

Foreword

For the past 30 years, I have devoted much of my professional life to the challenge of preparing teachers to work with children and youth in poverty. For such children, schooling is a matter of life and death; without school success, they have no other options for making it in American society. I believe that our best hope for students of America's urban schools is to provide them with the very best teachers we can. That belief has been the source of motivation as I have pursued a research agenda aimed at identifying the functions of *Star Urban Teachers*.

When I first began this research, I was criticized for taking a "Band-Aid" approach to a system of schooling that the reconstructivists argue should be dismantled. Today, while people continue to debate what kinds of systemic change are necessary, I continue to study the beliefs and practices of classroom teachers who are making schools work better. As a result of this research, the quality of teaching in many urban school districts has improved.

Thus far, we have discovered and described 14 teacher functions that characterize the professional practice of outstanding urban teachers. Each function includes a mix of beliefs and behaviors that reflect an ideology and a number of "should-be's" about the purpose of school and about teaching children in poverty. For this reason, I have always maintained that there are no "10 easy steps" for other teachers to follow.

For the past two years, I have watched with great interest the work of James Rowley and Patricia Hart at the University of Dayton as they have created a series of professional development programs designed to help novice and experienced teachers reflect on many of the star teacher functions. Understanding the complex challenge of trying to help teachers adopt star ideologies, Rowley and Hart have turned to the case method of teaching, which can be used in both preservice and inservice education. Their video case study programs bring into sharp focus some of the most critical thoughts and behaviors of star teachers. I expect that those who experience these programs will never again be the same in the way they approach their own professional practice. I thank and commend Hart and Rowley for their authentic reflection of research on outstanding urban teachers and their dedicated commitment to help teachers at all levels of experience reach for the *stars*.

Martin Haberman, 1995
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Introduction and Theoretical Foundations

Functions of Star Urban Teachers

For the past 30 years, Martin Haberman, Distinguished Professor of Education at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, has pursued research aimed at understanding the qualities, or functions, of Star Urban Teachers. Haberman has identified 14 functions of outstanding urban teachers. Each function is composed of an interrelated set of ideologies and practices that are in sharp contrast with the ideologies and practices of a second group of teachers he refers to as “quitters” and “failures.” Seven functions are the foundation for The Urban Teacher Selection Interview. Developed by Haberman, this interview is designed to predict the potential success of teacher candidates for urban schools (Haberman 1994). Those same seven functions provide the theoretical foundation for the Becoming a Star Urban Teacher series. They are:

- Persistence in Problem Solving
- Protecting Learners and Learning
- Putting Ideas into Practice
- Approach to “At Risk” Students
- Professional Versus Personal Orientation
- Avoiding Burnout in the Bureaucracy
- Teacher Fallibility

Intrigued by Haberman's writings about these teacher functions, we conducted in-depth interviews with eight outstanding teachers from the Dayton, Ohio, public schools in which we posed a series of questions based on Haberman's writings. These videotaped interviews with highly successful, veteran teachers powerfully validated Haberman's claims and left us confronting a most challenging professional question. Could the seven star teacher functions be taught?

Fundamental to understanding Haberman's notion of the functions of star teachers is recognizing that “the way stars think about their work and their observable behaviors cannot be separated.” For this reason, Haberman argues that it is impossible to take what outstanding urban teachers do and make them into “10 easy steps” for other teachers to follow. To do what stars do, he points out, would require other teachers to adopt the ideology of the stars that guides their daily practice and decision making. “However,” Haberman adds, “for those teachers willing to buy into the ideology of the stars, the functions may prove a source of insight and guides to action” (Haberman 1995).

A Video Case Approach

Agreeing with Haberman that a “ 10 easy steps” or “cookbook” approach to teacher development would hold little promise in helping teachers acquire star teacher functions, we designed and developed the seven video case study programs that compose the *Becoming a Star Urban Teacher* series. We specifically designed each program to promote the kind of reflective dialogue that we believe can help novice and experienced teachers buy into star ideologies. We hope this dialogue will guide them to develop and adopt congruent actions.

Each *Becoming a Star Urban Teacher* videotape contains two parts, a *video case* and a follow-up *commentary* section. Each of the seven video cases contains 9-11 scenes specifically designed to provoke discussion and analysis of one of the star teacher functions. This approach is *not* based on modeling theory. The beliefs and behaviors exhibited by the teachers portrayed in each case do not always exemplify star teacher ideologies and actions. In fact, in some cases, they serve as nonexamples for the purpose of stimulating dialogue about the featured function.

Designing a Reflective Practicum

The segmented structure of the video cases, with discussion between scenes, allows the series to be used as a reflective practicum. In *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, Donald Schön (1987) describes the *reflective practicum* as a learning experience in which participants learn by doing with others who are simultaneously engaged in learning to do the same thing. In addition, he describes such an experience as taking place in a *virtual world* representative of the real world. In this virtual world, students can run “safe experiments cheaply.” In such a practicum, he adds, students would interact with someone experienced in what they were trying to learn, someone who could serve in the role of coach and engage students in reciprocal dialogue stimulated by the shared experiences that the students and coach had in the virtual world of the practicum. By combining video technology and the case method of teaching, our aim is to create a “virtual world” in which developing and experienced teachers can vicariously share in the challenges and complexities of professional decision making.

In the real world of education, teachers must frequently make decisions with incomplete knowledge. They must respond spontaneously to immediate situations and problems without the luxury of having complete data. The problems encountered by classroom teachers unfold and change with time and with the teacher's interaction with the problem. In an effort to capture this dimension of teacher decision making, we have structured each video case into about 10 sequential scenes of about 2 minutes each. At the end of each scene, the facilitator pauses the tape and invites discussion and

interpretation of the scene. We tailored each of these between scene *reflection points* to put participants at the center of a challenging professional dilemma one that has no single correct response. In this way, participants experience the challenge of decision making in what Schön (1987) calls the *indeterminate zone* of professional practice. It is precisely at these decision points that teachers find themselves engaged in a virtual world where they are free to experiment with their ideas and vicariously experience the challenges of professional decision making.

To illustrate how this particular approach works in the series, consider *What to Do About Raymond?* a video case designed to promote reflection on the star teacher function of *persistence in problem solving*. In Scene 1, a middle school social studies teacher is seen leading a lecture discussion on the prohibition era in American history. The camera also captures a student named Raymond, who has his head on his desk and appears to be asleep. If the facilitator pauses the videotape before the teacher's response to Raymond's behavior, he or she will stimulate lively discussion not only on the various strategic responses a teacher might employ, but on possible reasons for Raymond's apparent lack of involvement.

Throughout the remaining nine scenes, viewers follow the teacher as he struggles to understand the nature of Raymond's behavior and to find a workable solution. As each scene unfolds, viewers acquire additional insight into Raymond as the perspectives of other teachers, Raymond's father, the assistant principal, and Raymond's classmates are introduced to the case. At each reflection point, viewers have the opportunity not only to react to the action the teacher took, or failed to take, but to suggest what they would do or have done in similar situations.

We like to characterize this particular approach as *low-tech interactivity*. It is low tech because all that is required is a TV, a VCR, and a remote control equipped with a pause button. The approach has *high interactivity* because extensive field testing has proven that preservice and veteran teachers quickly begin to interact with the video and with each other. Before watching the video, viewers are not informed that the case has been designed to promote reflection on a particular function such as persistence in problem solving. We hope that this will be discovered in a more personal and powerful way as a result of struggling with the issues in the case and from viewing the commentary segment that follows.

Concluding the video case experience with the commentary video segment enriches the viewers' discussion by introducing the reflections of star teachers whose thoughts and attitudes exemplify the function featured in the case study. We believe this component is particularly significant because it respects the value of veteran teacher knowledge in the professional development process and offers a specific method for integrating such knowledge into preservice and inservice teacher training. In this way, it responds to Schön's (1987) call for efforts to improve professional preparation by including the

study of the artistry of expert practitioners. Previous research (Rowley and Hart 1993) on the effects of using videotaped presentations of veteran teacher knowledge in preservice teacher education has shown benefits to this approach.

Getting Started

In many respects, learning how to effectively facilitate a video case is not unlike learning how to play a new board game. While the directions and rules are important and will eventually need to be explored, much is often learned when someone finally says, "Let's play." Consequently, we encourage you to get started in an active way by viewing a selected video case with a group of colleagues or students. If you choose to take this approach, here are some basic rules to remember.

1. The video cases are designed to provoke collegial reflection and dialogue. Stop the videotape when the black screen appears, marking the end of the scene, and spend time discussing the scene before continuing the tape.
2. The video cases are designed to help teachers understand the functions of Star Urban Teachers by analyzing the professional thoughts and actions of the video case teachers who may or may not be modeling star teacher ideologies and actions.
3. Each video case is followed by a commentary segment that will help you understand the nature of the star teacher function on which the case was built.

After experimenting with one of the video cases, we hope that you will experience heightened interest in understanding the functions of star urban teachers, as well as a desire to know more about the six other video cases in the series. In addition, we anticipate that you will be thinking about how you might use these video cases in your work as a staff developer, teacher educator, school administrator, or lead teacher. Finally, you may be interested in learning how to more effectively facilitate the video cases by using field-tested procedures and questions. Parts 2 and 3 of this *Facilitator's Guide* are specifically designed to respond to these needs and questions.

Professional Development Uses of *Becoming a Star Urban Teacher*

This series is designed for a variety of professional development uses. With minor modifications, the video programs are equally effective when used with preservice, novice, and veteran teachers. We have extensively field tested the seven video cases in the series in the following professional development settings.

General Staff Development and Inservice Programming

The *Becoming a Star Urban Teacher* series offers school-based staff developers a useful tool for creating inservice programs that are highly interactive in nature and specifically designed to promote group reflection and dialogue. Because each video case realistically captures classroom life, veteran teachers quickly engage in reflection on the case from the perspectives of their own beliefs and experiences. Field testing has demonstrated that veteran teachers are also engaged by the commentary video segment that follows each video case.

One significant aspect of using the series with veteran teachers is that it creates a professional atmosphere in which teachers are encouraged to publicly share their private, professional knowledge. By discussing each video case scene in a small- or large-group setting, teachers are inevitably exposed to beliefs and strategies different from their own. Then, in the commentary segment of the video, they encounter the thinking of a group of outstanding, veteran practitioners. These experiences put teacher knowledge at the center of the experience, inviting participants to construct or reconstruct their own meaning. For some teachers, the experience may be most valuable because it affirms their own beliefs and practices. For others, value may come in the form of a new idea for approaching an old, persistent problem. For still others, the experience may be troubling as they realize that one of their current beliefs or practices may be self-defeating or ineffective. Finally, we are confident that many teachers will be re-energized and recommitted to the importance of the star teacher function that was the focus of the session.

The following are some specific ideas for using the series for general staff development or inservice training:

1. Ask lead teachers from your school or district to serve as session facilitators for concurrent sessions to be offered on a staff development day.
2. Create a professional development study group of teachers and administrators to meet periodically during the year to analyze each of the seven cases in the series. In this format, you may want each group member to have a copy of Martin Haberman's

book *Star Teachers of Children in Poverty* (1995).

3. Notify principals and department chairpersons in your district that the programs are available for use in buildingwide or departmental meetings.
4. Provide mentor teachers with a training session in which they are introduced to the series and invited to use it in their work with entry-year teachers.

Entry-Year Support Programs

This series is especially effective when used with beginning teachers, for several reasons. First, exposing beginning teachers to the seven functions of star teachers may provide them with important insights that can serve as guides to action as they develop as reflective professionals.

Second, the teachers portraying the central characters in each of the cases are not always models of star teachers in action. In fact, the cases were specifically designed to capture teachers at various stages of development as they struggle with a diversity of complex issues and questions related to the particular star teacher function featured in the video case. For this reason, beginning teachers quickly identify with the teachers and the problems they are encountering.

Third, viewing the commentary segment of each video exposes entry-year teachers to the practical wisdom of veteran teachers. This encounter might otherwise never occur, or occur only over a period of many years.

The following are some specific ideas for using the series in entry-year support programs:

1. Use the programs as the basis for entry-year support sessions in your school district or building. Consider inviting mentor teachers to attend the sessions with their beginning teacher or teachers.
2. Use the series in mentor teacher training. Because each of the seven cases in the series features a teacher struggling with a significant professional or personal issue, the cases raise important questions for experienced teachers working in a helping relationship or supervisory role.
3. Make the series available to mentor teachers so they may employ them on an individual or small-group basis with beginning teachers who may have needs, problems, or issues similar to the ones portrayed in a specific video case.

Although each of the video programs was created to promote reflection on a particular star teacher function, Table I may be helpful to staff developers and teacher educators working with preservice or entry-year teachers. It cross references each of the video cases with seven of the most commonly reported problems of beginning teachers, as identified by Veenman (1984). A checkmark indicates that the particular video case from the series contains material related to the cross-referenced, common problem of beginning teachers. For example, whereas *The Home Run* is a case about the star teacher function of *protecting learners and learning*, it can also provoke reflection on classroom discipline, student motivation, instructional planning, and authentic assessment.

Preservice Teacher Education

All seven video cases have been extensively field tested with preservice teachers in a variety of course settings ranging from an introductory education course to a student-teaching seminar. Because the videos have been enthusiastically received by students at all levels of undergraduate experience, we encourage teacher educators to experiment with the programs, using them in different courses and for different purposes. Given the research base on which the video cases were developed, they are ideally suited for preservice courses focused on the preparation of teachers as reflective decision makers or urban practitioners.

The following are some specific ideas for using the series in preservice teacher education:

1. Use the programs in introductory courses that do not include field work as a method of taking preservice teachers into the "virtual world" of the classroom where they can test their existing and developing beliefs about what constitutes good practice.
2. In social and psychological foundations courses, use the series to connect research and theory with the realities of school and classroom life.
3. In methods courses, use the programs to promote reflection on a broad range of problematic situations typically discussed in an instructional methods class.
4. Student-teaching seminars are also an excellent place to show the programs because student teachers relate to the problems confronting the teachers portrayed in the video cases and use them to help process their own experiences.

Graduate Education Programs

University instructors teaching graduate courses in education may find this series to be a useful tool for engaging graduate students in reflective dialogue about the functions

of star teachers. The series can be used to introduce or explore important concepts and theories relative to specific areas of professional practice. For example, it can be effectively used in courses in the areas of school administration or guidance and counseling. Several of the programs explicitly portray school administrators or counselors interacting with teachers and students. In addition, the remaining programs inevitably raise important questions about what role a principal, school counselor, social worker, or other professional could play in the case. The following are some specific ideas for using the series in graduate education.

1. Use the case study programs in courses in school administration to promote discussion on the question of what principals might do to support classroom teachers relative to each of the seven star teacher functions.
2. Use the programs in courses in counseling and human services to raise important questions about the multiple needs of children in poverty and the variety of ways in which the allied professions can most effectively respond to those needs.

Table 1
Seven Commonly Reported Problems of Beginning Teachers Cross Referenced to the Seven Becoming a Star Urban Teacher Video Cases

Common Problem	Video Case						
	<i>What to Do About Raymond</i>	<i>The Home Run</i>	<i>Hanging the High Street Gallery</i>	<i>Risky Business</i>	<i>Fighting Chance</i>	<i>The Maze</i>	<i>Judgment Day</i>
Student Discipline	✓	✓	✓				✓
Motivating Students	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Dealing with Individual Differences	✓			✓	✓		
Planning Classwork	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Parent Relationships	✓			✓	✓		
Evaluating Student Work	✓	✓		✓			