

Foreword

Sustaining young, spirited, gifted teachers in our public schools, especially in our urban systems, is one of our country's greatest challenges in education. This book, written by two educators who have brilliantly faced that challenge and helped create a comprehensive program to retain those teachers, is a blueprint for the nation's "way out" of losing the very people who can inspire a higher level of academic achievement for our children.

This text substantiates what Asa G. Hilliard III, educator, psychologist, and historian, insisted was necessary for the promotion of powerful teaching. Dr. Hilliard said,

Revolution, not reform, is required to release the power of teaching. . . . Virtually, all teachers possess tremendous power which can be released, given the proper exposure. We can't get to that point by tinkering with a broken system. We must change our intellectual structures, definitions and assumptions; then we can release teacher power. (1997)

Our large school systems are, indeed, broken. No quick fix or "tinkering" is going to work. The "fixes" offered in most charter schools and voucher systems have failed because they have ignored the lessons that Hilliard and these two practitioners hold to be true—that "proper exposure" of new teachers to expert professionals in the field and to democratic classroom philosophy and practices is essential. The hegemonic "structures" of institutional top-down leadership that privileges only the sons and daughters of the powerful elite demoralize all our teachers and keeps the nation's schools married to mind-numbing instruction and policies. The larger the system, the less it seems to challenge the racist and classist "definitions and assumptions" that constantly stifle the imaginations of the diverse populations of students who show up every day in classrooms across this nation. These policies and practices, however, are countered in the praxis advocated by Gudwin and Salazar-Wallace.

Unlike many other reform agents, these authors recognize the need and the methods for nurturing young professionals who work with our children in outdated and uncreative classrooms. They understand clearly the need to change the mindset of teachers who fall victim to society's notions that black, brown, and white children who are forced to live in poverty cannot

academically excel. Gudwin and Salazar-Wallace create experiences for teachers to grapple with these societal myths and come to the other side—to a belief in the capacity of all children to soar when delivered a quality education. Understanding that all parents and communities bring wisdom to the table of education, the authors and the coaches teach their teachers how to encourage an honest reciprocity of knowledge-sharing in their classrooms. These teachers are coached to invite students and parents into the learning circle to enrich the curriculum and create culturally responsive pedagogy.

Mentoring and Coaching: A Lifeline for Teachers in a Multicultural Setting helps teachers and schools transcend the troubled waters of intellectual structures that have for too long trapped our professionals into practices that do not work for children or communities. As educational experts like Freire and Macedo (1987, p. 122) suggested decades ago, schools are never politically neutral. They either support the status quo or they create contexts where children learn to transform their worlds. Our teachers should be agents who can drive education beyond the boundaries of the status quo. If we are to push America toward the realization of its democratic promise for all people, not just for the power brokers, then we must develop teachers and schools that attend to liberation and transformation for everyone they serve. This is the “revolution” that Hilliard envisioned for our teachers. In fact, our democracy depends on the courage of our teachers to become co-creators in education for the liberation of children from all cultures and linguistic backgrounds.

As Bob Moses, Civil Rights legend, MacArthur Genius Fellow, and president of the Algebra Project, suggests, “All the children *in* the nation are the children *of* the nation” (2004). Our new teachers need the guidance of master teachers who understand the ramifications of that reality on the instructional philosophy and practices in their classrooms. This text can support that dialogue and praxis.

Moreover, this text is a rubric whose wisdom comes from real stories of real successes of collaboration between a large university and a giant urban school system in nurturing and mentoring beginning teachers so that they do the right thing for all the nation’s children. Many of us are searching for effective induction plans for our teachers. Gudwin and Salazar-Wallace give us a “hands-on” model to guide us there.

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