Restructuring High Schools: Searching for Solutions

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Questions to Guide Future Research and Discussion about High School Reform

Introduction
High Schools for the Future
Dennie L. Smith, Professor

Many educational leaders believe that the modern day high school as we know it is broken and needs total reconstruction. Many students, especially minority populations of African American and Hispanic, are dropping out of high schools at a much higher rate than other groups. The problem is further exacerbated in urban environments and in low socio-economic level communities. In addition, students are not motivated with traditional teaching methodologies and curricula that do not orient them for a future requiring skills in accessing information and using constantly improving technological resources. Policy makers are addressing these problems by funding innovative practices to help maintain our country's competitive advantage, especially in math and science. The amount and quality of research is quite limited, however, with respect to providing guidance in developing curricula and teaching methodologies that will enable students to make the transition to post-secondary schools as well as other avenues for developing potential and evolution to productive membership of society.

This book's purpose…..

Literature Review
Lisa O'Dell, Karin Sparks, Jonathan Doll and Dennie Smith

Students leave school for a variety of reasons. Poor academic performance is often cited as one of the strongest predictors of risk of dropping out. Additional reasons include repeating one or more grades, coming from a low socio-economic background, speaking English as a second language, becoming pregnant, and being frequently absent. One single factor or, more likely, the convergence of multiple factors, has resulted in unprecedented rates of students dropping out of high school. Policymakers and educators have confronted this escalating problem with programs and strategies that are based on research and designed to increase retention and successful completion of high school.

E. Gregory Woods (1995) of the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory reviewed the research findings regarding the characteristics of effective dropout prevention programs. He noted that dropouts have such dissimilar characteristics and situations that they therefore require different kinds of educational programs that respond to individual circumstances and needs (Gándara, et al., 1997; Lee & Burkham, 2001; Reumann-Moore, 2000; Steele, 1997; Pirog and Magee, 1997; Pallas, 1991). Developed in response to the diversity of student needs, the most effective dropout prevention strategies and programs have provided individualized instruction, remediation and accelerated instruction, counseling and mentorship, and flexibility in programming and scheduling. Additional strategies that may have a positive impact on keeping students in school include having a trained and committed staff, increasing parental involvement, providing for collaboration with the community and businesses, and matching services to needs (Rumberger, May, 2001; Texas Education Agency, August, 2001, 2002; Louis and Miles, 1990; Roderick and Camburn, 1999; Stringfield, et. al., 1992; Slavin and Fashola, 1998; MacNeil, 1999; Ancess and Wichterle, 2001; IDRA, 2002).

Studies have pointed to additional strategies that seem to help prevent students from dropping out of school. The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, located at Clemson University, identified systemic renewal at the school level, safe learning environments, family engagement, early childhood education, and early literacy development as effective strategies. Other basic core strategies included mentoring/tutoring, service-learning, alternative schooling, and after-school opportunities. Jobs for the Future (2004), an organization targeting at-risk youth, synthesized a variety of strategies and ways to increase graduation rates that included: establishment of high academic standards transparently linked to future learning and work opportunities; individualized flexible programs with high expectations and clear rules of behavior; and opportunities for youth to catch up and accelerate knowledge and skills. Researchers from Harvard University noted that smaller schools, individualized attention, and strong academic intervention, particularly in the 9th grade, appear to improve the odds that students will finish high school (Johnston, R., 2001; Legters & Kerr, 2001; Neild, et. al., 2000; 2001; Texas Center for Education Research, 2002).
The Southern Regional Education Board (2002) in comments relative to its research highlighted that the process for dropping out of school begins early and strategies that improve student achievement are strategies that reduce the dropout rate. From this perspective, an essential strategy thus becomes the identification of at-risk students early and provisions for both academic and social interventions to help overcome problems that begin in preschool and continue through elementary, middle and high school.

The allowable strategies and activities under the Texas dropout prevention grant program (TXDPG) were based on the above research findings on effective dropout prevention strategies. They were also supported by the

findings of a series of school dropout prevention focus group meetings conducted in Fall 2002 by the Texas Education Agency. Focus group participants identified numerous causes and possible solutions to the dropout problem. Some of the factors identified as causes for students to dropout of school included:

• loss of eligibility for extracurricular activities
• lack of a safe school environment
• poor attendance by at-risk students
• the size of some very large schools
• the lack of a challenging and flexible curriculum
• lack of academic skills and credit hours;
• lack of a system to support students who are at risk of dropping out of school
• lack of motivation on the part of some at-risk students
• teenage pregnancy and parenting
• peer pressure
• a climate of intolerance of diversity in some schools
• being overage for their grade level
• family environment (TEA, 2002)

In addition to identifying reasons why students leave school early, focus group participants recommended strategies and programs to address the problem. Among the recommendations were the following:

• individualized instruction for all students
• establishment of high student expectations by teachers and additional training and staff development opportunities for teachers
• restructuring of schools to make them more conducive to students staying in school and graduating
• providing career and technology education courses in middle schools
• extended-day programs such as after-school tutoring and other after-school programs including summer school programs
• dual enrollment in high school and postsecondary education
• implementation of character and values education programs
• programs and services for pregnant students and students who are parents
• creating a sense of belonging in schools
• additional counseling
• mentoring programs
• partnerships and collaboration between schools and community groups and organizations
• parent involvement in education (TEA, 2002)

Many of these activities and those mentioned in the literature were supported through funding under the TXDPG program as explained below.

Allowable Grant Activities

Allowable grant activities under the Texas dropout prevention grant program were based on the effective strategies described in the dropout prevention and recovery literature and the recommendations of the focus groups. These strategies and activities are presented below in eight categories based on similarity.

Credit Accrual

• ***Online diagnostic assessment for students.*** Students use a computer program to receive immediate feedback on their academic status. This type of assessment identifies the specific areas that have been passed and failed by the student. Software programs commonly used in online diagnostic assessment include but, are not limited to, Plato, Nova-net, and School-Net.

• ***Credit recovery programs to assist students who are behind in credit accrual***. Oftentimes taken in a lab setting or a night program, students make up credits in needed courses. A credit recovery program may include on-line diagnostic assessment and accelerated instruction. Some credit recovery programs use TEA-approved curriculum such as American Preparatory Institute (API).

• ***Accelerated credit accrual programs.*** After identifying the parts of a course that have been failed, students receive fast-paced instruction and accrue credits in these areas. Software programs commonly used include but, are not limited to, Plato, Nova-net, and School-Net.

• ***Dual High school/college course credit opportunities.*** Students earn both high school and college credit by taking one course. The high school typically has an articulation agreement with the local community college to provide these courses. Career and technology courses are common examples. Courses can be taught at the high school or at the college.

Staff Hiring and Development

• ***Professional development for teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners.*** Diverse learners include, but are not limited to, students identified as limited English proficient, students with disabilities, and migrant students. Professional development materials, training and/or courses introduce teachers to instructional strategies that are well-suited to the needs of these learners.

• ***Professional development for counselors***

• ***Hiring of additional counselors***

• ***Funding of highly qualified paraprofessionals or teacher assistants to assist teaching staff.*** Highly-qualified refers to individuals who have accrued a specified number of professional development credit hours and/or course work. These individuals may teach small group instruction under the supervision of a teacher and provide assistance in a variety of ways that include but are not limited to, organizing a credit recovery lab, keeping records of student participation, attendance and performance in the lab, book-keeping, etc.

Expanded Learning Opportunities

• ***Extended Learning Opportunities.*** Learning opportunities for students beyond the regular school day, such as before or after school, in the evening or on week-ends, as well as summer classes.

• ***Computer Assisted Instruction***

• ***Trailer courses.*** These are courses offered in the term immediately following the semester in which the identified course was failed. For example, a student fails Algebra I in the Fall semester. In the Spring semester the student retakes the Fall term of Algebra I in an out-of-school time frame and continues with the Spring term of Algebra II. The student has an opportunity to remain on track with course credit by successfully completing both sections in the Spring term.

• ***Flexible scheduling.*** Similar to flexible entry/exit courses; while enrolled in Algebra I, the student makes up missing credits in Geometry. However, in comparison to flexible entry/exit courses, flexible scheduling is generally regarded as a component of program development.

• ***Flexible entry/exit courses.*** These courses are likely to take place in a credit recovery lab where a student is enrolled in one course and makes up missing credits in another at the same time. Students may be scheduled into an elective to make up missing credits.

• ***High quality tutoring services for students identified as at-risk.*** Tutoring is provided to students by teachers certified in a particular field. Teachers certified in English who provide tutoring in math would not be considered high-quality tutors. Tutors use individual-level data to plan individual lessons for students.

Mentoring (by peers and by adults)

• Role models working with students for the purpose of improving their academic, decision making, and problem solving skills. Students assigned to a mentor are afforded a connection with someone on campus who takes an interest in them.

Guidance and Support Services

• ***Character education.*** Activities include anger management, as well as drug, gang and pregnancy prevention.

• ***Services for pregnant/parenting students***

• ***Service learning opportunities for students.*** These are opportunities to do service work or volunteer work in the community. In some schools, students take a course and earn elective credit for service learning. There is

training and an extensive network for the students involved.

Early Intervention

• ***Early intervention programs targeting at-risk students.*** Students who show early signs of not being able to complete high school in four years are first identified and then "followed" to ensure they receive support services that address their specific needs.

• ***Expansion of the 9th Grade Student Success Initiative grant program.*** For those who received 9th Grade Student Success Initiative funds, an expansion would entail using local funds or additional grants to continue the activities, courses, labs, or curriculum initially developed with these funds. A continuation of the initiative focuses on ninth grade students who exhibit signs of not completing high school. The goals of this type of program are to increase academic achievement, offer credit recovery and provide support services to ninth graders in at-risk situations.

College/Career Preparation

• ***Work study programs.*** Students earn credits by participating in cooperative education. These programs allow students to gain work experience and high school credit at the same time. Advanced CATE courses often involve work study credit.

• ***Career awareness/planning activities for students***

• ***College awareness/planning activities for students***

Parent and Community Involvement

• Activities include (student) home visits, educational or career training for parents, efforts to involve parents in the educational process, parent or community volunteer programs (non-mentoring), distribution of printed materials in the Spanish language or hiring of bilingual personnel, and advertisement of grant program features and/or recruitment via the media.

The research and recommendations discussed above are being put into place in a variety of ways and with support from multiple sources, not only in the state of Texas, but also across the nation. It is not enough, however, to learn how public secondary schools can best support and retain potential dropouts. The programs and strategies must be implemented, monitored for effectiveness, and continually examined to identify what factors are most critical in student retention and high school completion.

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Preventions With Promise

Jaime Berry

Introduction

School drop out rates are much higher in urban environments. In addition, the way that drop out rates are determined varies from state to state. Many of the young individuals who fail to make that memorable walk to get their high school diploma represent immeasurable costs to our society. The consequences of dropping out are dire presenting a serious national, state, and local problem. There has been much research of the causes that contribute to students' dropping out of school including: peer affiliation, school size, learning disabilities, environmental factors (urban vs. rural), and motivation. Compared to the research related to the causes for dropping out, little attention has been paid to successful prevention models such as: Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success, High Expectations: Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Sciences, The High School Completion and Success, Upward Bound, and Project Grad. The following sections present descriptions and discussion of several successful prevention models that have demonstrated potential to decrease dropout rates and increase success in achieving high school completion.

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

For over twenty years, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has placed secondary school students who are considered at risk of dropping out of school as tutors of elementary school students, enabling the older students to make a difference in the younger students' lives (Intercultural Development Research Association, 1998).In addition, students engage in field trips within the community to explore economic and cultural opportunities, participate in a mentoring program, and listen to five guest speakers annually who model professional experience Participating schools have documented enhanced basic academic skills; strengthened perceptions of self and school; reduced disciplinary action referrals and absenteeism; and strengthened school-home-community partnerships to increase the level of support available to students at risk of dropping out of school. In one of several evaluation studies, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program demonstrated a follow-up high school dropout rate of 1 percent.

Some prevention programs focus on certain subgroups of the student population who appear to be at greater risk for dropping out of school. The following program is one example.

Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success

Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success (ALAS) was developed for Hispanic youth who were at risk of dropping out of school (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 2000). The youth were primarily from low-income communities in Los Angeles associated with drug use, gang activity, and high crime rates. The program focused on facets of students' lives, home and school, and community. Educational components attempted to improve areas where students lagged including: academics, language, problem-solving, and self-esteem. The school accomplished objectives via counseling programs for the students, skills-building programs for the parents, and increases in emotional support systems for both groups thus strengthening bonds between educators and students and educators and parents. The program was highly successful as determined by students' grades, attendance and rates of high school completion. It had a positive effect on mobility, attendance, class passing rate, and graduation credits; unfortunately, when the program was discontinued, the students lost the gains they had made and many failed to graduate. The research evidence of this program presents compelling argument that programs must be ongoing and not just one-time or short term interventions.

Other programs have emphasized student motivation and higher expectations of students. Two programs that are examples of these conceptions are described below:

Advancement via Individual Determination

Individual teachers in San Diego, California who were concerned with California's high dropout rates of their students founded the program, Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID). The approach in this program was not to place relatively low to low-average students in remedial classes, but rather to motivate them to set higher goals and maintain higher expectations of them. The teachers took at-risk students who were performing at a C average and placed them in advanced classes for high-performing students where they not only improved their grades, but also surpassed their peers in academic performances (Chavkin & Gonzalez 2000). In post-study interviews, students attributed their improvement to increased motivation and beliefs they could do better in school. The evaluation further concluded that students were greatly influenced by the teachers' encouragement and higher expectations along with feeling more optimistic about future opportunities (AVID, 2003). Today, AVID programs exist in more than 1,650 middle and high schools in 24 states and 16 countries with a graduation rate of 95 percent.

High Expectations: Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Sciences

Public high school students labeled at-risk for school dropout were placed in alternative classes instead of mainstream public education classes. Students reflected characteristics commonly associated with high risk, including low IQ scores, poor academic achievement, poor attendance, and behavioral problems (Chavlin & Gonzalez, 2000). At Hostos, however, they were not dropping out or underachieving. In fact, 70 percent of these students graduated on time. From 8th to 10th grade, students exhibited a 30 percent gain in math and 24 percent in reading, compared to students in traditional public schools (Hancock, 1994). Program evaluation identified two main themes for success: increased expectations and supportive relationships (Hancock 1994). The students at Hostos, unlike standard remedial programs, are not taught from the traditional academic curriculum but from adapted curriculum used by the University of the State of New York. Most students take Honors and college-level courses and succeed. Teachers stated they work very hard at motivating students to believe in their own abilities and that their higher expectations motivate the students to believe in themselves.

Funding by state and national governments is an essential source of support for implementing many of the current

programs. The Texas High School Completion Success program is one example that is funded by the state.

The Texas High School Completion Success

To heighten awareness, funding was authorized for The High School Completion and Success Cycle I Grant (THSCS) (Texas A&M Evaluation Group, 2005). The grant targets students who are at risk of academic failure. The four primary goals of the THSCS program are to: increase student achievement, increase the number of students who graduate in four years after entering ninth grade, increase the number of students who graduate college-ready, and decrease the number of criminal incidents and non-criminal incidents on campuses.

The THSCS campuses were required to implement selected strategies and activities allowable under the grant. The strategies were organized into seven categories: activities related to Individual Graduation Plans (IGP); Credit Accrual, Instructional Strategies, Student Achievement, Expanded Learning Opportunities, Early Intervention, and Community Engagement. Of the approximately 116, 889 students, over 45, 300 students (40%) had an IGP in place by the end of Summer 2004. One-third took an Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate course. The program is on-going and another report submitted by the Evaluation Group at Texas A&M will be available August 2006.

Brief descriptions of other programs that have been noted for their progress and success are presented below.

Upward Bound

This program targets 13-19 year old students whose family income is 150% below the poverty level and students who are potential first-generation college entrants. Students enrolled are provided with extra instruction in after school and Saturday classes in math, science, foreign languages and English. They are also offered instruction in study skills, academic or personal advisement, exposure to cultural events, college financial assistance information, and opportunities to participate in an intensive six-week summer academic program at a college campus. In an evaluation with a comparison group, Upward Bound showed promising results with a rate slightly higher than the comparison group. In addition, Upward Bound had a greater percentage of high school graduates who were eligible to attend college (71%) than did the comparison group (47%), and 65% of the college eligible Upward Bound students attended postsecondary education institutions (Upward Bound, 2005).

Project GRAD

Project Graduation Really Achieves Dreams (GRAD) is a comprehensive dropout prevention and college attendance program developed and evaluated by Jefferson Davis High School, which serves a very low SES population in Houston, Texas. It was started in 1989 by James Ketelsen, a former CEO of Tenneco in collaboration with the University of Houston. At the time, Tenneco and other founders promised any student who graduated on time from Jefferson Davis with a GPA of 2.5, a 4-year $1,000/year college scholarship. Students were also provided with two 5-week summer academic institutes held at the University of Houston and paid internships in local businesses. GRAD provides further assistance with interventions to improve school-wide discipline, parent involvement, and quality of instruction. Since its inception the percentage of students graduating in four years has risen from 50% to 78%. College attendance has increased from 10% of all graduates to 60%. The passing rate on the 11th grade state examination increased from 37% to 86%, and annual dropout rates have decreased (Project GRAD, 2005).

Future Implications

There are many successful programs that have helped students stay in school. Among the most common characteristics of these programs are student mentoring, challenging curriculum with advanced placement opportunities, college preparatory classes, and as suggested by a significant amount of research and study of these programs, the belief that all students can succeed. Promising preventative and alternative structures that need to be pursued with research include: alternative schools, “schools within schools,” and mentoring programs. Quest High School in Humble, Texas is an example of a “schools within schools” philosophy, providing an alternative environment for students at-risk of dropping out. Another promising intervention is providing schools with a specialized field that will help students gain employment or postsecondary education. For example, Houston Independent School District has what are termed magnet schools in a variety of fields including: health professions, aviation, architecture, and hotel management. These and other promising alternatives to the structuring of high schools require rigorous research and continued investigation to acquire substantially more and better schooling for all high school students.

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Newcomer Programs: A Blueprint for Success in Educating Immigrant Students

Sandra Sandoval

The Current Status of Education for Immigrant Students in the United States

In the nation's schools, the number of immigrant students enrolling in high school has risen dramatically over the last 10 years. What were once one or two immigrant students in the schools has turned into 20 to 30 immigrant students. According to Feinberg (2000), immigrant children or children of immigrants composed over 20% of all American children, making them the fastest growing group of students in the United States. Most of the immigrant students that enroll in schools speak little or no English. In many elementary schools, bilingual programs are offered to help these students acquire the English language over time; however, few high schools offer this option. High schools must not only teach the "newly arrived" immigrant student to speak English, but must also ensure that the student takes the required courses in the content areas to prepare for graduation. Because of the influx of the number of immigrant students into the high schools, districts have had to reconsider how to best serve the older immigrant students. Genesee (1999) states, "Virtually all schools in America are being called upon to provide educational services for linguistically and culturally diverse students." (p. 1)

As a result of the increase in immigrating older students, many districts across the nation have established a *newcomer program* or new arrival program at the high school level to support the secondary immigrant student. A newcomer student is defined as: "Recent immigrant students who have very limited or no English language proficiency and who may have had formal education in their native countries" (Short & Boyson, 2004, p. 1). For the purpose of this paper, the term "newcomer" will be used to describe the program for these students. This chapter will focus on the characteristics of the newcomer programs in high schools, promising programs in the United States, and the future of such programs.

Newcomer Programs –The Idea

Newcomer programs evolved from the English as a Second Language programs (ESL) established in many high schools. At the elementary level, bilingual education programs have typically served the English Language Learner, however, enrollment trends indicated that more immigrant students were attending at the secondary level. Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000) found that most funding for language programs were concentrated at the elementary level. Therefore, language programs at the secondary level have been minimal to meet the needs of the immigrant student. Content-based ESL classes attempt to serve all ELL students, but have not met with adequate success to help all ELL students (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004).

The ELL secondary immigrant student has a wide range of proficiencies. This is due in part to the age of the students, limited ability to speak English, poor literacy in the first language, and low academic skills putting them at risk for failure. According to Higgs (2005), newcomer programs are designed for students with needs beyond those generally served by traditional bilingual or ESL programs. These programs may vary from school to school, district to district, and state to state. Echevarria, Short, and Vogt (2004) noted that because immigrant students can come with a wide range of background knowledge, it is essential that a variety of avenues of learning must be offered in order for them to meet with academic success. The main goal is still the same: to prepare the

immigrant student to participate and contribute to their learning community through opportunities in accelerated language acquisition and the content areas.

Newcomer programs can be designed in various ways according to the district goals, sites, resources, and needs of the population. There are some common threads that can be found in each program. In *Creating Access*, Short and Boyson (2004) identified the following features among districts in establishing a newcomer program: a cohort of newcomer students, a program distinct from the regular language support program, a plan for ESL development, instructional strategies for literacy development, instructional strategies for the integration of language and content, courses for U.S. orientation, experienced teachers and paraprofessional support, appropriate materials, and family connections.

The program models vary institutionally in the physical location, length of program, and program features. Additional factors that may impact the type of programs offered in schools are fiscal resources, materials, community support, and enrollment. According to Short and Boyson, (2004) a standard newcomer model has not emerged. Through assessing the needs of their immigrant students or newcomer students, districts and schools must determine which type of program is most appropriate for their communities.

According to Short and Boyson (2004) there are essentially three types of newcomer programs in high schools: program within a school, separate site, whole school. Most high schools (77%) employ a program within a school. This allows for additional educational opportunities for the immigrant student to participate in the regular school setting. The length of the program varies according to the needs of the students and availability of resources. In the high schools that offer newcomer programs, 56% have a full day program, 17% a half day program, 6% less than half day, 2% after school, and 19% a combination of programs (Short & Boyson, 2004). These programs provide additional English language support and accelerated instruction in the content areas. The full day program assists in building students' background knowledge and experiences for transition into regular classes. At the International Newcomer Academy in Fort Worth curriculum and classes include a 90 minute block alternating math and science /social studies, a 90 minute block alternating ESL/Speech with reading, ESL lab/keyboarding, a class in careers, cultural orientation to the United States, and a study skills class. The length of enrollment in newcomer programs varies, with 43% of the districts providing one-year enrollment in newcomer classes, and 28% providing more than one year (Short & Boyson, 2004).

The instructional design of the newcomer programs generally provides the immigrant student with opportunities for intense English language instruction, and in some programs, the development of literacy skills in the students' native language. The classes use varied and multiple instructional techniques such as: scaffolding, cooperative learning, graphic organizers, and modeling. Literacy classes incorporate whole language strategies, the language experience approach, oral language development activities, and high interest reading selections. Feinberg (2000) reports that at International High School at LaGuardia Community College native language skills are reinforced and individualized learning opportunities are provided. Three of the most common ways content instruction is delivered to immigrant students are through sheltered instruction, native language instruction, or a combination of both. Sheltered instruction is an approach to teaching that extends students' time for receiving English language support while they learn content subjects (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). When most of the students have a common native language, content area instruction can be delivered through the native language. Boyson and Short (2004) reported that 89% of the programs taught content through sheltered English instruction.

Promising Newcomer Programs –The Models

International High School-LaGuardia

This magnet program serves 450 students and is located on a college campus. The curriculum is focused on English language acquisition and comprehending content area instruction while reinforcing native language skills. Students' needs are met with individual learning opportunities and counseling support for college and career requirements. The success rate of the first class resulted in a 90 % graduation rate with all graduates accepted into colleges and universities (Feinberg, 2000).

Liberty High School-Manhattan

This full-day program is located at a separate site from the high school and serves students who are in the ninth grade. The immigrant students who attend this campus have a carefully selected and flexible offering of classes to meet their needs. The classes vary from ESL programs with sheltered instruction in the content areas to bilingual programs for preliterate Spanish-speaking students to content courses in native language (Spanish literacy, Cantonese, and Mandarin). Students are enrolled in the program for one year, but can exit after one semester. Success of the program is reflected in scores for the Regents exam in the content areas. Short and

Boyson (2004) reported that in 1999-2000, 15 students took the math Regents exam and passed, while 56% of the students who took biology passed the exam. This recognized school has received a $50,000 grant for a commendable school project and a state archive grant for writing curriculum, linking research of the Fujianese community, social studies, language arts, and the New York City curriculum standards (Short & Boyson, 2004).

International Newcomer Academy-Fort Worth, Texas

This one-year program serves middle school and high school students from diverse backgrounds such as Vietnamese, Serbo-Croation, Albanian, and Spanish. Most of the classes are ESL based with sheltered instruction in the content areas. ESL language/literacy classes are also offered. The full day program is located at a separate site. However, there are opportunities for students to work on projects with students from other campuses. The campus has low teacher turnover and has strong financial support from the district. In 2001-2002, the students from the International Newcomer Academy had a 65 % passing rate for algebra end of course exam http://www.fortworthisd.org/profile/062ap.html .

Future of Newcomer Programs-Under Construction

The Newcomer program is an innovative way to help teach immigrant students who are not prepared to enter the high school system of the United States. Students are generally motivated and want to familiarize themselves with the culture of their new country and seek out educational opportunities. The programs offer an alternative for high schools to help prepare these students for the real world. Short and Boyson (2004) provide sound data that support the newcomer program. Although different in implementation and design, these programs make the promise of academic success more viable for students who are among the most vulnerable population in high schools today.

Innovative programs, such as the newcomer programs, allow teachers and districts to use a variety of research-based strategies to deliver content area information. As the newcomer programs continue to evolve, certain issues will need to be further investigated such as: uniformity of assessment, evaluating the program effectiveness, integrating the content areas for more effective instruction, and addressing the needs of the pre-literate immigrant student. As the population of students change, the educational system must reform programs and practices to meet the diversity of the student population. The newcomer program concept offers high schools a blueprint for educational success for immigrant students.

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Teaching and instructional practices vary widely in American high schools. Research has identified several promising practices of effective high schools in an effort to improve test scores and enhance the acquisition of knowledge in students. The purpose of this paper is to identify and summarize three of those promising practices, teacher discourse, teaching stories, and teacher and student team teaching, and to briefly describe other instructional practices that hold promise for helping high school students achieve at higher levels.

Teacher Discourse

Teacher discourse in the form of a narrative is a promising teaching practice. White (1981), Bakhtin (1981), and Brunner (1986) noted that narratives promote the construction of knowing, self, and knowledge, respectively. In addition, Fairclough (1995) stated that discourse is a powerful tool that contributes to students' current and future views of themselves. In 1977, Bourdieu concluded that students readily take advantage of learning opportunities when their views are synchronized with their teachers. Narratives contribute to this student teacher disposition by helping students construct knowledge and understanding (Hicks, 1994; Rex, Murnen, Hobbs, and McEachen 2002). Rex and his colleagues also noted that teachers' stories are very influential and often convey instructional messages. The messages inform students about their roles in the classroom, their learning outcome expectations, and methods by which they can demonstrate their knowledge.

Teaching Stories

The benefits of teaching stories are evident in a study conducted by Rex et al. (2002). The study was designed to determine how teachers' style of storytelling shaped the identities of students as well as how storytelling provided opportunities for students to learn the subject matter. The teachers' stories in this study that were more closely related to the construction of knowing, self, and knowledge included object lessons, lessons on learning aids, lessons on test taking, and lessons on dealing with grades. Object lessons inform about morals, memorizing, writing, and reading. For example, one teacher discussed how people try to memorize words by mindlessly repeating them over and over without making connections. Another teacher noted how Cliff Notes limit learning opportunities by preventing students from reaching their own conclusions. One teacher described how his son failed his first SAT but scored well on his second SAT as a result of altering his study plan. One teacher demonstrated how to complain about a grade.

Teacher and Student Team Teaching

Team teaching was first promoted in 1964 by Irvin as a method for controlling large groups. York's 1971 research concluded that team teaching was useful for directing teachers' actions, and Jacobs (1999) considered team teaching to be one of the best practices for school improvement. A primary benefit of team teaching is that it promotes collaboration among teachers. The ultimate benefit, however, is that this collaboration contributes to successful school reform and improvements in students' achievement (Hart, 1998; Jacobs, 1999; McCraken & Sekicky 1998; Murata, 1997; Oldfather & Thomas 1998; Peterson 1966; Trent 1998; Trivette & White, 1969). Tchudi & Mitchell's (1999) research concluded that team teaching is based on a sound learning theory that improves student achievement.

Murata (2002) identified the characteristics of team teaching and the environment necessary for collaborative teaching. Her study revealed that planning is a key aspect in team teaching because the goals of curriculum integration are highlighted during this time. For example, one team merged English and history into humanities. New curriculum was developed as a result of the curriculum integration. As part of the process, teams reported altering their approach to curriculum planning as a result of team teaching. Instead of focusing on individual lessons, these teams learned to think of curriculum as a set of concepts. Other benefits identified by teachers included: Teaching teams informed teachers about the curriculum of their partners; Teachers extended their relationships outside the classroom by taking field trips together and by socializing away from school; Team teaching fostered trust and the development of rich personal relationships between partners; Teachers learned about their own strengths and weaknesses; and, Team teaching reduced isolation. One teacher reported that having a partner instilled a sense of belonging in him. Team teaching also serves as a model of professional and personal relationships for students. One student reported the synergy between teachers as a strength of a class that was team taught. Students in other classes stated that they would always remember the relationship that they made in class, and another student remarked that the team teaching class brought the students closer together. Team teaching appeared to strengthen student-teacher relationships by giving teachers the opportunity to interact with students' one on one as groups were working. Perhaps most importantly, students reported having lots of fun with their teachers.

As with teachers, students also can use this model of teaching as a basis for fostering a community of learning. In

2001 Kiernan concluded that teaming students is a promising teaching practice. This practice provides opportunities to create heterogeneous groups, foster collaboration among students, create reciprocal teaching opportunities, and improve students' organizational and communication skills. Teachers can partner high achieving students with low achieving students to motivate the students and to raise self expectations. Another positive by-product is that students learn to work together in an effort to accomplish assigned tasks. For example, reciprocal teaching requires students to take turns leading class discussion. Research of this strategy indicates that students gain a deep knowledge of the subject when they teach their peers. Vygotsky (1978) stated that reciprocal teaching creates zones of proximal development and posited that the maximum amount of learning occurs when students are in this zone. An additional benefit is that group members develop organizational skills. Classroom observations noted that some students began recording their assignments in planners as a result of observing their group members' organizational practices. Finally, the interactions that occur between students when they are working in teams appear to improve their communication skills.

Other Promising Instructional Practices

Research of effective schools indicates that there are other important and promising instructional practices that support student achievement. Langer (2002) identified several instructional practices and organizational structures that characterize effective schools and teaching, including skills instruction, connecting learning, teaching thinking strategies, concept learning, and class organization. Skills instruction has been and continues to be debated among researchers. For example, in 1938 Dewey stated that experience-based instruction was the most effective approach to skills instruction and in 1971 Bloom countered this philosophy by advocating decontextualized instruction as the best instructional approach to skills learning. Later Langer (2002) reported that skills instructional approaches that are separated, simulated, and integrated were the most effective in teaching skills and knowledge. Examples of effective instruction from her research included one teacher who took challenging vocabulary words out of context and demonstrated their use in class using a simulated activity. Langer's 2002 study also revealed that the connection to learning by the incorporation of students' pre-existing knowledge is an effective instructional technique as is the use of enabling strategies that foster thinking and promote learning (Langer, 2002). Teachers can scaffold difficult exercises by segmenting them and by designing questions to guide students' thinking as they progress. Conception learning also appears to develop deeper understandings in students' abilities and classroom organizations that encourage shared cognition through group work are also effective instructional practices (Langer, 2002).

The promising practices outlined above appear to be especially useful in enhancing learning and contributing to student success. They are neither subject nor academic level specific and therefore can be applied in a variety of contexts. Most importantly, there seem to be no disadvantages associated with their implementation.

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English Language Learners – The Sheltered Instruction Model

Juliet Tzou

Challenges Faced by English Language Learners in American High Schools

The number of non-native-English-speaking students has risen dramatically in the United States as the population of immigrants continues to increase. It was reported that in the 2003-2004 school year, 5.5 million school-age children were English learners (Leos, 2004), an increase of nearly 100% from a decade ago. These English language learners (ELLs), due to factors other than language, such as educational background and socioeconomic status, normally experience difficulties in achieving comparable academic success with their native speaker peers.

Upon entering high school, ELLs who have no prior exposure to English are only at the beginning stages of social communication and will need at least two years to develop social language skills and up to eight years to develop

language required for academic content, depending on the age and educational background of the ELL (Collier, 1995). However, high school teachers' expectations are that all students will be able to use language functionally (Chamot, 1992). English language learners at the high school level where curricular demands are higher, may feel even more challenged and need longer time and more support in school (McKeon, 1994).

The quality of instruction ELLs receive in high school also determines their academic success. Although the No Child Left Behind Act demands highly qualified teachers in content areas by 2006, very few states require content area teachers to have any background or training in English as a second-language (ESL) instructional methods, second-language acquisition, or cross-cultural communication (Short & Echevarria, 2004). There is a strong need for content area teachers to prepare to work with English language learners. They need to teach ELLs in strategic ways that make the concepts comprehensible while at the same time promote their academic English development. This can be done through sheltered instruction. Like many other alternative programs designed for English language learners, such as newcomer programs (Short & Boyson, 2000), transitional and developmental bilingual education, and two-way immersion programs (Genesee, 1999), sheltered instruction programs cater to the special needs of ELLs. Sheltered instruction is often used in conjunction with other program types but can also be implemented as the sole approach for teaching ELLs.

Common Characteristics of Alternative Programs for English Language Learners

Programs designed for English language learners are well supported by strong and knowledgeable leadership among classroom, school, and district personnel (Genesee, 1999). Leaders in effective ELL programs are found to possess expertise in effective instructional approaches for ELLs, have high expectations for all students, and actively recruit teachers experienced in working with ELLs (Tikunoff et al., 1991).

In addition, alternative programs for ELLs have extensive parental involvement and engage in ongoing professional development and training of teachers (Lucas et al., 1990; Genesee, 1999). These programs provide instructional professionals who can implement strategies that promote language and academic achievement at the same time and who know how to use assessment methods that are linked to lesson objectives and that inform instructional planning and delivery. The programs develop and/or provide appropriate instructional materials and aids for ELLs, and the human resource entities usually connected to such programs coordinate communication between parents and schools (Chamot, 1992; Genesee, 1999).

Sheltered Instruction (SI) Model

In sheltered instruction for ELLs, the academic content areas are taught through English. The SI model is grounded on the belief that ELLs can acquire content knowledge and skills at the same time that they improve their English language skills. Based on the SI model, ELLs' language acquisition can be enhanced through meaningful use of and interaction in English (Genesee, 1999). The meaningful academic learning experiences afforded in sheltered classes enable English language learners to develop their academic language skills by practicing skills such as analyzing and summarizing cognitively demanding material, arguing a position, and other important skills (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004).

How Does the SI Model Work in a High School ELL Classroom?

Teachers' lesson plans in sheltered classes should reflect both content and ESL instruction standards. In other words, when teaching science, mathematics, social studies, and other subjects, teachers need to be aware of the sequential pattern of English language learning. For example, when doing a science experiment involving recording of observations, teachers have to make sure that key vocabulary is introduced, written, and highlighted for students to see.

High school English language learners in sheltered programs can also benefit from the use of graphs, models, and visual aids. SI teachers should make sure that texts and assignments are adapted for better comprehension. For instance, dense text can be graphically depicted or rewritten while passages may be read aloud and paraphrased (Genesee, 1999).

Scaffolding is also employed by SI teachers who begin instruction at a more manageable level and then through provision of adequate support, move students to a higher level of understanding. Techniques of scaffolding include asking questions or elaborating on students' responses, or giving written materials that serve as academic supports. Further, sheltered classes offer abundant opportunities for interaction and meaningful activities. Through interaction with the teacher and other peers, ELLs can practice skills in clarifying or negotiating meaning, confirming information, and disagreeing. In addition, high school ELLs are taught by meaningful hands-on activities such as doing experiments, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The assessment of ELLs in SI classes is often done informally, with the teachers closely monitoring the progress of both academic and language

development.

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, based on the sheltered instruction model – is part of a seven-year research project developed by Short and Echevarria (2004) under a federal research grant. It is the first empirically-validated model of content-based instruction and is currently used in all 50 states and hundreds of schools across the U.S. The SIOP is a lesson-planning and delivery approach consisting of 30 instructional strategies that are further grouped into eight components:

• Preparation
• Building Background,
• Comprehensible Input
• Strategies
• Interaction
• Practice/Application
• Lesson Delivery
• Review/Assessement

Research has found that ELLs whose teachers were trained in implementing the SIOP model performed much better on an academic writing assessment than those whose teachers had had no exposure to the model (Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2003).

The following six strategies for teaching ELLs are identified by teachers who had used the SIOP model successfully (Short & Echevarria, 2004):

• *Determining the language demands of content areas.* Teachers should understand what linguistic skills are required of ELLs to understand content-area subjects. For example, does the course require ELLs to read a textbook or take notes?

• *Plan language objectives for all lessons and make them explicit to students.* Teachers should develop language objectives related to key vocabulary, reading or writing skills, or listening or speaking tasks in addition to setting content goals.

• *Develop students' academic vocabulary.* Helping students become familiar with vocabulary and expressions beyond the technical terms highlighted in the textbook. Strategies such as word walls, semantic webs, and structural analysis can help students organize new words in meaningful ways.

• *Capitalize on students' background knowledge.* Activating prior knowledge helps students learn new concepts. For example, a lesson on American Civil War can be preceded by asking students' understanding about "conflict."

• *Promote oral interaction and extended academic talk.* Teachers need to encourage ELLs to join academic talk in class. This can be done by first asking the students to share thoughts with a partner before reporting to the whole class, thus giving students' more confidence to speak out.

• *Review vocabulary and content concepts.* Scheduling time at the end of lesson for review helps ELLs focus on key concepts that link to lesson objectives and state standards.

• *Give students feedback on language use in class.* Content area teachers can provide feedback to ELLs regarding their word choice, ways of comparing information, and techniques for explaining solutions.

In the sheltered instruction program and especially by using the SIOP model, teachers can effectively help ELLs master academic content and develop literacy skills necessary for school success.

Looking ahead – Training Teachers to Work With ELLs

A survey found that only nine percent of pre-service teachers were willing to teach in urban or multicultural contexts, and less than three percent were capable of teaching in a language other than English (Chisholm, 1994). Although many high school teachers regard themselves as content specialists who are not responsible for the special instructional needs that ELLs might have (Constantino, 1994), mainstream teachers who received proper training to teach ELLs in different content areas can have much success (Castaneda, 1993). It is vital that schools conduct professional development to help all teachers understand that they share responsibility for the

education of English language learners. While ELL students are in the sheltered instruction classes, teachers should learn appropriate techniques to support them; when ELLs transition into mainstream classes they should also be guided by mainstream teachers (Genesee, 1999).

Educators of English language learners in high schools do need a good understanding of the potential difficulties that language differences can produce for these students. Alternative programs such as the sheltered instruction program are tailored to the learning needs of high school ELLs and contribute to their transition to mainstream classes. Such programs should continue to be supported by high schools with English language learners, and both teachers in these programs and in mainstream classes have to learn effective strategies such as the ones under the SIOP model for teaching English language learners.

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College Assistance Programs for High School Students from Low Income Families

Steven Rodriquez

There are many federal and state funded programs that seek to help high school students gain access to postsecondary education. The purpose of this paper is to describe some of the larger college access programs and implications for future educational practice in this area. The discussion will involve the TRIO, GEARUP and other programs.

Programs such as Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services all originated as part of the federally-funded TRIO programs, which began in the 1960's. These programs offer counseling, tutoring in writing, math and science, and college admission and financial aid information (http://www.trioprograms.org/abouttrio.html). TRIO programs currently serve over 866,000 students annually through middle school to graduate school level programs in more than 2,600 colleges and universities nationwide. Wallace, Abel, and Ropers-Huilman (2000) state that TRIO programs positively impact student decisions to attend higher education institutions, as well as their satisfaction with their college experience. Additionally, they assert that students in these programs are highly motivated to persist in postsecondary education.

The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEARUP) program developed as a result of the 1998 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (Swail, 2000). GEARUP programs have generally the same purposes and offer many of the same services as TRIO programs, but they are different from TRIO programs in two ways. TRIO programs are encouraged to develop community partnerships in offering student services, but GEARUP programs are specifically required to develop partnerships with local educational agencies, postsecondary institutions and other community institutions (http://www.edu.gov/programs/gearup/eligibility.html). GEARUP programs are also mandated to serve cohorts of students where TRIO programs are only required to serve individual students.

The TRIO and GEARUP programs are the major federally funded programs aimed at serving underserved, low-income students. There are, however, many state funded programs. While smaller in scale, state programs such I Have a Dream™ (IHAD), Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), and Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement (MESA) also serve significant numbers of students (Swail, 2000).

Some studies have reported notable changes in various orientations to the educational experience for students who have participated in college access programs. For example, the United States Department of Education (http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/upward/upward-3rd-report.html) found that the longer students remained active in Upward Bound programs, the more likely they were to report a desire to enroll in and complete a degree at a postsecondary institution upon high school graduation. Similar studies that involved the Talent Search (http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/higher/talent.html) and Student Support Services programs (http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/higher/sss2.html) revealed similar findings. However, the literature in this area lacks studies that reveal differences in various educational outcomes between college access program participants and similar populations of students who were not enrolled in such programs.

The few that have written critically about these programs mostly focus on their successes (Blake, 1998, & Mahoney, 1998). The criticisms largely focus on the fact that these programs do not serve enough of the population that they seek to serve (Swail, 2000). It seems intuitive to believe that various types of academic support services help students achieve increasingly higher educational goals. However, research that compares educational outcomes of college access program participants to similar populations of non-participant students could inform administrative decision making about these programs as well as inform citizens as to the worth of these programs.

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Accessing the Gateway into High School Mathematics… Algebra I

Diana Piccolo

Since the Education Commission released the "Nation at Risk" report in the 1980's, the educational community has been striving to recognize, re-evaluate and reform instructional ideologies, practices, and pedagogies. Many improvements have been made, but Algebra I classes at the high school level are still in need of reform if students are to succeed in subsequent high school math courses. According to Smith (1996, p. 141), "introductory algebra is the first major gateway into secondary mathematics." Unfortunately, many ninth grade students are not successfully passing through this gateway and are struggling to meet required expectations of further high school mathematics classes. This chapter will attempt to define what factors are contributing to unsuccessful Algebra I completion, report results and recommendations of current U.S. projects being researched, and suggest implementation ideas for the future.

Algebra I has come to be regarded as the gatekeeper course for beginning high school students. Those who successfully pass it will advance while those who don't will be permanently left behind. The high failure rate in algebra, especially among minority students, has become an important social issue of concern (Wu, 2001).

Teacher preparation and professional development raise equity and expectation issues. Cobb & Strong (2000) found that "teachers must be prepared to remediate students' deficiencies while helping them learn new concepts and procedures" (p. 3). The task of improving student understanding and success in Algebra I begins with quality and relevant preparation of pre-service teachers. For current classroom teachers, a more comprehensive development of in-service that directly addresses teachers' mathematical needs in the classroom should be implemented (Wu, 2001).

Teacher training for algebra is usually designed for middle and high school certified teachers, only. New research and studies report that algebraic concepts and strategies should also be taught to elementary certified teachers due to curriculum content in these grades. Shwartz and Whitin (2000) stated that "the current educational emphasis on the child's construction of knowledge highlights the importance of the teacher's knowledge base to successfully immerse children in using their emerging algebraic reasoning and illustrating it graphically or symbolically" (p. 4).

Teachers should be trained to use relevant, effective and innovative teaching strategies. Teachers must know how to scaffold the bridges of learning from the concrete to the abstract. They need to be prepared not only to recognize algebraic thinking as it develops but also to structure genuine learning situations that allow children to use symbols to represent relationships and patterns (Schwartz & Whitin, 2000).

The Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) that participated in "Getting to the Right Algebra: The Equity 2000 Initiative" raised their academic standards, beginning with the requirement that all ninth grade students complete Algebra I. The results of the Equity 2000 Initiative found several barriers to student achievement in Algebra I that could be attributed to many ninth grade Algebra I classes in America. Ham & Walker (2000, p. 33) found three factors commonly cited for Algebra I completion by the end of ninth grade were: 1) students' low attendance and poor

preparation in mathematics, 2) large class size and its impact on teachers' ability to meet the diverse learning needs of a heterogeneous student population, and 3) the limitations on building teacher capacity.
There has also been much discrepancy among educators about what level of cognitive development students need to possess when learning algebraic concepts. To understand algebra, students must learn to collect data, organize this data, know how to recognize patterns in the data and be able to express the patterns they have seen (Moses, 2000). Algebra also requires abstract thinking. Wu (2001) found that algebra goes beyond the computation of concrete numbers and focuses instead on properties that are common to all numbers, be it fractions, whole numbers, etc.

Motivation and math anxiety are hampering students' ability to learn algebra concepts. Middleton and Spanias (1999) reported that students must feel comfortable with mathematics, must be challenged to achieve and must expect to succeed before the development of intrinsic motivation can begin. This idea can have a profound impact on a student's motivation to succeed in algebra.

The lack of adequate technology support and resources is also affecting algebra students' success in the classroom. Since the beginning of the 21st century, math and technology have become synonymous terms. In order for students to learn mathematics today, they need modern calculators, computers, and other CAS (computer algebra systems) materials (Howell, 2000).

Currently, there are many projects and studies being conducted in the United States to combat the growing number of beginning high school students who fail or do not even take Algebra I. Encouraging results and recommendations are being reported on how to best meet the educational needs of today's high school students.

Institutions, such as The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM, 2000), University of Chicago School Mathematics Project (UCSMP, 1983), Educational Testing Service and the College Entrance Examination Board (ALGEBRIDGE, 1990) and National Center of Education Statistics (NCES, 1994a) found that students are entering high school without the necessary algebraic and conceptual skills needed for Algebra I. One belief of the UCSMP (1983) was that seventh and eighth grade, for many students, are often review years, with very little new material being taught. Requiring students to complete algebra or its equivalent by the end of eighth grade was advocated in several of these studies (UCSMP, 1983), (NCES, 1994a), (NCTM, 2000).

In this era of mathematics education reform, the curricular and professional standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM, 2000) serve as a foundation for the newly stated principles of mathematics learning, content and teaching in grades pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade (Koedinger & Nath, 2000). Based on current school and testing reports for ninth grade algebra, schools are clearly not meeting these NCTM expectations. For example, a report that evaluated mathematical achievement was the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) document. It stated that math achievement is improving slightly, but much more work must be done to ensure that students receive a solid foundation in mathematics. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2000), only a quarter of eighth-graders are performing at or above proficient levels in math (NCLB, 2002).

Which ideas and reforms currently being researched will best meet the future educational needs of ninth grade algebra students? Clearly, a better structural and academic foundation is necessary in middle school that bridges the gap between general arithmetic and algebra. Introduction of algebra during the elementary and middle school years should help ensure adequate preparation for secondary-school algebra (Gamoran & Hanningan, 2000). Instead of courses designed for abstract thinkers, a cognitive level that many middle school students have not attained, courses could be redesigned to offer instruction in algebra that builds on students' elementary and middle-level algebraic experiences (Matsumoto, 2000). Studies, such as the Southeast High School Model (Borelli, 1995) also show that in order to help students succeed in 9th grade algebra, a paradigm shift of what content we teach and how we teach it in middle school must occur.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2000) found in the Nation's Report Card that 68 percent of 8th grade math students were performing at or above *Basic* in 2003. One change that was made in the administration of the current test involved allowing students with disabilities or limited-English-proficient students to use certain accommodations, such as extended time and small group testing. Allowing these types of accommodations in the regular 9th grade classroom could further algebraic understanding for these types of learners.

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM, 2000) advocates profound change in the overall mathematics curriculum in grades 5 to 8, which includes as one of its standards that students explore algebraic concepts in an informal way throughout their later elementary curriculum. Early access to algebra is predicted to have a sustained positive effect on students, leading to more exposure to advanced mathematics curriculum and,

in turn, higher mathematics performance by the end of high school (Smith, 1996).

Finally, researchers are supporting increasing the number of ninth grade students in algebra by offering alternative forms of instruction, such as Virtual High School Algebra I classes. The U.S.A. Exemplary Technology-Supported Schooling Case Studies Project (2003) discusses how virtual high schools are an innovative approach to educating today's high school students. In the technological age that we live in, offering students the option to take high school courses on-line is a natural progression of our educational system. Many courses in college are offered through on-line Internet classrooms. Allowing students to gain exposure and practice by learning in this new environment should provide them valuable support to their college education. Virtual High School courses can also benefit non-college bound students. High school students that work, or need to take a course that is not offered at their high school, can also utilize this form of learning.

The success of students in Algebra I is an important transitional milestone for a successful experience in high school mathematics. As a former 7th and 8th grade teacher and parent of a 9th grader, I understand the relevancy and urgency of the issues discussed in this chapter. I think that 8th grade students can learn many of the abstract concepts in algebra, but they must also be taught using both concrete and abstract teaching methods. All students should be encouraged or expected to take Algebra I by 9th grade. If algebraic concepts are integrated in earlier grades, qualified and well-trained teachers are employed, and educational and technical support is provided, 9th grade students should be better prepared for success in Algebra I.

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Performance Assessment at the High School Level

Margaret Mohr

With the introduction of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) into education in the United States (US), high-stakes testing has been thrust into the spotlight. Currently, many US schools are using high-stakes testing to measure student performance. These tests not only provide valuable feedback to teachers regarding individual student performance, curriculum, and teaching methods, but they also help to hold schools and school districts accountable for students' performances (American Psychological Association [APA], 2001). Although tests are among one of the best methods to assess student learning, high-stakes testing is often perceived as a single "snapshot" of a student's academic achievement (APA, 2001). Schools give the students one chance to successfully pass a paper-and-pencil test. In addition, the tests often "have unintended and potentially negative consequences for individual students, groups of students, or the educational system more broadly" (APA, 2001, ¶ 5).

The Need for Alternative Forms of Assessment

Gradually more schools, school districts, and states are experimenting with alternative forms of assessment. Most are not convinced the traditional standardized tests measure many of the important aspects of learning. In addition, traditional standardized tests fail to support many of the useful teaching strategies preservice teachers are currently being taught in their college courses (Darling-Hammond, Ancess, & Falk, 1995). Researchers (cf. Dorr-Bremme & Herman, 1983; Herman & Golan, 1991; Kellaghan & Madaus, 1991; Shepard, 1991; Smith & Rottenberg, 1991) have also concluded "the time focused on test content has narrowed the curriculum by overemphasizing basic-skill subjects and neglecting higher-order thinking skills" (Herman, 1992, p. 74). Although some test scores have improved through the use of the "teaching to the test" method, the standardized test scores represent only the content and formats included on the tests and in the end, teaching to the test does not result in meaningful learning for the students (Herman, 1992).

What is Good Assessment?

Airasian (1991) describes assessment as the process of collecting, interpreting, and synthesizing information to aid in decision making. The purpose of assessment is to "find out what each student is able to do, with knowledge, in context" (Wiggins, 1996/1997, p. 19). Traditionally, good assessment has been defined by what it is not (i.e., standardized tests). However, good assessment is "built on current theories of learning and cognition and grounded in the views of what skills and capacities students will need for future success" (Herman, 1992, p. 75). Webb (1992) described assessment as having multiple cameras at all different views taking pictures at all different angles all at the same time.

What is Performance Assessment?

Alternative assessment practices are being developed to look directly at “students’ work and their performance in ways that can evaluate the performances of students, classes, and whole schools” (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995, p. 10). The alternative practices are known as “authentic” assessments or “performance” assessments because students are engaged in “real world” tasks rather than multiple choice exercises. A performance assessment is a form of testing in which a student is given a task, usually a demanding one, then asked to respond to the task orally, in writing, or by constructing a product (Popham, 2005). The students are then evaluated according to criteria (typically a rubric of some sort is used) important for the actual performance in the particular field (Wiggins, 1989). Basically, in performance assessment, a student (the examinee) is asked to demonstrate and apply the skills and knowledge they have learned (Stiggins, 1987).
Performance assessments are broader in scope than traditional pencil and paper assessments. They are more authentic and are more likely to elicit a student’s full repertoire of skills and reflect a range of goals the teacher wants the students to meet (Campbell, Melenyzer, Nettles, & Wyman, 2000). There are various forms of performance assessment including, oral presentations along with student written work, experiments, debates, teacher observation and inventories, inquiries, and portfolios (Archbald & Newman, 1988; Meisels, 1996/1997; O’Neil, 1992). These various forms of performance assessments are also a valuable tool in special education where paper-and-pencil tests are unable to be utilized or fail to test important skills (Stiggins, 1987).

Design and Development

Although performance assessments are somewhat complex in their developments, they are essentially composed of four basic components: a *reason* for assessment, a particular *performance* to be evaluated, *exercises* to elicit that performance, and systematic *rating* procedures (Stiggins, 1987). All of these components are a vital part of the performance assessment process. However, Stiggins (1987) stresses the importance of having a clear sense of what you want to assess. “If you do not have a clear sense of the key dimensions of sound performance—a vision of poor and outstanding performance—you can neither teach students to perform nor evaluate their performance” (p. 37). For more specific instructions on the design and development of performance assessments, the reader is directed to Stiggins (1987) or Wiggins (1996/1997).

Predicaments

Although performance assessment is a reputable alternative to standardized testing, there are three imperative and ubiquitous problems one must keep in mind when creating performance assessments. The first is validity in the design. The task must yield the right kind of information and must sample from a large domain.

In asking students to do a *few* tasks well, we believe we are on solid ground because we view the tasks as apt—at the heart of the subject, and able to yield more general inferences about achievement in a subject. (Wiggins, 1996/1997, p. 20)

The second problem one must take into account is assessment for understanding. Because of the complexities involved, performance tasks generally lack sufficient intellectual rigor and credibility. Lastly, one must consider the critique and revision of rubrics and criteria. Although one takes into careful consideration the proper assembling of a performance assessment, they still have a blind spot about something. Stiggins (1987) sums it all up by identifying keys to success in performance assessments:

The keys to success—to obtaining valid and reliable results—are (a) to make the judgment-based evaluation process as systematic and objective as it can be while (b) focusing on the most important attributes of performance. The goal is to be sure that performance ratings reflect the examinee’s true capabilities and are not a function of the perceptions and biases of the person evaluating performance. (p. 33)

Promising Practices

Aurora Public School District

In 1990, the Aurora Public School District, the fifth largest in Colorado, began work to implement an educational plan known as performance-based education (PBE) to coincide with their newly adopted mission “to develop lifelong learners who value themselves, contribute to their community, and succeed in a changing world” (Hartenbach, Ott, & Clark, 1996/1997, p. 52). Their PBE model assessed content standards in two different ways—bodies of evidence and secured assessments—and offered validity to the overall assessment process through a system of checks and balances. The body of evidence contained multiple measures of student achievement using a variety of types of assessments which helps teachers determine whether content standards have been met. Exact content was not given on the secured assessments, but students were aware of the criteria for scoring ahead of time. In addition, teachers were required to model and teach learner outcomes. After the

administration of their first standardized tests in 1996, the district came to the conclusion their performance assessments appeared to have allowed students to better demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

California Writing Project

As part of the California Writing Project initiative, a district in southern California decided to involve their teachers in helping develop an analytic scoring scheme to be used to assess students' writing. In addition, teachers from other schools were trained in its proper use and implementation. In turn, the district witnessed an improvement in students' writing over the next several years (Herman, 1992).

QUASAR Project

The nationally known QUASAR (Quantitative Understanding: Amplifying Student Achievement and Reasoning) Project (a University of Pittsburgh project previously funded by the Ford Foundation) began in the 1990-1991 school year with an emphasis on math programs focusing on problem solving and reasoning skills in urban middle school students of various ethnic backgrounds (Silver & Stein, 1996). To assess and monitor student outcomes and growth, a performance assessment called the QUASAR Cognitive Assessment Instrument (QCAI) was developed (Lane, 1993). The assessment contained a set of open-ended tasks measuring students' mathematical problem solving, communication, and reasoning skills (Parke & Lane, 1996/1997).

In addition to documented success in the classroom (cf. Ross, 1999), the QUASAR project gained national and international recognition. The program played a prominent role in the revisions and updates found in the NCTM (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics) 2000 Standards and has had invitations to present information about the project abroad (Ross, 1999).

Central Park East Secondary School

Central Park East Secondary School (CPESS) is a 7-12 grades urban school in New York City that sends more than 90% of its graduates on to college right after graduation. CPESS contributes much of their students' successes to the use of a portfolio-based graduation system

The CPESS graduation portfolio establishes high standards without standardization, and it creates a dynamic vehicle for ongoing curriculum development, professional discourse, and meaningful dialogue among parents, students, and school staff about educational goals and values. It also allows for a much deeper and more effective accountability for student growth, learning, and preparation to succeed after high school than most schools provide. The assessment system, embedded as it is in an organizational structure for caring and striving for academic rigor, succeeds at motivating and deepening student learning rather than depersonalizing students and their work. (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995, pp. 22-23)

Conclusions

With NCLB and the implications of high-stakes testing, the push for an alternative form of assessment is greater than ever. Although a nation-wide effort and federal funding would be the best scenario for the implementation of an alternative assessment program such as performance assessment, the schools, ultimately, will be the deciding factor. The amount of time and effort needed for the proper development, design, and actual implementation of performance assessments will be the largest barriers for schools to overcome. However, the achievements of these programs show how performance assessment practices can help students and schools become more successful and more accountable for learning. In addition, these programs show there is a successful alternative to high-stakes testing.

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Hearing a Different Tune: Cultivating Students' Learning through Music

Ramona Pittman

Popular music has always introduced many trends into adolescent and youth culture. Whatever genre of music is popular at any given point in time will eventually be reflected in the language of young people and will impact their

lives in many ways, often including how they dress, how they spend their time and money, and how they self-identify and relate to others. Presently, the most dominant musical genre among adolescents is hip-hop. “Hip-hop culture is everywhere: tagged on the sides of building and bridges, bumping in Jeep wranglers in school parking lots, and blasting out from Sprite commercials” (Kelly, 2003, p. 1). Hip-hop is not a new phenomenon as it has been around for more than 20 years. As Kelly observed, “The influence of the culture’s celebrities, coupled with its strong roots among the urban poor, makes it an enticing vehicle for youth engagement” (p. 1). Several high school and community organizations have responded to these observations and have created hip-hop music programs as a means of motivating teenagers and helping them become successful in school. The following programs and/or classes are being used at various high schools and communities to reach students who have become bored with the regular curriculum. They represent promising practices for schools and teachers who are trying to find ways in which to connect with adolescents, make school curriculum relevant to their lives, and sustain their interest and success in completing high school.

RHAPSODY Hip-Hop Education Program

RHAPSODY is the Progressive Arts Alliance's cornerstone educational programming initiative for youths. The organization offers hip-hop lectures, workshops, and presentations, taught by contemporary artists, to schools. The mission of RHAPSODY is to work to integrate the aesthetics and ideals of hip-hop culture into the curriculum of every school district and college campus both nationally and internationally. The goal of the program is to encourage all people to better understand the cultural expressions of hip-hop and to develop an appreciation of its dynamic aesthetics. The program encourages and nurtures cross-cultural as well as cross-generational understanding and dialogue.

Through hands-on workshops, assemblies, and lecture-demonstrations, students learn more about the history and the aesthetics of hip-hop culture in an interdisciplinary context. RHAPSODY activities integrate hip-hop with life lessons (building self-esteem, teamwork, self-discipline, etc.) and basic theories in music, art, poetry, and dance. The activities are designed to improve students' critical thinking and critical listening skills as well as their public presentation skills. The program demonstrates how hip-hop can be a positive and productive form of creative self-expression. (Progressive Arts Alliance, 2004)

Hip-Hop High (High School for Recording Arts)

Hip-Hop High is a high school located in St. Paul, Minnesota. Hip Hop High is designed for at-risk students, and it is project-based, real world learning integrated with hip-hop music. Core curriculum such as science, math, and language arts are offered. When students have gained mastery in the core curriculum, they are given studio production time. The school has its own record label and produces high-quality CDs. Many of the students are former dropouts and have jobs and families. They enter Hip-hop High because they want to learn about something that inspires them and gain a marketable skill. (DesignShare, Incorporated, 2004)

University of Hip-Hop

The University of Hip-Hop (UHH) is a multidisciplinary school of the street arts that uses outdoor education, service learning projects, and community beautification efforts to bring cultural awareness and tolerance to youth in Chicago and worldwide. The goal is to increase the opportunities for youth to use hip-hop to bring communities of diverse backgrounds together to share and celebrate their cultural differences and histories. Students take courses in political education, outdoor and environmental education, the humanities and social sciences, as well as courses in dee-jaying, rap, graffiti, and mural arts. UHH has established charters in several cities and at several elementary, high schools, and colleges. (University of Hip-Hop, 2001).

Hip-Hop Project

This project was developed at Art-Start, an alternative high school in New York City. The students who attend Hip-Hop Project are on the verge of dropping out of school, living on the streets, or have just been released from prison. With the help of professional artists, students get an opportunity to record their own albums. Students research and follow a step-by-step curriculum to create and produce the albums. In the process, they learn to prepare their work thoroughly, pitch their ideas convincingly, work out team solutions, and follow through on their plans. These students meet at Art Start throughout the year to work on their album. (Hip-Hop Project, 2002)

Arts Far West High School, Oakland, CA

The Center for Art and Public Life offers a class at Arts Far West School in which students can take a class on hip-hop art and culture. The classes are intended to explore hip-hop as a cultural and artistic movement. The

class offers an in depth examination and analysis of the four major artistic elements: B-boying/B-girling (break dancing), Graffiti art, MCing, and DJing/music production. It also examines hip-hop social norms, values and ethics, politics, and history. (Center for Art and Public Life, 2005)

Other musical programs are making an impact on youths in high schools, such as the *Youth Development Research Foundation (YDRF)* in Gaithersburg, Maryland. This foundation offers technical assistance to youth organizations to integrate hip-hop into their programs. To get the support of YDRF, an organization has to attach a long-term goal to their program. Promising goals would be those that build job skills and teach entrepreneurship to youth. (Youth Development and Research Fund, Inc., 2005). *Just Think* is a program that offers media related workshops, such as understanding the elements of hip-hop to students. The program integrates media into the core subjects and ties into after school activities. The program's curriculum has been piloted in seven extremely diverse sites around the country from Tucson, Arizona to Bristol, Vermont. This program is designed to help educators integrate media literacy skills into the classroom. In addition, the curriculum examines the media portrayal of hip-hop stars as well as the content and marketing of hip-hop music. For example, students at Mission High School in San Francisco, California, created original beats and music for a youth-produced video called "Hip-Hip Is. . ." which depicts the elements of Hip-Hop. (Just Think, 2004). *Everyone Has a Song (EHAS)* is an alternative school program that fuses the world with hip-hop. *EHAS* takes in youth through referrals from school counselors or juvenile justice probation officers. The goal is to attract them to learning basic life skills by offering them a chance to learn how to make music. (Everyone has a Song, 2005). Finally, *JUiCE (Justice by Uniting in Creative Energy)* is located in Los Angeles, California. It is an after-school program that connects with high-risk youth through the arts. The participants are mostly Hispanic and Asian students. After school, students can attend JUiCE, where they can practice their various hip-hop skills. (Justice by Uniting in Creative Energy, 2005)

Future Implications

The programs described above do not yet have empirical research that recommends broad scale application of the concepts across all communities and environments. Future research needs to be completed before the effectiveness of each approach can be determined. A recent study by the Kaiser Family Foundation reported that children between the ages of 8 to 18 spend one hour and 45 minutes listening to music each day (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005). This makes a strong case for the inclusion of music into school curriculum. Even though most schools do not have resources for comprehensive integrated programs, there are many resources and lesson plans available to teachers for incorporating hip-hop or other genres of music into classrooms (Cable in the Classroom, 2005). Given adolescents' interest and the universality of appeal of modern music, it might provide a spark that would ignite a future for many young people who have lost hope that schools can help them find a satisfying one.

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Integrating Grades 9-14: The Early College High School

Angela Hairrell

Dropout rates and high school completion rates can be confusing. While the data varies from state to state for each of these categories, what is certain is many students do not obtain a high school degree, resulting in high economic costs. Although 75% of high school graduates enroll in further education, over 50% of those students never complete a degree and one-third never make it to the second year. For minority and low-income students, the numbers are even more staggering (Jobs for the Future, 2005; Balfanz, et al., 2004; Sum, et al., 2001). Historically, minorities and low-income students have had limited access to higher education, and those who entered often dropped out after the first year. These problems, along with what is known about raisingachievement and improving high schools, led to the concept of the early college high school. According to Tom Vander Ark, executive director of education at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, "If we fail to prepare all of our young people for the 21st century economy, the economic and civic health of our nation will continue to be at risk" (McGrath, 2003, p. 56).

Characteristics of Early College High Schools

Early college high schools (ECHS) are designed to allow students to graduate with a high school diploma and two years of college credit or an associate's degree. Many ECHS, such as the ones funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation along with other public and private sources, target poor urban minority students, first-generation college students, and English language learners. These schools attempt to physically and academically bridge the gap between high school and college. Although these schools are still considered a high school in a sense, 54% of them are currently located on a college campus. A critical component to this model is a partnership with a two- or four-year college.

Research from dual enrollment programs, small schools, and middle college high schools guided the development of a core of characteristics of ECHS. According to the Early College High School Initiative (2005) and Lieberman (2004), each ECHS has its own unique focus and environment, but all share seven characteristics of high-performing schools. These characteristics include:

• common focus on researched based goals and mission,

• shared, clear, high expectations and standards with a coherent, rigorous curriculum,

• small, personalized learning environment, with no more than 400 students,

• respect and responsibility among students and teachers,

• time for collaboration of staff and inclusion of parents and the community,

• emphasis on performance,

• technology as a tool for designing and delivering curricula (p. 3).

There are other characteristics common in ECHS. Flexible scheduling is one attribute. Students are provided additional time to work on higher-level learning through summer school, Saturday school, year-round calendar, and longer school days. Best practices are utilized in postsecondary classes, such as student skills training, hands-on learning, peer collaboration, and learning communities. Through the college partnerships, students

have access to both high school and college services, such as laboratories, libraries, and technology centers. College courses are taught at either the college or high school campus. Performance and outcomes are crucial. Students are closely monitored through standardized tests, performance assessments, portfolios and real world tasks to ensure they are making progress in the program. Together, students and faculty formulate an academic plan with students taking increased responsibility for their learning.
Although there are many similarities in ECHS, there are numerous differences due to needs of the community. While some schools have open enrollment, some require an admission test, and others select through a lottery system. The focus of the schools is also determined by the community and cooperating agencies. Antioch University Seattle is establishing eight early college high schools to focus on Native-American youth. Science, Engineering, Communication, Mathematics Enhancement (SECME) has partnered with others to create eight early college high schools that focus on science, technology, engineering, and math. Other ECHS focus on the arts, dropout recovery, liberal arts, or medicine (Early College High School Initiative, 2005).

Benefits

The benefits of the ECHS are numerous. First, higher education is more accessible to historically underrepresented populations through early college programs. These include students whose skills are inadequate, English language learners, first generation college goers and students in poverty. Because of tuition, travel requirements, and admission requirements, college is typically out of reach for these students. ECHS break down these barriers. Second, the transition from high school to college is facilitated through small classes, mentoring by teachers, and developing familiarity with a college campus. Third, students' hard work is rewarded with compressed curriculum and college-level courses. While some critics argue an accelerated pace for at-risk students is not possible, ECHS operate under the assumption that intellectual challenge and academic rigor are more motivating than remediation and repetition. ECHS programs not only benefit those wanting to go on to complete a four-year degree, they also enable students to get a jump-start on their careers. (The Early College High School Initiative, 2005; Jobs for the Future, 2005)

While the structure of ECHS is beneficial for those students at risk of dropping out, they are also advantageous for those students needing an accelerated curriculum and are ready for the rigors of college at an early age. For more mature students, ECHS offer the traditional high school activities alongside the programs and organizations of a college. In a time centric model, commonly found in most traditional high schools, all students move through the curriculum at the same time. Because the time centric model is removed in the ECHS, students advance to the next level according to their individual needs. Students are not held back or moved on as a result of time spent in class. Achievement gaps are filled when necessary, while the program is accelerated for those able. Research has shown acceleration has academic and social benefits for both bright students and those students at risk. (Burris & Welner, 2005; Johnsen, 2004).

Because of the changing economy and the need for higher education of all students, early college high schools are one model for redefining the education of young adults. "Early college high schools respond to the needs of youth who would otherwise be left behind, engaging and motivating them with a strong college-preparatory curriculum that allows them to earn credits in college-level courses and prepares them for higher education" (Sletzer, as cited in No author, 2004, p. 19).

A Partnership for Success

The Early College High School Initiative is a partnership of 12 organizations nationwide dedicated to developing ECHS. Currently, there are 46 ECHS in 19 states, which is expected to increase to 170 schools by 2008. In addition to the Early College High School Initiative, North Carolina and Texas have state reform efforts affiliated with the Initiative. The majority of ECHS are public schools (63%). Sixty-five percent of these schools are theme-based, ranging from allied Health and Medicine to Native American Culture. Furthermore, most (59%) are partnered with two-year college institutions. Funding today tops $124 million, coming from a variety of foundations, as well as public and private sources (The Early College High School Initiative, 2005; Jobs for the Future, 2005).

Success Stories

Of the 55 graduates from Washtenaw Technical Middle College in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 2003, 93% received a technical certificate or associates degree. About 50% graduated with honors and 18% were in Phi Beta Kappa, an academic honor society. Of New York City's Bard High School Early College 93 graduates in 2003, 90% went on to four-year universities. Gateway to College in Oregon offers a program for 16-20 year olds who have left high school or are at risk of dropping out. Most of the 51 graduates have a high school diploma and significant college credit (Chmelyski, 2004). Underlying the success of these programs is a shared vision for student

success by all parties involved, a culture of learning and support, and a focus on outcomes. While these results are promising, most programs are in the beginning stage of development; therefore data on their success is not yet available.

The Future

The central change toward Early College High Schools involves switching from a time-ruled idea of schooling to an achievement attainment paradigm. Mastery of content takes precedence over time spent sitting in classrooms. Students will not be held back or moved ahead according to the traditional school clock or calendar. Individualized graduation plans are based on the unique needs of each student. Students are provided with extra help or acceleration in the context of a nurturing environment. In this environment, students, parents, high school and college faculty, and community partners value learning and consistently focus on instructional goals and objectives. Schools are kept small so personal relationships can be formed. Because of a blurring of the line between high school and college there is increased collaboration between these two entities. This collaboration benefits all students, but seems to be a good fit especially for those traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education.

Educators no longer have to think of high school as grades 9-12, but rather, can move toward a grades 9-14 framework. Early college high school models open up conversations between high schools and universities to rethink current practices and organizational patterns. As stated in the Early College High School Initiative: Core Principals, "By changing the structure of the high school years and compressing the number of years to a college degree, early college high schools have the potential to improve graduation rates and better prepare students for entry into high-skill careers" (p. 5). As this idea grows, we will see more schools embracing the idea of academic rigor, job preparation, and preparation for additional college curriculum.

With change, brings challenges and questions for the future. The first question to be answered is "are these programs working?" If so, what are the characteristics of students and programs that are most successful and can these results be replicated? Additionally, are these programs reaching the students they were designed to help most, those traditionally underrepresented in higher education? Finally there is the question of state policy and funding. Currently, college costs are the responsibility of the student, while in Early College High Schools, up to the first two years of college are free of charge. State funding policy changes will be needed to make ECHS possible on a more widespread basis. More research is needed to determine the overall effectiveness and fiscal probability of these programs. Overall, ECHS are a promising practice for the future that needs to be considered to help all students receive the best education possible.

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Reading Communities: A new approach to developing reading curriculum in secondary schools

John Purcell

Consistently seen as major problems with high school students, motivation to read and reading literacy have long baffled educators, administrators, and parents. Historically, reading problems have been addressed through early intervention in the primary grades, notably in K-5, with some effort being made at the junior high level. For the most part, high school students have been ignored in recent years despite a general acceptance that higher levels of literacy have been deemed important for student success (Graves, 2005). In most cases shrinking budgets have been blamed for this trend (Santa,2003), nevertheless the general trend has been to address reading development in primary and lower elementary grades with the focus being either formative or beginning reading, word recognition and fluency, and phonemic awareness (Graves, 2005). Early intervention is essential, but, as Carol Minnick Santa states, "We must not stop the teaching of reading at Grade 3. In fact, at the end of Grade 3 our work has only begun" (2003, p. 6).

So the question becomes obvious: How *do* we continue this important work? How can reading fluency be developed, monitored, and assessed throughout the secondary grades? A number of suggestions have been made over the years, one of which has recently become a hot topic, the creation of *reading communities*, a subset of the popular concept of learning communities, where administrators, teachers, parents, and students take part in an interdisciplinary approach to learning. The reading community functions in much the same fashion, only it focuses on the reading process itself, and involves students, teachers, and library personnel in actively discussing the material being read by everybody. It has been said that with high-stakes state mandated testing (e.g., Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills test), "it becomes even more important for teachers, school administrators, and the lay public to be involved in promoting the public school reading curriculum"(Ediger, 2002, p. 1). This requires that everyone involved be familiar with the latest methodologies in teaching reading (Ediger, 2003). Unfortunately, the onus of this approach has fallen mostly on those whose positions have been eliminated due to budgetary shortfalls: reading specialists (Graves, 2005). Consequently, school librarians have had to step into the breach to create these reading communities (Coatney, 2003; Graves, 2005; Ediger, 2001, 2002; Lane, 2004).

In the past, a reading community concept has taken a variety of formats including reading clubs, book clubs, corrective reading programs, and so on. For the most part, they have been successful in getting students not only to read, but to enjoy reading as well (Coatney, 2003). In 1991, Knuth and Jones urged that public schools should establish "Community of Learners," support groups that consist of school personnel and community members to share teaching and learning experiences both in and out of school, to act as mentors and coaches for one another (and students, of course), and to connect community goals with the curricular goals of the school. These researchers even suggested that community groups, such as PTA's, churches, and the local Chamber of Commerce, get together with schools to create a rich learning environment beyond the school walls. In this way, "parents and other community members are involved in the life of the school as tutors, local experts, role models, and aides in schools" and are able to take part in the redesign process of the curriculum (Knuth and Jones, 1991, p. 6).

But has this worked? The Blue Valley School District in Overland Park, Kansas, has been using a literary program for over 20 years called REAL (Reading for Enjoyment and Appreciation of Literature). This program has been instituted in all of that school district's elementary schools, and exposes students to different types of reading material and "encourages kids to talk about what they are reading" (Coatney, 2003 p. 1). This program is overseen by a REAL teacher and the school librarian, who together adapt and change the program as needed to reflect topics being studied in the classrooms. The library media specialists regularly meet with all teachers to be well informed of curriculum topics in order to modify the REAL materials as needed, even making lists of books that are thematically linked to their classes. Students are literally surrounded by a reading culture, which encourages them to read and talk about what the entire community is reading. The response to this program has been positive; students, parents, and teachers have all noted improvement in attitudes and grades (Coatney, 2003).

Linked reading has also been used in remedying reading deficits in adolescents with emotional and behavioral disorders (E/BD) through the use of an explicit reading program (Lane, 2004). These reading deficits have been

linked with poor academic performances which result in high dropout rates, grade retention, and overall poor achievement. In one study, the establishment of consistent, communicative reading practices for older students with E/BD proved to be helpful, especially considering the current emphasis on state mandated curriculum standards and content-area learning. As Lane noted, "Based on the principles of Direct Instruction, this [explicit reading] program provides an instructional script that enables teachers with varying degrees of experience to direct the lessons consistently and with higher integrity" (2004, p.568). This variation of thematic reading suggests that the connections between students and teachers reading and discussing the same text material offer E/BD students a chance to compete successfully in school.

Aside from this last example, current literature indicates that the use of reading communities has been mostly confined to the primary grades. Given the concern that high school administrators have expressed over low literacy rates in graduating seniors, instituting some kind of a reading program that supports at risk high school students seems almost essential. Unfortunately, those programs that exist at the high school level tend to be limited to English classrooms. For example, the English department at Willis High School in Texas has been using a DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) Day for several years as a means of promoting student reading for pleasure while awarding points based on page count or novels read, which are earned by doing a Book Chat (a.k.a., an oral book report with the teacher) for each grade marking period. By strict definition, the DEAR Day concept is not a reading community, but a reward system for outside-class reading. An example of a secondary program that more closely conforms to the concept of a reading community exists in England. The Reading Agency (TRA) combined with ContinYou (formerly Education Extra) and were awarded funding in May of 2002 for Developing Reading Communities, a project intended to offer children in deprived communities access to reading clubs in secondary school, and to build models of the way schools can link these children much more powerfully to public library resources for additional inspiration and encouragement. (TRA, 2004)

Building on the success of the British government's National Literacy Strategy of the 1990's, the *Developing Reading Communities* project was designed to address a unique problem: whereas reading skills had improved since 1998, children's enjoyment of reading had declined. Pilot studies were set up in different secondary schools around the country, with a key principle being the integration of services that support children and their families, especially information-sharing between schools and public libraries. These two institutions shared the responsibility of working together "to improve and maximize their support children's [sic] reading development and enjoyment" (TRA, 2004, p. 4). Other outcomes that resulted from this holistic community reading support were raising standards in schools; the quality of life of children, young people and families at risk improved; and healthier, safer, and stronger communities resulted via economic vitality through increased reading leading to increased skills and employability. The TRA's final report strongly emphasized the need of school and public library cooperation and dialogue, plus the involvement of parents and community leaders. All of the programs implemented involved reading for pleasure and discussion of the material; the names alone indicate the vitality of the project: Chatterbooks Club, Summer Reading Challenge, the Big Read, and Book-it![sic]. In fact, Appendix 5 in TRA's 2004 Final Report lists a total of 227 Book-it! Reading clubs in secondary schools throughout England. (2004, pp. 57-59) Three of the major findings of the TRA project were that 1) partnerships between schools, public libraries, and the School Library Services are valuable in supporting reader development work with young people; 2) success factors for partnership-working were the commitment and enthusiasm of key staff involved, good planning and organization, plus effective communications; and 3) this project employed the best use of partners' complementary skills (2004, p. 54).

These programs and outcomes are indeed encouraging. The question to be tackled next is how to integrate this reading community concept into the American secondary curriculum. One possibility is to create a "Themed Reading Community" where all outside reading material is related to a particular unit of study. For example, using a variation of the TRA's *Developing Reading Communities* project as a model, a logical extension of Willis High School's DEAR Day would be to relate all material to a Civil War era literature unit in an English class (for example, reading Uncle Tom's Cabin, Mary Chestnutt's Diary, the collected letters of Robert E. Lee, Ambrose Bierce's classic story "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," or other novels and poems published at that time), with input from other libraries in the school district, such as nearby high schools, the Montgomery County Public Library branches in Willis and Conroe, even connecting with the North Harris Montgomery Community College District (NHMCCD), which has a campus nearby at Montgomery College in The Woodlands, Texas (which is a community that is actually a part of the Conroe Independent School District). Obviously, this could be a rich community to draw upon for input and support.

Taking this theme another step further, this could be very easily linked, through teachers communicating and working together, to an American History class simultaneously covering that particular era, thereby making the connection that the literature being read – the poems, stories, letters, journals, and diaries – is a product and reflection of the times in which it is composed. For that matter, it would not be hard to incorporate music and art into this reading community keying on the literature from this particular era. Studies have shown that an

interdisciplinary approach does pique student interest and results in better grades (Hlebowitsh, 2005). This also brings into play the multiple intelligence theory of learning by appealing to student's musical, visual, tactile, and verbal skills (Gardner, 1999). The connections between subject areas and students are many and varied. Therefore, it seems logical to assume that reading communities in the secondary grades should not only be encouraged, but definitely established.

Early intervention in eliminating student reading deficits is a step in the right direction in developing student literacy. A well-read and educated human being is the desired product of the American High School, but the construction process of attaining that product need not stop at the primary grade level. Reading Communities appear to be one of the possible next building blocks in creating a well-read and educated student, and it would involve the cooperation of school administrators, teachers, and the lay public (parents and community leaders), to say nothing of listening to the students themselves. Student input is vital to the success of a reading community (Coatney, 2003), so the dialogue must include the student. The sample scenario proposed for the Willis DEAR Day reading community is a broad fields approach (Tanner and Tanner, 1995) that brings other subject areas into the conversation, thereby providing other viewpoints that help make connections across subject areas for students. This is the goal that needs to be attained: a personal connection with reading. If a community is actively involved and interested in the reading process, then the odds are improved for growing connected readers in that environment. The final product of American high schools, the students, need not be passive recipients of reading; rather, they need to be active participants of reading. A rich, community-based, reading environment may make that product a reality.

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How "Plugged In" Are High School Students and What Should We Do About It?

Kenda Sipes Frederick

Introduction

Today's teenager enters high school with a different set of knowledge, experiences, and expectations than those of their parents or grandparents. The explosion of technology is responsible for this shift in today's teenage expectations, experiences, and knowledge. Those currently attending high school belong to the Net Generation, comprised of teens born in the late 1980s (Oblinger & Oblinger 2005). This Net Generation is "plugging into technology" in record numbers. A recent poll by the Consumer Electronics Association (2004) found that in the 30 days prior to the survey nearly 98% of teens surveyed had watched television, 87% had used a desk top computer, and 91% had used a DVD player. Technology immerses these students as they talk on cell phones, instant message their peers from desktop computers, listen to music on their I-Pods, and watch cable television with hundreds of available channels.

Hand-in-hand with the technology explosion is the exponential increase of information. One of the skills required by this new technologically concentrated environment is learning how to find information and manage it (CEO Forum, 2001). Today's high school students cannot rely on just learning the basic facts; they must learn how to locate the information, how to analyze the data generated, and when to question its source and validity. In short, they are expected to perform on a much higher level of thinking than their grandparents were. "Until recently Americans have taken 13 years of education (from kindergarten through grade 12) to be a sufficient preparation for life and work. In the emerging 21st century, all Americans will require two additional years of formal education and training at some points after they leave high school" (National Commission on the High School Senior, 2001).

The Problems

The advent of technology coupled with the explosion of knowledge has created several problems for high schools in preparing youth for the new century. Not all high school teens have access to technology; there is a decisive difference in computer use when income levels are examined. According to a government report, only 16% of lower income people earning $5,000 to $10,000 a year use the Internet while almost 60% of people earning $75,000 or more frequent the Net (Norfles, 2001). As a consequence many lower income students leave high school without the skills necessary to successfully enter college or the job market.

This digital division's tie to income levels extends to schools as well. While some high school students plunk away on ancient computers, other schools regularly update their computers, buy emerging technologies for classrooms, and spend thousands of dollars updating their teachers' skills. This creates two groups of students leaving high school, the techno-literate and the techno-illiterate.

Despite the increasing need for technology and high level thinking skills, schools still cling steadfastly to old ideas and teaching methods and are reluctant to change. This conflict between old teaching and the demand for newer skills leaves students confused and dissatisfied. Teens find it frustrating to leave their technological comfort zone behind for slower, less engaging teaching. Many of these disgruntled students simply disengage from the learning process, giving them a decided disadvantage at both college and the work place because they do not have the skills they necessary for either place (American Youth Policy Forum, 2000). As a result of the increasing drop out rates and the graduation of poorly educated high school students, communities are forced to re-educate graduates (Gould, 2002). This remediation is vital because the skills and knowledge needed by high school graduates who enter the workforce are the same as those needed by graduates who go directly to college (England, 2001). The remediation of these groups of students is expensive and the percentage of students in two-year institutions who require remediation skills has grown to 41% (National Commission on the High School Senior, 2001).

The Solutions

The integration of technology into all class rooms appears to be potentially viable solution to some of the problems that high schools are facing. It can allow students to learn the skills they need to succeed in the workforce or academia, while keeping students actively engaged in learning. An example of the success of technology integration exists within the Frenship Independent School District in the Texas Panhandle (Duttwiler & Madden, 2001). Frenship ISD is on the cutting edge of technology after instituting sweeping changes in teacher training, using technology to teach across the curriculum, and even offering free Internet for district families. In just four years, the district's scores on the state's academic achievement test, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), show that the gap between Hispanic and Anglo students and economically disadvantaged students and their more affluent classmates has almost disappeared.

Technology integration also appears to keep students engaged in learning and decreases dropout rates. The results of a five school study on integrating the regular curricula with the Internet demonstrated that, "when

students were able to use the Internet, they became, and stayed, engaged. They persisted in learning tasks" (Thomas et al., 2002 p. 19). In another study of technology integration in science classrooms, students not only learned the content much more quickly and thoroughly than in the conventional teaching environment, the students acted as teachers to their teachers. "Many students in our high school classrooms have multidimensional experience with interactive media outside of the school and they may be more techno-literate than their science teachers" (Thomas, et al. 2002, p. 20).

Cost barriers, teacher training, and administrative resistance can prevent schools from effectively utilizing technology in high school classrooms. Technology can empower teachers to become facilitators of learning rather than lecturers (Manternach-Wigans, 1999). Unfortunately, this new teacher role is unfamiliar and sometimes overwhelming. Teachers represent the greatest obstacle to technology integration. There are a number of reasons for this, such as computer illiteracy, computer phobia, disinterest, lack of equipment, and lack of support personnel (Thomas et al., 2002) All of these reasons must be dealt with before there can truly be a paradigm shift for teachers from teacher-lecturer to teacher-facilitator.

The Future

As paradigms shift from old-style teaching to the more facilitative role of teachers who integrate technology into their classrooms, some teachers will choose to leave the profession rather than become a part of this new teaching paradigm. The teachers who choose to remain and make the shift will require better training and support as they integrate technology into their classrooms. To support these pioneering teachers Frenship ISD employs instructional designers they call "computer technologists" (Duttwiler & Madden, 2001). These designers are accepted as an indispensable part of the staff of every high school as they assist teachers in making technology an integral, seamless part of instruction, not the focus of the instruction. Using their specialized training, instructional designers work with every teacher regardless of content specialization by seamlessly combining teaching ideas and content concepts with technology to create an effective teaching environment.

Additionally, virtual learning (on-line or distance education) will also move past the experimental stage and serve as yet another link between education and technology (Janek, 2001). This online learning opportunity gives students the ability to learn at their own pace concentrating on the learning opportunities that intrigue them and allow them the freedom of a more flexible schedule.

Another emerging development already present in some high schools, school-business partnerships, may at least partially solve the high cost of technology (McLean & Toler-Robinson, 2001). In an effort to stem rising costs and find job markets for its students, schools are increasingly forging school-business partnerships, forming a symbiotic relationship. Schools benefit from the technical and fiscal support provided by these businesses and the businesses profit from a readily available and highly trained labor pool.

Conclusions

Twenty-first century technology and the accompanying explosion of information demand a corresponding curriculum shift in high schools to include more than just the reading, writing, and arithmetic foundation of the curricula taught to the Net Generations' parents and grandparents. The cross-curriculum infusion of technology must also become an integral part of every high school curriculum so that technology skills become part of the skill set for high school graduates (Gould, 2002). In order to make the paradigm shift, more research must be conducted to investigate how the brain is affected by being "plugged in" to technology and which teaching methods work best for techno-literate students. Technology integration on the high school level must add technology objectives, invest in cutting edge equipment, and train and support teachers. Hopefully, technology can keep students "plugged into" learning and offer them the skills necessary for success in today's 21st Century world.

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Making the Connection: Using Technology to Connect Students to our Global Society

Lisa Brooks

Teaching students for tomorrow's world, a world that cannot be predicted, is a challenge. In order to be successful, students must not only learn the content and skills of domains, but also learn to become aware of their learning in order to be able to continue the acquisition of knowledge outside of school (Goldman, Petrosino, & Vanderbilt, 1999). Research in the cognitive sciences has identified four key factors that when present in learning environments allow students to begin to move toward mastery of the above objectives; (1) active engagement, (2) frequent interaction and feedback, (3) participation in groups, and (4) connections to real world contexts (Roschelle, Pea, Hoadley, Gordin, & Means, 2000).

The use of technology can be an asset to high school students' involvement in all of the aspects that characterize supportive learning environments, especially the latter two: collaboration and connection. Student collaboration on problems and projects has traditionally been restricted by the boundaries of classrooms and/or schools. Electronic communication can enable students and experts from across the world to collaborate on issues and problems. This collaboration allows students to see view points from different regions, cultures, and levels of expertise. Electronic collaboration also allows students to learn to work closely in groups face to face in order to present information to a group outside of their class, as well as work with that outside group. A third and important benefit of using technology in this way is to expose students to good examples of work and role models from which they can learn. Connecting students with experts provides an opportunity to learn in depth about the field they are studying (Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1989). Students can also be connected through virtual field trips to people, places, and things they may not ordinarily be able to access. Using computers as a means to connect and collaborate in these ways will likely be a part of students' lives after they complete high school and thus should be a tool they learn to use extensively during their high school educational experience.

Connecting Students to Students

Providing students with opportunities to learn to work with others, both in person and electronically, and to broaden their range of knowledge about the world and experiences is an important part of education. There are many high school programs already in place across the nation that allow students to connect and collaborate with others. One example of an international, large scale, multi-school program is the Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) program ("GLOBE project website", n.d.). There are also many smaller programs initiated by individual high schools like "Seeing Ourselves Through Others" ("Seeing ourselves through others project, 2005) that are becoming more wide-spread. These smaller projects allow students to become intimately involved with students

The GLOBE program was launched in 1995 and since then has brought together many schools worldwide (Bombaugh, Sparrow, & Mal, 2003; Camaco-Zapata & Lopez-Garriga, 2000; Singletary & Richard, 1996). The

program focuses on students collecting data from the environment around them, and sharing and comparing these data with each other. Students have collected data on four main aspects of the environment: atmosphere, hydrology, soil, and land cover/biology. Students upload their data to the GLOBE data base and share it with other students in oftentimes very different places. The hands-on experiences students have collecting the data allows them to have a direct connection and therefore a better understanding of the data collected and uploaded by other students. Sharing and analyzing the data collaboratively allows students to better understand global patterns and differences between regions while helping them develop valuable skills. These experiences allow students to participate in a real world collaborative scientific inquiry. Through this inquiry, students are gaining valuable skills such as learning to communicate with others through writing, presenting findings to others in graphical representations, learning to ask questions, and defending results.

Much like what GLOBE does in the study of science, other collaborative efforts have developed to help students see the world from different perspectives. One such effort, "Seeing Ourselves Through Others," allows students in New Jersey and Poland to interact with each other and a holocaust survivor and discuss their thoughts and feelings about WWII. This collaboration allows them to see similarities and differences between themselves and students from other countries, while forming opinions and ideas about how the holocaust affected both their lives and the lives of their peers in another country.

Connecting Students to Experts

As in the examples of programs connecting students to students, there also are programs designed to connect students to experts. Traditionally having experts speak with students was a brief and expensive scenario since the expert would have to come into the school and be physically present. While spending an entire day away from the office or lab is taxing on a professional, spending a few quick moments responding to an electronic discussion board or an e-mail is not so personally demanding. Connecting students to experts can be an extremely valuable learning experience. Students gain insight into a field from those directly involved in it daily, they are challenged to learn since their insight is for an outside audience whose input is valuable (Lewin & Shoemaker, 1998), and they also are exposed to good examples of role models (Goldman et al., 1999; Wiggins, 1998).

In the GLOBE project, biologists, geologists, and meteorologists periodically check on the data students are uploading and comment on it. These experts provide valuable insight into the thought processes of domains thus allowing the students' inquiry and analyses to have real merit.

In the "Seeing Ourselves Through Others" project, students in NJ and Poland were not only talking about the holocaust's lasting effects on two different countries, but they also had the insight of an expert on the subject, a holocaust survivor. This expert gave them first hand information and insights on the events that happened situated in the world view at the time. An "expert's" presence also motivated the students to hold their work to a high standard since they knew it would be looked at and appreciated by someone who really knew and lived the subject matter.

Interactions like the ones discussed above would have been relatively impossible just a few short years ago. Through periodic input in an electronic discussion, experts allow students the chance to learn from them, and continue learning from them for more than a one day workshop. This provides an opportunity for students to get feedback on their work, revise it, and reflect on the expert's advice.

Implications for the Future

Technology's importance in our lives is still increasing rapidly, as is the importance of teaching our youth how to effectively use and communicate with it. Providing opportunities for students to acquire and utilize these skills is important. In the high school of tomorrow, hopefully, many more of these collaborative endeavors will be promoted, and students can work with global groups in order to solve global problems that have a direct impact on their lives.

It is surprising to see how few examples of collaborations like those discussed above can be found in current literature. Electronic collaboration is a technology which is relatively cheap and easily accessible to students and teachers. Teachers need help to understand how to make the first steps, find other schools that are willing to participate, identify experts that may be willing to help, and prepare student work for meaningful online discussions and presentations.

It is equally surprising to discover how little research exists on this area of technological use in classrooms. There have been very few articles published on the possibilities and effects of student participation in collaborations like those discussed in the examples above.

The lack of evidence of effectiveness of collaborations supported with technology is disappointing. This instructional method is relatively inexpensive and can potentially have a high impact on students' learning and preparedness for the world of tomorrow. In practice, programs need to be initiated for teachers to become more familiar with technology and learn to make the first steps in initiating and maintaining such collaborations. Research needs to be conducted on these programs to assess what impact these collaborations have on students' learning and to devise new ways to make them more manageable for teachers and more meaningful for the students who participate in them.

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FUTURE TREND, CURRENT ALTERNATIVE: VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Wen-Chun Chen

If something is “virtual,” is it there or not there? If a school is virtual, is it a school, or like a school? As the word virtual has come to be associated with computers, a broader acceptance of its meaning has emerged as to what is “real” as electronic environments become more sophisticated with replicated real environments. Virtual schools tend to use existing educational models – those of the typical classroom – and simply transplant these in an online environment (Melnick, 2002, p. 85). The pioneering effort of the virtual school concept began in Florida in 1997, with an initial goal of providing a complete high school online by the year 2001. Educational services would enable students to successfully transition to postsecondary education and to the workplace by using the virtual school. Florida Virtual School (FVS) eventually offered the top five advanced placement (AP) courses upon the request of districts that reflected AP exam pass rates of students exceeding the national average (Hadderman, 2002, p. 24).
Virtual schools (VS) represent the changing face of education in the 21st century. According to a 2001 report by the Distance Learning Resource Network and WestEd, over 100 VS were in operation last year. Moreover, according to a 2002 survey, about 45,000 students were enrolled in at least one online course. A former administrator of a virtual school estimated that by 2006 a majority of high school students would have to take online courses before graduating (Fulton, 2002.p. 9) Some acknowledged and recognized virtual school websites in the United States are:
Cyber Oregon Online Cool School: http://www.coolschool.k12.or.us/
Florida Virtual School: http://www.flvs.net
Virtual High School (VHS, Inc.) Hudson, Massachusetts http://www.govhs.org/website.nsf
The successful Cyber School in Oregon began as part of the Eugene public schools system, and recently became a consortium of Oregon schools and out-of-state school systems. This virtual school was renamed as Cyber Oregon Online Cool School. The school has 165 students; an overwhelming majority of whom attend small, rural schools that are unable to offer such courses as AP English or Latin. The Cool School courses are developed and owned by certified teachers, most of whom are employees of Eugene public schools. Within these online schools, teachers are not restricted by reluctant department heads or indifferent students; they tailor their own instructional style with the support of technology to create an optimal visual learning environment (Clark, 2001, p. 14).
Virtual education has created a world-wide educational transformation. Outside of the United States, Europe and Australia also have well-implemented VS programs to compare and contrast:
Australia Virtual School for Gifted: http://www.vsg.edu.au/
Europe Schoolnet Virtual School: http://vs.eun.org/eun.org2/eun/en/index_vs.cfm
U.K. BYTEcher ATW Virtual School: http://www.byteachers.org.uk/school.htm

Technology
Virtual schools vary widely in their key features, such as technology selection, sponsorship, funding mechanisms, teacher requirements, course offerings, and modes of delivering instruction. Some VS offer courses to enhance, sup. lement, or enrich existing curriculum, while others provide a complete online alternative to traditional schools.

A number of VS deliver instruction synchronously, with students and teachers logging on at the same time each day; but most do it asynchronously, with students working at different times and occasionally having face-to-face meetings, phone conversations, or online chats with teachers and peers. Some structure their courses to fit into a standard school semester, while others allow students to complete courses at their own pace (Fulton, 2002, p. 6). Previous advances in technology have changed the world and are now making it possible for teachers to unite students in different parts of the world through the use of synchronous learning, live discussions, conference calls, and whiteboard technologies. Many teachers now can present courses in the way they have only dreamed of teaching. (Russell, 2001,p. 14). In order to facilitate these courses, teachers have to be creative to gain students' attention by familiarizing themselves with the selected technological tools.

Can online teachers really make technology work for them? Many virtual schools are buying or using technology that was originally designed for something other than education. These technologies are built around the principle of "use of technology." Each individual teacher has his or her own different and unique style, and this fact must be taken into consideration with respect to the selection of appropriate technologies. It would be wrong to have school boards, administrators, or Instructional Technology specialists make decisions about types of technology without direct input by the teachers (Melnick, 2002, p. 87).

Technology that is designed by educators for students' use is built around the principle of "technology of use" with the functionality determined according to the needs of the user. Future educational technology should be highly configurable by the user and designed to support and enhance learning. It is critical that the technology give students a sense of place and some degree of say or ownership in how this "cyberplace" looks or feels (Melnick, 2002,p. 87).

Classes and course content need to be completely redesigned for these new learning environments, since a physical classroom setting is very different from an online because of the absence of the face-to-face element. Online course curriculum also has to be written with consideration given to the specific technology that will be used for delivery. For example, if one chooses to rely heavily on collaborative discourse for a particular unit of study, then he or she needs to select a technology that is suitable for this practice. If no such technology exists, then the teacher may be required to rethink this decision (Melnick, 2002,p. .88).

Virtual education provides some unique advantages for learners who opt to rearrange their learning tasks and interests at their own pace and aptitude around the school's schedule. Time is no longer a barrier keeping students from pursuing other activities outside of campus. Home-schooled students can form their own community and join a wide variety of activities outside of campus. Equity to public education is possibly promoted for students through access to virtual learning (Zehr, 2000,p. 12). However, at the same time, parents will have more responsibility as well as increased diligence to watch over their children in cyberspace (Russell, 2001,p. 15). Virtual schools can expand the range of school offerings in rural schools, small schools, and other schools that cannot fill teacher vacancies or afford to hire teachers for courses with limited enrollment. They can also help ease the congestion in over-crowded schools (Fulton, 2002,p. 10). Virtual schools can increase educational options for hospitalized or homebound students, incarcerated youth, dropouts, young athletes in training, suspended students, students with child-care responsibilities, or other atypical students who are physically unable to attend regular classrooms, like young athletes training for the Olympics or pregnant teenagers (Fulton, 2002,p. 10). Availability of online course-equivalent learning environments may mean that an injured and homebound high school senior, unable to attend the one available section of a required class, can fulfill the requirements and graduate with the rest of his or her class. Virtual schools can also provide students with remediation and tutoring. In short, e-learning offers potentially important resources for providing accelerated courses that otherwise might not be available, filling gaps in required course offerings, increasing graduation rates, and reducing dropout rates (Blomeyer, 2002,p. 9).

Even though technology has brought us an alternative solution to traditional schools, nevertheless not all VS are as successful or high in quality as Cool School and Florida Virtual School. Some are closed due to the unexpected termination of major sponsorships. Instead of dropouts, some students who discontinue taking online courses become "stopouts" (Fulton, 2002, p. 11). In addition, students who have a strong need for a high degree of socialization should reconsider the isolation and solitude that is the consequence of high volume of online courses (Russell, 2001, p. 15). Indeed some have estimated that only 10 percent of the student population is considered suitable for online learning (Clark, 2001, p. 26). The suitable online learners must possess high motivation and self-discipline as well as being equipped with decent writing and reading proficiency and keyboard skills (Tuttle, 1998, p. 47). Before learners choose to take online courses, they have to realize that these courses are not only rigorous, but also require a high degree of independent learning.

Virtual education isn't for everybody or every situation. Teachers and students both have to realize the inevitable change of roles and work patterns. Many believe, as with traditional learning, online education rises and falls according to the abilities of its teachers. Teachers who work online are expected to receive extensive training on how to translate their vis-à-vis instructional experiences to cyberspace. By accepting the training, the teachers are supposed to develop their course and absorb nuances of online teaching (Russell, 2001p. 16). The Virtual High School (VHS, Inc.) in Massachusetts (America's first public virtual high school) holds a 26-week teacher-training course worth 12 graduate credits. During the class, the teachers develop their course and explore the capacity of online teaching (Blomeyer, 2002, p. 5).

Some critics oppose online learning replacing classroom experience and argue that online learning should exist to supplement and add to students' learning. It should never replace real teachers and peers. A part of this argument is that teachers have little knowledge about the backgrounds of the students they teach online (Melnick, 2002, p. 86), and more people have faith in face-to-face instruction, especially when the course content appears to be complicated (Russell, 2001p. .13). Real education only happens in a community of learners, where people can discuss and react to the thoughts and ideas of their teachers and classmates. In other words, these opponents do not believe the definition of "real education" can occur in virtual classrooms.

When facing this innovative form of educational system, people expect a matching structure to follow. However, policy-making is still an issue for administrators from diverse institutional levels (federal, state, and local), consortium and regionally-based service providers, virtual charter schools, private virtual schools, and profit providers. Nonetheless, virtual schools are an important tool for expanding opportunities in public education if states implement them carefully. Furthermore, VS should serve as a supplement to, not a replacement for, comprehensive public-school education. Lastly, VS funded with public money should be held accountable to the same broad principles and policies as other forms of public education, including academic outcomes, equity, and religious neutrality. Leaders in the e-learning movement and state education policymakers will need to come together to initiate communication and begin working to help shape and enable virtual education practice. Such dialogue will help education policy leaders understand the unique dimensions of virtual education practice and also will allow VS to operate within critical education policy constraints. Key state education agency representatives will need to participate in professional forums, providing common ground to VS producers, consumers, and policy leaders for constant improvement based on objective, research-based guidelines and standards supporting the selection and screening that online schools are lacking (Clark, 2001,).

In the future, policymakers should judge VS by many of the same standards used to gauge the quality of traditional schools, not by more stringent standards. These could include holding virtual schools to basic requirements regarding accreditation, teacher certification, appropriate student-teacher ratios, adequate instructional materials and resources, course content aligned with the state's academic standards, and adequate support services, such as counseling. In addition, policymakers should establish outcome measures for VS, just as they are doing for traditional schools. These would include student scores on the appropriate external tests (including grades), course completion rates, dropout rates, or student performance on course projects and teacher-made assessments (Blomeyer, 2002,).

Some education organizations have already established prototypes or guidelines that policymakers can use to develop quality indicators for VS. Examples include the Essential Principles of Quality Guidelines for Web-based Courses for Middle and High School Students (www.nea.org/technology/distanceed/highschool) developed by the National Education Association (Fulton, 2002, p. 14).

Virtual schools are radically distinct from traditional schools; leaders in virtual education are recognizing that certain policies established to ensure quality in traditional schools can be impediments to VS and may need to be revised. The most obvious examples relate to attendance and school calendars. Since one of the features of VS is that the students are able to access their virtual classroom anytime, anywhere, "seat time," "school days," and "fixed course length" become meaningless indicators (Blomeyer, 2002, p. 9).

Virtual schools are a viable learning collaborative that can well serve the needs and interests of a diversity of learners scattered around the globe. Today's VS are carving out niches for themselves in cooperation with conventional systems, offering alternative learning programs to homebound students, at-risk students, and other unique populations of learners. They can assist overcrowded or financially strapped schools and school systems by offering a variety of academic and specialized courses that are taught by state-certified teachers and that meet basic standard of learning requirements. Virtual schools are subject to many of the same restrictions of conventional schools, such as state accreditation and teacher certification, even though in some cases, such restrictions are irrelevant and work against the best interest of students and quality academic programs. In the future, school boards, districts and national and state educational agencies will likely be compelled to modify many of their requirements and create new standards of teaching and learning that are more appropriate for a geographically dispersed faculty and student population (Rutkowski, 1999, p. 75).

As technology drastically develops, it is expected to be more user-friendly and to accommodate both teacher and student needs. Teachers, who are either currently teaching online courses or planning to change from the physical classroom to the virtual classroom, would need to acquire enough training prior to their actual practice. Students and parents have to carefully choose when deciding between traditional schooling and virtual education. If educational specialists can conduct more quality research on virtual education in the future, the general public will benefit from their findings and guidance when building more effective online learning environments for the new generation of learners.

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Lessons From Within the "Box": How Archetypical High Schools Can Benefit From Emulating Promising Prison School Practices

Mitzi Kaufman

The Failures of Archetypical High Schools

In an archetypical high school environment, (1) students generally range in age from 14-18 years old, (2) school is in session five days a week for nine months a year, and (3) students progress from grades 9th-12th over the course of four consecutive years. The problem is that this archetypical model is not working for a large number of students. On any given school day, as many as 30% of students in various areas across the nation will not even show up to class (Ingersoll & LeBoeuf, 1997). Students who are chronically truant will often drop out altogether. While outside of the classroom environment, many of these former students will commit crimes, get arrested, and become the responsibility of the juvenile justice system (Ingersoll & LeBoeuf, 1997).

The Juvenile Justice Education System

Although the United States has only 5% of the total world population, it holds 25% of the world's incarcerated (Meiners, 2004). When one looks at findings that indicate as many as 90% of youth in the United States' juvenile justice system have one or more mental health disorders and/or learning disabilities (Larson & Turner, 2002), it is not a far jump to conclude that a major contributor to the staggering numbers of incarcerated youth in the United States is the nation's inability to appropriately address the educational needs of these students in archetypical classroom environments. Paradoxically, many juveniles who drop out of archetypical high schools are able to achieve educational success once they are behind bars.

In contrast to the model of an archetypical high school, in a prison high school, (1) students encompass a broad age range, (2) school is in session year-round, and (3) students progress at their own pace. While these characteristics alone surely influence the successes and failures of both types of schools, there are other factors which appear to be far more significant.

Case Study of Success: The Giddings State School

The success of a juvenile justice education program is judged by much more than the number of General Educational Development (GED) certificates and high school diplomas that its students earn. The success of this type of program is also judged by the number of its students who are able to stay out of prison after they have been released from their sentences. Data reported in 2002 indicated that 67% of state prisoners released in 1994 were charged with new crimes within three years (Lanagan & Levin, 2002). Some juvenile justice schools, however, have been able to break the re-arrest cycle for their students. One such successful educational program can be found 55 miles east of Austin, Texas at the Giddings State School. In 1997, it was reported that less than 20% of Giddings students were re-arrested within the three years after their release (OCRegister, 1997). As if that weren't impressive enough, by 2005 the percentage of students who were re-arrested within three years after release had dropped to 9.79% (Texas Recidivism Report, 2005)!

Larson & Turner's "Best Practices"

According to Larson & Turner (2002), there are eight best practices that nearly all successful juvenile justice education programs have in common:

- Individual Juvenile Planning,
- Skill Based Interventions
- Medical Intervention
- Behavior Systems
- Family Involvement
- Transitioning
- Staffing
- Assessment of Program Effectiveness

It appears that all eight of Larson's & Turner's (2002) recommended best practices are present in the programming at Giddings, and it is likely that this fact accounts for the overall success of Giddings' students. The following is a brief description of how these practices and programs are implemented at Giddings.

Individual Juvenile Planning

Each student entering the Giddings State School is accessed to determine academic ability, needs, and goals.

Each student is then given an individualized learning plan. Unlike an archetypical high school model in which the teacher directs an entire class at the same pace, Giddings' students can work at their own pace. Classes generally have no more than 10 students; this allows students to receive personalized attention from their teachers. As soon as work is completed satisfactorily, the student is allowed to pass to the next level. Students in archetypical settings would no doubt also benefit and enjoy this kind of personalized attention and pacing.
At Giddings, students are allowed to choose whether they want to pursue a GED and/or a high school diploma. Many students will initially choose to pursue a GED certificate because the requirements are less rigorous than those for a high school diploma. However, once achieving success in obtaining their GED, many of these same students are motivated to continue with their studies and earn a high school diploma as well. If the GED and/or high school diploma route were promoted more readily in the archetypical high school, it is likely that more students would achieve one or the other (or even both).

Skill Based Interventions

Students at Giddings are also given the opportunity to take many vocational and career-based classes. In fact, students at Giddings can earn certification in Computer Applications, Welding, Mill & Cabinet Making I, Auto Collision Repair, Automotive Technology, Building Trades, Floriculture, Keyboarding, Business Computer Information Systems, and Desktop Design. Students can also take elective classes such as art and quilting. While at Giddings, students who are not behavioral problems are able to be employed by the school so that they can gain valuable work experience. Money students earn while incarcerated is put into a trust fund to be used upon their release. Most students can benefit from vocational training and hands-on work experience, so these types of classes and opportunities should be incorporated into archetypical high schools to increase the future marketability of their students.

Medical Intervention

Ninety percent of all incarcerated individuals have a history of drug and alcohol abuse (Bilchik, 1999), and the population at Giddings is no exception. Students at Giddings are placed in detox and 12-step recovery programs as needed. Students are also evaluated with physical examinations and provided with appropriate medicine for any medical conditions they may have. Many students in archetypical high schools have medical and/or chemical dependency problems that go undetected and untreated. In order to address the growth of a student's mind it is imperative to address the needs of their bodies; it would be a good idea for archetypical high schools to step up their efforts to adequately deal with students' medical needs.

Behavior Systems

Students at Giddings pass through a five- phase behavioral system. In phase zero, they have little to no independence; they must wear bright orange uniforms and be personally escorted everywhere on-campus, and are not allowed to participate in fun programming such as marching competitions or movie nights. Students in the highest phase have far more freedoms: this positive reward system is an effective behavior management tool. In the highest phase, students have proven themselves to be of such a low behavioral threat, that they are rewarded with the freedom to go off-campus for six hours at a time.

Also, Giddings has a system for dealing with any severe behavioral problems that may arise. A student who is thought to be potentially harmful to themselves or others will be taken out of their dorm and placed in solitary confinement. In solitary confinement, a student will receive additional individualized counseling until they are no longer considered a threat.

Students can move up and down the phase ranks depending on their behavior. All students report to case workers and counselors, as well as participate in both group and individual counseling. The phase system at Giddings is based on positive reinforcement techniques. Similar techniques have been shown to work in pilot programs at archetypical high schools as well (Eber, Lewis-Palmer, & Pacchiano, 2002).

Family Involvement

Family involvement is a form of social capital that helps students achieve success in all areas of their lives, thus it is important to foster and nourish that involvement regardless of the academic setting (Portes, 1998). Family members of students at Giddings are encouraged and occasionally obligated to attend counseling sessions. Families are allowed to visit with students in supervised settings on-campus until a point when/if the student earns the right to the once a week six-hour visit off-campus.

Transitioning

Programs such as Project RIO-Y help students at Giddings transition from a life behind bars to a life as a productive member of society. Project RIO-Y offers classes that help students learn how to interview for jobs. These classes even teach the students how they can use their arrest as a positive asset on job/college applications, (i.e. they now have discipline, they are now drug free, they now have experience taking orders, etc.). Project RIO-Y coordinators set up interviews with employers outside of Giddings State School for students who are close to their release dates, thus many students who leave Giddings will have a job waiting for them. This is a key component, as an unemployed ex-offender is three times more likely to return to prison than one who has a job (Eisenberg 1990). Students at Giddings are also encouraged to come up with a plan of action for their release that will help them stay away from the environmental triggers that influenced their criminal behavior in the first place.

College classes are available to students who qualify for them academically; so many students leave Giddings

with several college credits and are already enrolled in a collegiate program, which they enter into immediately following their release. This type of pre-college preparation is common in most archetypical high schools, but what sets Giddings apart is that it prepares students who would be completely left out of college prep classes in a more traditional educational environment.

Staffing

All staff at Giddings goes through self defense and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training to protect themselves and the students. The staff is aware of available resources such as security guards and counselors. Often volunteers will come to help out at Giddings, and they too receive some additional training for working in a lock-down facility. Giddings is a no weapon campus, where even security guards do not carry weapons. Teachers in archetypical high schools also receive training, but they seldom receive the kind of in- depth guidance necessary to deal with students who have severe physical aggression issues. This can create a climate of fear amongst the teachers, and a dangerous environment for their students.

Assessment of Program Effectiveness

The Texas Youth Commission (TYC) keeps a close eye on the progress at Giddings. The TYC sets yearly goals for each of its facilities. As was mentioned before, in 2005, Giddings reported a recidivism rate of 9.79%; that means that Giddings exceeded their stated goal by 510.8% (Texas Recidivism Report, 2005)!

What Can Be Learned From Giddings' Success?

Giddings State School is an example of a successful juvenile justice education program. What can be learned from Giddings that will prevent archetypical high school students from dropping out and committing crimes that result in the need for such a school? After all, it is important to remember that many students at Giddings wound up there because they committed capital offences such as murder and sexual assault. According to Meiners (2004), students who are showing any warning signs of having difficulties in the archetypical high school environment (truancies, low grades, and behavioral problems) should be sent to an alternative school that utilizes the eight best practices techniques of intervention. Meiners has a point, but overall, it would be best if archetypical high schools took a preventative approach that would work to eliminate the need for after-the-fact treatment programs such as prison schools and alternative schools. To do this, Larson & Turner's eight best practices should be incorporated on non-prison high school campuses to prevent students from a life of crime and increase the number of students who can achieve without having to be moved out of the mainstream environment.

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Community Partnerships for High Schools

Denise Gordon

With the governmental push to implement “No Child Left Behind,” a connection between the outside community and the classroom should not be forgotten. Family, community, and the school make a perfect triangle for the education of our society, no matter the age, language, race, or religion. “Learning is influenced in fundamental ways by the context in which it takes place. A community-centered approach requires the development of norms for the classroom and school, as well as connections to the outside world that support core learning values.” (Bransford, J.D., 2000 p. 25). If we feel we are contributing to others, that is truly “motivational” education. “Learners of all ages are more motivated when they can see the usefulness of what they are learning and when they can use that information to do something that has an impact on others--especially their local community.”(Pintrich, 1996, p.61). Students in Midolothian, Texas designed a new storm warning system for their town and their idea was approved by the city council. Students in Fort Worth, Texas redesigned their school’s handicap ramps to accommodate wider wheel chair access. These are problems that were real and important to the students. There was a need that caused student motivation to learn. It is interesting to note the amount of time that students spend in school when compared to their home and community. Students only spend 14% of their time in school, while 53% of their time is at home and the community (Bransford, 2000). Thus, the educational connection within the community and home life seems a potentially useful way of creating meaningful learning opportunities.

Before there were schools, education was taught in the home or learned through an apprenticeship. Society passed on needed skills to the next generation by mentoring or modeling on a “one-to-one” basis. We learned from our mothers how to sew and cook. We learned from our fathers how to hunt or fish, and if needed, we were sent out in the community to become apprentices and learn from the local tradesman how to melt iron, repair tools, or even make shoes. One of the famous educator’s in the early 1900’s, John Dewey, Father of Applied Learning, said that the isolation of schools results in the isolation from life (Dewey, 1916). We must apply what we learn in school to the real world. John Dewey firmly believed that “Education is the reconstruction of experience.” (Parker, 1916 p. 30)

The following is a very old statement found in a college educational text, but it holds great value for today since our work is becoming more abstract as compared to earlier days.

A secondary school, whether located in a city, village, or rural hamlet, should be a source of strength to the community. The city or village, in which a secondary school is located, should continually grow stronger as a direct result from the school. The school should constantly put back into the community the best of each generation as permanent residents, if it is to justify its own existence and the taxation necessary for its maintenance.” (Parker, 1916, p. 61-62).

John Dewey High School in Brooklyn, New York, rings true to this statement. Their mission statement promotes an “alternative form of education by empowering students to make decisions regarding their education experience by enabling then to grow at their own rate in an atmosphere of innovation and dynamic interchange and by providing an extended day for their academic, cultural, and social enrichment.” (http://www.nycenet.edu/OurSchools/Region7/K540/default.htm?searchType=school) This school of 3100 students, from grades 9-12, has over 26 partnerships, involving the School for Special Children, Culinary Arts Careers, Cities in Schools, College of Staten Island, Kingsboro Community College, School-to-School, Cooperative ED, Junior Achievement, NYS Mentoring, Training OPP, and NYC School Volunteers. With more partnerships for the students to select from, more student interests can be accommodated and motivated. This philosophy of John Dewey High School can also be found in other high schools across the nation. Documentation in governmental or educational reports, journals or even the local newspaper reveals the creative ways that communities and classrooms have linked their goals together to strengthen the educational system. The following are some examples from throughout the country within the past 10 years.

Pittsburgh’s Steel Recycling Institute provided local high schools with volunteer opportunities that involved students in partnerships with recycling and environmental issues (Rogers, D. and Laymon, C.A. (1995). The Big Picture Company in Cambridge, Massachusetts set out to strengthen six urban high schools that used school-to-work strategies as a lever for whole-school reform (Standard Modern Fulfillment Center. (1998). Harbor City Learning Center in Baltimore, Maryland used SEEP, Security Educational Employment Program, an employment and training program for high school students that matched students with opportunities in private security. The results from this partnership and project-based learning experiences indicated a majority of students (80%) entering postsecondary institutions (Primerica Foundation. (1987).

To increase academic performance and better job skills, Swansea High School in Swansea, South Carolina, began a multi-year program that eliminated the general tracking of college bound students and/or vocational-technical students. Instead, all students were assigned a major in one of four general career clusters.

The schools' counseling and tutorial programs were strengthened. Curriculum and equipment were updated to national standards. Instructional technology in mathematics and science was expanded. "A shared vision was created among academic and vocational teachers, community partnerships were built, and applied instructional strategies were used to motivate students to learn challenging content." (Case study: Swansea High School, Swansea, S.C. 1999, p. 6). Swansea's reform efforts resulted in improvements in students' assessments of reading, mathematics, and science performance in 1993 and 1996. In reading, the percentage of students who met the performance goal increased from 45 percent in 1993 to 60 percent in 1996, while the mathematics goal increased from 40 percent in 1993 to 60 percent in 1996 (Case study: Swansea High School, Swansea, S.C. 1999 p. 8).

A famous philanthropist, Mr. Ewing Marion Kauffman, started Project Choice through his Kauffman Foundation. Inner city youth in selected schools in Kansas City, Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri were promised a college education if the students kept out of trouble, maintained satisfactory grades, and graduated on time with their classmates. Project Choice was a success by providing 709 students with full college scholarships out of 1,394 students that enrolled in this program (Sims, 1997). Also, through the high school partnership program, KCKCC (Kansas City Kansas Community College) outstanding high school seniors were able to earn high school and college credit for college-level courses taken on their own campuses. When the program was first initiated, 28 students enrolled for 84 credits hours. In the following spring, 239 students enrolled for 924 credit hours. In 1992, Elgin Community College and the Northern Kane Regional Delivery System in Illinois redesigned a tech prep program to include childcare, electronics, heating/air conditioning, machine tools/computer-aided manufacturing, and welding. From the original plan of three high schools, the program was successfully expanded to five more additional high schools (Brown, J.L. (1993). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 362244)

Hispanic students have higher dropout rates and lower academic achievement than other student groups. Enrichment programs that focus on self-esteem, family values, and cultural pride have been implemented in high schools. Several community programs in Texas have addressed these issues. They are: Value Youth Partnership Program, Advance Program, and the Pasadera (Stepping Stone) Program in San Antonio, Project ONDA (Opportunities for Networking and Developing Aspirations) in Dallas, National Hispanic Institute Programs in Austin, Del Mar College's prefreshman Engineering Program in Corpus Christi, and the University of Texas at El Paso's Mother-Daughter Program in El Paso (Sosa, 1990). The Mother-Daughter Program holds meetings once a month with Hispanic female students from the University of Texas. The program features college campus tours, career days, leadership conferences, and helps the young daughters to become more adjusted with college life. Mothers receive training on building self-esteem, encouraging success, and finding resources to support their daughter's education (Sosa, 1990).

The faculty from the University of California in Los Angeles has developed a partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District and have turned several high schools and continuation schools into community based learning (CBL) programs. High school students attend field sites two days per week to see how basic skills and academic subjects are applied in the real world. Job Training Partnership Act funded this program. Grades 9-12 are the primary focus of this program. The CBL program is characterized by individualized instruction, small group work, student initiated learning activities, and dedicated teachers. Both qualitative and quantitative data indicated the importance of the different components within this program. What were important to most of the students were the personal relationships between students and adults. (Shumer, 1993).

All of these programs share many key features. In particular, they actively recruit students to serve in small groups for direct personal attention to other students and focus on enrichment that validates the language and culture of each other's home life. These student groups provide supportive roles and use local resources to help ensure attendance and celebrate students' achievements publicly (Sosa, 1990).

What is happening today with the partnerships between communities and the schools? In Fort Worth, Texas, a large public school system with a population greater than 585,000, there is a great partnership and commitment found outside the classroom walls. Within the administrative building of the Fort Worth Independent School District there exists a separate department dedicated to working solely with the school and surrounding community. The mission of the School and Community Relations Department is to garner and sustain community support to advance the goals of the Fort Worth ISD. The following programs were coordinated by staff to provide community support, recognition and educational enrichment opportunities for high school students, teachers, and schools within the four main areas of: increasing attendance, mentoring/tutoring, providing career opportunities, and college credits. Some of the implemented programs during the 2004-2005 school year were:

• Adopt-A-School-businesses "adopt" schools and provide mentors, tutors, incentives and financial aid. All 18 Fort Worth high schools have designated business partnerships from local hospitals, banks, to the Environmental Management Department of the city of Fort Worth.

• TEAM Fort Worth is a Stay-In-School mentoring program that recruited and matched mentors with 38 professionals who interacted with 85 high school students during various mentoring activities that focused on career options.

• Stay In School Initiative collaborated between the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce and FWISD to recruit partners for schools and mentors for students.

• Texas Scholars volunteered and encouraged students to take rigorous courses in high school and recruited and

trained 75 volunteers to speak to 6,000 students in 18 high schools.
• Texas Mentoring and Educating Students (TEAMS) provided teachers as mentors in their own schools while recruiting 1,308 teachers to mentor 4,240 students.
• Every Child in School Every Day is an attendance incentive program that gave away 6 cars, 2 computers, and 2 skyboxes for a Rangers game to high school students with perfect attendance.
• DFW Airport "Share the Dream Essay Contest allows high school students to win cash prizes from six area schools. This year there were 12 winners.
• Score a Goal in the Classroom is an incentive distributed to schools that provides coupons to sporting events and entertainment venues.
• Tarrant County Community College has an open door policy for high school seniors to earn college credit while still attending high school (School & Community Relations , FWISD Summary Report).
Is this highly developed community partnerships to the high schools helping the Fort Worth Independent School District students? Is this what John Dewey had in mind when students are provided with incentives for attendance or cash prizes for writing essays? An examination of the Exit TAKS scores of all 11th graders for the FWISD in 2004 indicated 60 percent of the students meeting the standard; however, these scores still remain below the state with a standard of 72 percent (www.tea.state.tx.us/). Gimmicks and prizes are marketing skills that may work for the business world, but will they fix today's educational problems?
There is a common thread of "one-to-one" mentoring in all of the positive partnerships between educational systems and local communities coast to coast. In 1998 a practitioner's guide to strengthen the new urban high schools and the surrounding communities listed five postulates to guide the development of such partnerships:
• create settings where teachers and students can know each other well
• situate students directly in the world beyond school
• provide integrated reflected contexts for students
• articulate a common intellectual mission for all students
• work closely with family and community (Standard Modern Fulfillment Center.(1998). p. 3)
A blue-ribbon high school that provides success for students is the Urban Academy in New York City. Designated as a "National Showcase Site," the Urban Academy uses the inquiry method of teaching in all their core classes, performance assessments, weekly community and student involvement, and develops close personal relationships between teachers and the student body. This school's unique educational philosophy resulted in 95 percent of the Urban Academy graduates earning admission to four- year colleges (Toch, 2003). Other promising high schools are the Ben Franklin Academy in Atlanta, Georgia and the Maya Angelou Public Charter School in Washington, D.C. Instruction provided within these schools is one-to-one with close community ties to student projects or volunteer hours within the local community under guiding mentors. Thus, "the great waste of school" that John Dewey once described is slowly changing by applying daily life to what the student is learning in school and utilizing that experience that he/she gets from the outside community. This is what a real community partnership and our educational system should be about.
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Alignment of High School and Postsecondary Expectations and Standards

Scott Travis

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is certain to be mentioned among educators discussing current issues in K-12 schools. "High-stakes" testing and academic standards are becoming more prevalent and states are adjusting to the inherent pressure that comes from enactment of the NCLB policies. However, as the focus is now on ensuring no child will be left behind, some educators are concerned about where these children will be going and whether they will have the ability to get there. Will students be prepared for postsecondary education if they successfully complete high school in line with today's NCLB driven standards? While the long term effects of this legislation and the consequential effects of implementation have not been completely determined, there is cause for concern.

Today, many students are pursuing postsecondary education after completing high school. According to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), as of 1997, 57 out of every 100 high school students from SREB states attended a postsecondary institution within one year of graduation (Creech, 1997). Unfortunately, many of these students are not adequately prepared for postsecondary courses and are placed in remedial or developmental classes upon entering college. For instance, the SREB reported that the median percent of students taking remedial mathematics courses at two-year colleges was 46%. In fact, the smallest percent among states in the SREB region was 28%. The data are somewhat better for four-year colleges where the median percent was 22% (Creech). Even though these figures include students who did not attend a postsecondary institution immediately after high school, these statistics are nonetheless disturbing. A recent newspaper article reported that over half of the students in Texas attending postsecondary institutions needed some form of remedial class (Haurwitz & Heinauer, 2005). Yet, despite the increase of standards and testing in the high schools, it does not appear that this trend will abate in the near future.

Why do so many students entering two-year and four-year colleges and universities need remediation after successfully completing high school? Ironically, the problem may lie in the very state standards and tests that were intended to prepare the students. Traditionally, the American education system has been primarily decentralized. With states having authority over the educational institutions within their boundaries, there is no

central set of standards that apply to all students nationwide. Yet, with the federal mandate to increase standards and testing, higher education is not involved in the process of creating these standards in concert with high school curriculum sequences. This disconnect between secondary and postsecondary institutions exists throughout the nation and is well documented (Conley, 1996, 2003a; Conley & Bodone, 2002; Kirst, 1998; Schneider, 2003; Venezia, 2003).

There are several reports and established projects however that are aimed at assisting states and their secondary schools to align their standards and tests to the standards and expectations of postsecondary institutions. The report by Kirst in 1998 discussed establishing unified K-16 policies. The current K-12 policies and reforms, however, are moving in different directions from higher education standards and this is creating ineffectual practices and confusion for students. Kirst gave 20 recommendations for policy changes across K-16, which included the following:

• Permit students to submit subject matter-based state external exams in lieu of ACT/SAT and study the university success of these students
• align freshman placement exams with other state standards
• standardize the calculation of high school class rank and which classes may or may not be utilized in the calculations
• review the local K-16 standards and university standards periodically to ensure alignment
• align the concepts and content of university teacher preparation with the other recommendations of the report (pp. 8-11)

According to Kirst, “Students and state universities will benefit from clearer and more uniform admission standards and signals about what preparation is needed to succeed at the university level” (1998, p. 7).

Two reports by the Southern Regional Education Board discussed policy recommendations and strategies for high schools. As noted previously, there are numerous students entering colleges and universities who are in need of remediation courses. The 1997 report by Creech for the SREB indicated that high schools should prepare students better by providing more rigorous courses. According to the report, there are disparities between the expectations of the states and postsecondary institutions regarding high school courses. For example, “the highest level mathematics course required for high school graduation is Algebra I or its equivalent, but colleges and universities expect students to complete at least Algebra I and two additional higher level mathematics courses in high school” (p. 5). The main point of this report is that “fewer students who complete courses in the academic core need remedial work when they enter college” (p. 8). The report includes several recommendations for high schools, including the following: (a) “examine the content and rigor of high school graduation requirements and college preparatory programs” (p. 12); (b) “establish performance standards for students and communicate expectations to students, parents and the public” (p. 12); and (c) “use information from college-to-school reporting systems to bring college and school faculties together to work on specific ways they can help students prepare for and succeed in college” (p. 12).

In 2000, the SREB reported on its Making Schools Work (MSW) program for rural schools. The philosophy of the Southern Regional Education Board about MSW is “all students can complete an ‘advantaged’ curriculum, although some students may require more time, individualized instruction, encouragement and direction” (p. 4). The report described key practices and key conditions for accelerating student achievement and gave specific curriculum recommendations for both middle schools and high schools. In high school, the MSW-recommended curriculum included four years of college-preparatory English, four years of mathematics beginning with Algebra I, three years of college-preparatory science, three years of college-preparatory social studies, and four years of career/technical courses. The report emphasized the partnership between participating states, school districts, and the SREB to foster a challenging academic environment for all students. The MSW program also noted the importance of working with postsecondary institutions. In particular, high schools were encouraged to allow colleges to administer their placement exams to 11th graders so each student’s last year of high school can be tailored to the student’s needs.

In order for alignment to occur between secondary and postsecondary institutions, several colleges and universities have established criteria for student success at the postsecondary level. As Conley noted, most of the ongoing reform in secondary education “is occurring without reference to any explicit set of expectations for university success” (2003a, p. 10). Attempting to rectify this problem, the Standards for Success (S4S) project, sponsored by the Association of American Universities (AAU) and The Pew Charitable Trusts, has attempted to “identify the gap between high school academic content standards developed over the past decade and the knowledge and skills needed for success in entry-level university courses” (Conley, 2003d, p. 1).

Standards for Success establishes standards of knowledge and skill for success in [freshman] courses and offers a database of information on state K-12 assessments and standards to help students understand what universities expect and to aide professors and admissions officers in their understanding of what states expect their high school students to know. (Conley, 2003b, p. 14)

A two-year study included more than 400 faculty members from 20 AAU universities. One result of this study was the Knowledge and Skills for University Success (KSUS) standards1, which Conley described as the “most comprehensive and thoroughly grounded set of standards for college success yet developed” (p. 14). The College

Board already is using these standards as a reference for the development of future versions of the PSAT and SAT exams. Other results of this study were: (a) University Work Examples, which include sample syllabi and student work that meet the standards of success set forth in KSUS; (b) State High School Assessment Database; and (c) State Exam Alignment Study. All of these resources are available to state education boards, secondary and postsecondary institutions, and the public.

Conley asked, “Will standards-based educational reforms result in more students being prepared to succeed in college? Without some sort of plan to connect the two systems, the answer is ‘who knows?’” (2003a, p. 9). Since states and secondary educational institutions are designing and implementing reform, it is vitally important for them to include postsecondary education “in the loop” so that meaningful and effective reform can occur. Given that two-thirds of high school graduates in America immediately enroll in some form of postsecondary education (Conley, 2003b), states and secondary schools would do well to align their standards and tests with postsecondary standards and expectations. To do otherwise would be a great injustice to the students they serve.

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Footnotes

1The complete set of KSUS standards are in the document Understanding University Success: A Report from Standards for Success, which is available at the Standards for Success website: http://www.s4s.org

Alternative Teacher Certification: "The Backdoor is Open”

Emily Binks

In reading the chapters of this book regarding future possibilities for high school reform, the discussed best practices have some obvious implications to be considered for secondary teacher education. The impact of teachers on student achievement has been repeatedly proven through scientifically-based research (see Sanders & Rivers, 1996 and Jordan, Mendro, & Weerasinghe, 1997). Thus, to make such high school reform successful, teachers will need further training in such best practices, including (1) affective counseling and instructional mentoring (in drop-out prevention), (2) relevant curriculum (e.g. hip hop music) and its influence (and how to use it to promote learning), (3) technology (including proper incorporation and virtual classrooms), (4) college preparation for high school students, (5) current research on content specific teaching strategies (such as reading communities and math), (6) tutoring and other successful high school completion practices, (7) alternative assessment practices (i.e. performance assessment), (8) learning communities, (9) urban environments, and (10)

English language learners (ELL) and immigrant issues.

One of the most promising teacher preparation models to accomplish many of the preceding practices is through alternative teacher certification programs (see Feistritzer, 2005, for national survey). Whitehurst (2002) defines alternative teacher certification as "a route to a teaching license that bypasses some of the undergraduate coursework requirements in education" (p. 44). Such programs range “from newly created certification routes designed specifically for individuals who already have at least a bachelor’s degree to revamped Masters in the Arts of Teaching (M.A.T) programs” (Feistritzer, 2005, Introduction). In 47 of the 50 United States (as well as the District of Columbia), there are 619 alternative-teacher preparation program sites, in which 122 different types of alternative teacher-preparation programs are currently operating (as compared to only eight states in 1983 and 70 program types in 1990) (Feistritzer, 2005). In a national survey conducted by the National Center for Education Information, reports indicate that approximately 35,000 individuals now obtain teacher certification through alternative routes each year and an estimated minimum of 250,000 teachers have entered the field through alternative certification since the mid-1980s (Feistritzer, 2005). Almost half of the new teachers in Texas are certified through one of the state’s 75 alternative teacher certification programs. Further, the most recent research indicates that almost all alternatively certified teachers continue teaching after their first year (as compared to only about 40% of traditionally certified teachers), and alternative certification programs seem to attract older candidates into education careers as well (Feistritzer, 2005). “What began in the early 1980s as a way to ward off projected shortages of teachers and replace emergency certification has evolved into sophisticated means for recruiting, training and certifying people who already have at least a bachelor's degree and want to become teachers” (Feistritzer, 2005, Introduction).

What is the scope and quality of alternative teacher education and preparation? In a review of the nation’s best alternative teacher certification programs, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Innovation and Improvement found that “since most programs require that candidates demonstrate knowledge of subject matter to qualify for admission, the focus is typically not content knowledge but pedagogy—lessons and practice in how best to teach specific kinds of content to diverse groups of students” (USDOE, 2004, p. 15). Numerous studies have explored the pros and cons of alternative teacher certification. Many researchers have found alternative teacher certification to be as successful in student achievement as traditional teacher certification (Goldhaber & Brewer, 1998; Miller, McKenna, & McKenna, 1998; Zeichner & Schulte, 2001), while others report alternatively certified teachers to be less effective is promoting student achievement than traditional certified teachers (Armour-Thomas, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Wenglinsky, 2000). But perhaps more important than the debate between the merits and drawbacks of alternative teacher certification (and more relevant to student achievement), is a look into the curriculum that lies within alternative teacher certification programs.

Analyses of One Alternative Teacher Certification Program

Accelerate Online

The Texas A&M University accelerated certification program for teaching, Accelerate Online, is a cutting-edge, non-traditional approach to alternative certification for secondary science and mathematics teachers in the state of Texas. Teacher certification candidates entering the program have previously accumulated 24 hours of coursework in their specialty area. The Accelerate Online & Options program strand claims to provide students with the necessary background and teaching strategies to become successful and effective secondary science and/or mathematics teachers.

The Accelerate Online program includes 31 online modules of 60-90 minutes that students must complete, which makes up the curriculum portion of this alternative teacher certification program (in addition to extensive field-based experiences). Nearly half of these modules also require artifact submissions from the field experiences. These 31 modules fall under one of 8 different categories, including School and Classroom Environment (2 modules), Designing Instruction I (7 modules), Technology Applications I (3 modules), Promoting Student Learning (2 modules), Professional Roles and Responsibilities I (2 modules), History and Nature of Science or Mathematics Instruction and Assessment (4 modules each), Designing Instruction II (5 modules), Technology Application II (4 modules), and Professional Roles and Responsibilities II (2 modules). The content of these modules is examined below relative to high school reform and the concern for preparing teachers with strategies that are recommended for helping to prevent high school dropout and supporting adolescents to successful high school completion.

(1) Counseling and Instructional Mentoring (in drop-out prevention). One of the 31 teacher preparation modules seemed to specifically and directly promote counseling and instructional mentoring, particularly as a means of promoting high school completion. “Adolescent and Learner Development” is a 60-minute, medium-difficulty module in which alternative teacher certification candidates are introduced to the concerns adolescents have about their personal physical characteristics, their social standing, their emerging sexuality, their friendships, and their general adequacy as human beings—all constructs and variables that can affect adolescents' work at school. When instructional planning and informal teacher-to-student communications take place under conditions where these variables are part of the teacher's repertoire of professional understanding, the teacher increases his or her potential to connect with students in meaningful ways. If the curriculum of this module truly does prepare its teachers with all of the above counseling and mentoring skills as stated above, this seems to be a positive step in preparing teachers for high school reform.

(2) Relevance of the high school curriculum. While no modules directly address methods for using student interest and current culture (such as interest in "hip hop" music) to promote learning, the module that comes closest to possibly addressing such issues is entitled "Accommodating Student Diversity in the Classroom." This 60-minute, medium-difficulty module prepares teachers-in-training to work with students as individuals with varied interests, backgrounds, and priorities in order to maximize motivation for learning. Although this module seems to be a start in the direction of addressing students' backgrounds and influences that can affect their learning, it would be ideal if more of the curriculum was devoted to preparing teachers to directly identify the specific influences on today's youth (i.e. hip-hop/music) and how such can be used to enhance teaching and learning in the classroom.

(3) Technology (including proper incorporation and virtual classrooms). Technology preparation seems to play a big role in the curriculum of this alternative teacher certification program. Seven of the 31 modules (23%) are devoted to preparing teachers to use technology in the classroom, including eCommunication Tools and Applications, Basic Productivity Tools, Online Resource Applications, TrackStar I: Finding Online Lessons, TrackStar II: Preplanning an Online Lesson, TrackStar III: Developing on Online Lesson, and Spreadsheets and Databases in the Classroom (for more detailed information on these modules, see http://accelerate.tamu.edu). This area is particularly strong in its application to recent trends and recommendations for achieving high school reform. Such curriculum can serve as a model for other, particularly the more traditional, alternative teacher certification programs.

(4) College Preparation for High School Students. No modules appear to train teachers in preparing their students for college.

(5) Current Research on Content Specific Teaching Strategies. Accelerate Online currently only offers secondary teacher certifications in math or science, thus the content specific teaching strategies are limited to these areas. Math modules include Mathematical Perspectives, Mathematical Processes, Mathematical Assessment, and Mathematical Learning and Instruction. Science modules include History and Nature of Science, How Principles and Properties of Science Influence Decisions, Unifying Concepts that are Common to all Sciences, and Safety Plans for Classroom and Science Laboratory. An interesting note is that while the math modules seem to include an emphasis on teaching strategies related to the discipline, the science modules seem to focus more on science itself rather than the teaching of science. Given that these teacher certification candidates already have a background in their specialty field, it appears that the math modules are more successful in preparing teachers with current research on content specific teaching strategies.

(6) Tutoring and Other Successful High School Completion Practices. No modules appear to emphasize other successful high school completion practices.

(7) Alternative Assessment (i.e. performance assessment). The entire Designing Instruction II module category is devoted to preparing teachers for assessment, which includes five modules entitled Constructing Tests and Program Assessment, Multiple Choice Item Construction, True False Item Construction, Matching Item Construction, and Essay Item Construction. However, as easily seen through the module titles, none of these promote alternative assessment practices. For students pursuing the math option certification, the module entitled Mathematical Assessment claims to describe "various formats for assessing students" but does not elaborate on what these various formats entail. (The science option entails no extra or specific assessment modules.) While the Accelerate Online program seems to place a value on assessment (more than 16% of total curriculum), inclusion of more alternative assessment training seems warranted.

(8) Learning Communities. No modules appear to promote learning communities as part of the teacher training curriculum.

(9) Urban Environments. The only module that seems to have relevance to teaching students in urban environments is the module related to Accommodating Student Diversity in the Classroom (see above for description). However, while such a module seems to be a step in the right direction towards preparing teachers for issues related to urban environments, more preparation in this area is needed.

(10) English Language Learner (ELL) and Immigrant Issues. Despite the increasing number of ELL and immigrant students in U.S. schools, it is surprising to note that no modules in this particular alternative licensure program directly address ELL and/or immigrant issues.

While Accelerate Online seems to be moving in the right direction in preparing teachers for best practices related to high school reform (particularly as seen through the curriculum emphasis on technology), there also still exists much room for improvement in such a cutting-edge alternative teacher certification program (notably, teacher training in college preparation, high school completion, learning communities, and ELL/immigrant issues).

Other Alternative Teacher Certification Programs

The curriculum of other alternative teacher certification programs can be analyzed and evaluated in a similar manner as the one above in order to reveal strengths and weaknesses as related to preparing teachers for high school reform.

Interestingly, the more "traditional" alternative teacher certification program at Texas A&M University, the Secondary Graduate Certification Program (also known as the Post-Baccalaureate Program), encompasses a quite different set of strengths and weaknesses than the Accelerate Online program. Strengths include curriculum in ELL and immigrant issues, content specific teaching strategies, and counseling and instructional mentoring,

while the main weaknesses lie in the domains of technology, college preparation, and other successful high school completion practices (Secondary Graduate Certification Program, 2005).

NC TEACH (North Carolina Teachers of Excellence for All Children), is another popular statewide teacher licensure program administered by the University of North Carolina in collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, with the option of online modules or traditional classes. “NC TEACH is designed to recruit, prepare, and support mid-career professionals as they begin a teaching career in North Carolina's public schools” (NC TEACH, 2005). The strengths of NC TEACH as they relate to high school reform needs include a teacher education curriculum focusing on content specific teaching strategies, urban environments, technology, alternative assessment, and counseling and instructional mentoring. Notable missing components include college preparation and ELL/immigrant issues (although perhaps the need for the latter is less in this state).

Florida’s Alternative Certification Program includes notable strengths in its online curriculum that prepares teachers for alternative assessment, counseling and instructional mentoring, urban environments, learning communities, and technology (Florida Department of Education, 2002). Areas for improvement lie in ELL and immigrant issues (particularly important for this state), other successful high school completion practices, content specific teaching strategies, and college preparation.

In California, the CalState TEACH alternative teacher certification program includes curriculum strengths in content specific teaching strategies, alternative assessment, ELL, and immigrant issues, counseling and instructional mentoring, and urban environments (CalState TEACH, 2004). Recommended improvements to add to the program’s curriculum include preparing teachers for technology, designing and implementing learning communities, tutoring strategies and other high school completion practices, and college preparation.

As evident through the above examinations of a few alternative teacher certification programs, the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum within such programs as related to teacher preparation for high school reform is highly varied among and within states, and even among and within colleges and universities.

Implications and Challenges

Perhaps more relevant to teacher quality and student achievement is not the route to teacher certification, but the type of education and preparation involved within the certification. And perhaps the success, or lack thereof, of alternatively certified teachers' impact on student achievement is more closely correlated with the curriculum included in the teachers’ preparation program. After a meta-analysis of scientifically-based research on teacher quality and preparation presented to the White House Conference on Preparing Tomorrow’s Teachers, Whitehurst (2002) contends that "the effects of teacher training on academic achievement become clearer when the focus becomes subject matter knowledge as opposed to certification per se" (p. 45). Furthermore, in addition to cognitive ability and experience, focused training and content knowledge were found to have the highest impacts on teacher quality and student achievement (with certification, advanced degrees, and workshops ranking below) (Whitehurst, 2002). Even opponents of alternative teacher certification admit that “those who have more education training appear to do better in producing student achievement,” despite whether traditionally or alternatively certified (Darling-Hammond, Berry, & Thoreson, 2001, p. 57.

As the number of alternatively-certified teachers and popularity of such programs continue to rise, there is a challenge to evaluate secondary teacher certification programs relative to the criteria for producing quality reform of high schools. In evaluation of such programs, hopes are (1) for administrators of alternative teacher certification programs to employ curriculum that trains teachers in the necessary components of high school reform, (2) for researchers studying the effectiveness of alternative teacher certification to consider correlations between alternative certification curriculum and student achievement, and (3) for teacher employers to take a closer look at and place higher importance on the curriculum of the teacher candidates’ certification rather than the type of certification itself. While researchers in teacher education have historically focused more at the program level as compared to the components of the respective programs, we contend that the actual learning in any teacher preparation program should be the focus. Further implications for research include, examining the curriculum of a larger sample size of alternative teacher certification programs and studying correlations between the curriculum and teacher success (as measured through student growth and achievement), as well as examining not only the quantity of the curriculum in recommended high school reform areas but the quality of the curriculum and training in such areas as well.

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Staying Alive: Incentives for Recruiting and Retaining Teachers in Inner City Schools

Vonda R. Nunley

As I was sitting in a graduate level class with veteran teachers (3 or more teaching years), the subject turned to teaching inner city students. One educator bravely stated, "She would not work in an inner city school, because she can't relate to those students and she does not feel comfortable in the inner city communities." As the discussion progressed, others chimed in and stated that they also felt uncomfortable working with diverse populations. Initially, I was very surprised to hear certified teachers, studying toward their master's or doctorate degrees, stating that they feel uncomfortable teaching children in inner city schools, but as I thought about what they were saying, it was not at all different from the way many teachers in America feel. Research has shown that teaching students from diverse backgrounds in low income areas is more challenging than teaching students in schools from middle class to upper class families (Banks, 2005; also see Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2000; Pang, 2004). Realizing this, I ask, are we properly preparing teachers to be effective and feel comfortable teaching in inner city schools? This chapter will focus on what we are doing to recruit and retain great teachers in our most challenging schools.

Qualities of a Great/Resilient Teacher

Great teaching and teacher resilience is created, through learned practice, a strong knowledge base, experience, and continuous self-reflection and development. It is not guaranteed that when a teacher graduates from a college of education or an alternative teaching certification program that they will always be successful in the classroom. A teaching certificate is the base of an extraordinary challenge, yet wonderful life experience that could result in impacting the lives of many diverse learners. A resilient teacher can meet this challenge and accomplish noble goals under sometimes difficult learning conditions.

Geneva Gay (2000) and Valerie Pang (2004) have highlighted characteristics of resilient teachers in their culturally relevant and caring centered teacher models. By implementing these ideals a teacher should be able to captivate students' attention and foster positive learning environments. When a student feels as if he/she is part of the lesson, he/she will take ownership in the lesson. In a study of teacher resilience in urban schools, Peterson, Collins, and Abbott (2004) found nine common strategies among resilient teachers. These strategies included a teacher's personal morals and values, their aggressiveness, and their passion for education, which guides them to strive for the success of all students. Peterson et al. (2004) found that with these characteristics and with these strategies teachers were able to work through adversities and develop resilience. They were able to captivate learning, their students developed a knowledge base in the course, and they were able to meet the standards of mastery. These successes create resiliency in teachers.

Resilient teachers in urban schools must be strong teachers, confident in their own cultural identity, and open-minded. Resilience is developed from years of continuous learning and experience. A resilient teacher is willing to take risks and accept temporary failure without giving up. Instilling and fostering resilience in teachers helps create a higher teacher retention rate.

Incentives Used to Recruit and Retain Teachers

The decision to use incentives to recruit and retain teachers is made by individual school districts. Financing to support students from low-income families and the schools that support them has been passed down from the federal government through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). According to the United States Department of Education, Title I of the ESEA as amended on January 8, 2002 by the "No Child Left Behind Act" provides federal funds for professional development activities to help teachers working in schools with low-income families. These funds are also used to hire and certify highly qualified teachers by the upcoming school year. The federal and state governments have left the allocation of these funds up to the state and school districts. Title II of the ESEA specifically awards grant money to states and districts in order to assist schools in recruiting highly qualified teachers to work in schools with a high percentage of low-achieving students, students from economically disadvantaged families, students from racial and ethnic minority groups, and students with disabilities (Prince, 2002).

Many schools districts are using funds to give teachers financial incentives to teach in "hard to staff" schools. Cynthia Prince (2002) argues that targeted financial incentives, not just across-the-board pay raises, are essential to attract and retain well-prepared teachers in the most challenging schools. Competition between urban and suburban schools in terms of higher pay incentives have led some of the schools to offer additional incentives to work in low performing schools (AASA, 2002). Across America states are offering teachers $1,800 to $5,000 bonuses to work in their low performing or high poverty schools. A report on teacher recruitment and retention by the Education Commission of the States (ECA, 2002) stated that many school districts are offering housing incentives with interest free loans, reduced price homes, low-interest mortgages and much more. For example Alaska, Kansas, New York, North Carolina and Virginia are offering tuition reimbursements and scholarships toward continuing education to teachers who work in high poverty or low performing schools. California, Georgia, Maryland, and Louisiana are giving teachers who work in and commit to continue working in these schools state and federal income tax credit (ECS, 2002; Prince, 2002). These states and several more have enacted legislation or are in the process of enacting legislation dealing with incentives for teachers teaching in low performing schools (ECS, 2002; Prince, 2002).

Teach for America

Recruiting and certification of highly qualified teachers has also been assisted by the efforts of nonprofit organizations. In 1988 Wendy Kopp established an organization called Teach for America. Teach for America recruits college seniors and graduate students to teach in low performing or high poverty schools. Through recognition of the educational inequities within these schools, Teach for America has and continues to place thousands of carefully selected teachers and trained them to work in urban schools.

Educating and Supporting Teachers in Urban Schools

Financial incentives awarded to teachers in urban schools are important, but steps must be taken to make sure adequate support is available in the learning environment as well. In Why Public Schools Lose Teachers (2001), Hanushek, Kain, and Rivnik argue that urban schools struggle to recruit and retain effective teachers because districts fail to provide effective training, valuable induction programs, and a generally supportive teaching environment. So the question becomes how are we preparing them to work with the students? This preparation process should start at the university or certification program level, but often times falls short due to the actual learning conditions of inner city or low performing schools. It is important that these teacher preparation programs not only teach strategies and content, but that they also teach future educators how to work with a diverse group of students. Teachers must learn to build relationships and teach material culturally relevant to their audience.

Teachers will also need ongoing professional development not only in subject area content, but also on how to continue to work effectively with their students, their students' parents, and their communities. Engaging all stakeholders in the learning process is very important to teachers' success.

Identifying the "Right" Teachers

It is also important that we place the "right" teachers in our challenging schools. An article written in the Chattanooga, Tennessee newspaper highlighted the school district's efforts to place and retain more qualified teachers in their low performing schools. The mayor of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the city's educational administrators decided to implement incentives for teachers working in urban schools, but they also made sure that they were placing the "right" teachers in these schools; not just teachers looking for the financial incentives. They designed criteria that each of the teachers in these schools had to meet in order to remain in these schools, transfer to these schools, or be hired to teach at these schools (Benton, 2003). This type of selection process was very useful in improving the student learning.

Conclusion

In recognition of a need to place the most qualified teachers in the most challenging schools productive incentives have been put in place. Federal and many state governments have implemented incentive programs such as tuition reimbursements, scholarships for continued education, tax credits, and low interest mortgage

options for teachers who teach in low performing schools, urban schools, and schools that house students from low income families or racial or ethnic minority groups. The most popular have been financial bonus incentives to teachers working in the most challenging schools. In addition to these incentives, solid teacher preparation programs that prepare teachers to work with diverse populations in the most challenging situations help to create highly qualified teachers prepared to take on schools' greatest challenges. Continuous support for these teachers through subject area development as well as innovative development on engaging the students, parents, and community members in active learning is also necessary.

Incentives are useful and effective ways to motivate excellence in teaching. Title II is an example of a federal governmental act that has placed priority on the use of teacher incentives in urban schools. Schools districts around the country have also begun to use innovative incentive programs to effectively maneuver existing teachers and recruit new teachers for difficult environments. Keeping teachers vibrant in education is a challenging goal. Recognition and appreciative policies and practices are helping to keep teachers "alive" in education!

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Instructional Mentoring

Jamie Kobersky

One can hardly look at educational research or curriculum plans these days without encountering discussion of various mentoring practices. So what exactly is a "mentor"? The best way to describe a mentor is someone who combines both the teaching of skills to their mentee while also serving as a role model for that student. Mentoring is placed at the end of a continuum where it is "at the extreme end of the scale incorporating apprenticeship, friendship, and peer support, that is including all these relationships but going beyond them" (Monaghan et al., 1992, p.249). Mentoring in high schools usually takes the shape of adults and peers making an investment in students' lives. For those students at risk of not living up to their potential, mentoring relationships can be very helpful in overcoming obstacles to success in completing high school.

Focus of Mentoring

There are two primary focuses of high school mentoring research: mentoring in an instructional or learning sense (basically college preparation), and mentoring in a vocational sense. The focus of this chapter is on instructional mentoring, a new type of mentorship that serves as a sort of hybrid of several different types of traditional

mentorships. Instructional mentorship involves the use of the teacher as a mentor, going above and beyond the traditional roles of that occupation to make the students' learning experience more relevant and meaningful. Teachers use peers and cross-age partnerships as well as others in the community as partners in mentoring. The key is to have mentor relationships take on a broader and more prevalent role in the life of the students. They are being mentored in school, among their peers and fellow students, and out in the real world and surrounding community. This new form of mentorship reinforces these relationships in all facets of the students' lives.

Current Situation: The Problems

The current research on mentoring is very inconclusive because it is a relatively new phenomenon in many respects. The stance that much of the research is taking is that mentoring is a promising practice, but there are still a lot of kinks to be ironed out. Just as difficult has been putting formal "guidelines" into place regarding what makes for an effective mentor/mentee relationships. Although some research suggests that peer mentoring can be beneficial, there are also drawbacks to it. One of the biggest pitfalls to mentoring using other students is that often these adolescent mentors may not have the maturity to consistently serve as a useful mentor (Karcher 2005).

Another problem that exists in mentoring is the brevity of mentoring relationships. Often these mentor relationships are focused around a school calendar year, and thus, when the school year ends, so do the relationships. In addition, many times a year is not enough time to establish an effective mentor relationship. Mentoring should not be confined to a particular time table; it should continue as long as it is beneficial to the student. This may take a short while, or it may take a long time, but stopping the relationship before it is ready does not really help at all. In fact, it may do more harm than good. Another troubling aspect related to mentoring is mentor attendance. Studies have consistently shown that when mentors are absent frequently or when they are inconsistent, it very obviously does not help students (Karcher 2005). Mentoring by its very nature is time-consuming and requires the giving of one's self. For mentoring to be successful, the mentor must consistently show up, and they must work hard to make the relationship they share with the student meaningful (they are able to relate to their mentor) and useful (they are able to learn from their mentor).

Promising Practices: What's Taking Place

Instructional mentoring is an important aspect of teaching that has evolved over the past few years. More and more, teachers continue to take on additional responsibilities regarding their students, and mentoring them is often one of them. Instructional mentoring is different than other traditional forms of mentoring. It is designed to be more structured and formal. It involves almost a one-on-one tutor relationship between the teacher and student. This involves the teacher taking more personal responsibility for the achievement and success of students in addition to what is already done in the class. This is a promising practice because it can allow the teacher to do more for students who are already succeeding. This can include going beyond the classroom curriculum for a gifted student who needs acceleration or enrichment. It can also be promising for the other end of the spectrum. Individual investment in students who are struggling or may be having trouble on a particular task enables the teacher to help them and hopefully prevent their giving up on learning the information or task. Instructional mentoring can be particularly effective for students who are at-risk for failing or dropping out of school.

Teachers as mentors do not stop with only involving themselves in the mentoring relationship. They encourage students to have mentoring relationships with each other as well as with older or even younger students. Peer and cross-age mentoring is a common current practice. The benefit of students teaching other students is that they can better relate to one another. This too can be a valuable asset for at-risk students. While they may not be able to identify with a lot of the adults in their lives, it is likely that they can identify with other students. Peer mentoring is most effective when students who share common goals or backgrounds are placed together. The mentor is a student who has completed the goal successfully and the mentee is the student who wishes to become successful. Peer mentoring can be helpful and it can be challenging; which is why there is still much to be decided as to whether the benefits outweigh the costs.

There are several positive examples of mentoring programs that exist in the United States today. These schools have successfully worked mentoring programs into the curricula and classrooms. The Metropolitan Regional Career and Technology Center (cf. The Met) in Rhode Island and the Urban Academy in New York City (cf. Urban Academy High School) are two schools that have demonstrated how useful mentoring programs can be and how they can be integrated into the curriculum of a school. Both of these schools are college preparatory schools that use in class instructional mentoring as well as outside of class vocational mentoring. All students are required to work in volunteer internships out in the community and required to report back to their teachers what they have learned. The purpose is to give the students real world experience and vocational training. However, it should be noted that while these schools reflect a positive trend, they are charter schools or private schools, as are most other schools of their kind. Hopefully, as mentoring evolves, more and more public schools can adopt some of these practices.

When mentoring is done right and done well, it can be a very valuable tool for students. It can improve scholastic achievement, it can open up new possibilities and opportunities, and it can, most importantly, help increase the "connectedness" (Karcher 2005) students feel with their surrounding environment. In fact, some of the research even indicates that positive mentor relationships can improve the relationship between the mentored child and

their parents. Rhodes et al. (2000) performed a study to determine whether mentoring could affect parent/child relationships. Several thousand youths were paired up in a mentor program and then assessed after 18 months. The results of the analysis indicated that the mentoring relationships were beneficial to the parental relationships as well.

The Future: Where is Mentoring Heading?

The future looks bright for the practice of mentoring as it continues to evolve and adapt itself to the changing educational environment. Like many other aspects of educational change, technology will likely be shaping mentorships in the future. With the widespread use of technology and the instant access afforded through the use of computers, mentors can come from much farther beyond than just the surrounding community. In addition, technology can serve as a very helpful aid in providing additional information for mentors to use with their mentees. One high school, High Tech High School in San Diego (cf. High Tech High), has incorporated technology into mentorships. It serves as an example of where the future of mentor programs can go. Students still do traditional mentorships where they go out and work in the real world, but they have included a technology component as well. They are not limited to partnerships in their local community but can look much broader into the global community.

Another area where the future of mentoring must go is getting additional minority adults to serve as mentors. It is a critical component of a mentorship that the student is able to identify with their mentor and it would help minority students to be able to have minority leaders to be able to look up to and emulate. Research done by Linnehan et al. (2004) indicated that, sadly, many minority students perceived white mentors as being more capable than their black counterparts. It is likely that increased efforts to match minority mentors with mentees would be useful in reducing racial negativity and pessimism.

Conclusions

The biggest change for mentoring is not recreating it, but refining it. As has been mentioned several times throughout this paper, there is so much potential that exists in mentoring relationships, but there is also so much that has not been tapped into. Mentoring needs to evolve beyond the bounds it currently exists in and expand to create more success for the students it impacts. Efforts must be made to ensure that mentoring relationships are both useful in a practical sense but also meaningful. Mentors must be consistent and they must go above and beyond any basic requirements if they truly want to help students. That is what mentoring really is. If mentoring is to move beyond an idea that sounds good on paper, it will take teachers, communities, and students to get out of their comfort zones and make it work.

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School Name: _____ Observer Name: _____

Observation Date: _____ Project ID #: _____ Observer Role/Affiliation: _____

Part 2: Classroom Observation Summary

Directions: Reflect upon the extent to which each of the following is present in the school.

0 = Not Observed
1 = Rarely
2 = Occasionally
3 = Frequently
4 = Extensively

Instructional Orientation

1. Direct Instruction (whole class lecture) ? ? ? ? ?
2. Small group/cooperative/collaborative learning ? ? ? ? ?
3. Independent/individual work ? ? ? ? ?
4. Co-teaching/team teaching ? ? ? ? ?
5. Tutoring (teacher, peer, aide) ? ? ? ? ?
6. Paraprofessionals/teaching assistants ? ? ? ? ?

Instructional Components 0 1 2 3 4

7. Instruction aligned with TEKS/TAKS objectives ? ? ? ? ?
8. Connections to students' background ? ? ? ? ?
knowledge, or real world problems
9. Higher level questioning ? ? ? ? ?
10. Differentiated instruction ? ? ? ? ?
11. Modeling/demonstrations ? ? ? ? ?
12. Higher level instructional feedback ? ? ? ? ?
12. Teachers acted as coaches/facilitators ? ? ? ? ?
14. Integration of subject areas ? ? ? ? ?
15. Project-based learning ? ? ? ? ?
16. Parent/community involvement ? ? ? ? ?
17. Computers for instructional delivery ? ? ? ? ?
18. Technology as learning tool ? ? ? ? ?
19. Alternative assessment strategies ? ? ? ? ?
20. On-line diagnostic assessment ? ? ? ? ?
21. Student self-assessment ? ? ? ? ?
22. Discipline/classroom management problems ? ? ? ? ?
23. Appropriate pacing of instruction ? ? ? ? ?

Student Behaviors 0 1 2 3 4

24. Experiential/hands-on ? ? ? ? ?
25. Computers/technology as learning tool ? ? ? ? ?
26. Sustained reading ? ? ? ? ?
27. Sustained writing (creative) ? ? ? ? ?
28. Calculating ? ? ? ? ?
29. Interactive discussion ? ? ? ? ?
30. Presenting/performing ? ? ? ? ?
31. Studying/transitioning/waiting ? ? ? ? ?

Context of Teaching and Learning Low
Moderate High

32. Challenging activities (higher-level taxonomy) ?
? ?
33. Effective classroom management ?
? ?
34. Instructional resources (texts, computers, etc.) ?
? ?
35. Student engagement ?
? ?
36. Academically-focused class time
? ? ?

Questions to Guide Future Research and Discussion about High School Reform

The core of all research and discussion is a question. As we investigated the status of research-based knowledge regarding secondary schools, we began by selecting topics of interest and explored those topics to determine the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching adolescents, retaining them in school, and preparing them for the future. As anticipated, our initial questions spawned additional questions that continue to intrigue us and spark our imagination for developing innovative programs and conducting research that will bring

us closer to the goal of teaching and preparing all secondary students for satisfying careers and maximizing their potential for living in a complex and global society. The following are some of the questions we believe require additional and continuing research and investigation:

1. What type of training is more effective for future high school teachers? Leaders?
2. What are the most effective models for organizing high schools?
3. How are nonconforming students accommodated?
4. How do future schools better meet the needs of minority, low-income and other under represented students?
5. Does the overall size of high schools make a difference in learning achievement?
6. How much student personalization is necessary to teach and retain students in schools?
7. What types of counseling are helpful to young people?
8. What are the future curriculum hot topics?
9. How can the school day be flexed to make curriculum more accessible?
10. How do we motivate students to continue their education?
11. What are the external factors that impact student learning and school completion? How can resilience to negative factors be developed?
12. How are school social networks nurtured for all students?
13. How can the curriculum in all subject areas appeal to students for future living and learning?
14. In what ways can future skills, such as in technology, be effectively incorporated in high school curriculum?
15. How effective are night schools in meeting the needs of students who are working and parenting?
16. Should and could we pay students to complete school?
17. How effective is individual tutoring for students?
18. How can the needs of highly mobile students be better accommodated in schools?
19. Would gender separation increase student learning?
20. Would an increase in cooperative learning impact student achievement?
21. What are some specific survival skills in personal development, business, etc. that could be incorporated in high school curriculum?
22. What are the necessary bridges for moving to college and university environments?
23. What are the most appropriate teaching /learning strategies for high school students?
24. What are the most critical barriers and most supportive factors in high school completion?
25. What are the most effective ways of using technology to enhance learning? To enhance teaching?
26. How can the school day be modified to make schooling more accessible?
27. Would more independent study or research enhance learning?
28. How can the fourth year be used more productively?
29. Would a three year high school be effective?
30. How would a year round high school impact teaching and learning?
31. What is the relationship between class size and learning?
32. What are the most effective ways of encouraging and developing student relationships?
33. What are the most effective ways of developing student and teacher relationships?
34. Would students learn more effectively in an evening school?
35. What is the optimum balance of social and academic time?
36. What social activities are present in successful high schools?
37. Would tutoring and individual coaching improve achievement?
38. What are students currently learning that prepares them to participate in a democratic society?
39. How can the responsibility of learning be shifted to students?
40. Would students learn to write better in smaller classes?
41. Would a flex schedule in high school enhance the transition to college?
42. How can peer tutoring impact learning?
43. How effective are after school programs?
44. How do high school physical spaces impact students' academic and social lives?
45. How can the integration of work and learning be accomplished in a more effective manner?
46. What do students want/need from high schools?
47. How does a better educated work force contribute to the gross national product?
48. Does instruction in reading and study skills throughout high school improve graduation rates?
49. How effective are community partnerships and opportunities for student internships in real world settings?
50. Does teacher education influence how effective teachers are at teaching adolescents core subject matter? If so, how is this instruction best provided?

The questions presented above bear on topics of widespread interest in secondary education. They have been articulated in a wide range of theory, research, programs, curricula, and educational policies and, we believe, currently reflect the central issues in developing successful approaches for increasing achievement of secondary students and preparing them for successful and fulfilling lives. Continuing and rigorous research of these

questions will, hopefully, bring us closer to answers.

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