The length of an urban teaching career is even less since fifty percent of



beginners leave in five years or less (Rowan et al. 2002). But teachers who leave have less of a negative impact on schools and students than those who burn out but remain in teaching. It has long been established that burnouts who remain use significantly less task oriented behavior(i.e. less hands-on, active learning), and provide fewer positive reinforcements to their students (Koon,1971). They also have negative effects on student performance (Young 1976). The research supports the contention that stress affects teachers' effectiveness with students (Blasé 1982). When teachers feel good about their work student achievement rises (Black 2001).

The persistent and pervasive nature of teacher stress studies makes it clear that teaching has become a high stress occupation. Numerous studies of American teachers, particularly those in urban schools, have documented the high level of stress and burnout among teachers (Cunningham 1983). In May, 2000 the National Association of Head Teachers in Great Britain found that 40 percent of teachers had visited doctors with stress related problems the previous year. Twenty percent admitted to drinking too much, 15 percent admitted to being alcoholics and 25 percent reported stress related problems such as hypertension, insomnia, depression and gastrointestinal disorders. It was also found that a staggering 37 percent of teacher vacancies were due to ill health (Jarvis 2002). As early as 1933 surveys of American teachers found that 17 percent of them were usually nervous and that 11 percent of them had suffered nervous breakdowns (Hicks1933). The National Education Association has conducted studies spanning sixty five years indicating that teachers' experience health problems, absenteeism and performance let-down as a result of their working conditions (NEA,1938, 1950,1967). Since stress causes physical and emotional problems which lead to lower teacher effort and greater teacher absenteeism, the connection between teacher stress and student learning is a significant relationship (Ehrenberg et al. 1989).

Some stress is inevitable and may be beneficial. This is especially true in teaching where teacher effort and enthusiasm has a positive impact on student learning. At some point however, and this varies for individuals, too much stress is a predictor of poor teacher performance, absenteeism and teacher turnover (West and West 1989).

The inexorable link between teacher stress and burnout leads researchers to examine the causes of teacher stress. Based on a review of the research it can be reasonably concluded that teacher stress is a real phenomenon that can reliably be connected to both intrinsic causes which interact with teacher attributes and personal predispositions as well as to external causes which exist in the actual working conditions teachers face. Both intrinsic and extrinsic job stressors affect K-12 teachers who experience physical illness and psychological strain on the job (Evans et al.1985).

Historically, studies have focused on external causes which are assumed to exist independent of teacher perceptions: these include ambiguous role expectations (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe 1977); unreasonable time demands (Lortie 1975); large classes (Coates and Thoresen1976); poor staff relations(Young 1978); inadequate buildings and facilities (Rudd andWiseman 1962; Buckley et al. 2004); salary considerations (Gritz and Theobold 1996;Tye



and O'Brien 2002); lack of resources, isolation and fear of violence (Brissie et al. 1988); and disruptive students (Dunham 1977; Friedman 1995). The need for administrative support is also frequently cited as a critical condition of work (Tapper 1995). Lack of administrative support is a category that includes but is not limited to the following teacher perceptions: principals are "not supportive" if they do not handle discipline to the teachers' liking; do not understand the instructional program the teachers are trying to offer; do not provide the time and resources the teachers believe necessary; do not value teachers' opinions or involve them sufficiently in decision making; do not support them in disputes with parents; or fail to listen to their problems and suggestions.

In urban schools, teachers also use "lack of administrative support" as jargon to signify their belief that the principal has engaged in "dumping", or has "dumped" on them. This means that they believe the principal has assigned too many students with discipline problems, with special needs, those lacking in basic skills, or even too many male students to their classrooms. Other external stress factors commonly cited include the low status of the profession and the inadequacy of training programs which foster unreal expectations (Rudd and Wiseman p.289). Low salaries as a cause of stress is frequently expressed by teachers as resulting from preparing their students for colleges they cannot afford to send their own children to, or from being forced to moonlight. Teachers who moonlight work ten or more hours per week and believe that extra jobs take a toll on their energy and morale (Henderson 1997). Safety concerns are cited as a cause of stress and low morale by over 62 percent of teachers in middle and high schools. So too is the need for teachers to annually spend almost \$600 of their own money for supplies and equipment they regard as necessary (Lumsden 1988).

Many factors related to the quality of school buildings affect teacher stress. A synthesis of 53 studies pertaining to school facilities concludes that daylight fosters student achievement (Lemasters 1997). The positive psychological and physiological effects of daylight have heightened interest in increasing daylight in classrooms (Benya 2001). Yet, 20 percent of the teachers in Washington, D.C. report that they cannot see out of their windows (Corcoran et al. 1988). Teachers believe that thermal comfort affects not only the quality of their teaching and student achievement but their morale (Lackney 1999). Some of the best teachers in the country indicated that when they could control the temperatures in their rooms their effectiveness increased (Lowe 1990). Studies of poor indoor air quality have developed the concept of "sick building syndrome" which affects both students and teachers. Asthma studies show that both students and teachers lose considerable school time. Two-thirds of the teachers in Washington, D.C. reported poor air quality as a concern. In a Chicago study that paralleled the D.C. study, over one-quarter of Chicago teachers reported asthma and respiratory problems as their most frequent health problem. Another 16 percent reported health problems linked to poor air quality (Buckley et al., p12.). Noise seems to cause more discomfort and lowered efficiency for teachers than for students (Lucas 1981). Almost 70 percent of Washington D.C. teachers report that their classrooms and hallways are so noisy they cannot teach. Until the studies by Buckley et al. there was not a clear link between school



facilities and teacher burnout and turnover. They use their data to contend that the benefits of improving physical facilities may even outweigh those derived from pay increases. They argue that since improving facilities is a one-time expense while salary increases are continuous that capital improvements may turn out to be as cost effective in the United States as they have proven to be in developing countries (Oliveira and Farrell 1993).

Several studies seek to weigh or rank the relative importance of the conditions of work causing stress and finally burnout. For example, one study concludes that teachers might be willing to take lower salaries for smaller classes (Hanushek and Lague 2000). Others compare the impact of salary with other conditions of work (Murnane and Olsen 1989). A few studies combine the effects of several conditions of work with demographic factors. Hence the finding that the school's management of students' misbehavior and the burden of non-teaching duties affects more experienced teachers less than new teachers. Experienced teachers are more concerned with maintaining their autonomy and discretion than less experienced teachers (Macdonald 1999).

In reviews of teachers' job satisfaction there have been differential effects of different climates on teacher stress. Traditional, rigid bureaucratically administered schools result in low teacher commitment and job satisfaction. Flexible schools that use collaborative problem-solving strategies and which promote greater teacher affiliation with the school raise teacher morale. In the more flexible schools teachers believe they can contribute to positive school change and that their ideas will be sought after and used (Macmillan 1999).

It is clear that none of these conditions, especially difficult students, can be entirely separated from teachers' perceptions and interaction with these conditions: for example, a class that is deemed too large to work with by one teacher can be managed by another; time demands that one teacher finds impossible to meet are met by another; and most confounding of all, students considered disruptive by some teachers are engaged and hard working in the classrooms of other teachers. There are no conditions of work that exist independently of the teacher's values, perceptions and personal attributes. Rather than arbitrary distinctions between internal and external causes of burnout therefore the more useful studies focus on the number of teachers who regard a particular condition of work as negative and the degree to which the particular condition impinges on their performance.

Stress in Urban Schools

In a study of teachers in urban secondary schools students' lack of discipline and motivation was the primary source of teacher stress and the most significant predictor of burnout (Gonzalez 1997). In a comparable study of urban middle-school teachers, three conditions of work were identified as significant predictors of stress: higher levels of emotional exhaustion, a depersonalized school climate and lower levels of perceived accomplishment. These results were equally true for both male and female teachers (Konert 1997). Depersonalization can be defined as a school climate in which teachers perceive that their



individual voices have no impact and that even their existence is unnoticed. For example, with automated telephoning for substitutes it is not uncommon for no adult in a school building to know, or particularly care, that a teacher is absent on a given day.

Teachers' feelings of job satisfaction and years of experience were statistically significant predictors of less stress (Konert p144). In a study of elementary school teachers, lack of social support, classroom climate, work overload and lack of participation in decision-making were identified as significantly related to teacher burnout. This study also compared year-round and traditional school calendars and found no differential effects on teacher burnout (Walker 1998). Differential effects are related to school size; stress appears to be more prevalent in larger school systems than in smaller ones (Green-Reese et al.1991).

The coping skills needed to remain in the classroom require active problem solving abilities. The case of special education teachers is both the area of greatest shortage and most leavers, reporting an attrition rate of 43 percent for fully trained teachers beginning in 1993. Those with low coping skills were most at risk of burnout or leaving. Brownell et al.(1995) identified new special education teachers' basic problem as an inability to provide instruction resulting from their inability to handle discipline coupled with the fact that their most common coping mechanisms were limited to trying to suppress problems or crying. The National Center for Education Statistics found a correlation between teachers' commitment and children with special needs. Special education teachers who stay express an altruistic purpose and deep personal obligation to serve their students. Those who leave have an unselfish regard as well but lack the depth of conviction found in teachers who stay (NCES 1966).

In comparing stress on rural and urban teachers it was found that rural teachers perceive too much parental contact as a source of stress while urban teachers regard the lack of parental involvement as stressful. The major difference between the groups was that rural teachers feel greater stress from time demands and the conditions of work, while urban teachers attributed greater stress to student discipline and behavior problems (Abel and Sewell 1999). In 1995 the Metropolitan Life Survey of 1,011 teachers examined changes in the views and perceptions of teachers from a previous, similar survey conducted in 1984. In this ten-year period rural teachers perceived improvements in their work environments and expressed positive views regarding their professional recognition and social support while urban teachers perceived the opposite. Urban teachers perceptions were that their working conditions had deteriorated. They also expressed less positive views regarding their professional recognition and more negative views of their school systems' policies, including curricula and academic standards (Leitman et al.1995).

The Abel and Sewell study is important because it supports substantial previous literature on teacher stress in rural versus urban schools. This study concludes that urban teachers have greater stress and that there is a clear relationship between their stress and burnout as a result of having difficult classes, problem students, poor classroom climate, poor working conditions, shortage of resources, lack of recognition and inordinate demands on time leading to burnout" (Abel and Sewell p6).



Several recent studies argue that the focus on greater teacher accountability and high stakes student testing has forced teachers to follow a “drill and kill” curriculum. This constant and increasing pressure on teachers has made testing and accountability a primary cause of teacher stress (Darling-Hammond and Sykes 2003). Teachers report stress from teaching in schools that have been designated as failing (Figlio 2001). It must be noted however that as teachers become more effective they are less stressed by testing. In studies of star teachers serving Latino children in Houston, Texas and African American children in Buffalo, New York, teachers identified as effective with diverse children in poverty did not focus or limit their teaching to preparing their students for tests. These star teachers were able to follow best practice rather than drill and kill and still have children whose test scores improved markedly (Haberman 1999). While the accountability movement has certainly made teachers more directly accountable for raising test scores and become a major cause of stress, any reading of the total literature must inevitably conclude that the preponderance of studies still point to lack of discipline and classroom management as the primary cause of teacher stress and burnout.

In addition to problems which exist in schools, several demographic characteristics are also related to burnout: teachers’ age, level of education, and years married have significant mediating effects on burnout. In one study, religiousness was identified as having a mediating effect on burnout while lack of religiousness was identified as the most significant predictor of burnout (Gonzalez 1997). Female teachers tend to be more satisfied with their jobs than males; elementary teachers report less stress than secondary teachers; and younger less experienced teachers report feelings of greater alienation, powerlessness and greater stress (Black p4). In other words, it is possible to predict that, other things being equal, female, elementary, older, more educated, more religious teachers who have been married for longer periods will experience less burnout. The caveat is that experience is a mediating factor until about the tenth year and then becomes a predictor of burnout. These findings also support the contention that the conditions of work in schools do not exist independently but must be strained through the perceptions and value systems of the teachers before they become either causes of teacher burnout or simply conditions that teachers can cope with or ignore.

One indicator of how teachers feel about the conditions of work in urban schools is where the teachers send their own children. In a study of fifty urban school districts more teachers (29.4%) than the general public (23.4%) sent their children to non-public schools. In twenty nine of the fifty cities the number of teachers choosing private schools for their own children was greater than for the general public. The disparity was greatest in Rochester, New York where 37.5 percent of the teachers and only 14.6 percent of the general public chose private over public schools (Doyle et al. 2004).

The costs to the school systems of teacher turnover have been escalating on an unbroken upward trend line for the last thirty years. In earlier studies teacher stress and burnout were computed in terms of the cost of simply hiring substitute teachers (Bruno 1983). More recently the costs of teacher attrition have been expanded to include the costs of recruiting, hiring and processing new teachers. The current estimate is that teacher stress and turnover now costs school districts 2.6 billion dollars annually. The researchers make a case



that this is an underestimate. (Alliance for Education 2004). A legitimate claim can be made that these are public funds intended for children and youth in urban school districts which claim to be under funded and redirecting 2/6 billion dollars annually to a continuous process of hiring quitters and failures is a misappropriation of funds..

Urban Teachers Who Leave

Studies of quitters and leavers identify stress factors as the explanation of why teachers leave a particular school system or teaching entirely. A typical list of why teachers say they leave is very similar to the factors identified in the stress literature and includes: overwhelming workload, discipline problems, low pay, little respect, lack of administrative support and the clerical workload. Not surprisingly, the most commonly cited reasons refer to the difficulty of managing children and poor working conditions. The difficult working conditions in many urban schools do discourage beginning (and experienced) teachers but such complaints also raise questions about the validity of these responses, the maturity of the teacher-leavers making these responses and the quality of the teacher preparation offered those who give these reasons for leaving. The reason for concern over the authenticity of the reasons offered for leaving urban schools is that the negative conditions of work are well known even to the general public and must surely have been known to the teachers accepting positions. Indeed, interviews of high school students indicate quite clearly that even young adolescents are well aware of the negative conditions under which their teachers work. (Florida State Department of Education, 1985) Quitters and leavers who offer these reasons for terminating their employment and those who accept and analyze these responses as the complete explanations make the findings of studies on why teachers quit or fail highly problematic.

While poor working conditions most certainly do contribute to teachers leaving, in-depth interviews reported by Haberman of quitters and failures from schools serving diverse children in urban poverty over the past 45 years reveal other additional explanations for leaving than those gleaned from superficial questionnaires, surveys and brief exit interviews. Based on actual classroom observations of failing teachers by Haberman/Post in the Metropolitan Multicultural Teacher Education Program between 1992 and 2003, there are more basic reasons for leaving than those gained from typical exit interviews. (Haberman and Post 1998). Leavers are understandably chary about having anything on their records that they believe might make it difficult for them to get a reference for a future job. They seek to avoid saying things that might make them appear prejudiced toward children of color or their families. It takes an hour or longer for skilled interviewers to establish rapport, trust and an open dialogue in order to extract more authentic and less superficial reasons for why teachers leave. For example, the quitter's citation of "discipline and classroom management problems" as the reason for leaving takes on new meaning when one learns what the respondent really means by "discipline problems" or "problem" students. In typical surveys quitters and failures frequently mention the challenge of working with "difficult" students and this comment is simply noted or checked or counted. In in-depth interviews where rapport has been established, this



cause is amplified by leavers into more complete explanations of why discipline and classroom management are difficult for them. Leavers make statements such as, "I really don't see myself spending the rest of my life working with 'these' children." or "It's clear that 'these' children don't want me as their teacher." When the reasons for the disconnect between themselves and the children are probed further, leavers will frequently make statements such as the following: "These kids will never learn standard English." or "My mother didn't raise me to listen to 'm.f.' all day." or "These children could not possibly be Christians." or "These kids are just not willing or able to follow the simplest directions." (Haberman, 2004).

The comments of quitters and leavers which may have at first appeared to indicate a simple, straightforward lack of skills on the part of a neophyte still learning to maintain discipline, can now be recognized as actually representing much deeper issues. Rather than a simple matter which can be corrected by providing more training to caring beginning teachers who understandably just need some tips on classroom management and more experience, an irreconcilable chasm between these teachers and their students is uncovered. Teacher attrition increases as the number of minority students increases (Rollefson 1990). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (1998) schools with 50 percent or more minority students experience twice the turnover rate as schools with lower minority populations. In a study of 375,000 primary teachers over a three year period researchers found that the greatest tendency of leavers was to switch to schools with fewer minority students, higher test scores and smaller percentages of low-income students (Hanushek et al. 2002). The same results are obtained when questions are posed in positive terms: that is, when is teacher satisfaction greatest? "Teachers report greatest satisfaction working in schools with students who have high test scores, high graduation rates and where 81 percent or more of the students are working on grade level." (Teacher Quality Southeast 2003). These are also schools serving predominantly white students who are not from low income families.

Quitters and leavers cannot connect with, establish rapport, or reach diverse children in urban poverty because at bottom they do not respect and care enough about them to want to be their teachers. Such attitudes and perceptions are readily sensed by students who respond in kind by not wanting 'those' people as their teachers. Contrary to the popular debates on what teachers need to know to be effective, teachers in urban schools do not quit because they lack subject matter or pedagogy. If Haberman's contention is true, quitters and leavers know how to divide fractions and they know how to write lesson plans. They leave because they cannot connect with the students and it is a continuous, draining hassle for them to keep students on task. In a very short period leavers are emotionally and physically exhausted from struggling against resisting students for six hours every day. In the Haberman/Post classroom observations of failing teachers they report never finding an exception to this condition: i.e. if there is a disconnect between the teachers and their students then no mentoring, coaching, workshop, class on discipline and classroom management, or class offering more subject matter content can provide the teacher with the ability to control children s/he does not genuinely respect and care about. This disconnect is most likely to occur between teachers and diverse students in urban poverty. In truth, the graduates of traditional programs of teacher



education are “fully qualified” only if we limit the definition of this term to mean they can pass written tests of subject matter and pedagogy. Unfortunately while knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy are absolutely necessary they are not sufficient conditions for being effective in urban schools. Knowing what and how to teach only becomes relevant after the teacher has connected and established a positive relationship with the students.

Many who give advice on how to solve the teacher shortage in urban schools frequently assert that “these” children need to be taught by the “best and the brightest.” Unfortunately, the typical criteria used to define “the best and the brightest” identify teachers who are precisely those most likely to quit and fail in urban schools. The majority of early leavers are individuals with higher I.Q.s, GPAs, and standardized test scores than those who stay; more have also had academic majors (Darling-Hammond and Sclan 1996). Teachers who earn advanced degrees within the prior two years leave at the highest rates (Boe et al. 1997). Those who see teaching as primarily an intellectual activity are eight times more likely to leave the classroom (Quartz et al. 2001). The fact that the shibboleth “best and brightest” still survives is testimony to the fact that many prefer to maintain their pet beliefs about teacher education in spite of the facts. In effect, the criteria typically used to identify the “best and brightest” are powerful, valid identifiers of failures and quitters in urban schools.

There is a degree of unreality in the expectations of beginning teachers that leads them to believe that while there will be stressful problems that they personally should be able to avoid them. When asked about the conditions of work they would like to have they state that “they want to work in schools with involved parents, well-behaved students, small classes and supportive administrations” (Public Agenda Online 2004). The available positions however are extremely unlikely to be in schools where these are the typical conditions of work. This disconnect between new teacher education graduates and the needs of the schools serving diverse children in urban poverty is demonstrated by the number of “fully qualified” graduates who take jobs and by how long they last. Only 58 percent of the newly certified graduates even take teaching jobs (Yasin 1999) and of those who teach in the 120 largest urban districts fifty percent leave in five years or less. In some states (e.g. New York) only 27 percent of the “fully qualified” even take jobs (Yasin p3). The disconnect between preparation and practice appears to be a systemic breakdown.

Teacher Ethnicity Burnout and Attrition

Of the more than 53 million children in the public schools about 30 percent are living in poverty. Seven million of them are concentrated in the 120 largest schools districts. The numbers who are members of linguistic or racial/ethnic minority groups is 35 percent and will reach 40 percent by the end of this decade. Of the nearly three million teachers, counselors and administrators approximately 5 percent are African Americans, down from 12 percent in the 1960's (Wilson and Butty 1999). “Improvements in the recruitment of Hispanic American, Asian American and Native American teachers have been offset by this decline in the recruitment of African American teachers”(Darling-Hammond 1999, p289).



A summary of the research literature in Texas found that: 1) neither written competency exams nor certification predicted teacher quality in the classroom; 2) there were no differences in the classroom performances of teachers with bachelors or masters degrees; 3) teachers' classroom experience is the most important source of teacher capacity; and 4) it takes 6-7 years of experience for teachers to fully develop the requisite skills and knowledge. The most important finding of this research review was that "Hispanic and African American teachers are able to maximize student performance for classrooms where the teacher's ethnicity is dominant among the classroom student population"(Lopez 1995). If fifty percent of new teachers leave in five years or less then students will not have many teachers who complete the 6 or 7 years of experience needed to reach the level of full skill development. Further, if over eighty percent of teacher candidates in traditional university based programs of teacher education are white, the finding that Hispanic and African American teachers maximize students' performance cannot be implemented. The question is whether these data are confined to the State of Texas or represent the situation nationally. The likelihood is that they are representative of the 120 major urban school districts.

A summary of the research literature in California projects a student population of 6.2 million children, 70 percent of whom will be students of color by the year 2007. There is a need for almost thirty thousand teachers per year in that state's 1,055 school districts. Yet the recruitment of teacher candidates of color is simply not happening (Keleher 1999). In 1999 the number of teacher candidates in California passing the Professional Assessments for Beginning Teachers (Praxis Exam) was 49.3 percent for whites, 31.6 for Asian Americans, 27.5 for Mexican Americans, 25.7 percent for other Latinos and 18 percent for African American. If California is representative of the nation there is both a shrinking pool of teacher candidates of color and a smaller pool that pass the required state exams for licensure. A few states are trying to fight this trend with financial aid and tutoring programs for minorities in university based programs. The most powerful recruitment of minorities however continues to occur in on-the-job training programs where adult minorities can be paid while they learn on the job. (Keleher p12).

A ten-year study of 315,442 graduates of public universities in Florida tracked the top ten discipline choices producing African American graduates. Over the decade studied health science and computer science majors increased and education majors decreased as a percentage of graduates. For African American, white and Hispanic males business, engineering and social sciences remained the top three disciplines. For females, business and education remained the most frequently chosen. This study supports the literature (USDOE 1997) that minorities choose majors in fields that are higher paying and which enable them to recover the costs of their college educations. The study also corroborates the literature that in their motivation for choosing majors "the differences between men and women are greater than the differences among race and ethnic groups" (Pitter et al.2003).

The question of how to recruit more teachers of color has stymied traditional university based teacher preparation. With the advent of alternative routes more minorities are entering teaching but the problem has not been "solved" if the goal is to have a teaching force



representative of the children being taught. This leads to further analysis of the literature on motivation for entering teaching and why whites or individuals of color chose to become teachers.

The few studies of when African Americans decide to become teachers indicates that approximately 25 percent decide when they are in elementary school and about half when they are in college. The source of their motivation is relatives, primarily mothers and children. Those who discourage them most are college peers (King 1993). Difficult working conditions and the lure of other

Occupations seemed to influence males more than females. One study of a talented cohort of African American teachers concluded that to attract others like themselves would require providing a great deal more encouragement than is currently typical in the recruiting process(King p6).

Among white populations, teaching diverse children in urban schools has declined in status so that while white women still predominate they represent lower socioeconomic levels and lower educational achievements than in the past(Lanier and Little 1986; King 1993b). These data are supported by the fact that many white teacher candidates are the first generation college graduates in their families and that with the opening up of higher status professions to women over the last forty years (medicine, law, business, engineering, architecture and others), women students from higher socioeconomic levels and those with stronger educational achievements have not entered teaching, particularly teaching of diverse children in poverty. Among people of color however teaching retains some degree of status. In a study of motivation for teaching among 124 African American college students it was found that the historical respect given teachers remains. Respondents indicated that family members encouraged them to become teachers. The salary and benefits of the job itself also was a motivating factor. Among African Americans and Hispanics there is a higher proportion of low income individuals than whites who perceive a salary range of \$30,000-\$60,000 per year as a good salary and fringe benefits which now typically exceed 50 percent as high. The important difference in motivation however was not between ethnic or racial groups but between males and females. This is also true for African Americans. In addition to the typical reasons offered for considering teaching, African American males who do decide to enter teaching perceive of themselves as role models while females claim to be motivated by their love of children(Bauman 2002).

A summary of the literature explaining the shortage of African American teachers makes four basic arguments: first, that elementary and secondary education is inferior for people of color and therefore produces fewer graduates and fewer graduates with the basic skills requisite for higher education; second, that there is declining enrollment in the historically Black colleges that are more supportive and can get their students through college; third, that there are now wider opportunities for African Americans college graduates to enter higher status, higher paying careers than teaching; and finally, that the widespread and growing use of competency and other forms of testing for licensure discriminate against minorities(King 1993). There is widespread agreement, supported by data, that three of these arguments are



valid. The fourth contention, that testing by states and universities is unfairly keeping minorities out of teaching is still debated on the methodological grounds used in these studies and by the argument that the commonly used tests have been standardized with diverse populations, and are race neutral and valid (Cizek 1995).

The empiric studies explaining the causes of why teachers either burnout and stay, or leave teaching entirely do not identify different causes for whites, African Americans and teachers of other ethnic groups. There is a substantial and growing literature of case studies, exploratory studies and qualitative studies which do seek to provide insight into the causes of burnout and leaving among the various ethnic groups. Typically, such studies make the following argument. First, that schools represent European-American culture, even urban schools serving predominantly diverse children in poverty; that this “cultural imperialism” is accomplished by means of the curriculum content as well as by the policies and procedures by which schools are organized and function; that this school culture is antithetic to both minority children and their teachers, causing lower levels of achievement and higher frequency of suspensions and dropouts and greater stress among minority teachers. Second, that in these schools dominated by European American culture, African American teachers, especially male teachers, are made spokespersons and required to represent the “Black” perspective. Being put in the position of cultural representative or spokesperson is identified as a source of stress. The argument is that forcing members of minority groups to serve as spokespersons supports the dominant culture group’s stereotypes and maintains a fictitious view of African Americans. The third part of the argument is that the testing and evaluation used in schools is unfair to students of color and causes greater stress among teachers particularly among teachers of color who are perceived as representative of their group. The final part of the argument is that there is not a critical mass of African American teachers who understand these dynamics and who can serve as an advocacy group with sufficient voice to transform schools and align their curricula, policies and culture with the cultures of minority students (Madsen 2000). There is little in the literature to explain why these conditions result in greater stress for African American males than females, apart from the argument in the Bauman review which supports the contention those African American males explain their motivation to become teachers as driven by their need to serve as role models. More study is needed to define more precisely and specifically what serving as a role model actually means in behavioral terms. For example, there might well be differential effects among teachers who define role models differently. Is a role model one who has succeeded in the dominant European American culture? Is he a model of someone who can succeed in two cultures? Is he a model of someone who pursues learning to develop a particular talent? Is he a model of someone who is willing to sacrifice status and money to serve others? Is he a model of someone who seeks to function as a community leader? This “role model” motivation is directed at teaching in urban schools. In a study of 140 African American teachers in suburban schools their primary motivation for teaching was similar to whites; i.e. “imparting knowledge” (Wilson and Butty p280).

Several studies have found the reasons African Americans enter teaching are essentially the same as those of whites. They argue that altruism may not necessarily lead to competence



so the fact that most African American males choose fields outside of education because they are motivated by salary and advancement should not preclude them from being recruited. They may still become good teachers (Shipp 1999). Others argue that since approximately 25 percent of teachers are now recruited at the post-baccalaureate level that this is the greatest pool from which to recruit African American teachers (Clewell and Vallegas 1999). One ten-year follow-up study of college graduates from fields outside of education who were working as paraprofessionals demonstrated that this could be a viable population for preparing outstanding teachers. After ten years 94 percent of this pool comprised of 74 percent African Americans was still working as classroom teachers in a highly bureaucratic urban district with debilitating conditions of work. (Haberman, 1999).

There is a growing literature of stories depicting the struggle of individual African Americans as they have pursued teaching careers. These include first person reports as well as biographies. The stories have a literary and an inspirational quality and are focused on how barriers of discrimination and poverty were overcome. The generalization one might infer from these stories is that great people who want to teach will encounter horrendous obstacles but will overcome them by commitment, perseverance and ability (Foster 1997). Stories of personal heroism and sacrifice however are different from analyses of specifically how dysfunctional urban school bureaucracies cause stress, burnout and attrition, and whether their debilitating impact is different for African Americans or whites. Stories of great teachers also underscore the fact that these are also great people and leads to the question of whether two million such heroes can be found and hired between 2000 and 2010.

Summary

A review of the studies focusing on teacher stress indicates beyond any reasonable doubt that classroom management and discipline are cited most frequently and ranked highest as the most pervasive cause of teacher burnout. It is also the most continuously cited teacher concern and begins dominating teachers' perceptions from student teaching (Roy 1974) through retirement (Morton et al. 1997).

The second most powerful cause of stress has to do with teachers' perceptions of administrative support. This is a category of reasons that represents disparities between what teachers believe principals should be doing and what teachers perceive administrators actually doing to facilitate teachers' work. This category is also affected by the climate a principal has established in a school regarding the role of teachers and the specific behaviors they are expected and not expected to perform.

Stress is greater in urban schools than rural ones. At the same time, teachers' different personal characteristics lead them to leave burnout or cope with the very same objective conditions of work. The attributes which predict burnout, coping or quitting include age, sex, educational level, grade level taught, years of experience, religiousness, race/ethnicity, class and commitment to serving children.

The fact that most teachers are white and that most stress and burnout occurs in schools serving predominantly diverse children in poverty is highly significant. So too is the fact



that the highest attrition rates for new teachers is in schools serving minority populations. This relationship between teacher stress and burnout with greater student diversity and lower socioeconomic level has been documented for twenty five years (Goodman 1980). This trend of traditional teacher education graduates not being able to serve diverse children in poverty in large urban school bureaucracies has not only been thoroughly documented but has continued to worsen during this period. This in spite of the fact that it is widely known that effective recruitment and selection can reduce job stress. Using screening devices with predictive validity can create a better fit between teachers' abilities and the demands placed on them in bureaucratic school systems. A mismatch between system demands and teacher abilities due to poorly conceived and executed recruitment and selection procedures results in heightened stress levels with negative effects on teachers, students and school system (Wiley 2000).

A set of studies supporting the contention that matching teacher and student ethnicity correlates with greater student learning is beginning to accumulate. The evidence indicates that higher teacher retention and greater student achievement is based on positive teacher-student relationships. Since minority teachers relate more effectively with minority students the potential exists for less burnout and attrition to occur if the teaching force were more representative of the students. It would be incorrect, however, on the basis of existing evidence to conclude that simple racial or ethnic matching will decrease teacher attrition and close the achievement gap for diverse children in poverty. If "the" solution were one of simple background matching then school districts such as Washington D.C. or Newark, N.J. where teachers and students are from the same ethnic backgrounds would be among the highest achieving districts rather than among the lowest. The issue of socioeconomic class differences which separate teachers and students of the same cultural background and which intrude upon the ability of teachers to connect with their students also prevents teachers from establishing the basic relationship required for teaching and learning. There is a paucity of studies dealing with the effects of differences between teachers and students in terms of socioeconomic class.

The literature does not identify differences in the motivation to teach which are related to race or ethnicity however the historical difference between males and females of all backgrounds remains significant. Teaching is still perceived as a female occupation and this perception is supported by the content and organization of teacher training and by the ways in which the work of schoolteachers is organized and administered. In areas where some maleness creeps in (math and science secondary teaching) the shortages have been historically greatest and continuous.

The forces that push and pull African Americans into or away from teaching do not seem to differ substantially from whites. Neither do the forces that have thus far been identified as causing stress and burnout. The explanation of the shortage of African American teachers is attributed to the fact that there is a much smaller and shrinking pool of African American males to begin with; that the pipeline from K-12 through university graduation is not increasing; and that African American males who are college graduates have greater access to higher paying higher status careers.



At this point the literature can inform us of the causes of stress and burnout, provide some descriptions of the especially debilitating conditions of teaching in urban schools, and summarize the reasons teachers give for entering and leaving teaching. There is no current data base to support any expectation that the ethnic/racial gap between white teachers and students of color will be overcome given the demographics of teacher preparation and the conditions of work in bureaucratic, failing school districts. This raises at least three issues worthy of further study. Can the attributes which enable effective teachers to relate to diverse children in poverty and remain working in failing school systems be taught, or, should the selection of future teachers focus on individuals who already have these attributes? Given the conditions under which teachers must work in highly bureaucratic school systems and which make burnout and attrition a highly predictable process, what are the most powerful mitigating factors which might counteract or slow down these processes? Do the conditions of work in bureaucratic school systems have differential affects on African American and white teachers? Building a data base which answers these questions will enable schools to stop the churn of teachers coming and going at the expense of the children.



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