

# THE DELTA KAPPA GAMMA BULLETIN

International Journal for Professional Educators

Spring 2007 • Volume 73-3

Proactive Approaches to Youth Challenges

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# The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin

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The *Bulletin* invites materials appropriate to the Society's Purposes: position papers, applied and/or data-based research, and other articles on announced themes or other topics of interest to educators; letters to the editor; viewpoints; book reviews; annotated bibliographies; anecdotes; poetry; and graphic arts.

Prose manuscripts for the *Bulletin*, a refereed journal, are reviewed by the Editorial Board and the Society editorial staff. Selection is based on rele-

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*The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin* (ISSN 0011-8044; USPS 715-850; IPM 0302295) is published quarterly each year by The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, 416 West 12th Street, Austin, Texas. Mailing address: P.O. Box 1589, Austin, TX 78767-1589. Periodicals Postage paid at Austin, Texas. Subscription, U.S. \$20 per year; single copies, \$5 each. International dues include subscription to *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*. Views expressed do not necessarily agree with positions taken by The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International.

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Spring 2007 • Volume 73–3

Published by The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International

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*The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International  
promotes professional and personal growth of women  
educators and excellence in education.*

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## ARTICLES

- |    |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                    |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5  | THE TEEN PREGNANCY DILEMMA:<br>A DIFFERENT SOLUTION<br><i>by Linda Arms Gilbert</i>                                                               | 28                                                                                                                      | EDUCATING ADOLESCENT PARENTS:<br>PROACTIVE APPROACHES BY SCHOOL LEADERS<br><i>by Marilyn F. Scholl</i>                             |
| 9  | HOMELESS STUDENTS<br>AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM<br><i>by Ramona A. Hall</i>                                                                     | 33                                                                                                                      | DEVELOPING REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS:<br>THE IMPORTANCE OF FIELD EXPERIENCE<br><i>by Jeanne Harrington and<br/>Sheryl McGlamery</i> |
| 13 | STRAIGHT FROM THE<br>EDITORS' MOUTHS.....PENS<br><i>by Patricia Williams, Margaret<br/>Hammer, Michelle Pierczynski-<br/>Ward, and Ken Henson</i> | 36                                                                                                                      | ACTION RESEARCH FOSTERS EMPOWERMENT<br>AND LEARNING COMMUNITIES<br><i>by Jill Beloff Farrell and<br/>Catheryn J. Weitman</i>       |
| 21 | CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: WHAT EVERY<br>EDUCATOR SHOULD KNOW<br><i>by Marianne K. Dove and<br/>Kenneth L. Miller</i>                                    | 41                                                                                                                      | TEACHER EDUCATION—THE HEART<br>OF A LEARNING COMMUNITY<br><i>by Michele Michiko and<br/>Jan Zulich</i>                             |
| 26 | CYBER-BULLYING:<br>WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO PREVENT IT<br><i>by Laura Johnson Hummell</i>                                                            | <b>4 CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS</b><br><b>46 POETRY</b><br><b>47 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR</b><br><b>48 SUBMISSION GUIDELINES</b> |                                                                                                                                    |

Cover: PhotoDisc

## About This Issue

In light of the recent tragedy at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia, it seems only fitting that this issue concentrates on challenges educators face in dealing with today's youth. Although the events at Virginia Tech are not common, they do speak to the ways in which society has changed, and how today's student environment is practically unrecognizable

compared to years past. Changes within the school setting are often good, but they also can bring about all kinds of new obstacles that teachers have to deal with. In this issue we explore various challenges such as the continuing problem with teen pregnancy, the growing situation of homeless students, and the new "cyber-bullying" that is a byproduct of technological advancements.

## Call for Submissions!

Members are encouraged to submit manuscripts for consideration by the *Bulletin* Editorial Board. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin* accepts manuscripts for **print** issues (spring, fall) that are Action Research, Anecdotes, Graphic Arts, Letters to the Editor, Poetry, or Program Descriptions. The **online** issues (summer, winter) include Annotated Bibliography, Qualitative Research, and Quantitative Research. For **both print and online** issues we accept Book Reviews, Viewpoints, and Position Papers. Manuscripts should be focused, well organized, effectively developed, concise, and appropriate for *Bulletin* readers. The style should be direct, clear, readable and free from gender, political, patriotic or religious bias. For more detailed information, please refer to the Submission Guidelines on page 48. Listed below are the suggested themes of upcoming issues.

### Winter 2008 (online)—Educating in Urban Settings

*(Postmark Deadline is September 1, 2007)*

Dimensions of the theme include (but are not limited to): • Parenting • Readiness for Education • Technology Bridging the Gaps • Distance Learning • Core Curriculum • Small Schools • Home Schooling and Other Options for School Delivery • Special Challenges • ESL

### Spring 2008 (print)—Mentoring: Wisdom to Share, Passion to Care

*(Postmark Deadline is December 1, 2007)*

Dimensions of the theme include (but are not limited to): • Mentoring • Mentoring Colleagues • Life Coaching • Induction Programs • Teacher Preparation Programs • Career Stages • Mentoring Parents • Time Management • Teacher-Administrator Relationships

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## The Teen Pregnancy Dilemma: A Different Solution

BY LINDA ARMS GILBERT

While America's teen pregnancy rate has steadily decreased since 1990, the question at the core of the dilemma remains: How do we help teen mothers become successful parents, reach their personal and professional goals, and achieve self-efficacy? This article recounts how one city found an effective answer to that question in a 50-year-old federal housing project that was riddled with crime and drugs.

When I first met Alicia, she was a vivacious, intelligent adolescent in my sixth grade music class. When I last met Alicia, she was living in Franklin Heights, a federal housing project, and was the mother of two young children.

At the beginning of her junior year in high school, Alicia became part of America's teen pregnancy dilemma—a dilemma with profound ramifications.

### Impact of the Dilemma

Between 1990 and 2002, the pregnancy rate for America's 15-19-year-olds decreased 36%. But we cannot be comfortable with that success, because a stark reality remains:

- 750,000 girls get pregnant each year,<sup>1</sup>
- 31% of teenage girls get pregnant at least once before they turn 20,<sup>2</sup> and
- the federal government spends about \$7 billion to help families that originate with a teen mother.<sup>3</sup>

Children of teen mothers often suffer from low birth weight and its associated physical and behavioral problems, receive less medical

care, are at higher risk of poor parenting, may become victims of abuse or neglect, are more likely to be retained in one or more grades, and score lower on achievement tests.<sup>4</sup> In addition, they are twice as likely to drop out of high school; and they are more likely to have children of their own before the age of 20, be unemployed, and live in poverty.<sup>5</sup>

What can be done to help teen mothers and their children be successful? In the geographic center of Tennessee, one city found the answer in an unexpected location—a federal housing project riddled with drugs and crime.

### Off Limits

In the early 1990s, Murfreesboro was becoming the fastest growing city in Tennessee, and at its core stood the Franklin Heights

#### THE AUTHOR

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Federal Housing Project, a complex of 140 two-story brick row apartments constructed 50 years earlier. Franklin Heights was an area filled with low-income families; it was also an area known for violent crimes and open-air drug sales. Daily, Nashville drug dealers traveled 30 miles to Murfreesboro to peddle their goods to teen parents who lacked education and job skills, had drug and alcohol dependencies, and had no meaningful involvement in their children's lives. Trash and debris were strewn in the yards, which had no grass or trees; in the streets, adolescents used dealers and hustlers as role models. Delivery trucks would not serve the area, and when police officers tried to patrol the complex, their cars were pelted with rocks. Franklin Heights was off-limits to safety, off-limits to learning, and off-limits to a positive future for young mothers and their children.

#### Partnerships Begin

In an effort to rid the area of the dealers who were preying on the residents and to regain a drug-free environment, the Murfreesboro Housing Authority formed a partnership with the Murfreesboro Police Department to provide off-duty police officers in Franklin Heights.

With federal drug elimination funds, the Housing Authority transformed a one-bedroom apartment into a police precinct. The police officers focused on developing positive relationships with the Franklin Heights families,

made more than 500 contacts to form partnerships with businesses and faith organizations, and held meetings to empower residents by teaching them about criminal trespassing and the process for reporting unwanted visitors and suspicious activities.

During this time, the Parks and Recreation

Department began Project Go!, an after-school program that targeted the 8- to 13-year-old student group. The program eliminated drug-related behaviors by providing safe, positive, social and recreational alternatives for leisure time. Experiential learning activities included fishing and camping trips, pizza parties, sporting events, concerts, movies, skating, bowling, and a trip to the Smoky Mountains. In addition, Project Go! created an after-school tutoring program.

By 1998, the combination of informed residents willing to provide tips and the positive working relationships between law enforcement and the Franklin Heights families had created a safe environment. But in order for the housing project to become a productive community, core educational, environmental, and social problems had to be addressed.

#### Meeting the Need

In August 1998, the Murfreesboro City School System used Title I and Even Start funds to begin two preschools in the center of the housing project. An adjacent four-bedroom apartment became an adult education/child care facility that offered GED and job skills enhancement to young mothers and provided care for their children who were not in preschool. However, other services were needed.

Because no additional school system funds were available, grants needed to be written and partnerships needed to be formed in order to build additional protective factors for the teen mothers and their children. As a result, during the second year of the school system's involvement at Franklin Heights, a Family Resource Center opened, and a clothes closet and food bank were established. A "Dress for Success" program, which provided young mothers with appropriate clothing for job interviews, also opened in the facility.

By 2001, a Department of Children's Services case worker had joined the location; three VISTA volunteers were developing reading programs for children; businesses and industries within the county were holding job fairs for the residents; an ESL program had begun; psychologists were facilitating "Woman to Woman" classes to increase the self-esteem

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**The program eliminated drug-related behaviors by providing safe, positive, social and recreational alternatives for leisure time.**

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of young mothers; the Guidance Center was conducting a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program; a van purchased with drug elimination funds was taking families to medical services and social services; a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers grant provided transportation to PTA meetings and after-school tutoring and learning activities; and the school system's Extended School Program was offering child care from 6 to 8 a.m. and from 2:30 to 6 p.m. for working parents.

Between 2001 and 2004, the Franklin Heights project formed a consortium of more than 40 volunteer, faith, education, and social agencies. A Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program was added. The PAT Program parent educator made home visits, conducted parent skills training, and held group meetings to help young parents understand the emotional, physical, and cognitive needs of their young children and to form a community of teen mothers who could offer support to each other. A lending library that collected books and shared them with children in the project was established in an apartment. A Parent-Teacher Organization was formed within Franklin Heights and provided a strong link between the community and the school to which the children were zoned. A partnership between the City Schools' GED program and the nearby Tennessee Technology Center gave young mothers access to education and job skills training. In a town with no public transportation system, a Bookmobile from the public library visited the project each week to allow access to a library and to teach literacy make-and-take activities; and a Mobile Health Unit from the local hospital provided weekly on-site health services.

### The Results

Franklin Heights has been honored for its success. National and international awards include a Best Practice Award from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a Best Practice Award from the International City Management Association, the American Association of School Administrators' national Leadership for Learning Award for urban school districts in America, the American School

Board Journal's Magna Award, a Communities Can! Award, and the National Civic Star Award from the American Association of School Administrators and Sodexo. But more important than the awards are the transformed families.

Young women—who had become mothers when they were children themselves, had dropped out of school without completing their high school diploma, and would have entered a cycle of poverty without the intervention and support programs located on site in the housing project—have graduated with their GED certificates and received postsecondary degrees from the Tennessee Technology Center or from Middle Tennessee State University. Mothers have become employed, have developed nurturing parent-child relationships that ensure academic success for their children when they enter school, have participated in school board meetings, and have told their stories at national conferences.

### Lessons Learned

Franklin Heights has taught an entire city about the importance of collaboration and has shown what can be accomplished when individuals and agencies choose to look beyond the borders of their own job descriptions and departments to see the needs of families within that community.

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As a result of the lessons learned at Franklin Heights, turf issues between governmental and social agencies no longer exist. Increased communication has provided

a shared knowledge of what each agency offers, and the process for acquiring services has been streamlined. Because of the ongoing collaboration among the partners, when a young mother needs help, help is found. Focus is on the person instead of the product.

Since its efforts in Franklin Heights began, the Board of Education has endorsed new preschools within school buildings and in satellite sites in the community, and the number of preschools across the city has tripled. A countywide literacy initiative was formed to address the needs of families, and an on-site health clinic will be in place soon.

Success stories abound:

- Welfare moms, graduates of the GED classes, are now enrolled in the university's nursing program.
- In the summer, children are involved in recreational and educational activities at Franklin Heights. Idleness and boredom, the partners of drug use and teen pregnancy, have been eliminated.
- The Family Resource Center coordinator actively links families with health professionals to address the physical and mental needs of parents and children.
- Children who would have qualified for special education services a year ago, before preschool, are succeeding in a kindergarten class.

Beginning as an initiative to make lives of residents better, the efforts of community partners have changed the Franklin Heights community—from despair to promise, from a fragmentation of services to a consortium of help, and from being reactive to being proactive.

Teen mothers have reclaimed their lives and are now empowered for the future.

The beauty of Franklin Heights is that it can be replicated in other communities. When people and organizations committed to improving the lives of others join together, many communities can experience the success story that is Franklin Heights.

What about Alicia?

The last time that I saw Alicia, she was in one of Franklin Heights' preschool rooms and was singing. Her voice was as clear as it had been many years ago in my music classroom, and it was a voice of hope. Two weeks previously, Alicia had received her GED, and on this particular day, her child was graduating from preschool. When she finished the song, I gave Alicia a hug, and then she asked me if I would write a letter of reference for her to be admitted to the university's nursing program. I sent the letter to the university the next day. A success for Alicia...a success for Franklin Heights...a success for the future...a success built on the efforts of a city that chose to see the needs of teen mothers and to put together support systems on which successes could be built and futures could be changed.

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## Homeless Students and the Public School System

BY RAMONA A. HALL

This article focuses on the plight of homeless students attending public schools in the United States. More than a year after Hurricane Katrina, public school systems throughout the country continue to make efforts to deliver an equal, high-quality education to this population. Having heightened awareness of this social issue as its main objective, this article outlines homeless students' experiences and the barriers they typically face, while making available practical tips and other resources that school personnel may use.

It is a Friday morning in an Oklahoma sixth-grade classroom, and the class has completed a math lesson just minutes before lunchtime. The principal walks in with a student who has just been enrolled. He is one of the thousands of students displaced by Hurricane Katrina. The boy and his father recently relocated to the area, and since Katrina, neither of the two knows the whereabouts of the boy's mother. She is feared dead. The boy's father is unemployed, and both are temporarily residing at the local homeless shelter. Clearly, this student has no school records or stable home environment, and school is the least of his concerns at this time. Imagine the feelings and questions that this young boy may have. Imagine the feelings and questions that you would have if you were his teacher.

### The Numbers

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina slammed into America's Gulf Coast. While the news stories related to this horrific event have significantly subsided more than a year later, the after effects of Katrina remain present in school districts throughout the country. Approximately

370,000 school-aged children were displaced by the nation's worst natural disaster. Hundreds of thousands still remain separated from what used to be their homes.<sup>1</sup> While some areas house larger concentrations of families uprooted by Katrina than other areas, displaced school children can be found throughout the country. According to the Council of Chief State School Officers' statistics on displaced students, these families have been welcomed by at least 38 states, and the school systems that operate within those states have managed to accommodate the children.<sup>2</sup>

In light of these numbers, it is important to be mindful of the fact that Hurricane Katrina did not create this population over night. The events of August 29, 2005, added to an already existing population of homeless school-aged

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children who are served by the nation's public school systems. However, because of the nature of the situation, it is difficult to obtain a clear picture of the number of families and school-aged children who are homeless. Individuals who find themselves without a home to call their own tend to be reluctant to discuss their plight with others and often go to great lengths to hide their circumstances altogether. Unlike the case with Hurricane Katrina, it is typically by surprise and happenstance that homeless students are identified by school personnel. Many times, teachers, principals, and school counselors are oblivious to the situation. The National Coalition for the Homeless indicates that approximately 1 million children experience homelessness in any given year.<sup>3</sup> In light of that estimate and the secrecy that tends to surround this social issue, there is a high probability that many homeless students are never identified and offered the help that they need.

Despite the fact that obtaining solid data on the number of homeless is a challenge, substantial evidence supports the theory that the number of homeless children in the United States has dramatically increased in recent years. By some accounts, the number has more than doubled in recent decades.<sup>4</sup> And contrary to popular belief, the homeless population is not necessarily concentrated in urban areas. In fact, higher rates of homelessness exist among families with children. About one-half of all rural households are characterized as such.<sup>5</sup>

Characteristics and Challenges of Homeless Students

The first step in trying to improve homeless students' public school experience is to define and understand fully their perspectives and unique circumstances. The characteristics of homeless students that impact the quality of their educational experiences are many. The average homeless school-aged child experiences a number of emotional challenges. Irrational fears and phobias, such as a fear of the dark or a fear

of strangers, are all typical for this population. Anxieties, low self-esteem, and feelings of anger, embarrassment, and depression are also common. Behaviors that may sometimes accompany these emotions include aggression and suicide attempts. Socially, this group tends to exhibit immature interaction with peers, inappropriate social interaction with adults, and withdrawal and isolation. In a classroom setting, frequent disruptive tendencies are also common. Physically, homeless school-aged children are much more likely to experience hunger, stress, developmental delays, hyperactivity, and problems sleeping. They are also more susceptible to health problems, as well as to domestic, physical, and sexual violence. Other behaviors that this particular group typically exhibits include difficulties concentrating, psychological and cognitive problems, and learning disabilities.<sup>6</sup>

Many at-risk groups are present in classrooms all over the United States. However, homeless school-aged children have been characterized as the group that is the most at-risk of all.<sup>7</sup> While the characteristics outlined above focus on the student exclusively, it is necessary to understand that it is not just personal issues that can present a barrier to receiving a high-quality education. Unfortunately, many times the barriers that this group encounters

are created on the part of the school system itself. When most school policies and procedures were written, the plight of the homeless was not given consideration. Consequently, the school system, as it was designed and created to operate, inherently presents barriers for this population. For example, the enrollment process can present a number of potential barriers. Many of the students who were displaced by Katrina did not possess paperwork from their former schools concerning their attendance or academic performance. The case is the same for students who are rendered homeless for reasons other than a natural disaster. In addition, satisfying

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**The National Coalition for the Homeless indicates that approximately 1 million children experience homelessness in any given year.**

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other enrollment requirements also becomes a challenge for the homeless student and his family. Documenting citizenship and residency when entire communities and infrastructures have been eradicated is difficult to do. Again, this challenge applies not only in natural disaster situations but also in situations where there simply is no stable home environment to safeguard important documents. In some instances, simply verifying the legal guardian of a child is a barrier. Another common barrier is transportation. Homeless students frequently reside in homeless shelters and other parts of the community where there typically is no school bus route. If left unchecked, this situation can perpetuate the high truancy and dropout rates that exist within this population.<sup>8</sup>

### Who Can Help and How

Clearly, the tendencies and challenges that have been outlined above are not experienced in a vacuum by the student. They have significant implications not only for the teacher, but also for the policymakers, administrators, school counselors, and other school personnel with whom they are in contact. Consequently, ensuring that this group receives the adequate and high-quality education that it deserves and has every right to receive requires effort on the part of everyone involved.

Although the circumstances may present themselves as overwhelming to school personnel, there are some basic, practical steps that counselors, administrators, and teachers can take to mitigate the effects that homelessness can have in the public school setting. School counselors, for example, can simply take it upon themselves to identify those students who live in local shelters and initiate contact with them at school. Counselors may also help by creating school-wide programs that create a more tolerant school climate. Where appropriate and feasible, peer counseling programs can also be quite effective.<sup>9</sup>

Administrators also have a role in helping with the homeless student situation. One of the most important things that administrators can do is ensure that the school system and its school personnel have immediate access to

such resources as food, clothing, medical care, and emergency shelter. In addition, promptly following up when homeless students are absent is another good habit. Other effective practices

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## **...there are some simple steps a classroom teacher may take to provide continuity and stability in the lives of these children.**

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that administrators may coordinate and oversee include leaving school brochures at shelters, sending teams to the shelters to assist with enrollment and to answer questions, and even offering classes and volunteer tutoring services at the shelters when students are unable to come to the school building.

Administrators are also capable of relaxing policies for enrollment. Some examples include accepting motel receipts and shelter letters as proof of residency, or using passports, Bible inscriptions, or social services forms as proof of a birth date. Allowing a grace period to obtain school records or a verbal confirmation of the student's past record is a great benefit to these students. Other practical tips include making storage space available for students' personal items and maintaining food pantries, laundry facilities, showers, and a place for students to go between the time that school closes and the shelters open. Of all the things that administrators can do to alleviate some of the stress that these students experience, one of the most important is providing training for school personnel in how to work with and facilitate these students' unique needs. Perhaps the most important thing an administrator can do is simply devote 5 minutes a week to a homeless child.<sup>10</sup>

Typically, the school personnel who work most closely with the homeless student population are the classroom teachers. Ironically, in the midst of chaos, disorder, and uncertainty, there are some simple steps a classroom teacher may take to provide continuity and stability

in the lives of these children. Some of the effective strategies that classroom teachers may practice involve the classroom setting itself. For example, in an effort to provide a sense of stability, it is helpful to refrain from frequently rearranging the classroom furniture. At the same time, creating a classroom environment that resembles a home-like setting is also beneficial. A classroom that has plants, photographs of the students, a class pet, and even a sofa or other appropriate domestic furniture provides the homeless student with a sense of stability that he most likely is not getting elsewhere. In many cases, giving the homeless student classroom responsibilities and tasks provides the child with a sense of independence and control that he may desperately need. Providing a well-established daily routine that the student can count on and look forward to is another way to provide a sense of stability and continuity in the midst of uncertain circumstances.

In addition to attending to the classroom setting, there are other things the classroom teacher can do to make the sudden and frequent transitions that these students experience a bit less traumatic.<sup>11</sup> For example, teachers are urged to break regular, routine practices and procedures into smaller segments. Rather than issuing progress reports every 6 weeks or so, the teacher may choose to issue the report weekly or even daily. Having a portfolio policy in place is an excellent way to document the student's work, abilities, and progress over short periods of time. At the same time, a portfolio quickly and easily transfers with the student. If a portfolio policy is not feasible, simply maintaining an updated account of the student's dispositions, abilities, preferred learning style, and so forth is a great idea. Other recommendations include creating contracts with the student concerning homework assignments, allowing the student to finish assignments independently in cases where there are regular absences, and giving the student the opportunity to complete tasks at his own pace. One procedure that is useful in both learning about the prior knowledge and abilities of incoming students and offsetting the potential effects of sudden departures is always to have

on hand basic assessments that can be easily and readily administered.<sup>12</sup>

## Conclusion

Unfortunately, homelessness is a social issue that most likely will never completely go away. In spite of how it may appear on the surface, however, there are some practical steps that school personnel can take to make the public school setting more conducive to the unique circumstances of the homeless student population. Creating a school environment that is welcoming and accommodating to the homeless child is the responsibility of everyone involved.

## Resources

Children's Defense Fund, [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)  
 National Coalition for the Homeless, [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org)  
 National Law on Homelessness and Poverty, [www.nlchp.org](http://www.nlchp.org)  
 National Center for Homeless Education, [www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche)  
 Education for Homeless Children and Youths, <http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html>  
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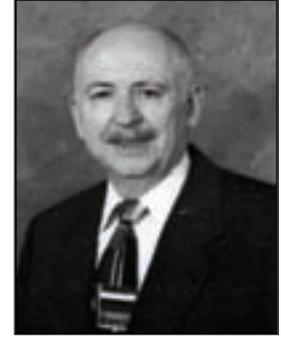
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## Straight from the Editors' ~~Mouths~~....Pens

BY PATRICIA WILLIAMS, MARGARET HAMMER, MICHELLE PIERCZYNSKI-WARD, AND KEN HENSON

What do journal editors want from potential authors? We received questionnaire responses from 43 editors concerning such topics as acceptance rates, preferred page length, and reviewer timelines for selected journals. In addition, we asked them about the number of subscribers and issues produced yearly. Then, we organized the findings into four categories: selecting a journal, preparing the manuscript, receiving reviewer feedback, and making the final cut. We also created a table to delineate the results and provided various journal Web sites and editor e-mail addresses. Writers will find this article useful as they explore places to send their next manuscript.

Your manuscript floats through your head or sits impatiently locked in the computer awaiting the finishing touches. However, you are still contemplating where to send your scintillating piece. To make this process easier, we decided to ask editors questions with which we, as writers, have often grappled in choosing a journal. What do editors really want? What are the chances that our article will be published? Who decides? How long will it take? And, if the article is selected, how many potential subscribers will read it?

To answer our questions, we queried journal editors to discover what they expected in today's writing marketplace. Of those contacted, 43 individuals responded. We then alphabetized the journals and created a table that delineates specific questionnaire responses (See Appendix A at [www.deltakappagamma.net](http://www.deltakappagamma.net)). Our analysis

of the responses concentrates on four major points: selecting a journal, preparing the manuscript, receiving reviewer feedback, and making the final cut.

### Selecting a Journal

How many times have you thought, "I have a great idea for an article, but where do I send it?" According to editor Ken Henson, you should select potential publications before you begin writing.<sup>13</sup> Using Cabell's online directory is one way of finding editors who might be interested in your topic.<sup>6</sup> This massive compilation features approximately 570 journals grouped into specific categories, so it is easy to find precise matches for your manuscript concerning early childhood, psychology, or educational leadership. Along with providing a list of article topics, Cabell's explains each

journal's guidelines and review process. It also indicates how often a specific journal is cited in other journals. Often, university administrators and faculty use information such as circulation rate in determining how prestigious it is to be an author in a particular journal. Along with the Web site, Cabell's offers two books that can assist writers in publishing their manuscripts.<sup>4,5</sup> If your institution does not subscribe to Cabell's online directory, you may decide to use the print versions, although these are not updated as frequently. Once you have located appropriate journals, review at least three current issues and the most recent guidelines to see if your manuscript fits.<sup>17</sup> Editors change, addresses change, requirements change. There are literally hundreds of journals, and you want to find the right ones. If you locate two or three possibilities, you are saving yourself time. Later on, if the manuscript is rejected by your first choice, you can quickly get it ready for the next journal. You have already done the research.

At our university, the College of Education has classified journals as tier one, two, or three. Whereas tier one journals are generally nationally or internationally printed and have a large circulation, tier three journals may appeal to a relatively small group and be sent to individuals in one state. Therefore, we wanted to know how many people actually subscribe to the various journals. Our table indicates that rates vary greatly. For instance, *School Leadership Review* is sent to 100+ subscribers, while 180,000+ individuals receive *Educational Leadership*. If readership is important to you, then you might consider these statistics. However, these numbers may be a little deceiving because a large university library may be a subscriber, and hundreds of patrons may read the same issue. Circulation rates, therefore, may be much higher.

Along with studying readership, there are several additional points to ponder. Whereas *Tempo* accepts 85% of the manuscripts received, *Educational Leadership* prints 10-15%. With acceptance rates ranging from 5% to 85%, this piece of the puzzle becomes important. By comparing the acceptance rate with the number of articles published, you can determine how

many articles these editors receive. While editors for *Action in Teacher Education*, a preeminent journal, publish roughly 40 of the approximately 267 manuscripts they receive, editors for *Tempo*, a lesser-known but worthwhile journal on gifted education, includes 17 of the 20 manuscripts they get each year. What are your chances of getting your article printed in that tier one journal? Is your piece written for their target audience, does it fit their topics of interest, and does it tie with one of the themed issues?

As Henson and Buttery concluded, it is often easier to get an article published in a themed issue.<sup>15</sup> Usually editors do not receive as many manuscripts for themed issues as they receive for "open" issues. In fact, Henson emphasized, "Often three or four times as many manuscripts are received for general issues as are received for themed issues. Submitting an article for publication in a themed issue means that *you have an opportunity to increase your chances for acceptance by 300 to 400%*."<sup>13</sup> Consult the actual journal or Web site to discover the monthly, seasonal, or yearly themes. All 43 editors stated that they printed journal guidelines at least once per year, and those who have themed issues typically announce them months, or in some cases, years in advance. In addition to listing the number of yearly issues, the table shows how many themed issues are produced.

In determining where to send your manuscript, think about the number of issues printed. While some print on a monthly basis, others print just once a year. Will your statistics be outdated in a year? Will your hot topic still hold interest? Understanding journal timelines is paramount in the publishing field.

Research, especially at the university level, is often a requisite for faculty and administrative positions and merit funding. Albarran and Scholes stressed, "Within higher education, there has been a traditional culture that to be a rounded academic, an individual must have a profile that demonstrates active involvement in research and publishing."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that 21 of the 43 journals are primarily research focused. In many instances, scientific papers use a common format that includes title, abstract, introduction,

methods, results, discussion, and references.<sup>21,15</sup> Even with a research journal, many editors still do not want tables and pictures. In fact, the vast majority, 31 editors, noted that these items would not enhance a writer's chances of having an article published. With printing costs continually rising, it may be better to describe the research results in the text's body. Again, peruse three current issues to determine the acceptable format and style.

Many authors have a definite opinion regarding how they want their article published—hard copy, online, or both. According to our survey responses, most journals have hard copy printings; however, one published online solely. Burbules contended that:

New avenues of publication have raised a host of new questions: issues of intellectual property and plagiarism; issues of how publication in on-line journals, many of which are refereed with as much rigour as most print journals, should be evaluated for tenure, promotion, and salary purposes...<sup>3</sup>

Check with those administrators who complete your faculty evaluations to discern how much online publications count. Also, read the requirements to determine if the authors must be affiliated with a particular organization. In our study, *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, an internationally recognized journal, is the only one that requires at least one author to be a member.

If you still have questions after studying the guidelines and previous issues, you might consider contacting the editors. In Appendixes B and C, you will find the Web page addresses and e-mail address listings for the editors we contacted. Of the 43 individuals, only 12 preferred no initial contacts, and 28 wanted potential authors to e-mail them. In a few instances, editors wanted telephone inquiries or query letters. Samples of successful and not-so-successful query letters appear in Henson's book, *The Art of Writing for Publication*.<sup>13</sup> Regardless of the method selected, inquiries must be focused and brief. Succinctly state your reason for contacting the editor and

ask for a response. Provide an e-mail address, phone number or snail-mail address. Editors are usually busy individuals who do not have time to hunt for numbers or addresses.

### Preparing the Manuscript

After examining various journals, you are now ready to prepare the manuscript. In their article regarding writing for publication, Gargiulo, Jalongo, and Motari provided 12 succinct tips. Among these suggestions were to “have something to discover or say and work from genuine curiosity and intrinsic motivation rather than obligation or trendiness,” and “be reader-centered.”<sup>10</sup> First, you must meet these criteria. If you do not believe that your points have merit and add significantly to the field, others will not either. Moore agreed. She created a tentative conceptual model on faculty motivation to write and publish and concluded, “When individuals write out of anxiety rather than desire, the process is driven by a negative and potentially damaging ethic.”<sup>18</sup> Passion for what you are saying comes through in writing, at least in writing that others truly want to read.

The first impression—the abstract—is what most editors initially read. Therefore, an article may be automatically rejected because it seemed unclear or unfocused. Twenty-six of the 43 editors wanted abstracts. According to Shannon:

A well-prepared abstract will enable the reader to identify the basic content of a paper quickly and accurately and determine its relevance to their interests. It concisely summarizes the results and main conclusions so that the essential details of the paper can be understood in 100-250 words.<sup>23</sup>

For further help in writing these important summaries, you may read Kamler and Thomson's article, “Driven to Abstraction,” in which they analyzed journal abstracts and explained typical components.<sup>16</sup>

In addition, you will want to know if the journal stipulates a particular style manual and a certain page length. Most education journals

follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA).<sup>20</sup> However, 10 editors wanted writers to use the *Chicago Manual of Style*.<sup>7</sup> Three said they would accept either APA or Chicago, and one stipulated the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*.<sup>11</sup> Other valuable tools include *The Internet Writer's Handbook*<sup>22</sup> and *Research and Documentation in the Electronic Age*.<sup>12</sup> Some editors suggested a page length, while a few wanted a precise word length. Rule of thumb—each double-spaced page contains about 250 words. For our editor participants, the page length answers varied from four to 50 pages. Henson contended that a writer should review previous journal issues and check lengths.<sup>14</sup> Then, aim toward the shortest number, because an editor will often need a shorter piece to complete an issue. That happened recently to one of the authors of this piece. Her one-page article fit perfectly in the *Phi Delta Kappa International Connection* newsletter.<sup>2</sup>

### Reviewing Your Work

In today's fast-paced, technology world, manuscripts are often sent electronically. Editors can now easily send submissions to reviewers with a few computer clicks. This convenience often speeds the process so that writers receive reviewer remarks at a much faster rate than previously. Other editors still send hard copies to three or four reviewers, usually with a due date for comments. Check the journal to determine the number and type to send. While 33 editors wanted manuscripts sent via e-mail or online, 10 requested four or five hard copies. Others mentioned disks. Fahey recommended that writers send a disk only when the guideline or editors request it.<sup>8</sup> The format and number are normally stipulated in the guidelines, so check to avoid making an error. As stated in a publication concerning editors' advice, "Build credibility with the editor and conform to the manuscript submission guidelines rather than ignoring details."<sup>10</sup> To build this trust, writers should develop positive communication lines, submit quality work, meet deadlines, and respond promptly to e-mail and telephone messages.<sup>19</sup>

Of those who answered our survey, 23

used a double-blind review, which means that the reviewers did not know who the writers were and vice versa. This process gives everyone an equal chance because potential articles are judged solely on the work's merits.<sup>6</sup> Two of the most prestigious educational journals, *Phi Delta Kappan* and *Educational Leadership*, employ editorial staffs. Their manuscripts are selected in-house and are not subject to blind, double-blind, or peer reviews. Furthermore, writers do not receive written comments about their pieces. However, a substantial majority of respondents, 37 editors, indicated that writers did receive written feedback. These suggestions normally focus on content, organization, and journal compatibility. Questions about whether it fits the journal's purpose; is interesting, clear and readable; is well organized; and is of interest to our readers dominate reviewer forms.

### Making the Final Cut

The waiting game is both one of the easiest and hardest parts of the process. Your work is now out of your hands, so you begin the process once again. Prolific writers often have four manuscripts moving along simultaneously. One piece is being published, another is being reviewed, a third is being drafted, and a fourth is circling in the writer's head. Juggling this much, while at the same time preparing and teaching outstanding classes, performing service duties, and having a personal life, requires commitment and skilled time management. Why then would you want to follow this schedule? One editor we surveyed stated that it may take only 2 weeks to receive notification concerning whether or not the piece will be published, but many listed 3 or 4 months, and several checked more than half a year. Academicians do not have time to wait before beginning again—publish or perish is reality at many higher education institutions.

Once you have received the editors' and reviewers' comments, it's time to make another decision. Do you celebrate because the manuscript has been accepted as is, make the necessary revisions and resubmit, or send your manuscript to a different journal editor? Some revisions are so massive that it means rewriting the entire article. At times, the reviewer feedback

is contradictory. Because reviewers usually do not see the other reviewers' comments, they may make statements that leave you in a quandary. Whereas one applauded your introduction, another believed that it fell flat. Good editors will help you with this dilemma by making their own comments after reading all the reviews.

According to Fahey, "Most articles that are accepted for publication will be 're-writes'; the editor typically asks an author to resubmit the piece with some indicated changes."<sup>8</sup> Don't be disappointed if you are asked to revise. In *Writing for Publication*, Garcia advised writers to be encouraged if they are asked to resubmit and suggested they contact the editor if questions about the feedback arise.<sup>9</sup> Revision timelines are often based on when that issue will be published. Our survey responses ranged from 2 weeks to 3 years. In some instances, the revision deadline is negotiable. Editors can use the manuscript in various issues; at other times, the deadline is short: 2 to 4 weeks. Especially when the article fits a particular theme, editors cannot hold production for one article. They must meet their deadlines, too. If you have given your word that it will be there, it must. No exceptions. According to our survey, the published article will appear between 2 and 18 months after acceptance. Then, the celebration can begin.

## Concluding Remarks

Now that you have gained new insight into the publishing market, it is time to use this knowledge. Before picking up that pen or turning on that computer, think about your topic, read the table results, review several possible journals, and choose the most suitable audience.

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**Appendix A**  
**Table of Questionnaire Responses can be found on Society website**

**Appendix B**  
**Guidelines for Authors - Journal URLs**

*Action in Teacher Education*

<http://www.ou.edu/action/>  
[http://www.ate1.org/pubs/Submitting\\_Journal.cfm](http://www.ate1.org/pubs/Submitting_Journal.cfm)

*Advancing Women in Leadership*

<http://www.advancingwomen.com/awl/awl.html>

*Alpha Chi Recorder*

<http://www.harding.edu/alphachi/gettingpublished.htm>

*The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*

<http://www.deltakappagamma.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=97>

*Early Childhood Education Journal*

<http://gort.ucsd.edu/newjour/e/msg02765.html>

*Ed leadership Review* (See Appendix C for e-mail address)

*Educational Leadership*

<http://www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd/en/ititem.965dde87afdbb65fb85516f762108a0c/jsessionid=EwTzV4tDZ5Dn155kXzWnuLegRftQORkSpUKvePKOVqwI9rASskOR!-2037085831>

*Elementary School Journal*

<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/ESJ/home.html>

*Exceptional Children*

<http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Publications1>

*The Family Journal*

<http://tfj.sagepub.com/>

*Gifted Child Today*

[http://www.prufrock.com/client/client\\_pages/prufrockauthors.cfm](http://www.prufrock.com/client/client_pages/prufrockauthors.cfm)

*International Journal of Social Education*

<http://www.bsu.edu/classes/cantu/ijseinfo.html>

*Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*

[http://my.nctm.org/eresources/journal\\_home.asp?journal\\_id=1](http://my.nctm.org/eresources/journal_home.asp?journal_id=1)

*Journal of At-Risk Issues*

[http://www.dropoutprevention.org/resource/journal\\_risk/call\\_manus.htm](http://www.dropoutprevention.org/resource/journal_risk/call_manus.htm)

*Journal of Constructivist Psychology*

<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/authors/upcyauth.asp>

*The Journal of Higher Education*

[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal\\_of\\_higher\\_education/information/guidelines.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_higher_education/information/guidelines.html)

*The Journal of Research in Childhood Education*

<http://www.acei.org/jrcehp.htm>

*Journal of Thought*

<http://www.educ.ttu.edu/online/dsimpson/journalofthought/index.html>

*Knowledge Quest*

<http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/authorsandeditors/aaslauthorseditors.htm>

- Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*  
<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/carfax/13611267.asp>
- Middle Level Learning* (National Council for the Social Studies)  
<http://www.socialstudies.org/publications/ml/>
- Middle School Journal*  
<http://www.nmsa.org/Publications/MiddleSchoolJournal/GuidelinesforAuthors/tabid/405/Default.aspx>
- Multicultural Perspectives*  
<http://www.nameorg.org/publications.html>
- Phi Delta Kappan*  
<http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/khome/khpsubmi.htm>
- Phi Kappa Phi Forum*  
[http://www.phikappaphi.org/Web/Publications/Forum/about\\_forum.html](http://www.phikappaphi.org/Web/Publications/Forum/about_forum.html)
- Preventing School Failure*  
[http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_hb3372](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3372)
- Remedial and Special Education*  
[http://www.proedinc.com/submission\\_rase.html](http://www.proedinc.com/submission_rase.html)
- School Leadership Review*  
[http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/EPPIWeb/home.aspx?page=/reel/review\\_groups/leadership/home.htm](http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/EPPIWeb/home.aspx?page=/reel/review_groups/leadership/home.htm)
- School Science and Mathematics*  
<http://oregonstate.edu/pubs/ssm/>
- Science and Children*  
<http://www.nsta.org/elementaryschool> or <http://www.nsta.org/162>
- Science Scope*  
<http://www.nsta.org/middleschool> or <http://www.nsta.org/153>
- Science Teacher (The)*  
<http://www.nsta.org/> or <http://www.nsta.org/169>
- Social Education*  
<http://www.socialstudies.org/publications/se/>
- Social Studies Journal (The)* (See Appendix C for e-mail address)
- Social Studies Journal and the Young Learner*  
<http://www.socialstudies.org/publications/editorial/>
- STATellit (The)*  
<http://www.statweb.org/statellite.html>
- T.H.E Journal*  
<http://www.thejournal.com/the/marketing/prguidelines/>
- Teacher Education Quarterly*  
<http://www.teqjournal.org/information.htm>
- Teacher Educator (The)*  
<http://www.bsu.edu/tte/article/0,,28654--,00.html>
- Teaching and Learning: The Journal of Natural Inquiry and Reflective Practice*  
<http://www.und.nodak.edu/dept/ehd/journal/>
- Teaching Children Mathematics (TCM)*  
[http://my.nctm.org/eresources/submission\\_tcm.asp](http://my.nctm.org/eresources/submission_tcm.asp)
- Tempo*  
<http://www.txgifted.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=116>
- Urban Review*  
<http://www.springer.com/sgw/cda/frontpage/0,11855,5-10126-70-35755139-0,00.html>

### Appendix C Journal Editors' E-mail Addresses

*Action in Teacher Education*—John Chiodo & Priscilla Griffith (jjchiodo@ou.edu)  
*Advancing Women in Leadership*—Beverly Irby & Genevieve Brown (edu\_bid@shsu.edu)  
*Alpha Chi Recorder*—John Williams (jewilliams@harding.edu)  
*Childhood Education*—Anne Bauer (abauer@acei.org)  
*Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin (The)*—Jane Posten (janep@deltakappagamma.org)  
*Early Childhood Education Journal*—Mary Renck Jalongo (mjalongo@iup.edu)  
*Ed Leadership Review*—Sandra Harris (harriss@my.lamar.edu)  
*Educational Leadership*—Margaret M Scherer (mscherer@ascd.org)  
*Elementary School Journal*—Gail M Hinkel (HinkelG@missouri.edu)  
*Exceptional Children*—Steve Graham (steve.graham@vanderbilt.edu)  
*Family Journal (The)*—Kaye W. Nelson (Family.Journal@mail.tamucc.edu)  
*Gifted Child Today*—Susan K. Johnson (Susan\_Johnsen@baylor.edu)  
*International Journal of Social Education*—John Glen (jglen@bsu.edu)  
*Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*—Steven R. Williams (williams@mathed.byu.edu)  
*Journal of At-Risk Issues*—Rebecca A. Robles-Piña & Alice Fisher (edu\_rar@shsu.edu)  
*Journal of Constructivist Psychology*—Robert A. Neimeyer (neimeyer@memphis.edu)  
*Journal of Higher Education (The)*—Leonard L. Baird (baird.62@osu.edu)  
*Journal of Research in Childhood Education*—Michael F. Kelley Mkelley@asu.edu)  
*Journal of Thought: A Journal of Critical Reflection on Educational Issues*—Douglas J. Simpson (doug.simpson@ttu.edu)  
*Knowledge Quest*—Debbie Abilock (kq@abilock.net)  
*Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*—Carol A. Mullen (cmullen@coed.usf.edu)  
*Middle Level Learning*—Steve Lapham (slapham@ncss.org)  
*Middle School Journal*—Tom Erb (thomaserb@depauw.edu)  
*Multicultural Perspectives*—Penelope Lisi (lisip@ccsu.edu)  
*Phi Delta Kappan*—Bruce M. Smith (kappan@kiva.net)  
*Phi Kappa Phi Forum*—James P. Kaetz (kaetzjp@auburn.edu)  
*Preventing School Failure*—Stephanie Todd (psf@heldref.org)  
*Remedial and Special Education*—Mike Wehmeyer (wehmeyer@ku.edu)  
*School Leadership Review*—Stacey Edmonson (sedmonson@shsu.edu)  
*School Science and Mathematics*—Gerald O. Kulm (gkulm@coe.tamu.edu)  
*Science and Children*—Chris Ohana (chris.ohana@wwu.edu)  
*Science Scope*—Inez Liftig (zenisci8@aol.com)  
*Science Teacher (The)*—Steve Metz & Jennifer Henderson (smetz@nsta.org)  
*Social Education*—Michael Simpson (msimpson@ncss.org)  
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*Social Studies Journal and the Young Learner*—Sherry Field (sfield@ncss.org)  
*STATellite (The)*—Joel Palmer (statnews@statweb.org)  
*T.H.E. Journal*—Christina Schaller (cschaller@1105media.com)  
*Teacher Education Quarterly*—Thomas Nelson (tnelson@pacific.edu)  
*Teacher Educator (The)*—Jerrell Casady & Laurie Mullen (tte@bsu.edu)  
*Teaching and Learning: The Journal of Natural Inquiry and Reflective Practice*—Margaret Zidon (editor.tandl@und.nodak.edu) or (margaret.zidon@und.edu)  
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## Child Sexual Abuse: What Every Educator Should Know

BY MARIANNE K. DOVE AND KENNETH L. MILLER



Millions of children are sexually assaulted, exploited, molested, or raped in the United States and throughout the world. The authors define child sexual abuse, present prevalence statistics, and provide information about the signs and symptoms of sexual abuse. Strategies are also shared to heighten educators' awareness and ability to prevent sexual abuse, to take action in cases of suspected sexual abuse, and to reduce child sexual abuse by enacting educational policies and legislation.

Child sexual abuse is an alarming and pervasive feature on both the American and world landscapes. In the United States, reported cases of child sexual abuse increased by 322% between 1980 and 1990,<sup>1</sup> with 1.3 million reported sexual assaults on children in 1995 alone.<sup>2</sup> Today, there are approximately 60 million survivors of child sexual abuse living in the United States.<sup>3</sup> On the world stage, 73 million boys and 150 million girls under the age of 18 were victims of forced sexual intercourse or other sexual violence in 2002.<sup>4</sup> Exacerbating the problem is that 95% of victims know their perpetrators<sup>5</sup> and a majority of cases go unreported.<sup>6</sup> Child sexual abuse perpetrators include family members, friends, neighbors, teachers, coaches, clergy, and older youth. This fact reveals that persons in authority and caregivers in whom society places trust and power do not always warrant such license.

Although these statistics underscore the magnitude of the problem, societies are only now coming to grips with the actual prevalence and implications of child sexual abuse.<sup>7</sup> This realization is reflected in recent efforts by a host of law enforcement agencies (e.g., National Center for Missing and Exploited

Children, U.S. Department of Justice-Federal Bureau of Investigation), health/mental health organizations (e.g., American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Psychological Association), children's services organizations (e.g., Child Welfare Information Gateway, National Juvenile Online Victimization Survey Publications), and educational groups (e.g., Kidscape, and Childhelp USA) to create awareness of the problem and identify strategies that parents, children, educators, and others can use to prevent and respond effectively to child sexual abuse.

At the forefront of these efforts are legislative and educational initiatives to help teachers respond effectively in the classroom to cases of suspected child sexual abuse.

### What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Defining child sexual abuse is not a clear-cut task. The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect defines *child sexual abuse* as "any childhood sexual experience that interferes with or has the potential for interfering with a child's healthy development."<sup>8</sup> Several related terms have been used in the research literature and state statutes in an attempt to better describe

and identify specific acts of child sexual abuse. These terms include sexual exploitation, sexual assault, child molestation, sexual victimization, child prostitution, child molestation, child pornography, and child rape. Often the use of these synonymous terms has created more confusion than clarity for the prevention and detection of child sexual abuse.

Crosson-Tower defines child sexual abuse as “the use of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult.”<sup>9</sup> This may include the actual genital manipulation of a child and the request to touch an adult or compelling the child to observe sexual acts or have photographs taken for pornographic purposes.<sup>10</sup> According to Crosson-Tower, the term child rape denotes “sexual intercourse usually undertaken with violence to the child.”<sup>11</sup> However, the laws of many states further delineate child rape to include “the intrusion of any part of the perpetrator’s body (e.g., penis, fingers, tongue) into any orifice of the child’s body.”<sup>12</sup> Child sexual abuse can include incest/familial abuse (sexual abuse by a blood relative), extrafamilial abuse (sexual abuse by someone outside the child’s family), pressured sex (perpetrator uses enticement or persuasion), or forced sex (perpetrator uses the threat of harm or force).<sup>13</sup>

Elliot defines child sexual abuse as, “any sexual exploitation of a child under the age of sixteen for the sexual pleasure or profit of an adult or much older person.”<sup>14</sup> The Darkness to Light Organization defines child sexual abuse in four distinct ways:

- (1) Any sexual act between an adult and a minor or between two minors when one exerts power over the other;
- (2) Forcing, coercing or persuading a child to engage in any type of sexual act. This, of course, includes sexual contact. It also includes non-contact acts such as exhibitionism, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and communication in a sexual manner by phone or Internet;
- (3) An agonizing and traumatic experience for its victims; and
- (4) A crime punishable by law.<sup>15</sup>

The American Academy of Pediatrics defines child sexual abuse as “any sexual act with a child performed by an adult or an older child.”<sup>16</sup>

These varying definitions are the result of differences in statutory regulations across government bodies and among cultural values and norms, which play important roles in determining the age at which a child becomes an adult and the constituents of appropriate vs. inappropriate sexual behavior.

### **You Probably Know a Child Who Has Been Sexually Abused**

As many as 60 to 75% of reported child abuse and neglect cases include a sexual element.<sup>17</sup> About 25% of girls and 17% of boys are sexually abused by age 18.<sup>18</sup> Almost 70% of all reported sexual assaults are to children under the age of 17.<sup>19</sup> About 20% of sexually abused children are under 8 years of age.<sup>20</sup> The median age for reported sexual abuse is 9.9 years for boys and 9.6 years for girls.<sup>21</sup> Family members account for 30 to 40% of sexual abuse suffered by children.<sup>22</sup> Almost 40% of sexually abused children are abused by older or larger children.<sup>23</sup> At least 33% of adolescents who run away from home experience sexual abuse.<sup>24</sup> “Sexual minority” youth (gay, bisexual, transgender) suffer higher rates of sexual abuse than non-minority youth.<sup>25</sup> About 20% of children are solicited sexually during Internet use.<sup>26</sup>

Despite the high prevalence of child sexual abuse, most children never report it. Victims who never report the abuse or those who do report and are not believed are at a higher risk than the general population for a host of psychological, emotional, and physical problems that frequently last into adulthood.

### **Signs and Symptoms of Child Sexual Abuse**

Children who have been sexually abused frequently demonstrate symptoms in the following categories: (a) physical, (b) emotional, (c) behavioral, (d) sexual, and (e) no symptoms at all. Physical signs of child sexual abuse are less common and include urinary tract infections, swelling or rashes in the genital area, sexually transmitted diseases, and physical symptoms associated with anxiety such as headaches or chronic stomach pain.<sup>27</sup> Emotional symptoms are

more common and include depression, anxiety, inappropriate anger, rebellion, and suicidal ideation/attempts.<sup>28</sup> Behavioral signs include bed wetting, nightmares, irritability, eating problems, secretiveness, compulsive washing and/or masturbation, unwarranted fear of people and places, refusal to attend school, withdrawal from family and social situations, running away from home, and reenactment of abuse on objects or with others.<sup>29</sup> Sexual symptoms include unusual interest in or avoidance of sexual ideas and materials, seductive behaviors, creating drawings that illustrate sexual acts, and encouraging other children to perform sexual acts.<sup>30</sup>

These signs and symptoms are not uniformly displayed by victims of child sexual abuse. Responses are idiosyncratic and are influenced by a variety of factors that include the child's age at the time of abuse, the child's relationship to the perpetrator, the responses by adult caretakers, the extent to which violence was part of the abuse, and the duration of the abuse.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, some children will demonstrate florid symptoms while others exhibit none. Compounding these difficulties in identifying victims of child sexual abuse is the fact that most of these symptoms are shared with other common childhood developmental tasks and stages, illnesses, and mental disorders.

### Effects of Child Sexual Abuse

From the above discussion, it is evident that child sexual abuse can have profoundly harmful short-term consequences for victims. Although the sexual abuse experience does not guarantee that a child will experience significant negative consequences in adolescence or adulthood, common long-term effects include the development of physical, interpersonal, social, educational, mental health, and sexual problems.<sup>32</sup> Sexual abuse in childhood has been found to correlate with the following interpersonal and social problems in adulthood: (a) lower levels of self-esteem; (b) insecure and disorganized attachments in adult relationships; (c) instability and lower levels of satisfaction in intimate relationships; (d) higher rates of separation or divorce; and (e) higher risk for perpetrating property offences, domestic violence, and felony assault.<sup>33</sup> Sexually abused

children exhibit higher rates of delinquency, conduct problems, and school/academic problems than those who were not abused.<sup>34</sup> Mental health outcomes in adolescence and adulthood for children who have been sexually abused include higher rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse disorders, eating disorders, self-mutilation, post-traumatic stress disorders, and suicide.<sup>35</sup> Children who were sexually abused are more likely to demonstrate sexually promiscuous behaviors (including engaging in prostitution) and have a threefold probability of becoming pregnant before their 18th birthday.<sup>36</sup>

### Strategies for Educators

Reporting suspicions of child sexual abuse is crucial to reducing the suffering and psychological trauma experienced by sexually exploited children. Educators' responsibilities to protect children are so great that, in addition to federal legislation, all 50 states have enacted laws that mandate school professionals to report suspicions. Failure of school professionals to report suspected cases of child sexual abuse places them at risk for legal and professional sanctions, including fines, certification and license suspensions, jail sentences, and civil suits.<sup>37</sup>

Current prevalence estimates indicate that within a 2-year time span, every American classroom teacher may be confronted with at least one suspected case of child abuse (physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect) that necessitates reporting to child welfare or law enforcement authorities.<sup>38</sup> By design, the mandatory reporting system has been created to accept a high rate of false identification in order to maximize rates of accurate detection of child maltreatment. The objective of mandatory reporting legislation is to cast a wide net to capture as many actual cases of abuse as possible.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, if an educator *suspects* sexual abuse, he or she is legally obligated to report it *immediately* to child protective services or a local law enforcement agency.

Reporting suspicions of child sexual abuse is often complicated by the fact that the perpetrator is a family member. Educators are advised not to notify parents for consent prior to contacting child protective services or

law enforcement. Such contact with parents can interfere with investigations, compromise confidentiality, and violate legal requirements. It is important to understand that educators are not responsible for assessing the probability of abuse or for conducting an investigation. These actions are the legal responsibility of the designated authority (i.e., child protective services or law enforcement). Under most state statutes, the legal mandate to report must be made by the original observer and cannot be delegated to another person (e.g., principal, school nurse, guidance counselor). Educators should consult with district administrators and thoroughly review district reporting guidelines and state laws. Reporting *suspicions* of sexual abuse will enable the child protection system to move toward early intervention. Early intervention efforts minimize subsequent sexual abuse and limit the potential for later and more intrusive responses by authorities.<sup>40</sup>

Additionally, educators should encourage school administrators to provide training in mandated reporting for all school faculty and staff members. To learn how to make a report in your state and obtain phone numbers for reporting child sexual abuse visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway Web site at [www.childwelfare.gov/responding/how.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/responding/how.cfm).

It is important to note that more than 80% of sexual abuse cases occur in one-adult/one-child situations.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, experts in the field strongly advise professionals to eliminate or reduce one-adult/one-child situations for school outings/functions and youth-serving organizations (sports, clubs, and scout programs). In such circumstances at least two adults should supervise children at all times. It is also advised that professionals carefully consider child safety in situations where older youth have unsupervised access to younger children.

Educators should also demand that school administrators develop policies and implement procedures that reduce the risk of sexual abuse. All adults who work with children (e.g., student teachers, bus drivers, teacher aides, coaches, substitute teachers) should be required to undergo finger printing, as well as state and FBI criminal background checks. Research has revealed that child sexual abusers gravitate

to occupations that place them in contact with children and that these perpetrators are skilled in garnering the trust of both adults and children.<sup>42</sup> School administrators must send a clear message to those who prey on children that they will be identified, prosecuted, and punished to the fullest extent of the law. Additionally, school personnel should take an active role to help federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies investigate and combat crimes involving sexual exploitation of minors on the Internet (e.g., child pornography Web sites, sex chat rooms) and in the use of other telecommunication technologies (e.g., cell phones) to engage minors in phone sex and/or solicit child prostitution.

Educators must remain current and knowledgeable about legislative attempts to protect children from sexual crimes. Presently, *Megan's Law* (dedicated in memory of Megan Kanka, 7 years old, raped and murdered by a pedophile with two prior sex convictions, in 1994 in Trenton, New Jersey)<sup>43</sup> is one such piece of American federal legislation that provides two significant components to better protect children. It requires states to register individuals convicted of sex crimes against children and also enables states to make private and personal information on registered sex offenders available to the public.<sup>44</sup> Another important American federal legislative attempt is *The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006*, which serves to strengthen federal laws to protect children from sexual and other violent crimes, prevent child pornography, and make the Internet safer for children. Additionally, this *Act* imposes lengthy, mandatory minimum sentences for the most serious crimes against children and increases penalties for crimes such as sex trafficking of children and child prostitution. It also authorizes new regional *Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforces* to combat crimes involving the sexual exploitation of minors on the Internet.<sup>45</sup>

International initiatives to protect children are also underway in Canada and the United Kingdom. Variations of *Megan's Law* have been named *Holly's Law* in Canada (dedicated in memory of Holly Jones, 10 years old, sexually assaulted, murdered, and dismembered by a pedophile in 2002 in Toronto, Canada),<sup>46</sup> and

*Sarah's Law* in the United Kingdom (dedicated in memory of Sarah Payne, 8 years old, kidnapped, sexually assaulted, and murdered by a pedophile in 2000 in Brighton, England).<sup>47</sup>

## Conclusions

Recent crime figures on child sexual abuse, prevalence statistics, and research findings reveal the need for educators to demonstrate vigilance for, actively prevent, and effectively respond to child sexual abuse. These goals can be met as educators create awareness and prevention programs for students, parents, and staff. In addition, educators must honor their legal, ethical, and professional obligations to report suspected child abuse at the costs of feeling vulnerable, uncertain, and anxious. Education is a time-honored profession, characterized by serving the best interests of children, families, and communities. Today's educators can pay no greater homage to this tradition than to continue to protect those least able to protect themselves—our children.

### THE AUTHORS

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(Continued on page 45)

## Cyber-bullying: What It Is and How to Prevent It

BY LAURA JOHNSON HUMMELL

Cyber-bullying can affect anyone who is connected to the Internet and regularly uses e-mail, instant messaging, or any other part of the World Wide Web. Knowing what it is, how to prevent it, and what to do if you or someone you know is a victim of cyber-bullying are of utmost importance. Educators, administrators, and parents should know the characteristics of this phenomenon and how to help their children overcome this emerging type of techno-threat.

One morning after I logged in, I opened up my e-mail program and noticed an unusual and unrecognized e-mail address in my inbox. Curious, I opened the unknown person's message only to discover that someone had sent me a vulgar, hate-filled note threatening to get even with me over some perceived slight at school. Fortunately, I was in my 30s and a teacher when this happened and well versed in how to deal with bullies and their threats. In addition, I knew how to deal with this misuse of school technology and quickly discovered exactly when, where, and who had sent the e-mail. Thankfully, my district had an Acceptable Use Policy in place that prevented this kind of thing from happening to me again, and the student who sent it had to deal with the disciplinary consequences. Unfortunately, however, many young children and teenagers, who experience



this same misery at school and at home, do not know how to deal with cyber-bullies or their barrage of threats and slurs.

As usage of the World Wide Web, cellular telephones, and other wireless technologies becomes more prevalent among students worldwide, the possibility and incidences of cyber-bullying, or cyber-harassment, increase. According to the *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids* Web site, a recent poll of 1,000 children revealed that "One-third of all teens (12-17) and one-sixth of children ages 6-11 have had mean, threatening, or embarrassing things said about them online."<sup>1</sup> Not only do children have to worry about these threats, but adults are also falling victim to people who think that using technology to carry out their threats affords them anonymity and ways to victimize others while avoiding the consequences of their actions.

Educators, administrators, parents, and students working together must find ways to combat this negative exploitation of technologies that otherwise can be wonderful tools for education, information, and communication. First, acceptable use policies (AUPs) should be researched, designed, developed, and implemented at all levels in schools worldwide.

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According to the North Carolina IMPACT site, an AUP is “designed to provide guidelines for the appropriate use of a school computer or network, including access to the Internet. Acceptable use policies usually include explicit statements about the required procedures, rights, and responsibilities of a technology user as well as the consequences of inappropriate use.”<sup>2</sup> Examples of AUPs and Web sites that address how to create them are available at:

- The Southern Indiana Education Center Writing Acceptable Use Policies site at [www.siec.k12.in.us/techplan/aup.html](http://www.siec.k12.in.us/techplan/aup.html)
- The Virginia Department of Education, Division of Technology, Handbook of AUPs site at [www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Technology/AUP/home.shtml](http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Technology/AUP/home.shtml)
- EDUCAUSE Acceptable/Responsible Use Policies site at [www.educause.edu/content.asp?page\\_id=645&PARENT\\_ID=110&bhcp=1](http://www.educause.edu/content.asp?page_id=645&PARENT_ID=110&bhcp=1)
- David Kinnaman’s article about Critiquing AUPs at [www.io.com/%7Ekinnaman/aupessay.html](http://www.io.com/%7Ekinnaman/aupessay.html)

In addition to having an AUP, its rules and regulations need to be enforced at all levels of any educational organization. There should be no tolerance for the misuse or abuse of technology. This zero tolerance is especially important if cyber-bullying occurs and creates confusion, fear, or distress among its users and affects their perceptions of the organization. No bullying or harassment of any kind should be tolerated at any level of educational organizations from elementary schools to universities.

Another way to prevent cyber-bullying is to educate students about how to avoid socially inappropriate behavior, what the consequences are if the cyber-bullying behavior is exhibited, and how to respond to and report bullies. *The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* at Clemson University is one example of a positive program recognized for its effectiveness.<sup>3</sup> *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids* also offers explanations, examinations, polls, and programs about cyber-bullying at their Web site.<sup>4</sup>

In the March 2006 issue of *District Administration*, the editor offers three tips for combating Internet safety issues. These safety tips suggest that educators (a) implement an interactive, meaningful educational program

on cyber citizenship. Programs should address specifics like cyber-bullying, stranger danger, and music theft; (b) get peer counseling groups involved. Peers can help diffuse the hurt of cyber-bullying; and (c) get expert help. School leaders can find examples of safe profiles for kids, learn about risk management, and find curriculum to teach online safety at [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org) or [www.i-SAFE.org](http://www.i-SAFE.org).<sup>5</sup>

Other organizations like Teenangels and WiredSafety offer peer-based solutions for any concerned party. Telling parents to “set ground rules, teach privacy, stay engaged, and keep tabs” on their children’s technology use, they encourage proactive, not reactive roles among adults.<sup>6</sup> By being proactive and knowing how to prevent problems before they begin, children and adults alike can thwart those people who would use technology negatively.

These sites and others also understand that everyone needs to know how to also deal with problems that have already started. Teenangels recommends, “If a cyber-bully strikes,”

- Stay cool
- Keep a log
- Be prepared
- Notify the school
- Click on support<sup>7</sup>

Knowing what cyber-bullying is and how to deal with it can teach students how to use technology wisely, responsibly, and ethically.

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## Educating Adolescent Parents: Proactive Approaches by School Leaders

BY MARILYN F. SCHOLL



Teenage pregnancy is still occurring. What should educators do about adolescent pregnancy? Whose responsibility is it to educate adolescent parents? This article examines the perennial youth challenge of adolescent pregnancy and proactive approaches to curbing the problem through educating young parents.

Adolescent pregnancy remains a persistent problem in the United States. In spite of federal, state, and community attention to this issue, America has faced and continues to face crisis levels of adolescent pregnancy, the highest of any nation in the western world<sup>1</sup>. Annually, more than 1 million young women under 20—one out of every 10 American girls—become pregnant. More than 40% of our teenage girls will become pregnant before they reach their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday and those from minority backgrounds and those living in poverty are more likely to become pregnant than others. Approximately half of these young women carry the pregnancy to term, resulting in a live birth. According to

the Alan Guttmacher Institute, fewer than 10% of teenagers who give birth choose adoption for their children, so the vast majority of these young parents keep their children and assume parental responsibilities. Unfortunately, most teenage mothers have not completed their high school education, nor do they have the financial resources or family support to provide adequately a nurturing environment for their offspring. There is no simple solution or answer to the situation of adolescent pregnancy, yet educational leaders are in a pivotal position to provide direction as to how schools and communities will meet the needs of pregnant and parenting teens and their children. Adolescent parents and their children fare better in communities where school leaders have taken a proactive lead in providing comprehensive, special programs to meet their unique needs.

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Marilyn Faris Scholl, Upsilon Chapter, Virginia, is supervisor of Family and Consumer Sciences and supervisor of Teenage Parenting Programs for Arlington Public Schools. Since 1987, she has procured more than \$3 million in grants starting new programs for pregnant and parenting teens, young fathers, infants and toddlers, adolescent pregnancy prevention, parenting education, mediation, and family literacy. She was honored as a 2005 Person of Vision for Arlington County, Virginia, received the 2006 Iota State Scholarship, and is nearing completion of a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from George Mason University.

### Background

Until the late 1960s, the almost universal response to teen pregnancy in public schools was expulsion<sup>2</sup>, unless the pregnant teen was secretly sent to a maternity home. Unwed adolescent mothers were scorned, punished, shamed, and blamed<sup>3</sup>. Title IX of the Federal

Education Amendments of 1972 stopped schools from forcing pregnant teens to drop out. Title IX prohibits the expulsion or exclusion of students from any program, course, or extracurricular activities solely on the basis of pregnancy or parenthood, regardless of marital status. Beyond satisfying the legal obligation to educate these students, school districts were encouraged to develop policies and programming to meet the unique needs of pregnant and parenting teenagers so that they could complete their education, become productive members of their communities, and lessen the likelihood of their economic dependence on society<sup>4</sup>. By 1973, more than 200 local school systems in the United States had created programs to encourage pregnant school-age girls and young mothers to continue their education, obtain prenatal care, and engage in group counseling to help solve problems that either may have led to or been caused by the pregnancy. Most of these programs offered young mothers a regular educational program in a special setting.

Today, nearly 30 years later, one might imagine that most U.S. school systems would have programs and services specifically for educating pregnant teens. However, that is not the case. The predominant attitude in schools across the country, when faced with pregnant and parenting teenagers, has been to ignore the situation, assuming that pregnant students will drop out<sup>5</sup>. Some are concerned that the presence of student parents in the classroom will convey the wrong impression to non-pregnant students, namely that the school and society accept and condone teen parenthood<sup>6</sup>. Others have denied that the problem exists in their district. Thanks to Title IX teen mothers now have the right to stay in school, but few have the financial ability or support systems to solve the child care and transportation problems that keep them from attending. Unfortunately, Title IX does not mandate that programs be created to meet their special needs, so many schools continue to ignore the problem of adolescent pregnancy or pretend it doesn't exist.

Schools are the most logical catalyst for generating a proactive approach to adolescent pregnancy. No other social institution has

sufficient access to teenagers to have the necessary impact. Schools are capable of setting up networks and helping families deal with the situation, all while meeting the students' educational needs. Many students also have important relationships with their teachers or other school staff. Schools can create a safe environment where young people can explore questions of sexuality in a responsible manner. Students can learn to understand the consequences of their choices rather than acting according to messages from peers or the media. Schools can develop policies and programs to address both primary prevention, to result in fewer pregnant teenagers, and secondary prevention, to result in healthier infants, fewer school dropouts, and more teenage parents graduating from high school and acquiring jobs that enable them to support their new families.

The consequences of teenage pregnancy are both far-reaching and cyclical, with implications for the education, health, and well-being of both the young parents and their offspring. Educational consequences of teenage pregnancy and parenting are twofold: young mothers and fathers are at high risk of not gaining the educational skills necessary to be self-supporting, economically productive citizens, and their children often enter the educational system with economic and developmental disadvantages. Youth with poor basic skills, regardless of race or ethnicity, are more than three times as likely to be teen parents as are students with average or better basic skills<sup>7</sup>. Pregnancy and parenting are the number one reason females cite for dropping out of school. Teen parents who drop out of school are at an increased risk of entering a cycle of welfare dependency.

### **School Program Approaches**

Providing special programs for teenage mothers and their children dramatically increases high school graduation rates for this population of students. In a comprehensive school-based program for teenage mothers and their children in Plainfield, New Jersey, "a significantly higher percentage of the program mothers graduated from high school (84%) than did comparison

mothers (41%).”<sup>8</sup> School staff members at this same high school believe the program helped prevent school dropout among teen mothers. Similar success among teen parenting programs in promoting school completion was found in other studies.<sup>9</sup>

Decision makers at all levels need to be aware of the true numbers, circumstances, and needs of parenting adolescents within their community and within individual systems. Adolescent parents and their children are a highly vulnerable population, yet they are not highly visible within most public systems. In most communities, the total number of parenting teens or of the young children of teen parents is not known. Very often the number of parenting teens in a community is assumed to be the number of teen births in a given year. However, in fact, it is several times that number when you factor in young mothers who gave birth in earlier years and are still teenagers. Accurate data are needed to raise awareness and assist decision makers in addressing needs in the most effective manner.

Generally, teen parents have few natural advocates. Parents are reluctant to be vocal about demanding services for their pregnant daughters. The school nurse may try to be an advocate, but school nurses may not be school employees, so they may not have much authority. Because most student record systems generally do not identify parenting students, teen parents can get lost within the general student population. Furthermore, adolescent pregnancy frequently goes unrecognized when students drop out of school without giving reasons. These young people may not have access to available services because of their own intimidation or lack of knowledge. Additionally, a gap between the number of parenting teens in the community and those known to be enrolled in public school programs creates the need for identification and outreach.

Advocacy is even more necessary for the young children of adolescent mothers, because the focus of the school building staff is on students at the secondary level (the mothers), not on school readiness for the primary grade students (their children). One particularly startling statistic from the past 2 decades should

bring this issue to the attention of all educational leaders: In the state of California, “annually, a minimum of 2,118 kindergarten classes costing almost \$276 million will be needed to serve only the children born to teen mothers.”<sup>10</sup> We must see to it that today’s and tomorrow’s children grow into productive and compassionate adults, because the security of all of us will eventually come to rest on their shoulders.

Pregnant and parenting teens face significant barriers to academic achievement, largely because traditional school programs often conflict with the demands of pregnancy and child rearing. The younger the single-parent mother, the less likely she is to finish high school. “Less than half of teens who become pregnant between 13 and 15 graduate from high school.”<sup>11</sup> While the dominant trend in school policies affecting pregnant and parenting students has been what is called “mainstreaming,” this may not meet the unique needs of this population. According to one national study, teen mothers who attended vocational programs that serve as special programs for pregnant teens were almost twice as likely as similar teen mothers in regular schools to graduate<sup>12</sup>. Some characteristics of effective alternative programs for pregnant and parenting teens include small class sizes, nurturance, personalized guidance, and mentoring. Teen mothers need what all teens need, only more so: close adult attention, guidance, and support, which is often not available for pregnant girls in regular schools.<sup>13</sup> The most poorly performing students in regular schools are often the ones who reap the greatest benefits from alternative schools or specialized programs. Researchers Nancy Apfel and Victoria Seitz conducted a 20-year study of the McCabe School in New Haven, Connecticut, an alternative school for pregnant students and their children. This separate school functioned as an excellent dropout prevention program for students who had been ‘D’ and ‘F’ students prior to their pregnancy.<sup>14</sup> The longer a pregnant girl attended McCabe, the better she did. Students at high scholastic risk appear to require a specialized school program.

When it comes to postponing rapid repeat childbearing, a single-sex environment may also help as it may reduce the pressure to resume

dating during an emotionally vulnerable period. Studies evaluating the effectiveness of postpartum comprehensive, multidisciplinary programs for adolescent mothers suggest that “young women receiving care in special adolescent-oriented postpartum programs are more compliant with contraceptives prescriptions, postpone second pregnancies for a longer time, and are less likely to drop out of high school and become welfare-dependent than young mothers receiving medical care in other settings.”<sup>15</sup>

According to a study by Frank Furstenberg and his colleagues, in a long-term study of Baltimore’s Edgar Allan Poe School for pregnant teens:

Women who attended Poe were much more likely to be economically well-off in adulthood than women who either dropped out or remained in their regular school program. Poe students were also more than two times more likely to be using birth control a year after the study child was born and significantly less likely to be on welfare 17 years later.<sup>16</sup>

Young women who have children before finishing high school are more likely to receive welfare assistance for a longer period of time. According to estimates by Furstenberg and his colleagues, if none of Baltimore’s pregnant students had attended Poe, about one-third would have been on welfare 17 years later. If all of Baltimore’s pregnant teens had attended Poe, only an estimated 11% would have been on welfare 17 years later. The impressive results from schools such as Poe and McCabe suggest that school districts should seriously consider creating or expanding these types of special schools and targeted programs for pregnant students and encourage students to remain in them for longer periods of time.

### **Recommendations**

Issues such as adolescent pregnancy require the best from all school personnel. At the very least, we must recognize that pregnant adolescents have become and remain a factor

in our schools. School Boards can set policy that responds to the needs of pregnant and parenting adolescents as well as be open and honest about the issue in our schools. As the school spokesperson to the community, the superintendent can influence both educators and parents. Principals, teachers, counselors, school nurses, social workers, librarians, and support staff, individually and as an integrated team, can play important parts in addressing how the school system will respond to this issue.

To take a proactive lead in providing comprehensive, special programs to meet the unique needs of pregnant and parenting teens, effective educational leaders should:

1. Gather pertinent data such as actual numbers of pregnant and parenting teens known to the school system during the past 5 years, as well as the actual numbers according to state statistics.
2. Identify interested stakeholders in the school and community, including parents, and determine what role(s) they are willing to play.
3. Develop policies, programs, and activities regarding educating adolescent parents, designating someone to be responsible or in charge of program delivery, and get School Board approval.
4. Develop partnerships with other agencies and organizations such as hospitals, health department, Cooperative Extension Service, March of Dimes, and local churches.
5. Develop and implement programs and services designed to meet local needs, evaluating and making appropriate improvements on an annual basis.

One school system that followed these steps and is successfully addressing the youth challenge of pregnant and parenting teens is the Arlington Public Schools in Arlington, Virginia. Four programs operate to serve this special population. The Family Education Center, established in 1970, provides an alternative program for pregnant teens. Outreach for Parenting Teens, established in 1988, locates and retrieves pregnant and parenting teens who are not currently attending school and connects them with services. Alternatives for Parenting Teens, established in 1992, provides comprehensive services for teenage mothers, including a

licensed day-care center for their children. The Young Fathers Program, established in 1998, helps the fathers of babies born to adolescent mothers to develop a positive relationship with their child through home visits, mediation, educational sessions, and referrals. Grant funding has been sought to establish and sustain these programs, but successful communication with all stakeholders has helped stabilize funding for key program components. You can see the programs at work if you are in the Washington, D.C., area, or you can go to [www.arlington.k12.va.us/schools/teenageparentingprograms](http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/schools/teenageparentingprograms) to learn more about them. These effective programs have been selected as a featured charity in the 2006-07 Catalogue for Philanthropy at [www.catalogueforphilanthropy.org/dc](http://www.catalogueforphilanthropy.org/dc).

### Implications/Conclusion

Adolescent parenting impacts society as a whole. Increases in welfare, food stamps, and medical care expenses cost U.S. taxpayers an estimated \$6.9 billion each year, a significant portion of the gross annual cost estimated at \$34 billion. In addition, educational leaders need to keep in mind that the percentage of American adolescents who are sexually active has increased significantly in recent years. Currently, 56% of girls and 73% of boys have had sexual intercourse before 18 years of age. To reduce the number of pregnant and parenting teens who drop out, schools can introduce and enforce policies and practices that encourage and create ways for pregnant and parenting teens to remain in school and complete their high school education, while still complying with Title IX.

“It is irrefutable that schools have enormous potential for initiating action that will both better serve pregnant and parenting adolescents, and seriously reduce the number of unwanted teenage pregnancies.”<sup>17</sup> For the past several decades, schools have come to play a greatly expanded role in our children’s lives. We now look to the schools to teach not only academics but also career education, character education, health education, driver education, and vocational education. This represents a change from the family to the school as the primary educational and socializing institution, which

necessitates that educational leaders provide direction as to how schools and communities will meet the needs of pregnant and parenting teens and their children. The “school represents society’s best chance to improve adolescent pregnancy outcomes through early detection, prompt medical and psychosocial referrals, and programs to prevent drop out, unemployment and underemployment, welfare dependency, and juvenile crime.”<sup>18</sup> Adolescent parents and their children, in addition to the whole community, will benefit immensely when comprehensive, special programs are provided to meet their unique needs.

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## Developing Reflective Practitioners: The Importance of Field Experience

BY SHERYL MCGLAMERY AND JEANNE HARRINGTON

The authors describe the significance and importance of field experiences for teacher candidates and the value of writing reflective journals after each classroom visit. Field experiences involve working in authentic classroom situations, giving teacher candidates opportunities to develop the planning and problem-solving skills they will need in their own classroom. Through reflective journaling with the college instructor, teacher candidates engage in thoughtful and critical thinking about best practices.

The literature on field experience in teaching clearly states that experience in actual classroom settings is a critical component of learning the craft of teaching.<sup>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</sup> There are many goals of teacher education programs such as helping beginning teachers

learn to select and construct curriculum that (1) represents and connects to their students' lives and experiences; (2) allows students to develop habits of participation in a diverse community, beginning with the classroom itself; (3) supports academic, vocational, civic, and personal goals; and (4) supports equitable achievement.<sup>6</sup>

We believe these goals are best achieved in a field context. Beginning teachers need the classroom context to help frame their visions of good teaching and appropriate pedagogy.<sup>7</sup> As teacher candidates complete their semesters of university methods classes, most are eager for hands-on, authentic opportunities to work



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with elementary, middle school, or secondary students in real classroom situations. With their student teaching semester looming, the teacher candidates are both eager and nervous about leading a classroom.

The significance and importance of field experiences cannot be underestimated. For many methods courses, having a built-in field experience is the cornerstone of the course. It's the place where theories taught in the college classroom and actual teaching practices merge. As teacher candidates visit, observe, and take opportunities to teach in authentic school classrooms, they see not only the foundational blocks of curriculum and instruction being taught, but also the more mundane events occurring every day within a classroom and a school building. With the knowledge learned and observed during extensive field experiences in their various methods courses, teacher candidates have a far better idea of what to expect as they student teach and prepare to have their own classroom.

An equally important facet of field

experiences is that they take place where teacher candidates can develop into thoughtful, reflective practitioners. When teacher candidates are asked to write reflectively about each of their field experience visits, they begin to develop problem solving strategies and plot methods for successful instruction. Writing reflectively allows teacher candidates to thoroughly process each school visit; it helps to guide their critical thinking about how lessons went, how the school students responded, and what might work next time.

As teacher candidates become accustomed to critically thinking about their students, their lessons, and their future teaching plans, this thinking carries over to the time when they have their own classroom. Reflection allows the teacher candidates to develop the capacity to diagnose student problems and plot strategies for successful instruction. They are on the path to becoming lifelong learners, based on the critical thinking skills developed in methods classes, and used during field experiences.

For our purposes, we concentrated on teacher candidates working with elementary school children and the experiences that resulted.

### **Descriptions of Field Experiences**

Reading and Language Arts Methods course:

- Teacher candidates work with small groups of the same children each time
- Eight visits (four each in two different schools), each lasting about 1 hour
- Two schools are used, to ensure diversity and socioeconomic differences
- Reading and language arts lessons are planned and taught, using a variety of methods and strategies
- Teacher candidates write reflectively to the instructor after each field experience visit, describing the lesson and their observations, reflecting on their lesson taught, whether it needs to be revised, and why. The instructor responds in writing, offering encouragement and suggestions.

Science Methods course:

- Teacher candidates work with an entire elementary class at science and math learning

centers, for the purpose of teaching science and math enrichment activities

- Four visits, each with rotating 30-minute classes (1 hour and 15 minutes per visit)
- Two schools used, to ensure diversity and socioeconomic differences
- Science learning centers are set up by teacher candidates around the periphery of a classroom or large common area in the hallway
- Teacher candidates work at the learning centers on a rotating basis with different small groups of elementary students; practice and repetition help to develop lesson planning skills
- Teacher candidates write reflectively to the instructor after each field experience, describing their learning center lessons and observations; instructor responds in writing, offering encouragement and suggestions

### **Vignettes on Teaching Strategies and Skills**

1. One teacher candidate wrote reflectively about a field experience lesson that had not gone as smoothly as she had hoped. She found herself pressed for time at the end of the lesson, and as a result, she eliminated the “closure” step.

“I realized that I had rushed through the activity and didn’t check their understanding on the topics we had just covered. I wrapped up the activity by reading through the Web topics and then moving on to explaining the worksheet. Looking back, I should have talked more about characters, setting, problem, and resolution, possibly by going back over the books we have already read and picking out the characters, setting, problem, and resolution in those books. I learned that the closure of the activity is probably the most important aspect of the lesson because without closure there is little retention.”

2. A hearing-impaired teacher candidate (who was accompanied by an interpreter) reflected on solving the problem of effectively communicating with a small group of hearing children.

“I realized that I needed to focus on getting to know the children and allowing them to feel comfortable with my interpreter and me. I knew that I needed an activity that we could all do together, so I chose *I Spy* by Jean Marzollo, which is full of objects to find. We took turns reading clues that were at the bottom of the

pages. It worked! This type of activity created a lot of conversation between the students and myself.”

3. Working with first graders, another teacher candidate described a lesson in which a repetitive book was used to help develop reading skills in emerging readers. “I used the book *Deep Down Underground* by Olivier Dunrea. It is a counting book with a chorus that repeats itself; I was anxious to see how the children responded to it. I pointed out that each page ended with the words “deep, down underground.” And the students immediately got into saying it at the end of every page. They thought it was great. They even wanted to try different ways of saying it, different rhythms, etc. I really think that by involving them in the lesson like this, it made them more interested and helped them to enjoy the book more.”

4. Coordinating meaningful lessons and juggling time constraints are skills that require time and experience. Even veteran teachers struggle with getting everything done while trying to comply with time management issues in a classroom. A teacher candidate wrote about a lesson learned in time management. “I learned that even though a lesson goes well and the kids like it, it still doesn’t mean you’re going to get everything accomplished. I can now see why doing what seems like a few small activities sometimes has to be stretched across an entire week in a classroom. I think the greatest thing I took from this field experience visit was realizing how time management works in a classroom, and how a teacher must be able to coordinate the activities so that each student, no matter their academic level, is working on and achieving something in the classroom.”

5. Deciding what students have learned is difficult. Also, adjusting lessons to maximize learning is a skill mastered from experience, thus teacher candidates also find assessing student learning a challenge. A teacher candidate reflected on her experience as follows: “I’m not sure I’m getting the best feedback from the children. It’s critical that the questions I’m asking give me the best look into what the children are learning. I have to practice a bit more on asking questions that give the kids a chance to show me what

they understand about the science lesson. The products the kids produce are another picture of their understanding and learning. I feel I need more time to assess the student work and make adjustments in my instruction based on the work I evaluate. The time goes so fast, and I’m not yet comfortable making instructional changes in the moment. I know now how much effort teaching really takes.”

6. Teacher candidates face the issues of mixed ability grouping and teaching in ways to benefit all the students, not just the most gifted and prepared. The following comments from one teacher candidate reflect the issues: “Even in the small group of four children I taught this morning, I had all levels of reading ability, math skills, and science knowledge base. It was amazing how different each child was, even though they were all in the same grade and with the same teacher. This group was definitely a challenge. I had to re-think the lessons I had planned to take into account the reading levels and experiential base of each child.”

## Conclusions

Field experiences provide teacher candidates the opportunity to plan and implement activities based on reading, language arts, science, and mathematics lessons every week. Each teacher candidate is given the opportunity to teach lessons four to eight times with different small groups of children in schools with diverse populations. The practice and repetition is useful in gaining skills and developing a sense of how best to structure and prepare a lesson. Additionally, with the guidance of the university professor, the teacher candidates’ instructional and management skills begin to develop during their field experience visits.

*(Continued on page 45)*

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## Action Research Fosters Empowerment and Learning Communities

BY JILL BELOFF FARRELL AND CATHERYN J. WEITMAN



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Action research is a substantial type of professional development that cultivates collaborative learning communities through classroom inquiry focused on teachers' practices to increase student learning. The authors provide examples from the literature, as well as from their own work with teachers engaged in action research, that illuminate the critical place of action research in the development of the professional identity of individual teachers and learning communities.

The literature is replete with books and articles citing the benefits to students and teachers of classroom-based research strategies, specifically action research. Yet, the policy positions that daily affect classroom teachers are those emanating from research conducted *on* teachers, not *by* them.<sup>1</sup>

In practical terms, this has meant that those with the most direct influence on children's learning outside of the home—namely teachers—have had little if any voice or influence on the policies that define the limits and, to a very considerable extent, the very content of their teaching. In the worst cases, teachers have been the victims of the results of research that they didn't control.<sup>2</sup>

In essence, this top-down, piecemeal approach to professional development has been ineffectual and short-term and has accomplished little in the way of empowering teachers as knowledgeable decision makers.

Action research addresses the above issue because it involves teachers in making

decisions about topics of direct relevance to them and their students. Typically, teachers, who wield the most influence on students' learning, have the least to say about what goes on in their classrooms. Often, such silence leads to practices that are more harmful than helpful. One method of counteracting this situation is to involve teachers in the design and implementation of their own classroom-based research endeavors, or action research.

Educators and researchers in many sectors of the education community are beginning to see the benefits of immersing teachers in classroom-based inquiry that directly targets the issues critical to students' achievement and success in school. The issues and concerns that classroom practitioners struggle with daily are those most readily identified by the ones who are in the classroom every day, not those far removed from the actual classroom. According to Barth, the most sustaining changes and impact come from "within."<sup>3</sup> Policy makers, school districts, and even schools, colleges, and departments of education searching for new or different viable models of professional development to increase student achievement are beginning to include action research initiatives in their programs

of study, as well as in their district-wide opportunities for in-servicing of professional teaching staff.

This article encapsulates “lessons learned” through personalized reactions to the implementation of classroom-based inquiry from various studies undertaken to determine how action research provided meaningful professional development for teachers at all levels of experience, both in our own work and in that of others in the field. As cited in the literature, the most effective staff development for classroom teachers occurs when what is learned directly benefits their students. For example, “I had an intuitive feeling that what I did made sense, but I could not have defended myself if I had to the way I could now. While I still have a lot to learn, I have a clear vision of what my classroom practice is and why my approach is logical.”<sup>4</sup>

As teachers delve into areas of inquiry that arise from issues occurring in their own classrooms, they are able to make the changes needed in their own environments that lead to greater student success and achievement. Action research is perhaps the best vehicle for professional development. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future reported the following in their summarized findings on *What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future*.

Throughout their careers, teachers should have ongoing opportunities to update their skills. These opportunities should offer sustained work on problems of practice that are directly connected to teachers’ work and student learning. They should allow for in-depth inquiry, peer coaching, and sharing of knowledge so that real transformations of practice are possible.<sup>5</sup>

### **Action Research as a Tool for Professional Development**

The benefits of school-wide collaborative action research as a tool for staff development

and to bring about changes in the school culture have been widely documented and touted as opportunities for changing the nature of research as related to the practitioner.<sup>6,7,8,9</sup> By looking at different research methodologies, the scholarship of teaching and application become most relevant for sustaining change and impacting achievement.<sup>10</sup> Cotton identified research endeavors related to the scholarship of teaching.<sup>11</sup> One of the most viable was “teacher effect research,” which consists of classroom-based research to uncover “effective practices.” Central to many of these studies is the notion of using teacher research as a tool for professional advocacy and teacher empowerment. Teachers who have had the experience of engagement in classroom-based research have lauded the personal and professional benefits gained through such endeavors, including greater collegiality, an increased sense of empowerment, and an improved self-esteem, which all translate to higher levels of self-efficacy.<sup>12</sup>

### **Teacher Empowerment**

Teacher empowerment can be thought of as being comprised of three interrelated components: increased teacher access to decision making, increased teacher knowledge, and increased teacher status. Action research has attributes that promote each of these components. The first component, increased teacher access to decision making, is promoted in classroom-based inquiry because an action researcher makes decisions that directly impact the environment of the research study (i.e., the teacher-researcher’s classroom). The ability to make decisions that directly affect one’s environment promotes empowerment. Hence, teacher participation in action research directly promotes professional empowerment. As Intrator asserted, “Teachers have a colossal influence on what happens in our schools, because day after day, they are the ultimate decision makers and tone setters. They shape the world of the classroom by the activities they plan, the focus they attend to, and the relationships they nurture.”<sup>13</sup>

Action research engages teachers in curricular conversations, not because they *have to*—as may be the case with high stakes

testing—but because teachers *want to* employ conversations about what matters most. In essence, they want to be better at their craft. Action research provides a vehicle for constructive insights into one's own profession. Teachers learn to look into their own classrooms, examine those classrooms through new individual and personal lenses, and initiate bottom-up changes that lead to increased teacher knowledge, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and therefore, more meaningful professional development. Through action research, teachers suggest the long-term effects of action research: "I became aware of the needs of the kids and the positive effect we can make in their lives."

Further, because action research promotes empowerment through increased teacher knowledge, Bennett stated that teacher-researchers believe themselves to be better informed than they were prior to engaging in action research and often perceive themselves to be experts in their fields.<sup>14</sup> This is reinforced when results of the action research project are made public.

Engagement in action research fosters the development of implicit habits of mind. Classroom-based inquiry embeds and cultivates skills related to critical thinking, collaboration, problem solving, meaningful discourse, responsive and ethical decision-making, and reflection. Foremost, however, is *metacognition*. As teachers engage in the ongoing reflection inherent within the action research cycle, they are forced to consider their teaching practices and the impact of chosen practices on student learning. As a result, they are continually hypothesizing and testing the practices they think are best suited to their students' needs. In essence, they are constructing and adding value to their professional knowledge base.

As teachers look into their classrooms, they find themselves examining practices that only improve their own teaching and those of others around them. The processes involved in action research provide a powerful method for teachers to become re-involved and reconnected with the terrain of teaching. As a professional development pursuit, action research encourages and necessitates questioning the very practices teachers may have taken for granted or even

disliked. As the 1996 report from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future noted, "most school districts invest little in ongoing professional development [activities] for experienced teachers."<sup>15</sup> Classroom-based inquiry is a successful model for experienced teachers, as well as novice teachers, to personalize professional development and to have longitudinal impact, not only for themselves, but also for their students and colleagues. The knowledge gained impacts practices *from within*. This internal outcome provides a stimulus to attract and retain teachers.

If we want to attract and retain intelligent, passionate, caring teachers, we had better figure out what will sustain their vitality and faith in teaching. Education depends on what teachers do in their classrooms, and what teachers do in their classrooms is shaped by who they are, what they believe, and how vital and alive they are when they step before their students.<sup>16</sup>

Action research allows teachers to query practices found in their own surroundings, to utilize expanding proficiencies, and to enhance their professional skills and abilities. One of our teacher-colleagues initiated an action research project to substantiate that the time set aside for computerized math instruction was ineffectual. Through her own questioning, triangulation of data, and self-discovery, she uncovered benefits to math instruction no one else could have undertaken on her behalf nor proved for her. What she uncovered was a new trust in processes she could not be convinced worked prior to her action research. Hence, action research can be a vehicle that helps teachers to focus on best practices through critical and collaborative inquiry. Additionally, as teachers are immersed in the processes integral to action research, they gain status as professionals.

Teachers who participate in action research move along a continuum of attitudes from skepticism to action and risk-taking to a sense of self-efficacy. They move along this continuum because they believe that they own the changes that they help to enact. When

teachers feel that change is happening *because of* them, as opposed to *happening to* them, they feel empowered through their action and construction of knowledge and may be more likely to effect institutional change. Consequently, there is a paradigm shift in the way the teachers view themselves as professionals, with their self-concept evolving to the point that they see themselves as knowledgeable experts and empowered agents of change.

### Teacher Status

Increased teacher status is a by-product of teacher participation in action research, becoming the third and final element of the trilogy of empowerment components. The first step in improving teachers' status is improving teachers' self-perceptions. Many teacher-researchers believe that their action research efforts resulted in multiple personal and professional benefits, including increased levels of self-esteem.<sup>16</sup> Part of this increase stems from a broadening of teachers' knowledge accruing from participation in action research. As an example, in the following passage, a teacher addresses benefits that came from participation in an action research project:

I am more aware of current trends and the need for reform. I now identify problems with more confidence and apply more logical analysis to problems. I now read research-related literature when attempting to solve a problem. I am more objective and confident. I talk less and observe more. My salary has increased, and I have been asked to do several workshops.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, the impact of classroom-based inquiry has long-term effects that often lead to enhanced teacher status. One of our teacher-researchers, upon completing her action research on reciprocal teaching, was asked to share the outcomes and benefits at her school site. Colleagues and administrators were so impressed with her research and its effect on student learning that her status (and empowerment) within the school community was greatly and forever changed. This is an example of an action research initiative arising from the individual classroom teacher

questioning a practice that ultimately became a school-wide strategy. These examples affirm the interdependent nature of the components of teacher empowerment: increased decision-making, teacher knowledge, and teacher status. Being associated with contextual-based best practices provides a heightened awareness of, respect for, and admiration from colleagues.

Often, best practices come from sources external to the learning environment and are decontextualized, costly, or difficult to implement. Processes embedded in classroom-based inquiry provide a natural mechanism for teachers to become the leaders of and advocates for practices that improve student learning from their own classroom expertise. By sharing their discoveries with colleagues, as part of the inquiry-based action research methodology, teachers learn from each other, their perspectives are broadened, they become connected, and they refocus on what is important: teaching for learning. A collaborative community is born, ultimately having a greater impact on students and on the school culture as a whole.

### Community of Learners

The development of a community of learners focuses on a repertoire of professionalism, reflection, and self-study activities. Development of a community of learners is one of the many outcomes of action research, fostering trust and relationship building across a common ground, which by its very nature forces teachers to collaborate, listen, and learn from each other. In essence, action research cultivates educational leaders and front-line researchers—research-leaders who are compelled to grow, share, and learn about their practice. Teachers who invest time in classroom-based quests evaluate strategies unobtrusively, validate practices, authenticate their own effectiveness, and develop a shared repertoire of best practices. As one teacher related after completing an action research inquiry, “It is empowering to believe that I can research processes I’m involved with to improve what I do.” Others in the learning community find excitement in discovering—researching—with others. Using their own experiential professional expertise and insights, teachers become the colleagues they so longed

for. The process of collaboration transfers into extended corollaries. Some colleagues want to test or retest the newly found “best practice” in their environments, others feel encouraged, and all are rejuvenated. The immediacy and unpretentious nature of classroom-based inquiry changes classrooms, teaching, and learning. Improvements in learning are identified—one classroom at a time. Rather than serve as passive players and consumers of best practices, teachers actively engage in the entrepreneurship of best practices through familiar, trusting, and comfortable learning communities. These learning communities provide a self-effacing structure where conversations about teaching and learning naturally occur. Undoubtedly and foremost, teachers unobtrusively influence teachers. These types of positive influences are a profound testimony to the merit of action research as a cutting-edge, professional development undertaking. Action research is an effective way to reflect upon one’s own teaching through collaboration with other professionals in the field.

Teams of teacher-researchers from four middle schools collaborated with faculty from the University of New Hampshire and consultants from the New Hampshire State Department of Education on an action research project for the purpose of enacting changes in the teaching of mathematics and science. The following effects occurred because of this collaborative effort. First, the teachers became more involved in issues faced by them, their students, and their schools. More importantly, teachers saw themselves as having more of a stake. They no longer looked at things as being out of their hands. Instead, they began to see that they have a voice, that they have important contributions to make to the school, and it matters to them what happens.<sup>18</sup>

A significant component of the action research effort cited above was the development of a community of learners. In this community, everyone learned from everyone else. Each person was considered an expert in at least one field, and every person’s expertise was perceived to be as valuable as every other member’s expertise. The teachers participating in this research became reflective professional learners who realized that they could learn from each

other and from their students.<sup>19</sup> The collective learning community of educators benefited all participants because “some people know things that others do not know and the collective’s knowledge exceeds that of any individual”.<sup>20</sup>

Time and time again, action research has been shown to be a successful professional development endeavor. Research evidence clearly indicates the benefits to both teachers and students when teachers engage in action research. If we are to achieve our goals of engaging in inquiry that addresses some of the most pressing educational issues of our time, such as teacher quality and student achievement, then our goal should be to ensure that all schools are “communities of learning” where best teaching practices are nurtured, teachers are empowered, and student learning is bolstered. Action research can achieve such a goal as a critical and valuable professional development opportunity.

As Shulman related, “The primary meaning of ‘profess’ is to profess one’s faith, one’s commitment, and one’s life to service.<sup>21</sup> A ‘professional’ is someone who directs her intellectual and practical accomplishments to the service of her society and community. A member of a learned profession dedicates (her) understanding and skill to making complex judgments in the (best) interests of (her) clients.”

Action research provides the venue for teachers to widen their professionalism and to be seen as keen researchers, who are empowered and capable of providing for their own professional development within the context of their interests, needs, and questions. Teachers’ belief in being able to make a difference in her students’ lives is more easily attained when teachers are empowered through decision-making, increased knowledge, and heightened teacher status, as accomplished through action research.

*(References on page 45)*

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## Teacher Education – The HEART of a Learning Community

BY MICHELE MICHIKO AND JAN ZULICH

This article details the principles that guide the work of a university education department in Hilo, Hawaii. Authors share the story of how the exceptional work of a community group helped the teacher education program faculty broaden perspectives and breathe life into the program's stated vision of becoming the *heart of a learning community*.

When you hear the word *heart*, what comes to mind? Do you conjure images of romantic, sweet, Cupid-adorned valentines? Do you think about the body's vital organ and concomitant terms like *aorta*, *ventricle*, and *cardiovascular*? If this article influences your thinking, you soon may find yourself associating *heart* with teacher education on the Island of Hawaii.

When you think of Hawaii as a destination, with its warm trade winds, swaying palm trees, and active volcanoes, the notion of preparing teachers in a diverse cultural environment may not readily come to mind. However, the Island of Hawaii, the southernmost and largest island in the Hawaiian archipelago and according to the 2000 Census the most ethnically diverse county in the United States, is far more than a travel destination. It is home to the University of Hawaii at Hilo Teacher Education Program, a small but vibrant department of educators, with a big heart.

Like other accredited teacher education programs across the country, the University of Hawaii at Hilo Education Department has developed a conceptual framework, or



MICHELE MICHIKO



JAN ZULICH

operating philosophy, to identify specific core values, desired outcomes, shared beliefs, and characteristic practices that distinguish our teacher preparation and advanced degree programs. Simply put, this conceptual framework envisions our department's future as the HEART of a learning community of caring, ethical, and creative people. We view our work as nothing short of a calling. We symbolize our commitment to preparing excellent teachers with the acronym HEART, which represents five critical concepts that define our undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and master's level education programs—holistic, empathic, artistic, rigorous, and transformational.

As we strive to promote excellence in the teaching profession, we dedicate ourselves to the development of educators who are committed to equity, empowerment, and a critical understanding of our world. In so doing, we embrace the following principles:

Teaching and learning are holistic endeavors.

Empathy between self and others is an essential aspect of a pedagogical relationship.

Effective teaching embraces artistic ideals.

Excellence follows a rigorous path.

Teachers are change agents capable of transforming the environments in which they work.

We believe that HEART provides a conceptual understanding of how our professional commitments and dispositions are integrated across our curriculum, instruction, field experiences, assessments, and program evaluations. Our HEART conceptual framework centers on our desire to be the central component of a learning community.

### **Broadening Our Perspective**

While the development of our conceptual framework involved many hours of focused discussion about our own thoughts and practices, education faculty acknowledged the need for a more global perspective on who we are and what our work means to the community. Toward our vision of becoming the heart of such a richly diverse learning community, the Teacher Education Program leaders invited outside partners to participate in meaningful conversations about the growth and direction of our educational efforts. At the start of 2001, Education Department Chair and Delta Kappa Gamma member Alice Kawakami convened a small group of individuals representing public and private education, local government, business and community agencies, and the university. With this invitation, the Advisory and Advocacy Group (A&A Group) was born. Over the past 5 years, we have begun to realize our vision as the learning community's heart, with the exceptional support and commitment of our A&A Group.

The group members have become like health care professionals who are committed to the well-being and vitality of our educational programs. And much like the typical aging process, our journey toward this HEART vision has been characterized with a few scares, skipped beats, and even fears of cardiac arrest. In this article, we demonstrate how the development of our community-based support group has broadened our perspective on the meanings of HEART and has given us new life as we foster excellence across our varied educational programs.

### **The A&A Group Finds a Voice**

If you are a member of an advisory board or are considering participation in such a venture, it may be a familiar story to learn that our community group struggled at times to determine its own identity and find its own voice. While our purpose was clear in the desire for more global perspectives on the educational community's needs, the implementation of this purpose was yet to be determined by the group membership.

However, as the A&A Group developed alongside our department, the various meetings reflected a certain frustration with the uncertainty of its role. In a small university department like ours, there were more ideas and wishes than there were personnel, time, or energy to address them. We had a group of advisors and advocates, but we weren't quite sure how they could best do their jobs of advising and advocating for us.

In forming the group, we were careful to include *advocacy* in its name because we wanted to be sure that our efforts were aligned with what our community articulated as priorities. As the membership has continued to evolve, its activities have been characterized by instructional, social, and political efforts. As you might suspect, the *advisory* aspect of such group membership is relatively easy, especially for excessively busy people like school superintendents and business owners. The task is to attend meetings, articulate needs or problems, and generate suggestions or solutions. One simple outcome of the group's advisory capacity that allowed our department to respond directly to a pronounced community need was the development of a required course on beginning reading to bolster instruction in kindergarten through third grade.

The advisory role works in conjunction with the advocacy component, and during the past 5 years our A&A Group's contributions have gone far beyond any expectations we might have had. Originally, the Education Department selected community representatives to advocate for the department's various needs.

We learned over time, however, that the group's purpose was to advocate for the community's needs through their work with the Education Department. The following expansion

on the myriad meanings of HEART demonstrates how our advisory, advocacy, community-based group not only found a voice but also used that voice to speak for us when our own words fell short of our vision as the heart of a learning community.

### The Many Meanings of Heart

Helen Keller once said, “The best and most beautiful things cannot be seen or touched—they must be felt with the heart.” Just how does this idea relate to a broad-based community group working with teacher education faculty? Even a cursory glance at a thesaurus will provide multiple perspectives on a term common to all of us. If you take HEART to mean *caring*, as in “She has such a big heart,” you will see that our A&A Group has shown compassion and affection for the profession in its Annual Teacher Appreciation Event. This annual celebration for all our teacher candidates, their mentor cooperating teachers, school colleagues, principals, and M.Ed. students is held on our university campus and provides free massages, manicures, gift bags, prizes, entertainment, and food donated by local vendors. The gala event has grown exponentially each year due to the charisma of charter A&A Group member and local business leader/TV personality Derek Kurisu. The Teacher Appreciation Event provides valuable yet informal networking opportunities and publicly acknowledges the contributions of our many partners.

The soul of our profession is celebrated in many other events sponsored by our A&A Group. Two key examples are the graduation ceremonies, which highlight the culmination of our post-baccalaureate and master’s degree programs. Each year, graduating teacher candidates work with members of the Hawaii Island Retired Teachers Association (HIRTA) to select a symbolic Hawaiian plant design that is screened onto fabric by a local artist. Then HIRTA, whose A&A Group membership is represented by President Marvel Bento, provides funding and

labor to present each graduate with a crocheted lei and hand-sewn graduation sash made from the specially designed fabric. Incidentally, the HIRTA members serve as receptionists and greeters for several department activities, such as public forums and the above mentioned Teacher Appreciation Event. We are fortunate and thankful that retirement has afforded them the opportunity to remain so busy. In addition, the HIRTA group presents each Master of Education degree candidate with a maile lei (given on special occasions as a symbol of honor and distinction).

Perhaps the most touching highlight of our A&A Group’s visibility involves the participation in the master’s hooding ceremony at the university’s commencement exercises. It is a heartwarming sight, indeed. Imagine, if you will, a line of 12 community leaders (school superintendents, headmasters, principals, standards board chairpersons, retired teacher association presidents, business vice presidents, television personalities, and classroom teachers) standing in front of the commencement stage and facing the audience of graduates and their families. Then visualize a group of 12

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beautiful things  
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or touched—  
they must be  
felt with the  
heart.”**

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M.Ed. candidates ceremoniously approaching this line with their academic hoods, each candidate lining up in front of an A&A Group member. To complete the picture, imagine a group of 12 university faculty, in full academic regalia, forming a third line so that the entire group of 36 people spans the length of the stage. When the hooding ceremony takes place with lines of people three-deep, M.Ed. candidates are literally surrounded by the A&A Group and their professors. The audience sees quite vividly that our community stands behind us.

But the term *heart* has even more meanings. If you take HEART to refer to the *nerve center* or *hub* of a given place, as in “It is the heart of the city,” you will discover our A&A Group’s focal efforts in establishing our university campus as a community meeting place. Last year, our A&A Group hosted a

pivotal forum for developing a network of community and professional organizations to raise awareness and invite actions related to the serious need for effective recruitment and retention of teachers in our island community. This event drew more than 100 invitees who heard about successful programs, brainstormed locally relevant solutions, and committed to a number of site-based initiatives. Spearheaded by A&A Group Co-Chair and Delta Kappa Gamma member Sharyn Hirata, the forum represented the first venue for dialogue among key stakeholders and developed an action-oriented network of professionals dedicated to maintaining our HEART focus.

Now, if you choose to think of HEART as the *essence*, as in “Let’s get to the heart of the matter,” you undoubtedly will recognize that our A&A Group represented the core of our community efforts in our recent accreditation review. The A&A Group, again led by Sharyn Hirata, invited the site-visit accrediting team to discuss our program successes and challenges with a number of Hawaii Island school leaders. Offering a broader community perspective and speaking on behalf of the principals, one leader

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**Spearheaded by A&A Group  
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the first venue for dialogue  
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stated: “The University of Hawaii-Hilo Ed Department has carried upon its shoulders the vast diversity of communities and programs within our own island setting. There will always be a need for professional development in order to meet the uniqueness of each community of our Island Hawaii. In addition, the cultural sensitivity of the University of Hawaii-Hilo Ed Department has allowed for the indigenous voices to be

heard so that instruction and curriculum may be localized in order for student success to be attained by all.”

Certainly, if you take HEART to mean *spirit*, as in “She puts her heart into it,” then you will understand the bravery and courage of our A&A Group as the members demonstrated unwavering resolve through concerted political action and lobbying during times when resource constraints threatened the vitality and growth of the Teacher Education Program. The stalwart A&A Group presented fact sheets to the Governor’s Advisory Council and mounted an unprecedented campaign of letters, e-mail messages, and phone calls to legislators. After much work and not a few heart palpitations, their diligence ultimately resulted in additional personnel and funding resources to further the Education Department’s HEART vision. With determination and fortitude, the A&A Group members put their hearts and their reputations on the line and achieved the needed outcomes—all for the good of the community.

And finally, if you agree that HEART also means *hope, strength, endurance, patience, perseverance, and tenacity*, as in “She never lost heart,” you will celebrate with us the heartfelt gratitude of a Teacher Education Program whose ideas, beliefs, and values have been enriched by a meaningful partnership with a supportive community. We will continue to grow in response to changing community needs with the help of these good people, who will stand behind us. We will take steps forward, and there will be a few steps backward. Yet, we know that as the HEART of a learning community, we must never lose sight of our vision and must ensure that the beat goes on.

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**Developing Reflective Practitioners...***Continued from page 35*

Built into the field experience is a reflective journal entry, to be completed after each field experience visit. The journal is a means for the teacher candidate to reflect on the lessons that were taught, discuss whether their lesson went as planned, or what they might do differently next time.

The journal is also a tool for the instructor to use in assessing the understandings and perceptions of the teacher candidates. By asking teacher candidates to reflect on their field experience visits, the instructor is given a way to identify teacher candidate perceptions, understandings, problem solving abilities, and other areas of their concern, before teacher candidates enter the arena of student teaching.

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## Poetry

### *Student Vignettes*

#### **Don**

Star athlete,  
 Lettering in three sports,  
 Your notebook and your textbook  
 Remained unopened  
 Throughout the semester.  
 Years later  
 You visited my class,

Advising the students,  
 “Do your assignments every day  
 And turn in your papers on time.”

#### **Susan**

Child of poverty  
 Unloved stepdaughter,  
 Prey of insecurity,  
 Yet spirit indomitable.  
 Campaign manager  
 For two Presidential candidates,  
 Assistant to State Governor,  
 Co-Director of the Peace Corps.



#### **Fred**

Your picture appeared  
 On many pages of the Year Book—  
 Sports, music, academics.  
 Convicted of drug abuse,  
 You are serving time.

#### **Maria**

Foreign Exchange student,  
 During Fifth Period  
 We learned of the  
 Assassination of our President.  
 You shed the first tears.

#### **Bert**

From red-headed, freckle-faced boy  
 Selling me tickets to the Chili feed  
 To serving as  
 My Assistant Principal.

—Mary C. Commers, Zeta, Nebraska

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**Editor's note:** Line 11 of the poem “Learning Lives Here” in the Fall 2006 issue is incorrect. The line should read, “Yet, you feel energy...” In addition, the author's last name was misspelled. The correct spelling is Andrewes. We regret the error and offer our apologies to the author.

## *Spring's Fashion Parade*

As the spotlight, of the sun, sweeps the stage  
branches lift their arms.

Tiny buds creating jewels swell  
and burst in the glow.

Blades of grass shoot from the earth  
forming pumps of emerald green.

A hat of matching green completes the ensemble  
as leaves sprout from the limbs.

With her wardrobe, nature models her pets of newborns  
nestled in camouflaged beds.

Confetti of rain is thrown on the parade  
in praise of its excellence.

Nature takes her bows and walks the runway  
into the plushness of summer.

—Judy Hisaw, Rho, Oklahoma

## Letters to the Editor

Congratulations! The first online *Bulletin* is an excellent example of our Society meeting the needs [of] the technology skills of today's members. I chose to run off the articles most pertinent to me and read the others on the computer screen with great ease. It is my goal to share the articles with my chapter or anyone interested in the topics. Thank you for determining the need and acting on the premise that we are a computer membership. This is a big step forward and all involved are to be congratulated. —Connie Hoag, Mu, Iowa



I do have a great new computer and Internet program. So it was easy to get the *Bulletin* online. I must admit that I am a paper person. I like my magazines, newspapers, books in the printed form so they are easy to pick up and read. To scan the articles to see if there is a particular article that I would like to download is time consuming and tedious especially if you have any kind of vision problems. Then to have to decide which pages etc is not fun.

Do [I] like the new format of getting the *Bulletin* online? No! Will I read it when it comes out on the Internet? I doubt it. So for me it is not a big step forward but a step back to not enjoying a magazine. I hope to save money that we are not eliminating a portion of our members who are computer illiterate or do not own a computer. Thank you for reading my opinion. —Jewel Warfield, Iota Alpha, California

Please send Letters to the Editor to [bulletin@deltakappagamma.org](mailto:bulletin@deltakappagamma.org) or to the *Bulletin* editorial staff at Headquarters.

## ***Bulletin* Submission Guidelines**

Submissions from members will be accepted for review provided:

- The submission is not being considered concurrently in whole or substantial part by another publisher.
- The *Bulletin* has exclusive option of possible publication for a period of six months following receipt of the submission.
- The author assumes responsibility for publication clearance in the event the submission was presented at a professional meeting or is the direct product of a project financed by a funding agency.
- Authors are responsible for accurately citing all quoted and bibliographic materials and for obtaining permission from the original source for quotations in excess of 150 words or for tables or figures reproduced from published works.

### **Manuscript Preparation:**

#### **Articles, Book Reviews, Anecdotes, Annotated Bibliographies, Viewpoints\***

- \* A Viewpoint (between 500 and 750 words) expresses the writer's thoughts or opinions based on personal experience, perceptions, philosophy or reading.
- Manuscripts should be focused, well organized, effectively developed, concise and appropriate for *Bulletin* readers. The style should be direct, clear, readable and free from gender, political, patriotic or religious bias. Topic headings should be inserted when appropriate.
- Use *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, current edition for manuscript preparation.
- Articles most adaptable to publication are between 1,500 and 3,000 words.
- A definitive abstract of 75 to 100 words **MUST** accompany an article.
- Double space the entire manuscript, including quotations, references and tables. Print should be clear, dark and legible. Pages must be numbered.
- Footnotes should **NOT** be used. Cite works within text and include the author(s) last name(s) and year of cited work in parenthesis. Please refer to *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for more details.
- References should refer only to materials cited within the text. All materials cited must be referenced alphabetically by author name. Non-retrievable material, such as papers, reports of limited circulation, unpublished works and personal communications, should be restricted to works absolutely essential to the manuscript.
- Abbreviations should be explained at their first appearance in the text. Educational jargon (e.g., preservice, K-10, etc.) should be defined as it occurs in the text.
- Place tables and figures on separate pages at the end of the manuscript. Use Arabic numerals and indicate approximate placement in the text.
- Photos, graphics, charts, etc. that may enhance the presentation of the manuscript may be included. Contact the editorial staff for information regarding the use of photos.

### **Submission**

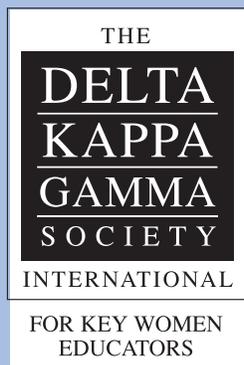
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