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"In It for the Long Haul"

How Teacher Education Can Contribute to Teacher Retention in High-Poverty, Urban Schools

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This study explores a constellation of factors that contribute to the retention of teachers in high-poverty, urban schools. It focuses on one cohort of the University of California at Berkeley's Multicultural Urban Secondary English Credential and MA Program, analyzing qualitative and quantitative data to track the careers of 26 novice teachers through their 5th year after receiving their credential. The authors reconsider the categories traditionally used to determine whether teachers stay or leave and offer ways to track those who stay or leave high-poverty, urban schools, including the use of a category of "movers" to describe teachers who leave urban classroom teaching yet remain active in urban education. They conclude with a discussion of factors that seem to contribute to teachers staying in high-poverty, urban schools and educational settings. Besides a state scholarship program, these include (a) a sense of mission, which was reinforced and developed by the teacher education program; (b) a disposition for hard work and persistence, which was reinforced and developed by the teacher education program; (c) substantive preparation that included both the practical and the academic and harmony between the two; (d) training in assuming the reflective stance of a teacher researcher; (e) the opportunity, given the high demand for teachers in high-poverty schools, to be able to change schools or districts yet still remain in their chosen profession; and (f) ongoing support from members of the cohort as well as other supportive professional networks across the years.

Keywords: urban schools; beginning teacher retention; beginning teacher attrition; longitudinal research; teacher research

Our nation's high-poverty, urban schools are in urgent need of dedicated and skilled teachers who are willing to commit to these schools long enough to make a significant difference in school quality and student performance. Although there is little disagreement about this need, there is much disagreement about how best to recruit, train, and most importantly retain teachers to effectively serve our nation's most underserved children (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Levine, 2006). Emergency credential policies and other teacher recruiting programs have been relatively successful in placing new teachers in urban schools. But are we really achieving a durable urban teaching corps, consisting of urban teachers whose classroom experience and expertise match their initial enthusiasm?

According to recent statistics, the answer is "no." A New York state study showed that across many dimensions of qualification, including experience level, "urban schools have teachers with lesser qualifications" (Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002, p. 44) and, furthermore, that "lesser-qualified teachers teach poor, nonwhite students" (p. 47). It is also the case that about 25% of our nation's teachers leave their classrooms after just 1 year, and

almost half leave within 5 years (Henke, Chen, & Geis, 2000; Ingersoll, 2003). In high-poverty schools, teachers are 50% more likely to leave than in low-poverty schools (Ingersoll, 2003).

These statistics are particularly alarming because they lead to significant inequity in student achievement. We know that students achieve more if their teacher has had at least 3 years of experience, although the effect of experience levels off after the 5th year (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005). Sadly, our neediest students have little chance of being taught by teachers with 5 or more years of experience. As Ingersoll (2004) concludes, unequal access to experienced and highly qualified teachers is "a major factor in the stratification of educational opportunity" (p. 4).

Using beginning teacher survey data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), Ingersoll (2004) found that one of the primary reasons teachers reported leaving is job dissatisfaction, most often related to inadequate pay, inadequate support from school administration, intrusions on teaching time, discipline problems, and limited input into decision making. Ingersoll argues that schools must reorganize to better support and retain teachers.

In this article, we present a longitudinal (5-year) qualitative study of a group of beginning secondary English teachers who form a cohort in an MA/credential program organized to teach them how to teach in high-poverty, urban settings. We define *high-poverty, urban schools* as those with approximately 50% or more of the students on free or reduced lunch, located within a greater urban metropolitan area. The schools themselves may or may not be in the main city or cities within the area.

Although we found support for Ingersoll's conclusions, we also found that a teacher education program, with a focus on teaching in such settings, can find ways to support teachers through some of the difficulties they encounter. As we consider how to help increase the numbers who stay in these schools, we suggest adding targeted kinds of teacher education to Ingersoll's suggestion to strengthen the organizational structure of urban schooling. Indeed, our findings lead us to hypothesize that both focused teacher education and structural school reforms are critical to solving the teacher retention problems faced by such schools and thereby to improving educational opportunities for the students who attend them. The question we address in our research is, "What factors help teachers stay in urban teaching?"

Our data come from the Multicultural Urban Secondary English (MUSE) Credential and MA Program at the University of California, Berkeley. We chose to study graduates of the MUSE program because historically many of them choose to stay in urban teaching and because we have a wealth of longitudinal, qualitative data that allow us to construct a "thick" description of urban teachers who choose to stay. The first author established the program, is its faculty director, and teaches in it; the second author taught in the program for 1 year as a visiting professor. In some ways, then, this is a teacher-research study, although the second author is not fully an insider to the program. We acknowledge that we bring our biases to our analysis, although the data provide us with an opportunity to examine and reflect on them; furthermore, the second author's insider-outsider status offers both intimate knowledge of the program as well as some interpretive distance.

The stated goals of the program are (a) to provide novice teachers with a theoretical foundation for teaching in urban, multicultural settings, particularly focusing on social justice, cross-cultural communication, and adolescent development, and (b) to support novice teachers in learning the art and craft of teaching in these settings, particularly focusing on developing curriculum for teaching reading, writing, and literature and on understanding the needs of all students, especially including English language learners and speakers of varied, nonschooled dialects of English.[1]

In the 2-year MUSE program, students are eligible for a credential in secondary English at the end of their first year. During this year, they take a year-long methods seminar as well as a set of courses that prepare them for urban teaching, including urban education, second language methods, and language study for educators. For their student teaching, they are placed in two different secondary schools, one each semester and ideally one in a class with a high concentration of English language learners and a special focus on meeting these students' needs. Program faculty work hard to find strong placements, which include, most importantly, teachers who are selected for their excellent teaching, mentoring abilities, and professional leadership. Most fit these criteria, and many are consultants for the Bay Area Writing Project.

The second year of the program consists of one course, which supports the writing of an MA paper. The MA paper is a reflective piece of teacher research focusing on a problem the beginning teachers are facing in their classrooms or schools. At the end of the second year, upon successfully completing their teacher research papers and the course, they receive their MA degree. The goals of the MA year are to provide these first-year teachers with ongoing support for their classroom work, to teach them lifelong habits of reflection through their teacher research projects, and to position them to be future leaders in the profession. Ultimately, the MUSE

program hopes to educate teachers and teacher leaders for teaching in urban, multicultural schools.

After receiving their MA, these early career teachers can apply to form a school-based teacher research group as part of a Berkeley-based, post-MA program. This program, Project IMPACT (Inquiry Making Progress Across Communities of Teachers), is funded externally. It allows more than one third of MUSE graduates to continue teacher research projects with colleagues at their schools and retain ongoing connections to Berkeley (see Curry, Jaxon, Russell, Callahan, & Bicais, 2008, for further information about Project IMPACT).

In the process of exploring what contributes to teachers staying, we found it useful to rethink the standard categories of what constitutes teacher retention. Most of the literature follows the categories used by NCES: (a) "stayers" who remain in the school from 1 year to the next, (b) "movers" who leave their classroom for another, and (c) "leavers" who leave classroom teaching. We report our results using these categories, so that our study can be compared to others using these standard categories. However, the categories conflict with the stated goals of the MUSE program in two ways. First, MUSE aims to train both teachers and teacher leaders, some of whom might leave the classroom (see also Olsen & Anderson, 2007, for a discussion of this issue as it relates to the UCLA program that they study and for their argument for a new category of "shifters"). Second, MUSE hopes its graduates will stay in high-poverty, urban education. Thus, we needed a way to capture not just who stays in the classroom or even in education generally but who stays in urban education.

Thus, we report our results in two ways. First, in Table 1 in the "Findings" section, we use the NCES categories of "leavers," "movers," and "stayers." In Table 2 in the "Findings," we add subcategories that show those who, at the 5-year point, stay in urban education (in the same school, in another urban school, and in another position in urban education). In Table 3 in the "Findings" section, we recalculated the results to show the percentages of those who stay in or leave high-poverty, urban education. Our recalculated categories overlap partially with those of Olsen and Anderson (2007), whose "shifters" we count as "stayers" as long as they shift into another position in urban education. For those who leave urban education, even if they continue teaching, we created a new category of "drifters."

What We Know About Retention and Teacher Education Programs That Prepare Teachers for High-Poverty, Urban Schools

Little is known about effective programs for preparing teachers who stay in the profession, regardless of the type

Table 1
MUSE Leavers, Movers, and Stayers

	Year 1 (N = 26)		Year 5 (N = 26)	
	%	n	%	n
Leavers	4	1	27	7
Movers	4	1	50	13
Stayers	92	24	23	6

Note: MUSE = Multicultural Urban Secondary English.

Table 2
Year 5 NCES Categories of Leavers, Movers, Stayers, and Their Component Subcategories (n = 26)

	Leavers 27% (n = 7)	Movers 50% (n = 13)	Stayers 23% (n = 6)
Shifters	Shifters to other urban education work (e.g., teacher ed, curriculum development) 4% (n = 1)	Shifter to another urban (or high-poverty) school 44% (n = 11)	
Drifters	Drifters to nonurban, noneducation 15% (n = 4)	Drifter to affluent school 8% (n = 2)	
Taking a break	Taking a break 8% (n = 2)		

Note: NCES = National Center for Educational Statistics.

Table 3
Recalculated "Stayers" and "Leavers"

Stay in High-Poverty Schooling		Leave High-Poverty Schooling	
%	n	%	n
69	18	31	8

Note: In this Table, "Stayers" include "Stayers" and "Shifters" from Table 2; "Leavers" include "Drifters" and "Taking a Break" from Table 2.

of school they choose. After reviewing the literature on the possible connections between types of teacher preparation and retention rates for teachers, Johnson et al. (2005) found few conclusive results. Most studies compare retention rates for alternative certification programs with those for traditional programs. However, the categories of alternative and traditional are imprecise, and their definitions varied from study to study. Thus, it was difficult to understand the findings. In other cases, the findings were inconsistent. For example, some studies found that content preparation in the form of an advanced

degree was positively associated with retention; others found that it was negatively associated with retention.

Johnson et al. (2005) argue for additional research on how career decisions relate to teacher preparation programs. As one possibility for such research, they suggest studying "programs through preliminary case studies and then tracking graduates of these programs over time in order to identify relationships between program components and . . . teacher retention" (p. 25). As mentioned earlier, Olsen and Anderson (2007) have conducted one such case study. They examined 15 early career teachers from the UCLA program for elementary teacher education. The teachers they studied constituted a cross-section of teachers from the program at different levels of experience, from 2nd-year teachers to 6th-year teachers. The teachers came from four different urban elementary schools. Using interviews and observations, Olsen and Anderson studied the teachers' reasons for entering teaching, their preparation experiences, workplace conditions, professional development opportunities, and future career plans. Besides problematizing the usual categories of stayers, movers, and leavers, Olsen and Anderson found that regardless of their plans to stay or leave, all remained committed to improving educational opportunities for urban youth, their initial reason for becoming teachers. Also, none expressed major dissatisfaction with their schools. Olsen and Anderson argue for a career frame that embraces multiple roles for teachers so that shifters are not framed as leavers. They also consider movers and stayers as one group. They conclude that teachers continue teaching if they can adopt multiple education roles inside and outside the classroom and receive professional support during the whole of their careers, not just the beginnings of their teaching.

The Study

Our research follows Johnson et al.'s (2005) recommendation to conduct case studies of programs and builds on Olsen and Anderson's (2007) findings. Rather than focus on elementary teachers, as Olsen and Anderson did, we study secondary English teachers. Instead of a cross-sectional design, we have chosen a longitudinal design. According to Johnson et al., "longitudinal studies that track teachers' actual behavior are difficult to conduct but, ultimately, far more informative" (p. 103). With a longitudinal design we hope to examine the ups and downs of beginning teachers as these fluctuations relate to staying with or leaving their jobs in high-poverty schools. We chose to study the MUSE program for two reasons. First, we know it well and have ongoing access to its students. Second, the program has an explicit mission to teach teachers to teach in high-poverty, urban

environments. We follow a single cohort, the one that received credentials and began teaching in 2002 and received their MAs in 2003. We follow this group from their 1st through their 5th year of teaching.

Data Collection

Data from the first year come from the group of 26 and consist of background information from their application materials, including their academic preparation and their previous experiences in urban education as well as more general program data on retention that were a part of an earlier program evaluation study (Paule & Ryan, 2003). The background data on the group allowed us to compare MUSE retention with national statistics (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005) and with data from UCLA (Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Quartz et al., 2004).

In their 2nd through 5th years, we also gathered information on what all of the 26 were doing so that we could assess whether they were stayers, movers, or leavers according to the NCES categories and whether they stayed in urban education or left urban education, the question we were trying to answer. In addition, we gathered data on their participation in Project IMPACT and on both their formal and their informal affiliations with other members of their cohort.

During their 4th year, we e-mailed a written survey to 25 of the 26 students; 15 (60%) responded. We could not obtain contact information for one who had moved out of the area, but we were able to get information about her employment status so were able to include her in the larger sample. We only gave students 1 week to respond because we hoped to use these data for a paper we were preparing for the American Educational Research Association; in retrospect, had we given them more time to respond and done more follow-up, we think we could have gotten a better response rate. Appendix A contains a copy of the survey questions. We found one systematic difference between those who did and did not respond to the surveys, which may shed further light on the rate of response. The stayers were underrepresented (13% of those returning surveys as compared to 23% of the sample); the leavers were slightly overrepresented (33% of those returning surveys as compared to 27% of the sample). The movers were consistent, making up about 50% of both the sample and those returning surveys. We think the skewed representation for stayers and leavers may have occurred because the stayers felt that they had less to tell us whereas the leavers felt more compelled to take the time to respond. In the end, however, stayers, movers, and leavers were represented and those who stayed in urban education and those who left urban education were also represented. Thus, despite the smaller

numbers, we had an opportunity to analyze the reasoning behind the career paths eventually chosen by those taking these different paths.

On the survey, we asked if the student would be willing to participate in a follow-up oral interview and become one of a set of focal students whom we could contact for additional information and follow-up. Of the 15 responding, all agreed to be part of the follow-up. However, we reduced the data from 15 to 8 for the 4th-year interviews because we wanted a smaller group that would represent fairly the range of career paths taken by the group as a whole as well as a variety of points of view. With the smaller group, we felt that we could provide increased depth on the issues around staying and leaving that were surfacing. We thought that 8 students could provide a fair picture of the group; we chose them to provide a range of contrast in terms of both demographics and points of view.

These 4th-year interviews were oral, and we conducted them either in person or by phone appointment. In these interviews, we probed to get additional information on the teachers' career choices and the factors that influenced those choices (see Appendix B for the interview protocol).

We then narrowed the group of 8 to 5 and conducted a second set of interviews in their 5th year. This slightly smaller group still represented the range of outcomes from staying, shifting, or leaving, yet it afforded the researchers the opportunity to conduct significantly extended interviews, which provided even more detail about issues related to staying and leaving. We eliminated only those cases where we expected redundant information with another case. For these interviews, our sole purpose was to probe why the teachers stayed or why they left; therefore, we did not create a detailed protocol. Instead, we started each interview with the "why" question ("Why did you eventually leave your teaching position?" or "Why have you chosen to stay in teaching?") and probed the experiences that led to their decisions and their reasoning about this topic.

Finally, after collecting data for the main study, we interviewed Christine Cziko, the program coordinator, and asked her to reflect on why she felt students chose to stay or leave, what her intentions were with respect to retention in urban schools and what purposeful planning, if any, she did to promote MUSE teachers staying. We then gave her a copy of our draft manuscript and asked for her comments.

Researchers' Roles

Both authors knew the students in the cohort under study. Both taught them and maintained their relationships with them after they graduated. Besides serving as faculty director, the first author taught a section of the MA seminar during the cohort's 2nd year of the program; during her year as a visitor, the second author cotaught the 1st-year methods course for the cohort with Christine Cziko, the program coordinator. The second author also taught a section of the MA seminar with another cohort. Neither author taught in the IMPACT program, although the first author helped conceptualize and obtain funding for the program and serves on its advisory board.

As their teachers in the MUSE program and the researchers who conducted the interviews, we had the advantage of having close relationships with these students and the disadvantage of the subjectivity that accompanies both student and program knowledge. Our concern was that the students might not feel free to be completely honest with us about weaknesses in the program, although they had a history of being candid with their critiques while in the program. We stressed the importance of honesty and our strong desire to use their input to further strengthen the program. In the end, although they may have monitored a bit, we felt that their responses were consistent with the candid character of group, which we had experienced throughout our work with them in the 2 years they were in the MUSE program and in our subsequent contact with them. That is, they seemed relatively honest about the strengths and weaknesses of their experience. In sum, then, we felt that the potential complication of researcher bias did not impede in any significant way either the collection of valid data or our ability to step outside our program roles and analyze the data. We tried throughout to use the information we gained to help us reflect on not just the program but also the larger issues in the field that the study addressed, such as the specific environmental aspects of urban teaching that create additional challenges for urban teachers, including the micro- and macropolitical factors that surround high-need, high-poverty, urban schools.

Analysis

Given the complexity of factors that undergird issues of urban teacher retention, we chose to approach our research question using mixed methods, employing both qualitative and quantitative data in our inquiry into teacher retention of the MUSE cohort. We first compiled demographic statistics on the cohort under study (gender, ethnic affiliation, previous experience with urban schools, and academic qualifications). When the information was available we compared the demographics in this cohort with national data on the demographics of the teaching force (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005).

We also completed a compared MUSE retention statistics with those for a similar program at UCLA (Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Quartz et al., 2004) and with data that have been generated by national studies (Ingersoll, 2004; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). For the MUSE cohort under study, we calculated the percentage of teachers in the cohort who at the end of Year 1 and Year 5 were "stayers," "movers," or "leavers" according to the NCES definitions used by the national studies. We also compared the statistics of this cohort with those reported in an earlier MUSE evaluation study to see whether the cohort under study was "typical" for MUSE (Paule & Ryan, 2003).

After determining that teachers stay in high-poverty, urban schools at greater than usual rates from both MUSE and UCLA, the second part of the study focused on finding out why, from the point of view of the teachers and from the point of view of the program coordinator. Our goal was to provide an in-depth, longitudinal perspective on the career decisions of a particular cohort and the individual, professional, and programmatic factors that influenced those decisions. We conducted a qualitative analysis of multiphase, multiyear data, beginning with a written survey, then proceeding with follow-up interviews and finally moving to additional interviews to gain further insights (see timeline in Appendix C).

To analyze the teacher interview data (Year 4 teacher interviews and Year 5 teacher interviews), we first divided each set of teacher interviews into "stayers in urban education" and "leavers from urban education." We then examined the responses of each subgroup, searching for patterns within each subgroup that both bound the subgroup together and that showed subsets within each one. We further looked for points of commonality across the two subgroups, which bound the entire sample together. The Year 4 interviews gave us a general sense of patterns related to staying and leaving, whereas the Year 5 interviews provided more specific detail and allowed us to raise questions about issues that were not clear and to see different points of view. We then examined the program coordinator's interview for further clarification of any of the patterns we were observing. The interviews showed us general trends related to why, from the teachers' points of view and the program coordinator's, the MUSE teachers make the choices they do.

Results

Background on the MUSE Cohort

The cohort consisted of 22 females and 4 males, consistent with recent national statistics on the teaching force (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005, p. 113). Six of the 26 (23%) were students of color, higher than the state average of 16% to 18% in the teaching population between 2002 and 2004 and higher than the most recent American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) data—from 1999—reporting 19.5% students of color in teacher education programs nationally (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005, p. 115) but lower than the percentage of teachers of color in most of the surrounding urban districts during that period, with Oakland having a high of 50% teachers of color (see http://ca.rand .org/stats/education/education.html for further information on teacher demographics).[2]

Approximately 70% of the cohort entered with experience in urban settings or schools, generally as tutors, teachers' aids, or other kinds of assistants in the schools or as youth workers in varied urban out-of-school programs. One came with 2 years of full-time teaching experience, but none of the others had had previous regular, full-time teaching experience in which they were in charge of a class. One had had experience teaching creative writing in an out-of-school program, and others had experience with print and broadcast media.

The average entering grade point average (GPA) for the cohort was 3.56, with a low of 2.99 and a high of 3.96. (GPAs are calculated only for the last two undergraduate years.) The average Verbal GRE was 590, with a low of 390 and a high of 800. The average Math GRE was 616, with a low of 540 and a high of 770. The average Analytic GRE was 625, with a low of 340 and a high of 800.

Stayers, Movers, and Leavers: In and Away From High-Poverty, Urban Settings

When compared to national statistics, this MUSE cohort has a remarkable rate of staying in teaching. Nationally, after just 1 year, 76% of those hired are still teaching. For this cohort, 96% were still teaching after their first year, with 92% at their same school and 4% moving to another school (Table 1). All were in urban, high-poverty settings. The MUSE statistics are almost identical to those Quartz et al. (2004) found in their 5-year retention study of graduates of UCLA's credential programs; they found that 95% of the UCLA teachers remained in teaching after 1 year and 98% remained in education (see Freedman & Appleman, 2008, for a full analysis of these trends).

The MUSE first-year statistics are consistent with those of another MUSE cohort as well. Paule and Ryan's (2003) survey of the MUSE graduates who received their credentials in 2001 and their MA in 2002, 1 year before the cohort we are studying, was

administered during the 2001-2002 group's first year of teaching. It revealed that in that cohort of 12, 11 (92%) planned to return to their teaching position in the first school in which they taught; the other one indicated that she planned to "look more into research/program design within [the] field of education" (Paule & Ryan, 2003).

We hypothesize that one reason for the lack of attrition after the first year could be related to the MUSE program design. During their first year of teaching, the members of the MUSE cohort are still working on their MAs as part of their program. Hence, they receive a great deal of support, including biweekly seminar meetings, This Year 1 support could also decrease movement after the first year. Although they are more independent of Berkeley than in their first year, half of the members of the cohort (13) participated in Project IMPACT.

At the 5-year point nationally, only 54% are still teaching (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). For this cohort, Table 1 shows that 73% were still teaching, and Table 2 provides details about what the MUSE graduates were doing at the 5-year point. The MUSE statistics again are almost identical to those reported by Quartz et al. (2004), who found that that 71% of the Center X teachers were still teaching after 5 years and that 88% remained in education (Table 2). Even at the 5-year point, most of the MUSE teachers were still in high-poverty settings, although one had moved to a less urban area.

Table 2 classifies the leavers and movers into subcategories that allow us to recalculate who, at the 5-year point, stayed in high-poverty settings and in what capacity and who left these settings. These recalculated results are presented in Table 3.

In all, 69% of the cohort remained as educators in high-poverty settings, including one who remained in urban education as a teacher educator for The Puente Project (n.d.), an "academic preparation program whose mission is to increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students who enroll in four-year colleges and universities, earn college degrees, [and] return to the community as mentors and leaders of future generations."

Center X researchers also found some movement away from the neediest schools across time (Quartz et al., 2004). When considered together, the findings from these two programs suggest that the teacher education program may make a difference in the numbers of teachers who begin in high-poverty, urban schools and in the length of time they stay. It is also possible that the MUSE and Center X teachers tended to stay at higher than usual rates for reasons independent of the programs. They simply may be more committed to urban schooling than the average urban teacher; after all, they chose to apply to and matriculate in intensive teacher education programs

that focus explicitly on urban schooling. Still, it is noteworthy that such specialty programs not only recruit young people but support them in making this choice and then in preparing them specifically to meet their students' needs.

It is also the case that some were beneficiaries of a special grant program from the state of California that paid for their matriculation at Berkeley and UCLA as long as, upon graduation, they taught in low-performing schools for 4 years; the grant was for $20,000, with $5,000 forgiven for each year in these classrooms. Although we looked at the 5-year point, not the 4-year point, the financial incentives from the grant program may have played a role in getting some of them to persist during the more difficult early years and thereby may have increased the numbers who decided to stay in teaching.[3]

The interviews conducted in the MUSE students' 4th and 5th years in the classroom help us further develop our hypotheses about the role the teacher education program plays in why teachers stay, why they change schools when they do, and why they leave altogether. The interviews also provide some sense of students' initial levels of commitment. We found that the MUSE students indeed did begin the program with strong commitments to urban education but that they completed the program with even deeper commitments and with a number of support structures that seemed to help them know how to work within and manage some of the complexities of their school contexts.

Why Teachers Stay in High-Poverty, Urban Schools

Our surveys during the 4th year and interviews at the end of the 4th year and in the 5th year revealed the following reasons for staying: (a) a sense of mission, which was reinforced and developed by the teacher education program; (b) a disposition for hard work and persistence, which was reinforced and developed by the teacher education program; (c) substantive preparation that included both the practical and the academic and harmony between the two; (d) training in assuming the reflective stance of a teacher researcher; (e) the opportunity, given the high demand for teachers in high-poverty schools, to be able to change schools or districts yet still remain in their chosen profession; and (f) ongoing support from members of the cohort as well as other professional networks across the early years of teaching.

Sense of mission. In her interview, Cziko noted that "the applicants to the program are attracted to the program because we have 'urban' in the title. They see it as

a kind of calling." The members of the cohort agreed, for the most part, that they chose the MUSE program because of a sense of mission, but they further explained how their sense of mission grew and developed as they participated in the program. Kaberi describes how she learned from the MUSE program about inequities for students in the schools. This learning led her to develop a mission to contribute to making changes that she thought would increase the educational opportunities of our most underserved urban students. She explained, "We realized that there was injustice going on, and we wanted to provide access to these students" (Interview 1, Year 4). She later attributed the development of her sense of mission to what she learned in the MUSE program: "If I didn't have all that background, I wouldn't have jumped on board like that. . . . I think it [the MUSE program] prepared us for *wanting* to make change, which I think is a really good thing" (Interview 2, Year 5).

The leavers tended to talk less specifically about this topic, using the more intellectual and less emotional term *vision* instead of *mission*. Ruth, who ultimately left to go to medical school, said that one of the courses, "Urban Education," "in the summer prior to starting everything provided a great foundation, common vocabulary, vision to build on" (Survey). Another leaver, Sally, used even more distanced language to explain that the courses "helped shape me" (Survey).

Dispositions for hard work and persistence. Besides the emotional charge of the stayers' sense of mission, one of the stayers, Abbie, claimed that in her observations, MUSE graduates stayed in higher numbers because they were hard workers who would not quit when the going became difficult. She explained, "People in MUSE tend to stay longer, and they tend to work harder. And I think we all have lots of respect for one another." She elaborated on the personal traits she thinks lead to staying:

> Well I definitely think it takes a certain kind of personality—a really, really hard-working personality. . . . And there's this ability to have things go wrong, you know, roll with the punches a little bit. So people with that character tend to stay in the low-performing schools. (Interview 2, Year 5)

Abbie was surprised to observe that "a lot of people who have not gone through MUSE, it's so funny 'cause they quit. They actually quit in the middle of the year" (Interview 2, Year 5).

One of the other stayers, Mary, thought about leaving because of poor pay coupled with the fact that from her point of view, "it's exhausting [work]" (Survey). Even though she thought about leaving, Mary claimed she would never quit precipitously, and she was aware of the work required to do the job well. She characterized the work as so hard that it was "exhausting."

Although only Abbie mentioned this trait explicitly and only Mary mentioned it indirectly, we include it because in our own observations we too observed that it seemed to be an important disposition that we thought could be more generally related to teachers' choices to stay.

Cziko explained why she thought the MUSE graduates worked as hard as they did. She thought that as a group they understood that their job carried "high stakes" for their students and that in some ways they felt the weight of that responsibility.

Substantive and coordinated preparation in theory and practice: Metaknowledge. Whether they left or stayed, the group emphasized the importance of the substance of the preparation they received in the MUSE program, even for their survival during their first year or two. Ruth, a leaver after 4 years, discussed what got her through her first year. She saw other first-year teachers feeling lost but reported that she felt that she knew what to do. She recalled, "In my first year of teaching, it was immediately apparent to me how well-trained I was as a result of MUSE" (Interview 1, Year 4).

The entire cohort, both leavers and stayers, showed appreciation for the theoretically oriented coursework and the practical advice in methods seminars and in student teaching. Some wrote generally, like Rebecca, who said, "I felt quite prepared to enter the classroom in 2003 due to the great professors, readings, and support throughout student teaching" (Survey). Others mentioned specific courses or experiences; across the program, everyone seemed to find something especially useful, although what that was often differed for different students. The courses receiving multiple mentions included Urban Education and language and literacy content within courses. Mary explained that she "loved the theoretical teachings and particularly the literacy material" (Survey). Ruth valued the help she received making links between theory and practice. She credited her ability to make these links to strong supervision and consistency between supervision in the classroom and work in the methods seminar:

> Student teaching with a supervisor who is regularly present and available and whose philosophy matched with coursework was key. I practiced what we talked about in classes immediately and had someone on the same page to talk with. The extent to which our

classroom experience drove our focus in methods was both helpful and empowering—our first experiences were validated, and we learned from them and built on them. (Interview 2, Year 5)

Kaberi also felt well prepared and discussed that she took away a desire to meet her students' needs: "It [MUSE] prepared us for wanting to really meet the needs of our students" (Interview 2, Year 5).

Finally, Maria argued the importance of metaknowledge to start a cycle of improvement:

> If MUSE did nothing else for me, it gave me the ability to evaluate my own pedagogy and correct my own mistakes. To resort to bad metaphor (which I am habitually guilty of doing), MUSE taught me to sail by the stars; no matter what waters I find myself in, I know how to chart my course. (Survey)

Just as Maria mentioned the big picture, charting her course, Abbie discussed planning across curricular time: "I learned to plan (the year, units, days, lessons) and to start with my GOALS when making those plans" (Survey).

This group was not without their suggestions for how the program could improve. In particular, they felt they needed more help with classroom management, evaluation, and grading; special needs of English language learners; age-appropriate instruction and standards; and the paper load.

Reflective stance for ongoing learning. Another aspect of the substance of the program that the teachers repeatedly mentioned as important to their survival was the reflective stance they developed through conducting teacher research. Laura explained, "The second [teacher research] year of the program was the most nutritive in terms of my teaching and my thinking of teaching" (Survey). As Abbie put it, "I learned to use an inquiry framework for my teaching, which has helped me tremendously to constantly be improving" (Survey).

Interestingly, constant questioning sometimes led to a level of self-criticism that proved stressful. Abbie remarked on another occasion:

> I think that the best, and worst, thing about MUSE is how we learned to constantly question our own practices and to consider how we could teach better. This mentality has really helped me with my National Boards and other PD [professional development]. But it has been hard, too, because I think MUSE grads tend to blame themselves more when their students fail than do teachers from other credentialing programs. (Interview 2, Year 5)

It seems important to add that those who stayed saw formal reflection or teacher inquiry as part of their future professional world if they were not currently involved in it. Amy, who moved to a position in Southern California, said, "I would like to get involved with some sort of teacher-research group . . . to continue that aspect of my career" (Survey).

The cohort and other professional networks. The fact that the MUSE program was cohort based also helped provide a support network for the beginning teachers. Ruth, during her 4th year of teaching, explained:

> We're still very connected. I feel that the shared experience of participating in MUSE is sort of the pedagogy that you develop. I think that's what helped link you together, particularly if you're in an environment where that isn't valued. So kinda reaching out and hanging on to these connections, I think that makes the bond stronger. (Interview 2, Year 5)

Abbie, at the same point in her career, also discussed the importance of her peers, including her cohort: "being able to work with colleagues, being able to work with somebody in your cohort" (Interview 2, Year 5). Others mentioned that they valued having other MUSE graduates at the same school, including those not in their cohort. They also reached beyond their school settings for contact. Some participated together in a book club; a few lived in the same neighborhood; others reported corresponding long distance.

Because so many mentioned the importance of the cohort, we created a sociogram to indicate who was in contact with whom (see Figure 1). Every single member of the cohort had remained in contact with at least one other member of the cohort, and many were in contact with a number of others.

In addition to the cohort, the MUSE graduates during their fourth year relied on other networks to sustain them. Most prominently mentioned was Project IMPACT for the 13 members of the cohort who participated in the program. For example, Kaberi told us:

> I've been a member of UC Berkeley Project IMPACT for two years. That's a teacher research group. And then I did a Teacher Knowledge Project at [my school]. And both groups I think definitely helped sustain me professionally. It's really a positive space. And I feel really good leaving those meetings even though they go pretty late. It's just fun. I feel that I have a lot of support. (Interview 1, Year 4)

Figure 1
Sociogram of Cohort Relationships
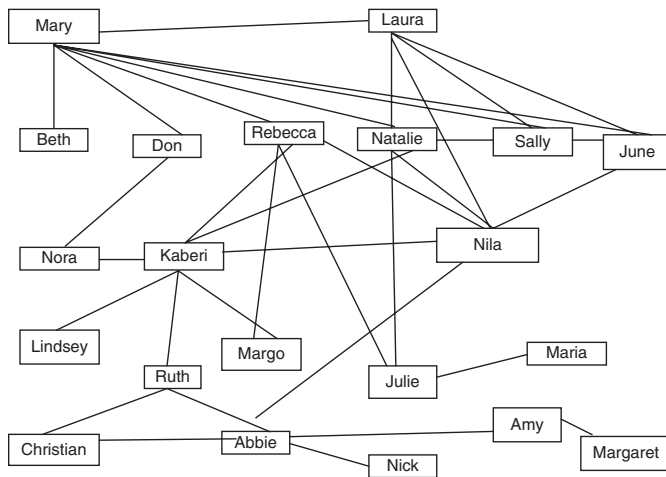
Abbie explained how she used teacher inquiry and reflection to help her both improve her teaching and sustain her learning:

> [Belonging to Project IMPACT] really makes you feel like an agent in your classroom instead of a victim. I've changed one little thing a year. And that starts to add up. And that feels good. (Interview 1, Year 4)

In their fourth-year interviews, those who were still teaching, for the most part, said that they were in teaching to stay. In contrast to the hardships some have faced, others have not even found urban teaching trying. Nila remarked:

> I know I am incredibly lucky. I love my school. I love my colleagues. We work together so well. I know it's been hard for some others, but it's been wonderful for me. I love teaching. And I want to keep doing it. (Interview 1, Year 4)

Cziko echoes the cohort's emphasis on community. In a reflective essay she wrote about the first year of MUSE, she describes her efforts to create a strong community for the cohort through a combination of joint social and academic activities (Cziko, 2008). In her interview, she reflected: "We consciously try to set up an academic/social community from the beginning. Then we try to step back so that they own the community, so it belongs to them."

Further Insights Into Staying in or Leaving Urban Education: Moving to Avoid Adversity

By the fifth year, Table 2 shows that 42% of the MUSE teachers had moved from one urban or high-poverty setting to another. We found that the MUSE graduates' flexibility about moving when there were problems with their initial school choice was one of the keys to why they were able to stay in urban teaching. Importantly, many of them did not move until after 2 years or more instead of the more usual pattern of moving after the first year. From the interviews, we thought an understanding of why the MUSE students moved and why so many moved after 2 years or more instead of after the first year might help us understand something further about what allowed this group to stay in urban teaching.

The surveys revealed that one important reason for moving was related to a special situation that arose for nine members of the group who all were hired by the same district, four in one high school and five in another. Because so many members of this cohort were affected, we look closely at this particular event and its relationship to staying and leaving.

The literature on leaving assumes that beginning teachers leave because they are dissatisfied. However, in this case, six of the nine teachers were told not to return for a third year. The end of the second year marked the end of the probationary period, and they were not reelected; that is, they were dismissed without cause. The situation was unusual in that the dismissals had nothing to do with district finances but rather were related to a complex of problems that neither the teachers involved nor the schools involved were prepared to handle.

These nine teachers were among our strongest graduates, and we fully expected them to thrive. We were excited that one district hired nine in one year and expected them to gain support from others in their cohort and to have an opportunity to shape the English curriculum in the district. Our observations of their work during their first year showed that, across the board, they were in control of their classes, well liked by their students, and teaching demanding material. They seemed to be thriving.

As far as we could tell, the problems began in their second year when some began to challenge school policies and leadership decisions and when at one of the schools they voted to unseat the department chair. Both schools in this district began to see the MUSE graduates as a powerful group with an agenda, not as individual teachers who were part of a school team. Given their

relatively large numbers, cohort members felt that from the point of view of their school administrators, they posed a threat to the status quo. Ultimately, according to the discussions that MUSE faculty had with both the MUSE teachers and the district personnel, relationships between the MUSE teachers and other staff and administrators deteriorated.

Of the three who were not forced to leave, one left after her third year to become a teacher leader for The Puente Project and another left after a fourth year for another urban school. Only one of the nine originally hired by the district remained in the same school at the 5-year point.

Of the six who left this district at the end of their second year, only one left teaching immediately. Two others went to other schools for a year and then left, one to have a baby and one for another type of job. The other three remained in urban teaching, having successful experiences at other schools with similar populations.

Overall, this situation led to disillusionment for some, political growth for most, mobility for many, and departure from teaching for several. It is noteworthy because it pointed to how school politics and urban teacher preparation programs come together to affect teacher longevity. At the program level, we learned from these teachers that we needed to teach our beginning teachers much more about the micropolitics of urban schooling (see also Curry et al., 2008). After this experience, we added explicit instruction about what it means to be a probationary teacher and how to move toward reform and be positioned to work with others to make needed change. We further made note of several times the teachers left themselves open to criticism and tried to better anticipate how to teach beginning teachers to consult about potentially controversial decisions and to better read the culture of their schools.

The non-reelections were also noteworthy because the district officials agreed that the MUSE students taught their students well, although they questioned their judgment. Fortunately, the group had regular support from Project IMPACT, but given the complexity of the situation, some needed even more support. The entire event shows what can happen in distressed urban environments and holds lessons both for urban schools whose job involves nurturing dedicated, idealistic new teachers and for teacher preparation and early mentoring programs whose job includes preparing and supporting teachers to navigate difficult and at times dysfunctional school environments. It is also important to note that the MUSE program soon reestablished its good reputation with the district. As the years have passed and new personnel entered in the district and as the MUSE program has developed strategies to help prevent such problems, the hiring and retention practices for MUSE graduates have normalized.

Conclusion

In his report *Educating School Teachers*, Arthur Levine (2006) asserts that "current teacher education programs are largely ill equipped to prepare current and future teachers for new realities" (p. 12). Although the purpose of this article is clearly not to defend teacher education programs against Levine's charges, we believe that some teacher education programs, including MUSE, are well equipped to prepare teachers for these "new realities" and that the proof that they are doing so lies, in part, in the number of their graduates who stay in urban education.

In this article, we have considered some of the factors that contribute to encouraging teachers to stay in urban, high-poverty schools. As we considered previous research on teacher attrition (Ingersoll, 2004) as well as recent studies on the retention of urban teachers (Quartz et al., 2004), we have attempted to revise our collective understanding of what it means to stay in urban education. Instead of just trying to figure out why teachers leave, we also included in our focus why teachers stay. Building on the work of Olsen and Anderson (2007), we reconsidered what it means to stay in urban education. Perhaps most importantly, we hoped to shed additional positive light on how best to educate teachers for teaching over the long haul.

Our analysis of a cohort of early career teachers in the MUSE program over a 5-year period points to several factors under the control of the teacher education program that we hypothesize contribute to teachers staying. Given the complexity of urban teaching, it is not surprising that we discovered, as has previous research (Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Quartz et al., 2004), a complex constellation of factors that help shape the arc and duration of the careers of urban educators. First, establishing a strong cohort in the induction years appears to be essential. The cohort constructed in the preservice program seemed to be durable and a continuing source of support as well as a social network. Providing entry to other kinds of challenging, nurturing, and high-quality professional networks also seemed important.

Acknowledging the sometimes-necessary mobility in those early years of teaching is also important. Given the complex micropolitics of urban schools (Curry et al., 2008), some teachers may need to move from their initial school before they find a setting where they can be most effective. Teachers who can be supported in these kinds of moves by relying on their pre-established as well as new, professional networks may be more likely to move to another school rather than away from teaching.

In the case of the MUSE cohort, the interplay between these two findings, the durability of the cohort and initial mobility, is noteworthy. Although many of the teachers left their original placements, the majority of those who remained in urban schools had a cohort member who was also teaching at his or her school. In an ironic twist, the strength of the cohort also seemed to contribute to a group of the MUSE teachers not being re-elected yet still provided support in placing teachers in other nearby urban districts. The network of support seemed to transcend the often-necessary job shifting. The stayers have also been successful in supplementing the network from their cohort with other professional networks, such as Project IMPACT, Puente, and the Bay Area Writing Project.

Yet it is not merely the social network that the stayers offered as explanations for their longevity. First, the focus on urban education was infused throughout the program from its title (Multicultural Urban Secondary Education) to the field placements to the teachers who served in the methods courses. This focus helped to create a frame for urban education, where it became the context of their teaching rather than a "problem" to be solved, where students were not seen as the "problem" but as the reason for the teachers' commitments. In other words, the program tried to normalize urban teaching rather than problematize it, even though the challenges of urban teaching were explored frankly. Specific programmatic features, such as substantive and coordinated preparation in theory and practice, helped these novice teachers develop a deeply theorized yet pragmatic pedagogical practice. Additionally, the reflective stance required for sustaining a significant piece of teacher research in the second year helped foster the habit of mind of reflective practice necessary to sustain good teaching.

As we have evaluated the durability of novice teachers' commitments to urban schools and students, we have reconsidered what it means to stay in urban education. Prior analyses of teacher retention (e.g., Ingersoll, 2001; Lankford et al., 2002; Levine, 2006) have not fully taken into account the motivations of those who seem to leave but are, in actuality, simply moving from one urban school setting to another or who are staying in urban education in slightly different capacities. To effect substantive change in urban schools, we need leaders both in and out of the classroom.

Finally, the MUSE teachers' commitment to their students provides perhaps their most important reason for staying. These beginning teachers were sustained as urban educators by their faith that they could play a role in supporting their students in finding better futures. They were working to help their students gain more knowledge and power and a more secure place as adults. They were knowledgeable about the barriers they and their students faced, but they remained realistically optimistic that they could still make some difference for their students, enough of a difference to keep trying and to stay "in it for the long haul."

Appendix A
Greetings 2003 MUSies—

We hope that you're doing well and want you to know that we continue think about all of you. . . . We continue to think about how best to make the MUSE program work well to prepare urban teachers and will be addressing that topic. We're attaching a brief survey, which we'd be most grateful if you could complete and return to us. . . . We look forward to hearing from you very soon. Please feel free to contact either of us if you have any questions.

MUSE Alumni Teacher Survey (E-Mail)

1. Are you currently teaching? If so, how would you describe your school (urban, suburban, rural; elementary, middle, high school; private, public; other).
2. Knowing what you know now, what advice would you have for the MUSE program. What should definitely be kept the same? What should definitely change?
3. Are you in touch with any members of your cohort, and if so who (we're still trying to track down a few folks)?
4. Do you think you see yourself still teaching or in an education-related field 5 years from now? Explain.
5. Would you be willing to do a 30-minute phone interview with Sarah or Deborah within the next couple of weeks? We'd like to interview a few people to get a bit more detail on past MUSEies' thoughts about teacher education. If so, please provide contact information for scheduling.

Appendix B
MUSE Alumni Interview 1, Year 4

1. What are the political realities of your school—what aspects are supportive and where are the challenges? How have you managed to navigate the challenges? How prepared were you for them?
2. There are at least two major parts of the job of a teacher that we try to help you learn to master in MUSE: to provide intellectual subject matter content and to master instructional strategies for working with diverse learners. Some people find it difficult to manage both creating a diverse community and teaching the subject matter at a high level. How do you feel about that? How do you navigate issues of community in general versus intellectual community in particular?
3. Are there any networks that sustain you professionally? What do you think about the durability of your cohort? Talk more about how the cohort traveled from teacher ed to professional settings. How did it happen? Could/should the program do more to facilitate it? What aspects of the program help with bonding? What makes it hard to stay in touch? Are there others you wish you were in touch with? Would it be helpful if the program lent a hand, and if so, how? Or are there other networks that help you stay in touch with your cohort?
4. What effect did the cohort structure of the program have on the success of your induction into teaching? Are you still in touch with any members of your teaching cohort?
5. Describe your current teaching situation. How is your current teaching situation similar to what you anticipated when you were a student in the MUSE program? How is your teaching situation different from what you anticipated?
6. In what ways do you feel your teacher education program prepared you for the realities of your teaching context? In what ways do you feel your program did not adequately prepare you for the realities of your teaching context?
7. How much of your personal identity is tied to your identity as a teacher?
8. Do you think you will still be teaching secondary school 5 years from now? Explain.

Appendix C
Data Collection Timeline

Year of Study	Method of Data Collection	Number of participants	Researchers' Notes
Year 1 Students begin 2-year program, included university courses, initial field experiences, and student teaching	Survey data, demographic data and other background information, continuing comparison	26	
Year 2 Students begin their first year of full-time teaching as they complete an MA, conducting teacher/research and attended MA seminar	Field notes, occasional writings in preparation for their teachr research master's thesis	26	
Year 3 Year 2 of full-time teaching for those who stay	Begin self-report of social networking across members of the cohort, continued program contact through Project IMPACT	26	
Year 4 Year 3 of full-time teaching for those who stay	Continued tracking of social networks, continued updating and analysis of retention, and continued program contact through IMPACT	26	
Year 4 (continued)	E-mailed written survey (see Appendix B) Follow-up telephone surveys to verify current teaching status of those not returning surveys Interview 1, Year 4 teacher interviews conducted in person on by telephone (see Appendix C)	25 written surveys sent / 15 returned 10 8	Lost contact with two members of the cohort Return rate of 60% was lower than we had hoped for but robust enough to justify continued analysis. But we had information about job mobility for 100%.

(continued)

Appendix C (continued)

Year of Study	Method of Data Collection	Number of participants	Researchers' Notes
			The purpose of these interviews was to glean more information about the career path of participants.
			Selected 8 of the 15 who completed written surveys and volunteered for interviews.
Year 5	Interview 2, Year 5 teacher interviews	5	Selected 5 of the 8, choosing the most distinctive or telling cases based on our initial analysis
Poststudy	Interview with program coordinator Christine Cziko	1	

Note: IMPACT = Inquiry Making Progress Across Communities of Teachers.

Notes

1. Nonschooled dialects of English include any dialect other than the "standard" variety—for example, African American English vernacular, Appalachian English, and Puerto Rican English.

2. Retrieved May 19, 2009, this website of databases, with access by subscription, allows the visitor to calculate many California educational statistics.

3. It is likely that the grant program affected some more than others; at the 4-year point, three left: one left urban teaching for a suburban teaching job in an affluent area, one left to have a baby, and the other left to take prerequisite courses for medical school. Of the five others who left urban education, one never took a high school teaching job and two left after their second year.

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