

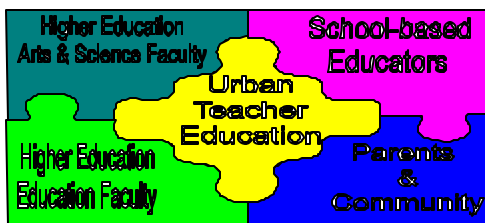
# MASS COALITION COURIER

## 2003 Summer Institute Highlights

~Building Powerful Networks of Support for Urban Teachers~

SPECIAL EDITION

Summer 2003



### Looking to the Future Thoughts from the Director

Our beloved Massachusetts Coalition is now entering its fifth year as a broad-based network of educators, community activists, student teachers, and students. Our circumstances at the time of this writing are daunting, with well over 1,500 teacher positions cut from our partnering districts in Boston, Springfield, and Worcester. Throughout the summer, leaders in the Massachusetts Coalition have convened to design strategies to meet the critical needs of our schools for highly qualified teachers in light of the fiscal crisis. We enter the new academic year humbled by the challenges that lie ahead yet inspired by the energy, enthusiasm, and creativity of all of our multiple stakeholders.

Especially exciting at this turning point is our increased awareness and appreciation of urban school students as agents for change in the Massachusetts Coalition. As the panel to the right indicates, urban students are thoughtful, curious, and ready to be engaged in improving their own education. Let's bring them into our activities in year five as new sources of insight and beacons of hope, as we continue to redesign urban education across the spectrum for the rising generation of pupils.

Dennis Shirley

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Dorchester H.S. students Dermouth Blake, Marcus Ruiz, Kenny Fleury

### Student Voices on Teacher Quality are Welcomed

Who does teacher quality really matter to? Why to students, of course. And what better source can we learn from? This summer three 10<sup>th</sup> grade students from Dorchester High School came to our institute to tell us about their experiences with school and teachers. This is not just something they thought up overnight.

Five students, including the three students shown above, participated voluntarily in a year-long all boys 'think-tank' organized by Dorchester HS student intern, Jessica Wilmot, a UMass Boston graduate student. Guided by university faculty member, Lisa Gonsalves, Jessica researched student engagement. The boys met weekly with Jessica to talk about how best to teach students like themselves. For their presentation, they recreated their role play as a withdrawn student, a teacher and a principal. Lisa Gonsalves played a parent and Jessica moderated in Oprah Winfrey style.

The students expressed the following thoughts during the role play and in response to our questions:

- We need interesting activities in our classes so they're not boring.
- Ask us our opinions and how the subject matter affects us. Don't treat us like statistics.
- Don't give up on students who have shut down. We're looking for someone to get through to us.
- Students don't want to disappoint teachers who care about them.
- Parents can help but we need to take responsibility for ourselves in school.
- Going to Middle School is a very big change and we need help from our teachers. We don't have the big picture yet.

**BOSTON COLLEGE/BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
*Urban Ecology Field Studies at Brighton High School*

The Urban Ecology Institute (UEI) engages students in urban public schools in the scientific process of performing basic research studies framed around the question: **What is the Health of Boston's Urban Ecosystem?** An external evaluation in 2001-2002 revealed that students in the UEI program indicated a significant increase in their interest in science over the course of the year and in their understanding of the scientific method. They also developed a sense of stewardship for the local environment. Control groups of students in the same schools actually showed a decrease in their interest in science and no change on the other factors.



**CLARK UNIVERSITY/WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
*The E-Folio as a Tool for Documentation and Reflection For Teacher Candidates*

Clark University piloted an “e-folio” project this year with several purposes in mind: to provide a multidimensional way to document teaching practice; to show the relationship of practice to state professional standards; and to stimulate reflection on philosophy and practice. M.A. teacher graduates shared parts of their e-folios, including the common template developed for the program.



**LESLEY UNI/ DEVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, BOSTON**  
*University Arts & Sciences Faculty Run 5th Grade Girls' Group*

Two psychology faculty members at Lesley, Dalia Llera and Eleanor Roffman developed and ran a group for 5<sup>th</sup> grade girls to address social as well as educational concerns of this age and gender group. It was a very successful. The faculty members shared this work and their plans for expansion next year which include conducting both boys' and girls' groups.



**NORTHEASTERN UNI./BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
*“The Elevator is Used to Store the Paper”*  
*Cooperative Partnerships Make Literacy Come Alive*

In the university’s Community Partnership Literacy Initiative, advanced undergraduate education students served as literacy interns at community out-of-school education programs. The presentation depicted the multiple roles these students wind up taking on and described their learning trajectory and the impact they had on the sites.



**UMASS AMHERST/ SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
*Research in Math Education and Peer Counseling*

Lenore Carlisle led a discussion on the need for research initiatives linked to effective classroom practice, linking the ways that partnerships and large coalitions can design and deliver the kind of quality research necessary. She shared research being done in the Gerena Elementary School in Springfield, MA in math education and peer counseling.

**UMASS BOSTON/ BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
*Meaningful Mentoring: College Student to Middle School Student and Teacher to Aspiring Teacher*

The UMass Boston/ Harbor School Partnership has been working on building a supportive chain of mentors. A highlight of this year was the mentoring of struggling middle school students by UMass-Boston students in before and after school meetings. The middle schoolers seemed to benefit tremendously both socially and academically from the additional adult attention, support and guidance. The partnership also supported an internal mentoring system aimed at helping Associate Teachers more effectively support UMass student teachers. Actions included involving all student teachers and Associate Teachers in all professional development activities, establishing additional professional development and support for Associate Teachers, and carefully assessing the effectiveness of each support structure.

*Effective use of Science Curriculum Strands in an Elementary School Collaboration*

The collaboration between the Condon School and UMass Boston this year has focused on the development of science curriculum. This work is captured in a video of a 5th grade Science Lesson being taught by a student intern where the lesson is based on the state’s Science Curriculum Strand, “Slow/Fast changes to the Earth’s Surface.” The video demonstrates the results of UMass Boston and the Condon School working together to take content knowledge and develop effective content by UMass-Boston students pedagogy for student teachers.



**WHELOCK COLLEGE/ BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
*Teaching Writing through a Literacy Lab and Teacher Study Groups on Interactive Writing*

In recognizing the need to both increase teacher effectiveness and student achievement in literacy, a new literacy lab course was taught on site at Young Achievers School, and a teacher study group on Interactive Writing began. The lab course focused on early literacy, K-2, with Wheelock graduate teacher interns tutoring young children and working with teacher mentors in those grade levels. Continued interest in Interactive Writing led to the development of new lessons for teaching writing. Teachers formed a study group and looked at student writing data, shared writing lessons, read the Interactive Writing text, and watched video tapes on conferencing, interactive writing lessons, and mini lessons. They hope to expand upon this model of study groups next year.

*Professional Development Schools and College Faculty Collaborate to Prepare New Teachers in Mathematics*

The on-site supervisor and the math professor from Wheelock College have been collaborating in the supervision of year long interns to both identify the content knowledge needs of new teachers and develop new ways to prepare teachers to effectively teach mathematics to K-5 students.

**Teacher Quality Panel**

Six education administrators - a district superintendent, a school principal, a provost, two deans of education and a Coalition partnership director – were asked to comment on teacher quality issues and the joint work of the Coalition in the context of tight school budgets, No Child Left Behind and moving into the final year of funding for the Mass Coalition.

Summarized below are captions of their comments and remarks.

*Susan Harris Sharples, Dean of Education, Wheelock College*  
 Teacher educators need to make sure we are giving the best education we can to our teacher candidates. The Commonwealth Education Deans Council has drafted a ‘Standards of Excellence Pledge’ that sets out 6 commitments to students to ensure teacher quality.

*Jim Caradonio, Superintendent, Worcester Public Schools*  
 Praised the work of school-college partnerships in Worcester and urged the universities to conduct research on the effect of this work on K-12 student achievement, to help schools be reflective, engage the teacher unions and move to the medical intern model for teacher preparation.

*Tony Caputo, Principal, Jacob Hiatt Elementary School, WPS*  
 Urged partnerships to work more with the teacher unions and develop support programs for school administrators who have been overlooked in this work. The Coalition should publish a list of their teacher graduates trained in urban schools for use by partner schools in hiring new teachers.

*Lenore Carlisle, Education faculty and Partnership Co-Director, U Mass Amherst-Springfield Public Schools*  
 Educators need to be proactive and undertake rigorous research to define ‘quality teaching’ so that it does not get done for us by those out of the field with less knowledge, experience and practice.

*Ahmed Abdelal, Provost, Northeastern University*  
 There needs to be an organized framework for the collaboration of Arts & Sciences and Education faculty in the preparation of teachers. One suggestion is to hire Arts & Sciences faculty with the understanding of doing work in schools to support the content knowledge in K-12 classrooms so that it is up to date, especially in the sciences.

*Jim Fraser, Dean of Education, Northeastern University*  
 With dwindling resources for education locally, in the state and nationally, we need more taxes. Arts & Sciences faculty participation is still not evident enough in teacher education. Make sure we share our research findings with state and national policy officials.

**Social Justice Issues in Urban Education**

Six educators participated on the panel and commented on the topic from their own unique perspectives. The discussion was moderated by Miekko Kamii, the director of the Wheelock College-Boston Public Schools partnership. Highlights of the panelists’ comments are presented:

*Nora Todd, Massachusetts Teachers Association, Consultant* – Social justice needs to be students in urban schools succeeding at the rate of those in suburban schools. The over emphasis on testing for teacher licensure stresses content knowledge above pedagogy.

*Paul Reville, Center for Education Research & Policy at MassINC, Director* – Mass Education Reform can celebrate its policy of having high standards for all students. Social justice is a matter of providing students with the competencies to succeed in society. MCAS is a way to assess that all students have those competencies

*Peter Murrell, Education Faculty, Northeastern University and Partnership Director, Northeastern University-Boston Public Schools*– Social justice is a condition to fulfill, a value, an ideology. In concrete terms it means equal treatment, and as a deep structure it is intercultural and multileveled. Social *injustice* is structured inequality.

*Marcie Osinsky, Professional Development School Coordinator, Young Achievers in Math and Science School/Wheelock College Partnership*,– What does social justice look like in a school? Challenging curriculum, academic rigor, posing critical questions, attending to beliefs and racial and cultural sensibilities, creating a classroom community where students take responsibility for learning, talking back to the world.

*Victoria Megias-Batista, Garfield Elementary School, a Boston Public School, Principal* – We must ask ourselves what role do we have and how can we support social justice and the policies that support it such as No Child Left Behind which is trying to bring everyone along. We must be patient with the process so we can cut down on our mistakes as we move along. What’s the next step you can take for social justice in your role?

*Bradford Gleim, Northeastern University and City on a Hill Charter School, a Boston Public School, Teacher Intern* – Social justice is a community to foster progressive and inclusive thinking in the schools. The ‘Why’ question is at the core of social justice. Students need to feel included in the system and curriculum; teachers need to have cultural training and be involved in the community.



### Coalition Objectives *IN ACTION*

Participants chose one of the Coalition Objective discussions and gathered in cross partnership groups to share their observations, work and learning related to that objective.

#### **Objective 1 – to increase the participation of Arts & Sciences faculty in teacher education**

- Teacher candidates in elementary education assess their own math content knowledge and work with faculty to address areas of weakness
- English faculty observe secondary teacher candidates and begin to assess their own pedagogy
- School sciences need more content support from the university faculty
- University tenure and promotion policy not supportive of faculty work in schools

#### **Objective 2 – to expand the school and community-based nature of teacher education**

- Student teachers work on school committees to learn needs of school population and identify resources and services in the community
- Tour school neighborhood, pair with student's family, work in afterschool program to understand local culture and apply to teaching the curriculum



#### **Objective 3 – to improve instruction in literacy across the content areas in teacher education and partner schools**

- Student teacher worked on specific literacy skill with student and learned to develop an in-depth instructional agenda
- Collaborative coaching, culturally relevant literacy strategies as important as content knowledge

#### **Objective 4 – to recruit, train and retain cohorts of ethnically diverse beginning teachers**

- Emphasize teaching is a career that matters and actively addresses issues of social justice
- Universities need to provide more scholarships for teacher candidates
- Ask students how they would change teaching and provide opportunities for them to see change

#### **Objective 5 – to promote the Coalition's capacity to conduct research and inform public policy on teacher quality issues**

- Coalition needs to make specific recommendations for improving urban education
- Identify local policy changes that have emerged as a result of partnership work
- Define what a quality urban education is and champion it in the state.

### MassCoalition Member Publications



Wishing you had been able to write down all those great MassCoalition Member Publications?

Well, fret no more. They are all now posted on the MassCoalition Website. Check it out:

<http://www.bc.edu/masscoalition>

### Angelica Brisk Shows her MCAS Documentary

The filmmaker follows two Boston Public high school students as they cope with the pressures of studying for and passing the MCAS exams now required for graduation. This personalized look at the MCAS provoked a lively follow up discussion with the filmmaker.

### Project QUEST Update

Darlene Martin, Asst. Project Director, described the first year's work of the Coalition's sub-grant from the MA Department of Education's Title II Teacher Quality Recruitment grant. Focus groups with new teachers have enabled the Coalition partnerships to develop pilot support programs for these new teachers.

### WebCT Demonstration

Molly Elliot, Coalition graduate assistant and webmaster, took us on a cyber space tour of the Coalition's new interactive web program which is a secure, password protected environment that enables Coalition members to participate in electronic discussion groups and share documents and resources. Contact Molly at [elliottmo@bc.edu](mailto:elliottmo@bc.edu) for logon information.



### Calendar of Events

#### Conferences:

**National Title II Teacher Quality Conference**  
Los Angeles, CA.  
December 3-6, 2003  
**\*Note Date Change\***

**Massachusetts Association of Colleges of  
Teacher Education (MACTE)**  
November 7, 2003 - Fall Conference