

**LASER RESEARCH AND WRITING COLLABORATIVE THINK TANK
THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2005
MIAMI SHERATON BAL HARBOR**

THINK BIG! WRITE BOOKS!

**Presenter: Beth Harry
Professor, University of Miami
School of Education**

THINKING BIG

YOU: Do you like to tell stories? Do you like to write descriptively? Do you often feel cramped by the requirements of article publication? Do you feel like you're leaving out heaps of important data or ideas? Do you have a "big idea"?

YOUR IDEAS: What's a "big idea"? Perhaps most often your most valuable idea will be one that comes in the form of a gut reaction to a certain situation or instructional practice or strategy. Don't reject these ideas on the basis that they're "just me", or that they're "too subjective". Pursue them, make notes on them, talk to colleagues and friends about them, and eventually develop them into an essay or position piece. This may well be the beginning of a book.

YOUR RESEARCH: Does your research lend itself to story telling? Does it include lots of dialogue from interviews? Does it include lots of descriptions of settings, people, situations? Does it include multiple perspectives of various stakeholders? Have you done case studies of individuals or groups?

YOUR AUDIENCE: Who is your ideal audience? The research community? Practitioners in a specific area of your field? Researchers and practitioners in the field more broadly? General readers beyond education? The world?

WRITING BIG

FINDING A PUBLISHER: Talk to your professors and colleagues who have published books. Get the inside story on their experiences with various presses. Check who were the publishers of your favorite books; try to find someone who can introduce you to the authors and ask if they would be willing to introduce you to an editor at the press. Read the endless promotional materials sent by publishers to see what kinds of books they promote most.

WRITE A PROPOSAL: Follow the press's guidelines for the proposal (prospectus), but above all, make your proposal engaging. Use quotes that catch attention or inspire. Be succinct and to the point.

LEARN TO SAY NO. At least during the period of writing your book, practice saying no to other very time consuming requests. You'll be happier with your one book than with 3 chapters in other people's books.

WRITE AND ENJOY: Let go and enjoy the writing. You'll be surprised at how much you still have to trim and delete, but it's still much more fun than forcing everything into 25 pages.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL BOOKS ON ISSUES IN URBAN, SPECIAL
EDUCATION, MINORITY EDUCATION

- Anyon, J. (1997). *Ghetto schooling: A political economy of urban educational reform*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Cartledge, G., & Milburn, J.F. (1996). *Cultural diversity and social skill instruction: Understanding ethnic and gender differences*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.
- Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: The New Press.
- Fordham, S. (1995). *Blacked out: Dilemmas of race, identity and success at Capital High*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Harry, B., Kalyanpur, M., & Day, M. (1999). *Building cultural reciprocity with families: Case studies in special education*. Baltimore: Brookes.
- Harry, B. (1992). *Cultural diversity, families, and the special education system: Communication and empowerment*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Irvine, J.J. (1990). *Black students and school failure: Policies, practices, and prescriptions*. New York: Praeger.
- Kalyanpur, M., & Harry, B. (1999). *Culture in special education: Building reciprocal family-professional relationships*. Baltimore: Brookes.
- Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities*. New York: Crown.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dream-keepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Lareau, A. (1989). *Home advantage: Social class and parental intervention in elementary education*. Philadelphia: Falmer Press.
- Mehan, H., Hartwick, A., & Meihls, J.L. (1986). *Handicapping the handicapped: Decision making in students' educational careers*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Mercer, J.R. (1973). *Labeling the mentally retarded*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Nieto, S. (1999). *The light in their eyes*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Pugach, M.... *One the border of opportunity: Education, community, and language at the U.S.-Mexico line*.
- Tatum, B. (1999) *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversations about race*. Basic Books.
- Valdes, G. (1996). *Con respeto: Bridging the distance between culturally diverse families and schools: An ethnographic portrait*. New York: Teachers College Press.