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## Goodbye to All That! : Community Performance for the 2014 Conference of the American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA

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# Goodbye to All That!

An Accomplished Teacher's Last Year in the  
Chicago Public Schools

Performance: Alexandra Miletta, Brandi Slider Weekley, Vasey Coman

Joker: Sarah Hobson

Response: K. Nicola Williams

Music: Andrew Babson

Produced: Lisa Yacso

Written and Directed: Charles Vanover

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Songs in Order of Their First Performance

Kruder and Dorfmeister: "Trans Fatty Acid"; Archetype: "Null and Void"; La Chatte Rouge: "Affaires a Faire"; Global Communication: "807"; Archetype "MetaMorph; Bidi: "Detroit Ghetto";  
Jeff Mills: "Reverting"; Archetype: "Red Shift"; Craig/May: "Frustration";  
Archetype: "Persistence of Vision"; Jeff Mills: "Automatic"; Jeff Mills "Black is the Number";  
Bola "For Casa 3"; Jeff Mills: Metamorph; Tangerine Dream: Love on a Real Train

Act 1. Interview 1. June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The Chicago Teacher's Union QUEST Center

Intermission

Act 2. Interviews 2, 3, 4. July and August 2004. CTU QUEST Center

### **Interview 1: The Story of Your Teaching**

Please come to the interview ready to tell the story of your teaching this past school year, from September 03 until June 04. I am interested in learning how the year began, how it ended, and the important incidents that happened in between. I would like to know about the successes that made you proud and the mistakes you learned from. I hope you will share some of the joy of life in the classroom while not forgetting the hard work and difficult moments that are also part of life in school. You are welcome to bring notes, samples of student work and other materials that might help you narrate. As you tell your stories, I would like you to focus on the following questions:

- Please tell a story about a student, or a group of students, for whom your teaching made a difference during the 2003-04 school year.
- Describe a unit or a group of lessons where you made a difference in your students' lives.
- Describe moments during the year when you felt you had learned something new about your teaching or your students.
- For experienced teachers:
  - Tell a story about a particular moment when something you learned from the your efforts to become accredited by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards helped you become a better teacher, or instances when this knowledge made it more difficult for you to serve your students.
- For beginning teachers:
  - Tell a story about a particular moment when something you learned from your student teaching or teacher education classes helped you become a better teacher, or instances when this knowledge made it more difficult for you to serve your students.
- Tell a story about any obstacles that got in the way of your teaching.
- Tell a story about a particular event that illustrates what you believe teaching is all about.

My goal as interviewer is to ask you to describe specific events and incidents. Throughout the session, I will ask you to expand on your stories by asking you to "Tell me more about that." or to "Walk me through what happened at that moment." or to "Describe a specific incident that illustrates that idea." In order to focus the time we have on your teaching I may also ask you questions such as "Could you tell me specifically how that event or person affected your teaching?" All of these questions are designed to help you tell your story in your own way, and in your own words.

Please don't worry about telling your stories in the specific order that they happened. My goal is for you to feel relaxed enough to speak naturally about the work you've done. Feel free to move forward and backwards in time and to come back to incidents that you've brought up before. I hope you will feel comfortable enough to tell your story to me in the same way you would tell it to teacher you trust.

The pilot interviews for this project ran from between an hour and an hour and a half. I would like you to have 90 minutes free so that you can speak freely without feeling rushed.

**Excerpt 1**

*In this excerpt, accomplished teacher Addison Addison<sup>1</sup> answers the third question in the first interview. Please read this story and be prepared to share its meaning with other members of your group.*

ADDISON: But, as far as teaching, I don't think that I've (5 SECOND PAUSE) grown. I don't think that I have really learned anything new.

*For a moment, ADDISON looks down at her notes;*

When I read that question I'm like,

'What have I learned?

'Holy shit! I haven't learned anything.'

I was like embarrassed. I'm like,

'Oh God, I'm not doing anything differently. I'm not doing anything differently. I haven't changed this. I haven't changed that.

I mean, I did a unit on slavery because I realized that my kids didn't know anything about it, and, I guess, that was different. But, as far as changing how I teach—how I go about planning and curriculum, that's all the same. How I—I mean—I don't think that I have learned anything new. Because when you learn something, it is usually through reflection and then you change. I don't—Like, there have been little things

'On their exit cards they told me they like this, or they didn't like this, and so, then, we did this.'

But, that's not really learning something new about me as a teacher or me in teaching.

**Excerpt 2**

I gave my two years. I paid my dues. We'll see. I am going to look. See what's out there. There is so many things. I told [my principal]

'I can pretty much work anywhere and do whatever I want. And I might just choose something totally different.'

She's like

"But, you're so great."

I go

'You think I'm great. You haven't even seen me at my best.'

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<sup>1</sup> Addison's part in the playscript is constructed from verbatim transcriptions from interviews conducted by the author. All names are pseudonyms. Words have been cut from the original transcripts, but no words have been added unless indicated by brackets.

**Excerpt 4**

And, one of my girls who did so poorly, even though she worked really hard all year, she really tried hard, and all the practice tests she did really well on. Whenever we worked together I'm like,

'Oh, Liana, you're fine, you're fine. You're trying so hard, your reading's improved, you understand all the strategies, you're using the strategies I taught you, you're going to do fine.'

And she went down, and she was surprised and I was surprised and I'm like,

'Oh my gosh, yeah, you'll be going to summer school, but you know what? You just don't give up and you just keep trying. You want to go on and they're going to hold you back if you don't pass in the summer.'

"But Ms. Ashland, I really worked hard."

'It's not based on effort and I am so sorry.'

I tried to explain it to her,

'It's not fair, this shouldn't be what they look at and say,

"Okay, your scores aren't high enough. You're going to have to repeat."

'If you were going to have me again, I could hook you up. I wouldn't make you do everything again, I'd set you up with new math and new history and new science.'

But she won't have me again, especially if I'm not there, for sure. And she's like,

"Well will you teach me for summer school?"

'I can't. I've committed to do something else. I'm not even going to be in Chicago.'

"Well what am I going to do?"

'You are going to count on yourself and get yourself through it and get your test score up.'

But it's so not fair that this person who worked really hard, who can read, and oh boy, she just really (4 SECOND PAUSE) But, a stranger in the room with them makes them feel more uncomfortable, and she's like,

"You know, you couldn't test us. We couldn't see you that day."

'Liana, what can I do?'

They put a lot of pressure on the kids. Their stupid announcements over the intercom all the time, the kids are like,

"Oh my God, the test."

It's wrong, it's wrong. They're twelve and thirteen and they should be worried about boys and lip gloss, not,

"Am I going to have to go to summer school if I don't pass this? Then if I don't make it through summer school, I have to repeat?"

I mean what she was learning is that,

"Okay, I worked really hard and I still am going to—I'm failing even though I worked really hard."