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NOTES ON MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

Dr. Michael Brunn is Assistant Professor, Department of Teaching, Special Education, and Curriculum, College of Education, the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Colorado, U. S. A. His research interests are in the areas of sociolinguistics, second language acquisition and the anthropology of education. Dr. Brunn is particularly concerned about issues in social justice for minority language groups and children. Dr. Brunn may be contacted at: mbrunn@uccs.edu

Dr. T. C. Chan is an Associate Professor of Educational Leadership in the College of education, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia, U. S. A. he has published widely in the areas of school planning and implementation of such plans both in the United States of America and in Asia. Dr. Chan is actively involved in educational developments in Asia particularly in China. Dr. Chan may be contacted at tchan@gsaix2.cc.gasou.edu

Dr. Ganga Persaud is currently Associate Professor of Education, Clark Atlanta University, where he teaches courses in evaluation, test and measurement, and quantitative and qualitative research. He also taught at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica. He has experience as a principal of a secondary school in the Cooperative republic of Guyana, South America and an elementary school in Georgia. He was also the Director of Research in the Dekalb School System, Georgia. Dr. Persaud may be contacted at: Gangap@aol.com

Dr. Melvin Peters is currently Associate Professor, African American Studies Department, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan, U. S. A. Dr. Peters has had years of experiences relating popular culture to the educational process particularly with regard to the African Diaspora. He is scholar-activist and is very active in the development of a program that seeks to use Hip Hop as a medium for engaging young people euphemistically referred to as "at risk" in the educational process through the Internet. Dr. peters may be contacted at: metpeters@ameritech.net

Dr. Walter S. Polka is Superintend of Schools in the Lewiston – Porter Central School District, Youngstown, New York. His primary research interests lie in the areas of curriculum planning and development and the integration of technology in the school curriculum. Dr. Polka is an adjunct faculty member at the State University of New York – College at Buffalo, Brockport, and Niagara University, all in New York State. Dr. Polka may be contacted at: polkaw@lew-port.edu

Dr. Francisco Rios is Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Educational Studies, College of education, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming, U. S. A. Dr. Rios has published extensively in the area of Multicultural Education and is currently a Senior Associate Editor for *Multicultural Perspectives*, the official journal of the National Association for Multicultural education. Dr. Rios may be contacted at: frios@uwyo.edu

Building Capacity to Increase Hope:
Educational Policy and Ethnic Minority Teachers

Francisco Rios
College of Education, University of Wyoming
William Berube
College of Education, University of Wyoming

Schools as social institutions are also culturally constructed while simultaneously serving political aims. Schools have had as a primary purpose the enculturation of the young; the goal has been national unification. One question that bears being asked is whose culture is the "target" to which we aim the enculturation (after all, any cultural orientation can serve both the enculturation and the national unification purposes). The answer is connected to acknowledging schools as being structured for both national unification aims as well as to solidify economic and political domination. The most explicit examples of the role schools have played (including specific practices) in asserting domination of whole groups of people is evident in both external colonization (outside the borders of the nation-state) and internal colonization (within the borders of the nation-state). Herein lies the role of power in educational decision-making evident in structuring schools consistent with White, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant world-views and for the political domination of poor, ethnic minority communities. These three purposes, enculturation, national unification and political domination, then are served first by asserting a EuroAmerican cultural and epistemological orientation. However, since people come to schools with vibrant and robust cultural orientations, deculturalization (the removal of one's culture) serves as a concomitant activity (Spring, 2001). Equally significant, resistance to this political domination and its underlying hegemonic ideology creates a dynamic and contested space in schools. It seems clear that a strong democracy would be critically advanced by way of the employment of a significant number of ethnic minority teachers who bring a strong cultural and political orientation to their work. This piece will detail educational policies and practices that work against the recruitment and retention of ethnic minority teachers in schools. This article closes with questions to consider in future efforts to diversify the teaching workforce.

INTRODUCTION

In a thought-provoking article describing the link between democracy and diversity, Walter Parker (1996) lays out his concerns about a "shallow" democracy but also his hopes for a "deep" democracy. In a shallow democracy, according to Parker, participatory citizenship is related to voting, respecting one's freedom of speech, and believing in the judicial system to enforce equal opportunity under the law.

Parker (1996) asserts that a strong democracy requires that participatory citizenship go beyond these to include the active work related to abolishing poverty and oppressive social conditions. It involves supporting the healthy development of families and communities. Without a doubt, any active efforts to work collaboratively with communities in need are predicated on an understanding of the people who live there (generally urban, lower economic class, and ethnic minority) and who have the most to gain (or lose) in the implementation of solutions.

But Parker goes farther. An understanding that our society has never reached the ideal outlined by the framers of the constitution marks creative democracy. While the civil rights movement moved us closer to the ideal, much in the later quarter of the 20th century moved us away from that ideal. Further, the ideal is constantly changing (consider, for example, how many in the US have been willing to curtail political rights in the hopes of gaining national security since the events of September 11, 2001). Even then, suggests Parker, democracy is not a place, but a path—a way of being, an ethic—for those who advocate a strong democracy.

Finally, Parker argues that democracy is advanced by our diversity. Many would interpret (both literally and figuratively) the axiom "e pluribus unum" as implying that from

diversity we must become alike (that is, like one). Indeed the nation nearly a century ago embarked on efforts to unify the nation by way of "Americanizing" the Native American people who lived here and those who had immigrated (voluntarily and involuntarily) to the US (Spring, 2001). Parker recommends that we need to rethink this interpretation of "e pluribus unum" and instead understand that unity springs from diversity. It is because of, from our, and as a result of our diversity that we can become one.

While the purposes of schooling are many (Goodlad, 1996), few would argue against preparing students for their role as active citizens in order to strengthen our democracy. Given this purpose, it is evident that schools can, indeed schools must, play a pivotal role in the advancement toward a strong democracy (Parker, 1996) in a culturally diverse society. It would also seem evident that the cultural and political assets of a diverse teaching workforce would be instrumental in attaining this central purpose.

The irony is that the push to integrate schools in the 1950's (a strong democratic act in principle) actually led to a decline in the number of ethnic minority teachers (Foster, 1997). When schools for African American students were first established, while segregated, they were staffed primarily by African American teachers. Many African American students had fond memories of teachers who understood them, valued their culture and had high expectations for them. These teachers used the need to advance the African American communities (local and national) as a critical source of motivation for these youth. Simultaneously, however, the people in these communities bemoaned the lack of resources and poor school facilities wherein education was taking place leading to the active efforts to end segregation.

In the push to end segregation in schools, the practice was to integrate ethnic minority youth into schools previously reserved for "Whites-only" tacitly acknowledging the inferior facilities previously set aside for African American youth. A concomitant assumption was that many of the ethnic minority teachers in these segregated schools were also "inferior" and therefore not qualified to work in the newly integrated schools. The result was the loss of a significant number of African American teachers, advocates for African American youth, to integrated schools (Foster, 1997).

Unfortunately, the teaching profession has not been able to turn the tide against this historical exclusion of ethnic minority teachers. Consider that 38% of all school children in the US are from ethnic minority groups (that number was just 22% 25 years earlier) (US Department of Commerce, 1999). Yet in that same time period, only 13.7% of all teachers were ethnic minority (US Department of Education, 1994).

THE CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF SCHOOLING

To more fully understand the implications of the lack of a diverse teaching workforce, we must first acknowledge the cultural foundations of education[1]. At the macrolevel, education is structured along lines consistent with certain epistemological assumptions (nested within larger civilizational assumptions) and societal divisions, (Sheurich and Young, 1997; to be discussed later in this article). That many of these assumptions are unconsciously held and rarely contested sets the stage for cross-cultural conflict.

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[1] That schools are cultural locations should not dismiss our contention that schools are also social, political, moral, etc. locations as well

Schools as social institutions are also culturally constructed while simultaneously serving political aims. Schools have had as a primary purpose the enculturation of the young; the goal has been national unification. One question that bears being asked is whose culture is the "target" to which we aim the enculturation (after all, any cultural orientation can serve both the enculturation and the national unification purposes). The answer is connected to acknowledging schools as being structured for both national unification aims as well as to solidify economic and political domination. The most explicit examples of the role schools have played (including specific practices) in asserting domination of whole groups of people is evident in both external colonization (outside the borders of the nation-state) and internal colonization (within the borders of the nation-state). Herein lies the role of power in educational decision-making evident in structuring schools consistent with White, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant world-views and for the political domination of poor, ethnic minority communities. These three purposes, enculturation, national unification and political domination, then are served first by asserting a EuroAmerican cultural and epistemological orientation. However, since people come to schools with vibrant and robust cultural orientations, deculturalization (the removal of one's culture) serves as a concomitant activity (Spring, 2001). Equally significant, resistance to this political domination and its underlying hegemonic ideology creates a dynamic and contested space in schools.

On a microlevel, the often-implicit interactions between teachers and their students mirror these larger purposes played out on the macrolevel (Cummins, 1994). They play themselves out in a variety of ways such as, for example, the differences in forms of communicating and behaving that distinguish Whites and Latinos. More importantly, it's not just that these differences exist but that certain of these are valued at schools while others are not (Gay, 2000). This often creates not only a cultural mismatch but also, due to critical consciousness about cultural domination, a reason to resist learning (Kohl, 1995) that may, in part, explain academic difficulties of ethnic minority students.

Several distinct advantages exist for advancing a diverse teaching workforce. These advantages are especially acute for those who bring a strong sense of their cultural identity and a critical/political consciousness (Darder, 1995). Consider, for example, that ethnic minority teachers with a strong cultural identity can bring the following assets to schools:

- viewing alternative cultural orientations (and languages) as advantages, not liabilities;
- promoting a multicultural curriculum (that benefits all students);
- using the cultural orientations of the students as a jumping off point for motivation and learning;
- teaching strategies for living in a Eurocentric society wherein life chances are increased;
- empathizing while yet setting high expectations for their ethnic minority students;
- serving as cultural mediators when cultural conflict arises between teachers and their students; and,
- creating meaningful connections to ethnic minority communities.

When ethnic minority teachers bring a strong political orientation to their work, they are more likely to identify racist curriculum and instructional practices (often implicit and subtle) while offering alternatives, to advocate for ethnic minority students and their

communities, and to work toward dismantling racism within the structure of the institution (Darder, 1995).

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

Educational policies have created more barriers than enhancers to the creation of a diversified teaching workforce. The bureaucratic tendencies of *national policy development* (Sergiovanni, 1999) have paralleled individual and institutional racism, both explicitly and implicitly. The recent Elementary and Secondary Education Act legislated by Congress is an example of bureaucratic educational policy (with ramifications not entirely known at this writing) that effects minority K-12 students, teacher preparation candidates, and practicing teachers. The No Child Left Behind component of the act has honorable intentions from an equal access viewpoint, but the bureaucratic, racist, and accountability elements of the law form new barriers and strengthen old barriers to diversity in the teaching workforce. What follows are selections of educational policy areas that represent tension within the bureaucratic source of authority which undergirds policy development.

Competency tests, despite years of research on how they are culturally biased, seem to be strongly supported in the frenzy for accountability. Many states and/or universities either require a competency test to complete teacher education programs (the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, is an example) or a competency test for new teachers. Connected to competency tests, the *standards* on which some tests are formed do not include diversity and multiculturalism issues as important. The Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board, for example, does not list any kind of cross-cultural competency and multicultural education ability in their standards, but instead it can be inferred in a more broadly defined standard associated with meeting the individual needs of learners. These examples serve to communicate that cultural competence is not an important tool for teachers or that teachers who exemplify a multicultural approach to teaching are of any value to schools. Combined these biases in testing and lack of diversity in required knowledge may help to explain why competency tests may have kept out as many as 38,000 minority teachers in the 1980s (Smith, 1989).

Affirmative Action policies were originally developed to afford more minority teachers and other professionals with employment opportunities. The abolition of Affirmative Action policies in California and other states has sent a clear message that minority teacher candidates are "on their own" on an uneven playing field; indeed, reverse discrimination seems to be the greater source of concern for some. The new term of "affirmative opportunities" cited by President Bush does not include quotas as targets or allow for employment requirement exceptions even in cases where public institutions have histories of racist employment practices. Without affirmative action policies as a safeguard nor any alternative safeguards placed in their stead, employment practices can revert to "business as usual" with its greater likelihood of replication of the status quo.

Teacher education program requirements and *teacher certification regulations* are policy areas which some ethnic minority students and faculty do not feel pay enough comprehensive attention to multicultural education. The bureaucratic structures of general education requirements for teacher education programs, large amounts of both content and pedagogy,

transcripts to verify courses completed, and competency tests can serve as barriers for prospective ethnic minority students and future teachers. Yet little significant attention is paid to the student diversity in schools this new generation of teachers will encounter. Sleeter (2001), for example, in a sample survey of teacher preparation programs, found that a large number of teacher education faculty are White (94%), that only 56% required a multicultural education course, and that many of these courses were disjointed and only superficially addressed diversity and learning issues. A related concern has to do with a national argument comparing full teacher preparation requirements to minimal "hire who you want without regard to certification or program completed" (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001) with its ramifications for prospective minority teacher candidates. These send a dual message about the value of teacher education and undercut efforts to provide comprehensive attention to teaching and learning in diverse contexts. Unfortunately, the use of "dispositions" as a main anchor in determining teacher competency seems to be minimized in decisions regarding teacher certification. It is the dispositions to work with and advocate for ethnic minority students and the disposition to employ a multicultural curriculum and culturally responsive pedagogy that needs to be championed. We believe that most ethnic minority teachers are likely to bring these dispositions to the profession.

Selection and recruitment of minority teachers is a policy area concern with its focus largely on what people don't bring to the job, instead of what they do bring. Indeed, much of the objective of search and screening procedures is to eliminate people from consideration for a position. The culture, thus, is on looking for weaknesses as opposed to looking for strengths. Processes to recruit and select teachers tend to focus on who is the "best match" for a position and search teams often make selection decisions that replicate who they are. A committee of all White members, for example, tends to be inclined to hire a White person rather than a person of color. Therefore, in many hire processes, a minority candidate has to provide evidences that they are clearly the best match for the job. This approach seems to create yet another uneven playing field caused by bureaucratic policy development.

Educational policy related to orientation, training and mentoring programs for new teachers are important because without them some teachers do not continue in the profession. Even though the numbers of teachers who leave in their first, second or third year are increasing, the numbers would even be higher without beginning teacher support programs and good mentoring. Naturally this holds true for new minority teachers, who sometimes are put in some of the most difficult schools (they often want to be there), but not without orientation, mentoring and additional professional development programs (Hood and Parker, 1994). Sometimes they blame their teacher education program for not preparing them for these schools (Parker and Hood, 1995). Hersey and Blanchard (2000) describe new teachers along a maturity continuum helping to identify where teachers are (i.e., professional needs) early on in their careers, and then they are directed, supported, coached, and delegated to as they progress and mature. One of the mistakes often made in working with new teachers is to want to coach and support them before providing assistance for the concerns they most urgently need assistance with. We need a full understanding of how these professional needs, as developmentally described, differ for ethnic minority teachers given the specific contexts in which they find themselves. From these, we can address the concerns that are important for ethnic minority teachers as they begin, so this direction of professional

development, along with solid mentoring and an introduction to the culture of the local environment, will increase their probability of continuing.

We cannot forget that educational policy development is nested within a larger context and tone, which is politically conservative. Anti-bilingual movements/propositions such as those in California, Colorado, and Massachusetts and "America is the best" notions turned into policies, provide huge limitations and hindrances to the creation and development of educational policies, which may build the capacity for hope. This political backdrop does not provide a conducive setting for increasing the diversity in teaching.

Also, Thomas Sergiovanni (1992) writes about educational policies having to balance a tension between a bureaucratic source of authority (going by the book) and a moral source of authority (doing what's right for people). One example of this is the recent conversation about the apparent two distinct tracks for getting teacher certification and getting into a classroom to teach - a short fast track teacher preparation structure or a full program requiring much more academic and pedagogical training   (coursework and structured field-based experiences). Often, the desire for ethnic minority teachers, especially in diverse and urban schools, gets them into the fast track. For ethnic minority teacher candidates and others, the fear is that those on a fast track to get into classrooms quicker (which is good and possibly driven by a moral source of authority) may end up having negative experiences leading them to bail out of teaching. When this happens they may blame the students while not acknowledging that their own lack of being fully prepared (which may be a bureaucratic source of authority) as a possible explanation for their negative experiences. So, the short run was good for the individual as a short-term fix, but in the long run detrimental to increasing the number of ethnic minority teachers in the profession.

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AS BARRIERS AND ENHANCERS

Clear missions of universities and colleges of education which explicitly state a commitment to diversity in both its admissions and curricular offerings provide the foundation for policy, which will enhance the experience of minority teacher candidates. Virginia Tech University (2000) provides, from the presidential level, a clear mission, vision, statement of understandings, and strategic plan regarding the "growing range of differences in the cultural and economic backgrounds of our students, staff, and faculty" (p. 3). Policies that increase numbers of faculty of color, that value a multicultural curriculum that is practiced, and that creates and sustains a support system or network in which students have an opportunity to voice issues of racism more generally in a safe environment enhance the organization in whole. Also, polices providing additional financial resources for multicultural efforts, creating admission criteria that values or validates what minority students bring, and seeking alternatives to minimize the role of standardized testing provide a direction that, in our estimate, lead toward facilitative practices which assist the progress and achievement of minority teacher candidates.

Many barriers continue to exist and provide systemic resistance for ethnic minority students seeking entry into the teaching profession. Conflicting perceptions of the profession provide a shaky foundation for entering students of color (Gordon, 2000). Categorical barriers to high school graduation, to admission to universities and colleges of education, to graduation from these, to teaching certification, to getting hired, to remaining employed in the profession (Burant, Quiocho, & Rios, 2002) are products of educational

policies which do not consider the cultural and political assets brought by ethnic minority teachers who have a strong cultural foundation and political/critical orientation (Darder, 1995).

In addition to policy barriers, the fact that we still live in a country that is largely a racially stratified social system plays out on top of all these systemic barriers. Our country was built on this racial stratification social system and the residuals are still evident. Schuerich and Young (1997) discuss how individual, institutional, civilizational, and epistemological racism still operate today and yet are rarely contested. Conversely, White privilege still allows White people to deny the power of race in their lives. These social underpinnings provide a backdrop that leads to confusion and uncertainty in policy development even when a diverse teaching workforce is genuinely desired.

THE SYSTEMS PARADIGM

Perhaps a systems approach to the challenge can provide the greatest hope in our efforts to diversify the teaching workforce. Keefe and Howard (1997) discuss the need for any reforms of systems to be comprehensive (on-going and long-term) and holistic. This might involve sustained professional development, visionary administrative leadership, involvement of all stakeholders, materials and resources to support the work, school cultures that celebrate diversity, larger organizational support, and bottom up professional development. Systemic reform also requires a cultural/historical/social systems lens when looking at existing practices in institutions that work against diversity. Thus, individual people's actions are seen as part of a larger system that shapes (although it does not determine) the individual's actions. We also need to look at the systems outside of the school/university itself, but which have powerful influence on what happens within the school/institution (communities, school district, parent organizations, community agencies, businesses, etc.). This would involve identifying both the facilitative and debilitative aspects of schooling that support diversity and how these two aspects interact to create the conditions it does for teachers from diverse backgrounds and how communication takes place to resolve these contradictions (Engestrom, 1999).

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND FUTURE EFFORTS TO DIVERSIFY THE WORKFORCE

This discussion must be set against a state of a national shortage of teachers for this nation's schools. This shortage is a concern not only at the school and district levels but also nationwide. To be sure, these shortages are more acute in some areas (urban and rural schools) and in some academic disciplines (math, science, special education, and bilingual education). We see this as an opportune time to rethink the policies and practices that have kept out large numbers of ethnic minority teachers. We think that this is an opportune time to identify new strategies for recruiting and retaining teachers. We think this is an opportune time to rethink the real skills and dispositions required of teachers for the 21st century. We ask: Will doing this widen the door for people from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds who would like to consider teaching as a career?

A second opportunity that we believe is available to us is to look more closely at those public school, university, and school district programs that serve as "best practices" in the recruitment and retention of ethnic minority teachers. Two such programs at the

university level are the TEAM project at the University of Indiana (Bennett, 2002) and the TRUST program at the University of South Florida (D. Larry, personal communication, March 8, 2002). The first program combines, among other things, mentoring, coursework, and financial assistance to ethnic minority students who aim to pursue their teaching credential. The second program prepares ethnic minority students for teaching students with special needs in urban schools. This program provides not only financial assistance and cohort-based coursework, but also provides an academic focus wherein students interact with national leaders in the field of multicultural and/or special education. Likewise, exemplary school district practices, like those at Fairfax County, Virginia, are important. They use active recruitment strategies, mentoring, and increased incentives for ethnic minority teacher candidates (personal communication, M. Bowman, April 2, 2002). We ask: what aspects (or combination of aspects) of recruitment and retention programs at universities and school districts are most salient and ought to be the highest priority for institutions interested in developing similar programs? And, we ask: where are the case studies of school districts that have implemented successful programs that recruit and retain ethnic minority teachers?

A third opportunity concerns itself with change. One focus is on the location of change efforts: at the individual level (superintendent, principal or teacher) or at the institutional level. While the latter may be more difficult, in the long run the change in institutional structures and culture will probably have a longer, more robust impact (Sleeter, 1992). A second focus is on the process of change: top down (as state mandates or as district-wide priorities) or as community and school level commitments that reach from the bottom up. A third focus is on the what of change: changing recruitment strategies or changing school cultures to affirm diversity thereby spurring retention into the profession. We ask: how have schools changed in ways that result in a greater increase in the number of ethnic minority teachers recruited and retained?

One of the enduring trademarks of the North American ethos is the belief that, if motivation is strong and concentrated effort applied, almost all things can come to fruition. In contemporary society, life chances can be increased for those from traditionally marginalized groups by being taught by culturally competent teachers who can use students' cultural/linguistic assets to advance their knowledge and skills. We believe a diverse teaching workforce can help. In contemporary society, life chances can be increased for those from the dominant group by being taught by culturally competent teachers who demonstrate an ability to communicate and relate across lines that have historically separated us by gender, race/ethnicity and class. We believe a diverse teaching workforce can help. Finally, in contemporary society, the very strength of our democracy can be increased when we dismantle oppressive structures, sustain a vision for democracy as it might be, and see diversity and democracy as inextricably linked. We believe a diverse teaching workforce can help.

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DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING PERSONAL COURSE PORTFOLIOS: A PRACTICAL STRATEGY TO INITIATE, DEVELOP AND PERSONALIZE EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS AND IMPLEMENT CONSTRUCTIVIST PRINCIPLES

Walter S. Polka
Lewiston-Porter Central School District

Keystone constructivist principles have been successfully employed by generations of teachers who believed strongly in creating student-oriented caring classrooms in a variety of different educational settings. This instructional perspective has emphasized active learners who link their new knowledge with their prior knowledge, and apply their expanded understandings to authentic situations. This articles discusses how such principles may be applied in a practical way in a course delivery at the postsecondary level.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary educators are constantly searching for new strategies that will assist them in implementing a more student-oriented cooperative classroom. Constructivist ideas and experiences permeate the current research and literature as the Twenty-first Century begins to live up to its heralded expectations as *the Century where the triumph of the individual will be a realty* (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990). Although teachers have focused on personalizing instruction as an instructional goal since the time of Quintilian (1st Century AD) if not before (Ornstein & Levine, 1989), technology promises to provide the most pragmatic solution to this age-old educational quest. However, keystone constructivist principles have been successfully employed by generations of teachers who believed strongly in creating student-oriented caring classrooms in a variety of different educational settings.

Accordingly, constructivist teachers encourage their students to use personal experiences to actively construct understanding that makes sense to them, rather than understanding delivered to them in an already organized form. This instructional perspective has emphasized active learners who link their new knowledge with their prior knowledge, and apply their expanded understandings to authentic situations (Eggen & Kauchak, 1997). Subsequently, contemporary constructivist proponents have identified that the typical teaching behaviors of constructivist educators include the following:

- Encourage and accept student ideas and initiatives.
- Encourage students to engage in dialogue.
- Encourage student inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions.
- Provide time for students to construct relationships and create metaphors (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

But, effective teachers have employed a variety of different constructivist principles and strategies in order to create a student-centered ambience in their classrooms long before

contemporary research recognized the significance of such behaviors. The following is a review of almost thirty years of designing and implementing personal course portfolios.

A UNIQUE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

As a relatively new high school social studies teacher in the early 1970's, I was exposed to a variety of values clarification strategies designed to improve classroom interaction. Like many of my colleagues, I carefully selected those that were most compatible with my teaching style. Some of those strategies have remained an integral aspect of my professional experiences ever since.

At a New York State Council for the Social Studies conference in New York City in 1972, I attended a session presented by Professor Sidney B. Simon. He described and modeled several valuing techniques designed to encourage group interaction that Leland W. Howe, Howard Kischebaum, and he had published in a book entitled, "Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies For Teachers and Students". (Simon, et al. 1972)

A valuing activity that Simon presented at the conference that made a lasting impression on me was called "Creating Personal Shingles". He distributed poster board sheets of paper and markers, and encouraged us to work with him in developing a personal information sheet that would serve as a great "ice breaker" and would foster group growth. He then proceeded to state that these shingles should say something about us, as individuals, and should express our values regarding ideas, people, and things in our daily lives. He had us place our name, or what we liked to be called, in the center of the sheet, and then he had us identify some characteristics of our personality that we were willing to share with others. Then we identified some personal values and some educational and societal values that we held dear and were willing to discuss with others. The result was that those present got to know each other very quickly, and the discussions were quite lively as well as comprehensive.

I found this experience to be truly eye opening and professionally enriching in that the "personal shingle" served as a great icebreaker, and definitely focused interaction about values which, subsequently, contributed to a stronger sense of group identity. However, consistent with contemporary education research, literature and jargon, I subsequently referred to the "personal shingle" as the "course portfolio". It will be, henceforth, referred to as such throughout the remainder of this article.

During the early years of my education career I continued to explore as a student and use as a teacher values clarification activities. Professor Mike M. Milstein at the State University of NY at Buffalo was primarily responsible for providing me with a solid research basis regarding the development of more effective human organizations, such as schools, through the use of valuing techniques. Primarily by conducting action research using the work of Richard A. Schmuck and Philip J. Runkle, "Organizational Training for a School Faculty", (Schmuck & Runkle, 1970), as well as the various volumes of "A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training", by J. William Pfeiffer and John E. Jones, (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1970), he introduced me to the various practical uses of values clarification strategies in organizational development work (Milstein, 1972). Armed with this new information, and determined to make my high school social studies classes significantly more interactive, I started the 1972-73 school year at Lewiston-Porter using a number of valuing techniques.

VARIOUS CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS OF PERSONALK COURSE PORTFOLIOS

The course portfolio promptly became a hit with my students, and served as a great ice breaker in helping students get to know each other, while assisting me in focusing my energies on getting to know them more personally. It also served as a primary activity for developing effective and efficient small groups.

Not only did I use the course portfolios at the high school, but I also determined that this would be a good activity to get students to interact at the college level. I taught a section of "Methods of Teaching Social Studies", and a section of "Educational Philosophy" to undergraduates at Niagara University, and decided to use these techniques with them. The valuing activities, especially the course portfolio, were quite successful with my pre-service education students, and truly opened them up to better classroom interactions and discussions.

Subsequently, I continued to use this portfolio activity as the primary "getting to know you" activity in all classes that I taught at the secondary and post secondary levels. I continued to use course portfolios in my own individual classrooms, as well as in my administrative role doing district inservice programs with teachers during my tenure in the Williamsville Central School District as Social Studies and Science Curriculum Coordinator. The results, again, were very positive, and the course portfolios promoted excellent group interaction. They also set the stage for the development of productive cooperative learning teams.

Eventually, the use of poster board for the course portfolios evolved into a more permanent form, which had more practical uses. I began using manilla folders for the course portfolios because they lasted longer, could stand on the desk top for display while being discussed, and could be collected at the end of every class so they served as an attendance aid. The manilla folders also were useful in conveying assignments and other class information between my students and me.

I have continued to use course portfolios in undergraduate courses, as well as graduate school programs from the mid 1970's to the present. In more recent years, I continued the use of this course portfolio technique at all levels of instruction, including, as Superintendent of Schools, at in-service programs. I especially find this activity useful with new teachers as part of the orientation process to get them to know each other better. I also use it as a model for them to promote teacher-student awareness and interaction within their "new" classrooms.

This method has also become a keystone for cooperative learning in my classrooms and other professional experiences. Too often in cooperative learning experiences people are placed together in groups prior to setting the stage with valuing warm-up activities, which are important in getting to know each other personally (Johnson & Johnson, 1990). The course portfolio activity is a powerful asset to "setting the stage" for future cooperative learning experiences.

However, as I continued to lecture and research at the university level, I became familiar with various socio-psychology references regarding the development of small group interactions. One which provided a conceptual framework, and definitely reinforced what I had been practicing via the course portfolio, was The Sociology of Small Groups by Theodore Mills (Mills, 1984). He identified that any group goes through stages similar to the Maslow's hierarchy of needs paradigm for individuals.

At the first stage, personal safety issues and situational survival concerns are prominent. This first stage is known as the forming stage. Obviously, the need for a course portfolio type activity is paramount during this initial experience. The second group stage is the

storming stage, where individuals are still getting to know each other, especially regarding values, personal resourcefulness, and skills. Obviously, additional course portfolio work facilitates group development through this stage. The third group stage is the norming stage, where the individuals begin establishing the norms of behavior and expectations for their newly formed group. The course portfolio is used as the "values" clarifier at this stage, and publicly assists the group in its search for procedural rules of order and operational style. The significant stage for growth and productivity, according to Mills, is the fourth stage, the performing stage. At this stage, the individual members have coalesced into a group or team and are ready, willing, and able to perform group tasks efficiently and effectively.

Too often, educators attempting cooperative learning strategies rush into the task activities without facilitating group development through these various stages via valuing process activities such as the course portfolio. The result is that the groups are not as interactively dynamic, efficient, or effective.

The last stage of Mills' group development, which I have personally experienced several times at the end of semesters, is the mourning stage. At this stage, the group tasks and the course are over, but the individual members linger and mourn the end of the group, as if a group wake was taking place. This is the stage when the retelling of group folklore and reminiscing about group experiences occurs. I have observed this phenomena with my students over the years, and one of the fondest memories they review with enthusiasm and take with them is their course portfolio, which is one of the vestiges of their group experiences.

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT PERSONAL COURSE PORTFOLIOS

The course portfolio has comprehensively and continuously evolved during my three decades of use. The front side is still initially used to help "break the ice". Students are asked to place their name, or what they would like to be called, in the center. Around their name, they then place three characteristics of their personality that they care to share with others. As I start this activity, I always state my personal philosophy about such teaching-learning situations. This modeling approach has served me well in the over twenty-five years of course portfolio use, and is consistent with William Purkey's ideas regarding establishing a positive classroom ambiance (Purkey & Stanley, 1991). I state that "I would never ask a student to do something that I wouldn't do". I model this behavior by doing my own course portfolio when I ask my students to do their course portfolio.

After asking my students to put down three things that would characterize their personality, I ask them to identify three words or phrases which, if said to them, would make them feel good as a person. One that I have used for over twenty years on my own course portfolio is "it looks like you are losing weight". Unfortunately for me, that has not necessarily been the case, but it is still gratifying when former students of mine see me and say, "Hey, Dr. Polka, it looks like you are losing weight"!. There are some things which we, obviously, remember about individuals, and the course portfolio helps to reinforce them for future reference. I then ask my students to proceed to the upper left-hand corner of the folder, and put a plus sign in a small box, and a negative sign in the upper right-hand corner in a small box. In the positive box I ask them to identify a person in history that they are most like, and to jot down the name of that person, whether fictional or non-fictional. Then they are asked to identify, at the polar end of their personality, a person others can recognize who they feel they are least like. Although they often give Attila The Hun, Adolph Hitler, and other similar

nefarious characters, it is always an interesting focus for discussion when people look around and interact about these individuals. Next, in the bottom center of the folder, I ask them to complete the sentence, "If I were zapped into an inanimate object, given my personality and current lifestyle, I would be zapped into ___." Obviously, this is another good stimulator of discussion as people explain, in the interactions which follow, why they chose a lawn mower, a television, a sofa, or a sleek Corvette.

In the left-hand bottom quadrant of the folder I ask them to identify their favorite food and their favorite drink, so that if we were ever going to plan a class party we would know what to serve. The real purpose is to provide students with the opportunities to recognize colleagues who possess similar or different "tastes". I then ask them to identify, on the right-hand side, their favorite song, a favorite movie, and/or a favorite book. Then I ask them to identify on the left-hand side three things they would rather be doing, instead of doing this activity at the present time, and on the right-hand bottom corner, three things they are glad they are not doing at the present time. Again, the purpose is to facilitate reflection on personal values and recognize those whose values are similar or different.

This completes the front side of their portfolio for this day; more can be added as the class progresses, and students are encouraged to colorfully embellish their course portfolio by doodling as a pre-class activity, or during some of the "sponge" times, as Madeline Hunter has labeled them, when one group has completed its task and others are still working (Hunter, 1993). One thing I have found, over the years, is to always bring to class sufficient numbers of different-colored magic markers. Recently, I have been using the ones with particular fragrances; i.e., pink is strawberry, purple is grape, yellow is lemon, etc., and I let students doodle at the start of class to review their folder, customize it, and add some "flavor" to it. Some of my psychology students at Lewiston-Porter High School enjoyed the activity so much in the Spring of 1993 that they coined the pre-class and sponge time activity: "You Gotta Doodle".

My graduate school students at Niagara University, who are practicing teachers and aspiring administrators, as well as my undergraduate and graduate students at the State University College at Buffalo, have also reacted the same way to designing and implementing the course portfolio component of my classes. It has evolved into a dynamic initial icebreaker, group process builder, information conveyor, and "fun sponge", because human beings generally like to "doodle" and reflect on their values.

Continuing beyond the initial uses of the course portfolio, I have the students turn the manilla folder over to the reverse side, and I ask them to divide it into a number of columns. These columns typically correspond, at the Graduate School level, to the number of days that we meet. When I teach regular semester courses such as psychology at either the high school or undergraduate college level, obviously more than one manilla folder is used. The reverse side of the course portfolio then becomes useful as additional space to share values about ideas, people, and things related to the course of study.

As an example, in a recent education graduate course, "The Individualization of Instruction", at Niagara University, I asked the students to divide the reverse side of their course portfolio into five columns, which corresponded to the number of class meetings. This class meets for five Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Then I had them divide each column into four distinct spaces. I asked them on the first day of class to identify the characteristics of the teacher who had the most positive impact on them in the top space of the first column, in the second space I asked them to list the characteristics of the teachers they personally experienced who they felt were most negative, in the bottom two spaces they identified the things that they like

best about their current teaching situation, and the things they like the least respectively. The folder then served as a group warm-up activity as individuals discussed some of the concepts associated with their stated values and identified some key course-related ideas.

The next meeting day, I ask the graduate students to identify the courses or programs that they liked best as a learner, and those they liked least in the top two spaces of the second column. I also ask them to identify what they like best about the concepts they teach, and the concepts they teach which they don't like very much in the bottom two spaces of the same column. Again, this served as a good group discussion facilitator and focused interaction on key ideas associated with curriculum and instruction.

On the third day I asked them to think back to when they were learners, and identify those school activities which were personally rewarding or positive to them, and those activities which they felt were negative and list those in the top two spaces of the third column. I then asked them to identify the teaching activities that they personally use which they feel are very positive for their students, and those that they thought could be improved in the bottom two spaces. This listing served to focus group warm-up discussions on the fact that different activities appeal to different learning styles and preferences.

In the fourth column they listed the positive and negative resources they used as students in the top two spaces, and those resources which they use as a professional educator that are positive, and those which could be improved in the bottom two spaces. Again, this served to stimulate group warm-up discussions on the different types of resources that individuals prefer to use in their learning experiences.

We "wrapped up" with a listing of the evaluations, tests, or achievement measurements they liked best as students, versus those they liked least as students in the top two spaces of the fifth column, and the evaluation procedures and formats they liked best as teachers versus those they like least as professional educators in the bottom spaces. This served as an excellent catalyst to focusing group discussion on different methods of evaluation that may be successfully used to authentically measure student achievement.

Those reverse side personal and professional valuing activities, coupled with the initial icebreaker activities on the front of the folder, complete the shell of the course portfolio. The front side, subsequently, is used to doodle on or customize artistically throughout the course.

Over the years I have also identified that the internal spaces of the course portfolio could be used to give students additional opportunities to reflect on classroom experiences and evaluate activities in a "free flowing" format using the ever-popular doodling pens - magic markers. Subsequently, the interior of the course portfolio has evolved into one side being the "Reaction Side", and the other side the "Personal Evaluation Side". Students react, on the right side, to their feelings about key classroom experiences, such as in "The Individualization of Instruction" course, when they gave their personal reactions to poems, videotapes, or other class experiences.

The opposite side is for personal evaluation of each class day. Obviously, in daylong graduate workshops, they are more comprehensive than those completed by students after each class period in a high school course of study or an undergraduate course. I ask them to date and write their personal evaluations about the class, my instruction, their classroom cooperative learning teams, and/or other activities. This can all be done, and I encourage it to be done, using a variety of different magic markers. I have encouraged graduate, undergraduate, and high school students to doodle as they do this, because I have found a fondness for the concept and an associated feeling of "going with the flow" as they progressively add depth and

comprehensive dimension to their course portfolio. I have recognized that students place a great deal of importance on creatively developing their personalized course folder throughout the course term. It naturally becomes an integral part of each regular class session and is customized to express values and feelings related to their learning.

SUMMARY

I have found that the course portfolio has provided the mechanism for me, during the past three decades in a variety of teaching/learning situations, to get to know my students much more personally so that I could customize education more effectively for them. I have also found that the course portfolio encourages them to interact more effectively with others. It encourages cooperative learning group structures, breaks down the initial walls and barriers that may exist regarding personal interaction, and does what the original authors of values clarification strategies suggested several years ago; it definitely helps to clarify values. In essential constructivist terms, Personal Course Portfolios pragmatically and concretely recognize that individual differences are dependent on the various participant experiences, knowledge, and cognitive structures at the time of instruction (Danielson, 1996).

I hope that this practical, time-tested strategy will be useful to other educators, whether in elementary or secondary schools, undergraduate and graduate schools, staff development programs, or any time that the objective is to get to know people better. This strategy empowers students to use their creativity to produce a customized course portfolio that initiates and develops classroom interaction and also serves as a souvenir of the learning experiences of a particular course of study.

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PARADIGMS OF PRACTICE: SHIFTING PEDAGOGIES IN THE "ACCOUNTABILITY" STORM

Michael Brunn
University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

As the pressure for more accountability for teaching and learning escalates, teachers are expressing more concerns about their students achieving high marks on the high-stakes testing, and how it is affecting their work. Test administration detracts from instructional time, disrupts schedules and routines, and seems to have more of a political agenda than a practical one. One critical area of a high-stakes testing regimen is the way in which teachers alter their pedagogies from best practices to test practices in order to meet the expectations of state and local officials. This paper reports on what happened in one school as the teachers geared-up for the accountability storm, and how they chose to approach the challenges and difficulties.

INTRODUCTION

Unarguably, standardized testing is pervasive throughout the school systems in America. The rhetoric of this latest presidential campaign highlighted the fact that the new administration would call for even more "accountability" from schools. President G.W. Bush signed one such bill in January of 2002 that required testing at every grade level. Individual communities, states, and agencies have until 2005 to put such a system in place. Remarkably, the presidential/political rhetoric was not new or unique. School districts and teachers have grappled with the issues of teaching and standardized testing for quite some time. Moreover, teachers clearly understand that the onus of "accountability" for schools (students) to perform well on these tests rests firmly with them.

A growing problem with the increased use of standardized tests in schools is the amount of time that teachers and students spend not only preparing for the tests, but actually in administering or taking the tests. In many instances, testing alone can require as much as twelve to fourteen days each year in some districts, and disrupt the flow of instruction and programs throughout the schools. Some school districts report that they are required to administer up to three different batteries of tests each academic year. Some of the tests are given in the fall of the year, then again in the spring to measure student achievement and growth over the academic year. These tests would seem to be more justified than the once-a-year variety because the results could be used to design professional development programs to improve instruction and student learning.

A more pervasive, and perhaps more insidious, outcome of the "accountability storm" is the related shift in teachers' pedagogies. When schools' budgets, principals' jobs, and communities' reputations are on the line with such high stakes testing, many teachers, exemplary and conscientious or otherwise, set aside their best practices in order to meet the pressures and the demands for increasing, raising, and scoring high marks within classrooms, and throughout the schools. When the testing regimens are extensive, the stress and pressure on each and every one to achieve high scores becomes even more noticeable.

A third and closely related concern that has received little attention, is the stress on the students themselves to perform well. Although many parents want their children to do well, they prefer to down-play the significance of their scores, attempting to alleviate the stress on their children. However, those stresses are felt within the classrooms in spite of the efforts of teachers and parents to ameliorate the situation. Furthermore, some testing

guidelines exempt certain students from the testing based on their known academic profiles such as chronic low achievement. This situation does not necessarily mean that those selected students do not feel pressures in other ways from the testing regimens. Labels, formally and informally, imposed upon students with special circumstances for testing can be damaging.

In this paper I report on some preliminary research into these developing areas of concern. It is important because as the amount of high stakes, standardized testing increases, we should make every effort to understand the affects on educators and learning communities. The more visible and public evidence is that schools loose nearly one half of their new teachers within the first three to five years because of dissatisfaction with the job. One major contributing factor to this attrition is the increasing interdiction of classrooms by non teaching functionaries, such as school boards and legislatures, who focus on test scores as the prime indicator of how much students are learning and, by association, how well teachers teach. The fall-out from these incursions, then, form the basis of this research: an exploration of the extent to which teachers abandon their best practices in order to teach to/for the tests, in their attempts to satisfy their administrators, the parents, and their communities.

The central research questions derived from this situation were: To what extent do teachers alter their pedagogies, i.e., the best practices of effective teaching, in order to present material and content that will prepare their students to successfully take standardized tests? Furthermore: What are the consequences of such a shift, in terms of affects on teachers and students?

I begin with a brief theoretical framework that supports the inquiry centered on what we know about how best to teach children, how children learn best, and how that may differ from the formats of certain tests. Following that, I discuss the data from the interviews, beginning with accounts of the teachers' concerns which are central to the factors and influences that precipitated their shifting pedagogies. Although the concerns of the teachers were many, they are reported here as a means to establish some shared background before focusing on how teachers responded, and to what extent they adopted the format and/or taught to a very high stakes test. I close with some conclusions, and suggestions for further research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Each year more and more teachers are faced with the challenge of how to complete the curricular requirements of their school districts, and still prepare their students for the onslaught of testing that continues to increase (DeVoogd, 1998). These two vectors are not mutually exclusive, yet there remains differences separating what is commonly known as *best practices* for teaching (e.g., Cesarone, 1998), and the processes and purposes of the pervasive testing. More importantly, teachers are making critical decisions about their pedagogies, i.e., their instructional methods and the related materials, in order to accomplish the dual objectives of teaching content and processes, and teaching for testing. These decisions have fundamental consequences for students and for society in the long term (Richardson, 1997; Smith, 1995).

The research on teaching and learning over the past half century has lead to greater understandings of how children learn (Grossen, 1997). From this growing body of

knowledge we know that the be*st practices* for the most successful classrooms include a constructivist approach utilizing hands-on activities, cooperative and collaborative projects, and posed, real life problems with open ended solutions (Richardson, 1997). Moreover, we understand that children working silently at their desks with mountains of worksheets is counterproductive to developing students who know how to problem-solve, and who know how to work with others to achieve a common goal, which are assets deemed necessary and valuable throughout society. The predicament with the standardized testing arises from the differences between the format of the standardized tests (a worksheet format), and the format of best practices (a constructivist paradigm) of effective teaching. Which is most important for the students and the teachers insofar as achievement of knowledge and processes of learning remains controversial and dependent upon the points of view represented in the discussions.

METHODS

Participants
        The participants in this pilot project included seven teachers in a typical suburban K-5 school. They taught in the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades, and each had many years experience in these grade levels. This particular school had instituted looping as a practice for the 4th and 5th grade levels on a volunteer basis. Two of the three 5th grade teachers were with the same class that they had the previous year in 4th. The other teachers had new classes of students in their 3rd and 4th grade rooms.
        The school was sited in the suburbs of a major metropolitan city. The students came from homes and families from the upper SES strata of the community. Female parents participated in the classrooms and volunteered for many projects in the school throughout the days while their children were in attendance. The typical occupations of the families were software engineers, medical professionals, and business executives who worked in offices and buildings nearby the neighborhood. Although school busses served the neighborhood, many parents drove their children to the school and picked them up each day. The school was built in the late 1980s, but appeared to be in like-new condition.

Data & Collection
        Proven, qualitative methods of ethnographic anthropology employed semi-structured interviews of teachers in this suburban K-5 school (Bernard, 1988; Milroy, 1987). An interview protocol of open-ended questions (N=7) guided the interviews (N=8) of selected teachers in the elementary school where the principle investigator worked with pre-service teacher candidates on a weekly basis since September 2000. The conversations were tape recorded, then transcribed. A software program for analyzing ethnographic data was used to analyze the teachers' conversations for themes related to the research questions. Based on the interview protocols and the initial reading of the transcripts, I identified the following primary categories that reflected the themes and topics discussed by the participants: *Concerns; Stress; Changes in Pedagogies.* These were cross-referenced for sub themes that defined the shifts in teachers' pedagogies, that revealed the consequences for teachers and students, and that more specifically indicated the affects on the community of learners. More specifically they were: *instructional time; socialization; academics; teaching strategies.* These

constructs contributed to the content of this portion of the analysis of the project. Much work is yet to be done within this context for a thick description to emerge.

The Data

To set the background for the main question of shifting pedagogies, I begin with two general beliefs held by the teachers. The first belief was that it was important to hold schools accountable for the teaching they did, and the student learning that occurred. The current mandate to use a particular test, the CSAP[1], was one means to this end. They wanted to be able to measure whether their students were achieving the state mandated Content Standards, and to what level they were achieving them. The second belief was that they thought that the standards-based movement was an important paradigm for the educational community to adopt as a means to ensure that students were learning the necessary and important constructs, concepts, and ideas to be productive citizens. Doug[2], a 5th grade teacher, stated:

> I guess when you talk about how I feel about the CSAP testing you
> have to look at it in the broader stream of standards-based movement,
> which basically I agree with. I believe in the standards-based movement.
> I think it is an excellent way of identifying priorities and the things we
> want to accomplish.

Other teachers agreed with this sentiment, and further elaborated that this particular test was one of the best they had experienced and used insofar as *performance-based* assessments went. Furthermore, they felt that it was one of the better *standardized* tests that they had encountered. One teacher commented that "... it [showed] not so much what kids can repeat to you, but what they can actually perform and do, and I like that.... I think the test is basically pretty good, generally speaking."

Teachers in general do adhere to the notion that they should be accountable for what they do in their classrooms. Framing this as a corporate model of education, which many legislators, administrators, and educational institutions have, teachers believe that there needs to be some measure of production both from their involvement in delivering content, and on the students' part for learning the content. An inherent part of being accountable, then, is the responsibility of the individuals engaged in the acquisition of knowledge and processes of teaching and learning. The predicament many teachers and administrators are in is deciding which test or group of tests will give them the information that they need to be more effective educators. The choice may not necessarily correspond with what legislatures and school boards might consider as appropriate or useful. Although the

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[1] In the early 1990s the State of Colorado initiated a testing program in elementary schools, beginning with the third grades, using a primarily performance-based test. The program is the Colorado Student Assessment Program. However, the test quickly became known as the CSAP, and has since expanded its use into the upper grades. It began with reading and math in the 3rd grade, and is in the process of adding additional content areas in the lower grades while it moves upwards to the middle school grades. The upper grades are currently testing literacy and math, and will add content areas as those are developed. The objective is to test literacy and the content areas in all grades third and above. This testing paradigm is the focus of this research now, and as it expands to other grades and subjects.

[2] Pseudonyms were assigned to protect the identity of the teachers who were more than willing to share their ideas and beliefs about the CSAP testing, other tests, and pedagogical matters.

teachers believed that the CSAP test was a good measure of what children should know and be able to do in any particular grade level, they had some specific concerns and issues about the test, and about its efficacy as a tool to assist them in their work with children.

SHIFTING PEDAGOGIES

The influences on teachers to develop and refine their teaching come from many sources. Their histories in educational institutions as they grow and develop into adults, their familial and kinship contexts, their social interactions, their training in colleges of education, and their praxis, among other experiences, contribute to their underpinning philosophies of education, and to their pedagogies. Current conditions in schools across the country indicate that greater reliance on strict accountability measures are becoming evermore usual. Similarly, the political uses of accountability measures for schools, and their ratings, are becoming increasingly evident. What is also becoming more evident is that teachers are under increasing pressure to conform to certain instructional paradigms that purportedly will increase student achievement in school. In short, teachers are choosing to and being coerced to shift their pedagogies to models of instruction that exemplify the format, content, and processes of the standardized and non standardized tests used by their districts for "accountability." In the following pages, I discuss some of the influences and pressures that were brought to bear upon a group of teachers who were required to administer a state mandated test as a comprehensive measure of accountability for their school's ability to educate children successfully.

CONCERNS ABOUT RATING SCORES/LEVELS

A first concern about the test was the level of difficulty of the questions for each rating level. The levels, from highest to lowest were: *advanced, proficient, partially proficient,* and *unsatisfactory.* Most of the teachers felt that while the test was a good measure of what children should know and be able to do, they believed that passing scores were set at unrealistic levels. The "cut-off scores" seemed to be set too high. One teacher gave an example of a local group of 8th graders who had recently participated in a national science competition/study (TIMSS). They had performed very well; however, only 58% were rated as *proficient* on the CSAP. As Terry commented, "... that tells me not that those kids aren't world class learners, but that it is a lousy [test rating]."

Because the tests were first given in the 3rd grade several years ago, they test makers have had opportunities to perfect the test so that it was not only a good measure of what children in that grade should know and be able to do, but that they were being rated correctly/accurately for performance. It was in the higher grades where the tests had not had a chance to be perfected that concerned many of these teachers. For example, Terry stated:

> My concern is that at these higher levels, the test isn't valid anymore. It starts off pretty good in 3rd grade, but they have been giving that literacy assessment longer than they have been giving the other tests.... So 3rd grade is looking good by now. They are still 'cutting their teeth' on these other tests [in the higher grades], and they are hurting schools, they're hurting kids,

and they're hurting communities because they haven't figured out how to make the assessment good.

Her concern was that the test designers were piloting the new versions of the test on students in the upper grades in almost all of the schools. The resultant ratings were not considered as indicative of the test piloting, but taken to be accurate and reliable. That is, the schools were being rated on their overall performance based on an underdeveloped test with unknown reliability and validity. This has the potential to be disastrous for many schools because, typically, low ratings by a school would be tolerated for three years before the state made a decision to manage the school itself.

Another teacher voiced his concern that the students were being given lower ratings that did not truly reflect their levels of performance. This teacher related that the writing test seemed "a bit advanced, and the demands seemed a bit much for a lot of kids." The students were to write a three paragraph essay in response to a prompt. In many instances the prompt was based on an unfamiliar concept or topic which left the students guessing as to how to address the writing. Furthermore, students in the third grade were asked to draft expository responses at a much advanced level although in school they were beginning to make the transition from narrative texts to expository texts and lacked sufficient experiences. Related to these concerns about the difficulty of the test, its performance descriptors, and its reliability was the efficacy of the test to guide or inform instruction.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE TEST'S USEFULLNESS

All of the teachers interviewed believed that the usefulness of the test in helping them educate children was simply poor. The tests were given in the end of February, but the scores were not returned to the classroom teachers until the following fall. The tests were scored by the state using Kelly Temporaries over the summer, then released to the school districts just before the commencement of the new academic year. As Doug stated:

> It is useless in terms of helping us educate the students that we have now. For one reason, because we don't get the test score results back until after these kids are gone from us. The other reason is that what we get back tells us virtually nothing about what their strengths and weaknesses were. It is just a score, and that is it.

One school district developed a way to make the scores more meaningful to its teachers. The scores for each student were sorted by particular characteristics, then entered into a data base which was accessible by the district's teachers. The teachers could retrieve the scores of their new students in the fall once the class lists were formulated. This particular school gave an inservice to its teachers about how to retrieve and use the information to help them target strengths and weaknesses of their new classes. Only one of the interviewed teachers had used the data base for the purposes of designing curricular activities that would advance certain deficiencies in her students. The other teachers interviewed stated that they did not have the considerable amount of time it took to retrieve and analyze the data, nor did they believe that the data was specific enough to be of any assistance in their instruction.

The broad descriptors of the scores - *advanced, proficient,* etc. - gave an umbrella picture of student performance. Furthermore, most of the teachers interviewed felt that the standards written into, and linked with the ratings in the test itself were too vague to be of any real value. For example, a student's rating of *proficient* would be linked with a standard that said, "reads and writes for a variety of audiences or purposes." If the standard were more specific, they believed that they could use that information as a diagnostic tool to help them plan and instruct more effectively. Because of the non definitive nature of the standards, many believed that how their students were performing was left to "speculation." Doug suggested that:

> If we, as teachers, would have the opportunity to actually analyze each student's performance on [the test], you know, actually look at the test documents, and what they produced, it would give us tremendous information.

The tests themselves were a highly controlled commodity. The schools received them just before the testing window, and were required to immediately send them back to the state Department of Education when the testing was finished. What the teachers did receive prior to the testing sessions were the released items from last year's test so that they could use the items as practice for the upcoming tests. Doug was not alone in his beliefs about the efficacy of the test to assist teachers in their work with students; in their efforts to plan instruction. It was not diagnostic. It was too vague, and it was poorly timed. Terry elaborated on these issues, stating that

> Generally, I don't have any problem with accountability. And the notion behind having some kind of a standard assessment that everyone is taking, to me, makes a lot of sense. However! However! We are testing 5th grade competency at the end of February. Fifth grade isn't over until the first of June. I feel like that is unfair. We don't get enough time. We have to administer that test in a time frame that fits with the State's needs for scoring. The State, then, takes until August to score. I don't understand why we are messing with children like this.

Their concerns over the applicability of the data that they receive was evident in their responses to further probing of this issue. They thought that when the data was finally received in the fall of the next academic year, the information was not helpful because the data represented one group of students, the students they taught the previous year. Even though those children in 5th grade came from the 4th grade classes in the same school, there were influences that these teachers identified that confounded the data, especially so when they did not loop with their 4th grade students into 5th grade, and not all did. Simply put, they could not know if the scores were reflective of the learning characteristics of the individual children, or if they were the affects of their teachers. Most believed it was an admixture of both, and thought that because of the compounding influences, the data was essentially worthless for planning and guiding instruction.

One idea that continued to surface was that the teachers knew how their students would score before the tests were even administered. They had worked with their classes for several months in a CSAP paradigm, knew enough about the tests to know what items would be presented, what formats would be used, and how the regimen would be conducted. Most teachers were not surprised when the scores were finally returned. As Terry stated:

> I could have told you before we ever gave the test who was going to score [*partially proficient*] and who was not, who was going to be *proficient* and who was not.... So that tells me that either my sensibilities, my data collection, the way I keep assessment is on target with the State, or the State should trust me and they don't need to do this, because I have been on target all along. And, most of us are. Almost any teacher can look at their class and say, 'these four won't be proficient on CSAP'.

These teachers raised important issues about the critical use of their and their students' time in the classrooms, about the efficacy of the CSAP to assist them in their work, and hinted at the increasing control the state was exerting over their ability to respond effectively to the diverse learners in their classrooms. Moreover, the teachers interviewed indicated that there were ulterior motives for the testing that had less to do with student learning, and more to do with the state's subrosa agendas. Among them were the political uses of the scores, the timing of and the time spent testing, and the stress and pressures related to the testing.

POLITICIZING SCHOOL SCORES

The teachers did not believe that the tests were designed to assist them in their efforts to better instruct students, and to ensure that their students met the Content Standards for their grade levels. The rhetoric at the state level from the promoters of the tests centered on those ideals, but for the teachers, the reality was based in politics. Schools were rated according to the composite scores their students reached on the CSAP tests. As Terry stated, "[the] CSAP was never intended to be a tool for teachers. It is a tool for the legislature to measure our performance." Others held such opinions, and were skeptical about the legislature's intentions. As Doug stated:

> What we are hearing from the state is that schools who perform at a high level will be rewarded financially, and that schools who don't will basically be punished financially, which seems backwards. You know, it is the schools that are having trouble who need extra resources, you know, not to be punished.... Well, depending on your class' performance on your tests, you might receive financial reward, or no financial award, or your [teaching] evaluation might be effected by that. Those are rumors. It has been suggested that that may be the direction it will go. Indeed, the Governor has said we will use these scores to help teachers improve. That seems like a rather veiled threat.

He was not alone in his suspicions about the subrosa agenda of the state to use the test results to interpose teachers' careers. Editorials and feature articles in the local newspapers alluded to the fact that teachers' salaries could be affected depending on their students' performances. In fact, the answer sheets of the tests required the social security numbers of the classroom teachers in addition to other specific information that could use to identify any student's set of teachers throughout her/his educational experience in the public schools. One state legislator had recently introduced a bill in the state legislature that would formally organize a data base linking teachers and students. The bill was defeated; however, the suspicions of the teachers interviewed seemed to hold forth.

A fundamental part of the teachers' concerns about rewards and punishments were grounded in what they believed about the factors beyond their control, yet for which they were held responsible. Specifically, as one teacher stated, "... not all students come to school with equal preparation; not all come to school with equal opportunities." This teacher had taught in a low SES school, before he transferred to this school, where the challenges of education were great. His students participated to varying degrees in a plethora of Federal programs such as breakfast, free lunch, Title I, and other programs that assist students in many low income and poor urban neighborhoods. The school administrators and the teachers understood that their students were significantly behind the median expectations for performance by the state, yet, they were being held accountable for high levels of performance from all students. The state mandate did not take into account the differences among the student populations, invoking a one *size fits all* testing program.

The teachers interviewed understood that there was great diversity, variety of backgrounds, and levels of experiences even among their students in this upper SES school. Regardless of circumstances, though, the testing and reporting of cumulative scores for each school seemed to be predicated on a more homogeneous population. The state made no allowances for diversity, treating all schools as similar in their demographics. In short, the schools were being held accountable for circumstances and situations they sometimes could not control.

TIME AS A CRITICAL FACTOR

In addition to the so far mentioned concerns and issues, there was the fact that making adjustments in curriculum and pedagogical conduct to accommodate the testing regimen required a significant amount of time. Some teachers greatly resented the time to prep and teach to the CSAP tests, noting how it diminished the other things that they believed to be essential and necessary for a well rounded, quality education such as social processes of learning. These teachers not only looked at the time to administer the tests, but at the set-up time involved, and at the disruption to their schedules, as detractors from their instruction.

All totaled, the CSAP tests required one half of a day for nine days to administer. They were quick to point out that they were only testing reading, writing, and math, and that the districts will soon be testing in social studies, science, and history. That is, the state will eventually be requiring testing in literacy and in all of the content areas. As Doug stated:

> The state has the math, reading, and writing, but they also require the
> districts to assess all other areas, as well. Ultimately and eventually, those

will be phased in one at a time. So we are going to have those dumped on
us, as well. So that is more disruption on our instructional time.

It should be noted that the CSAPs were just one of the standardized tests required by
this particular district, and currently required nine half days to administer. When the other
content areas are phased in, the total amount of time was projected to be eighteen half days
for administration. This would not take into account the preparation that the teachers
believed was necessary for successful testing. In addition to the CSAPs, this particular
district had a skills-based test that was given in the fall and in the spring of the year, ITBS
tests, and other testing, by group and individual, that was required as a part of the Literacy
Act. The interruption of instructional time began to approach a month or more of
classroom instruction spread throughout the school year, starting at the very beginning in
the fall. Doug delineated this as follows:

> At the beginning of the school year, just as an example, we came in and
> we had our first week. The next week we went to half day schedules so we
> could bring in students for literacy assessments. Then we had a four day
> week because of a holiday. Then, now, this week and next week are
> disrupted because of our district testing schedule. So it is going to be the 5th
> or 6th week of the quarter before we can really establish any routines with
> our classes.

Other teachers handled this fractured start in other ways. For example, Terry ran a
no nonsense classroom where she "hit the ground running" with the curriculum. Her
emphasis was on math and literacy; the test areas for her grade level. Although the climate
in her classroom was one of respect, there was a distinct quality that indicated that time on
task and engaged learning were the 110% focus, and the norm. What was missing was the
socialization that occurred in many classrooms, and that was of increasing importance for
many 5th graders. As she stated, "We don't take a lot of time messing around getting to
know you. We need to get into the math right away... into the literacy instruction right
away." She began with academics the very first day of school, and never let off the pressure
and the pace in spite of the disruption to the first few weeks because of the testing regimen
required by the district. One consequence of this was an increased amount of pressure and
stress, which she acknowledged was put on her and her students. She related that she often
told her students that "... the country is depending on you to get well-educated. We are all
depending on you. You can't waste your time." In fact, the previous year she admitted to
doubling her math time to two hours each day between the CSAP tests in February, and the
district's skills-based testing in April, knowing that the students would be responsible for
certain knowledge and skills on that later test.

STRESS AND PRESSURE

The stress and the pressures of raising scores among all learners was telling in the
classrooms, and in the responses of these teachers. Although each one had a different
approach to handling the stress with their students, as a group they disliked the fact that the
CSAPs brought on so much of it. Moreover, they resented how it affected their students to

the point where several students were sick on the days of the testing; some choosing to stay at home, some choosing to come to school. Understandably, those who came to school did not perform their best on the tests.

One unintentional consequence of the stress and pressure on students was how teachers believed that it effected students' values about schooling, learning, and educational objectives. As Marsha stated

> The stress can be horrible.... [The CSAP] has produced a level of anxiety amongst my peers that definitely spills over, it has to, onto their classrooms.... I think it gives kids, where the stress levels are very high, it gives kids a subtle message that what you are learning is not what is really important. It is how well you can perform for us on this test.

Other teachers remarked on this issue as it affected the students in their classrooms. They reported that students in first and second grades, although they were not subjected to the CSAP testing, were vocalizing their worries about being tested when they went to third grade. In some instances those ideas stemmed from their older siblings who were taking the tests. However, those ideas were topics of conversations among students throughout the school's classrooms, hallways, library, gym, lunchroom, and on the playgrounds. With a conscious focus on CSAP testing and the format of the tests over the majority of the school year, it set the environment of the school as an ecology of *tested performance*.

As noted elsewhere in this paper, the shift away from social activities as a fundamental part of their learning processes contributed to the students' re-formed concepts of schooling as individual competitiveness. Group work was minimal even though they arranged their desks in "pods" with three or four other students. Teachers utilized whole group instruction as the basis of their directed instruction to deliver content information centered on the topics within the curriculum. Classroom observations depicted students working quietly at their desks with paper and pencil assignments they were to do on their own. This paradigm was characteristic of the grades being tested, and it mirrored the format of the CASP test.

Furthermore, students recognized that their teachers were under pressure to have good scores, too, although in the lower grades they did not completely comprehend that situation. They heard from their parents, their siblings, and from their teachers that there was much at stake with the tests, and that they needed to do their very best work in preparing for and taking the tests. Teachers interviewed in the lower grades reported that the younger students believed that if they did not do well, that they (their teachers) might loose their jobs.

Teachers related that parents did not particularly like the ways in which the results were used to grade schools, to reward or punish schools, and to threaten teachers. They also believed that the parents tried to protect their children from the stresses and pressures, and tended to down-play the value of the scores. One teacher in this project related that her daughter, whom she noted was an above average, straight A student, was devastated when her rating came back as *proficient*, and her closest friends rated *Advanced*. She told her, "... this doesn't mean anything to me. You're such a bright little girl. You do so well in school. This means nothing to me as a mommy." Yet her daughter replied, "It means something to my teacher." This teacher found herself in a paradox. As a teacher she strove for the

highest scores possible in her classroom. Juxtaposed were her feelings as a mother, trying to ameliorate her daughter's feeling of being a low achiever. This teacher often remarked how she could consistently achieve *proficient* scores with her students when she was teaching in one of the low SES schools in the area. In her current classroom of upper SES students she often spoke with the children, couching the testing in terms of "we're in this together, so let's make the best of it." She saw herself in the role of a cheerleader, pepping up and encouraging her students with lots of rah-rah. Ultimately, she knew that it worked for most of the students, and that a few were "just nervous anyway."

Another teacher related how his wife really resented the testing, not only for the time it took away from instruction, but mostly because of the tremendous stress it put on their ADHD son. They knew that he was very capable of performing well, but that he could not always show that to his teachers, especially during the testing regimen in that district.

PEDAGOGIES AND PARADIGMS

The changes and alterations teachers made in their pedagogies to accommodate the state mandated CSAP testing was indicative of their shifting praxis. Throughout the interviews, the teachers made references to the ways they used to teach, and how they currently taught under the constraints and constructs of the CSAP. They also related how they made conscious choices to forego certain instructional paradigms in order to meet the demand for high scores on the tests. In this section I will explore these two mutually interdependent ideas, beginning with a statement from Marsha:

> There is a lot of fear. I feel like that is probably the predominant drive, the dominant source of energy that drives instruction right now, is, 'what can we do to get those test scores up?' I don't hear any talk about good pedagogy, I don't hear any talk about balanced anything.... You know, you have low groups; you know those kids aren't going to test as well. You know, a lot of that kind of fear and pressure.

That statement underpinned a decision by the 5th grade teachers at the beginning of this past school year to track students in reading, writing, and in math, the areas that CSAP tested in that grade. They did this as a means to better manage and direct their instruction towards increasing test scores through the use of homogeneous grouping, and individualized instruction when appropriate. The objective was to design their lessons and instruction in such manners as would have the greatest chance of increasing scores for each of the disparate groups. The goal was for the high group of students to all receive *Advanced* on their tests; for the middle group to receive mostly *Advanced* with several *Proficient*, and for the lower group to achieve mostly *Proficient*. Recall in a previous section that teachers believed that it was unrealistic for many students to score into these levels.

This decision to track struck dissonance with several of the teachers' philosophies about how children should be taught, i.e., their best practices for education. The tracking system meant that for nearly half of each day, the 5th grade teachers would have students rotating through their rooms from all of the 5th grade classrooms for literacy and math instruction. It was coincidental that there were three 5th grade teachers which facilitated a high, middle, and low group of students. Working from their own "identified strengths,"

the teachers decided among themselves who would teach which group. Two of the teachers voiced their feelings that they had no connection with their "class" since they spent much of their instructional day with varying groups of students from the three classrooms. Marsha commented that:

> I and another 5th grade teacher, our whole philosophy was that just isn't good for kids to group them homogeneously where you're asking kids of all one skill level, especially on the lower end, to have them as the only resource; you know, whereas when you have a heterogeneous grouping, you can have middle, high, low kids, all interspersed, kind-of building off each other, and working with each other.... Philosophically, I don't like homogeneous groupings.

Her statement is indicative of a Vygotskian based pedagogy, and a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. However, the decision to track students was directly attributable to the teachers' concerns about CSAP scores. The objective was less focused on overall improvement and growth for their students in all areas, but primarily designed to move *Proficient* students up to *Advanced*, and move the *Partially Proficient* students up to *Proficient* in the tested areas. The interviewed teachers noted that the gifted and talented students benefited from such a tracking system because they would not have to "... deal with, and wait for, and be slowed down by kids of other levels."

There were some situations where the teachers noted that the CSAP test served a useful purpose for improving instruction. The test brought to the teachers' attention areas where they were not instructing to a high level of achievement or effectiveness. One particular area was in writing. Several of the teachers noted that with the advent of the CSAP that they began to concentrate on writing instruction with their students. This area had previously been left to unfocused assignments and practice exercises in a haphazard program, classroom by classroom. It was not targeted or structured as an area of great importance such as reading and math. In order to mend the situation, the teachers noted that they began to actively participate in professional development courses that would teach them how to teach writing. As Marsha stated:

> Actually, the CSAP test for me, one thing, I guess I started really concentrating on how to teach writing. I took a lot of training in how to teach writing. I probably am far more organized, far more skilled at teaching writing in a direct writing-instruction way than I was before the CSAPs.

In addition to directly teaching writing skills, she also noted that she began to infuse writing into other content areas, especially in math since it was the only other content area for the tests besides reading. However, her approach to infusing the CSAP testing regiment into her pedagogy was significantly different than her colleagues who were interviewed. She spoke of using themes to organize her pedagogy, and related that she would choose a broad theme for the year, then bring the content areas under that umbrella throughout the academic year. The theme last year was "Constancy of Change" which served to guide the

integration of the various content areas however scattered the texts, kits, and other materials were.

Marsha explained that before CSAPs she would try to follow the scope and sequence of the texts and materials provided by the school district; more of a textbook-driven system. When their textbooks were adopted, the teacher's manuals became the curriculum. Now, with the high stakes tests and the advent of Content Standards for Colorado Students, she stated that:

> It is like, now, here is what a 5th grader is supposed to be able to demonstrate, master, be able to explain, communicate, let's say, in social studies. And now, textbooks or materials are being adopted to fit those standards more than us basing our curriculum on the scope and sequence of a teacher's manual. Which is a good thing because when you are working from the standards, too, you can actually adopt a wide variety, make use of a wide variety of materials. You don't have to be textbook bound, necessarily.

While she believed that she had more freedom to choose materials, texts, and activities than before, she essentially traded one restriction for another. For the curriculum, she moved from following a teaching manual as the guide for her instruction to following the Content Standards as the guide for her pedagogy. The standards gave detailed statements about the demonstrated/performed learning behaviors of students in all grades. In short, the teaching manuals were input models for instruction, whereas the Content Standards were output models. It was not so much a matter of a shift in the content that she taught as a shift in the format of her pedagogy.

Similar to her colleagues, Marsha prepared her students for the testing by designing exercises and assignments based on her knowledge of the format and content of the tests. For example, there was a strong emphasis on literacy, especially in reading. She knew that her students would be asked to read long passages, then answer questions. In her preparation from the fall until the tests were administered, she coached her students about how to know the answer format. For example, she stated:

> I make a real distinction between, with my kids, what requires a complete sentence, and what doesn't require a complete sentence. In answers, we kind-of go through the whole format. [If] they give you a whole page of lines, two sentences is not going to be a sufficient answer. We talk about interpretive questions, we will need a complete sentence, whereas factual sentences, the lower levels of thinking skill questions, you can answer in a phrase.

Marsha was not alone in her efforts to prepare her students for the CSAPs. Other teachers in the school also designed exercises and assignments that would give their students practice with testing items and formats before they took the tests. I call these activities *gearing up*, and explicate it in more detail below.

GEARING UP

A fundamental shift in these teachers' pedagogies centered on *gearing-up* for the tests. Many quickly altered their pedagogies as they began to encounter the CSAP tests, while others took time to make the adjustments. Two teachers admitted that they first concentrated on the skills to be tested on the district's skills-based exams in September, then just after the holidays "... [start to] really focus and really look-up 'what do I really need to make sure they have exposure to before we get to the CSAP test." This statement referred to the fact that the Content Standards dictated to the teachers what the students needed to learn (content) and be able to do (perform) at each grade level, and that the CSAP tests were designed to test student performance on those precise standards beginning in grade three. The activities these teachers designed for gearing-up were derived from the particular content and processes to be tested.

Because the tests were performance-based, it meant that the teachers needed to teach the formats of the tested areas before the students took the tests so that they would be familiar with the questions and how to answer them. Much of the teachers' instruction in those areas was designed around activities that emulated the tests. For example, Doug stated, "If I know they will be asked to do a 'compare and contrast' in a certain format on the CSAP, I will ask them to do it in a similar format in my instructional process so they are not thrown, again, by that format."

Throughout the months of instruction preceding the testing, teachers used released items to show students the format, and then instructed them in how to physically write on the test pages. The format taught in their writing training in their professional development activities was grounded in a process model based on the Bay Area Writing Project. The CSAPs, however, took a considerably different approach. The differences were accommodated by the teachers who subsequently altered their writing instruction in their classrooms. On the CSAPs, one of the performance objectives in writing was for the students to not skip lines, to not write in the margins, and to not write past the end of the lines. The goal was to test the students' ability to formulate a written response (content) and, by association, measure their ability to follow the prescribed format (performance). Pedagogically, then, the teachers kept some attention on the format of the test, looking for ways and opportunities to infuse that format into their instruction. The remainder of their attention was given over to the content, insofar as it was something that they knew would be tested in February.

The evolution of accountability for many of these teachers was based on their own progressive development as educators. Most were schooled during the whole language era, believing that projects, literature-based instruction, group work, and noisy, but productive classrooms were to be sought after. With an increasing emphasis on standards and standardized testing for accountability, these teachers abandoned that training, replacing it with a business-like, no nonsense pedagogy that was geared towards the CSAP testing. As Terry explained:

> As I got into the grade levels that were testing, I became a lot more focused on time on task, a lot more focused. That is always on my personal goals each year; time on task. And, my room needs to be maximized. I'm always a little nervous when I feel like kids are not focused or engaged.... I

do probably not as much CSAP prep as a lot of people do because the
whole day is embedded with that style.

This teacher began her career teaching in a more open style, with Vygotsky and
constructivism underpinning her pedagogy. Those ideals and philosophical approaches gave
way to a direct instructional approach with her students. Observations in her classroom
throughout the day revealed a very business-like environment. Students sat in rows widely
separated, and worked quietly at their desks on individual assignments. They turned in their
worksheets promptly when completed, then began the next assignment. Projects were few
and far between, mostly reserved for in the late spring when all of the testing was completed.
Talk in the classroom was limited to sessions when the teacher was directly instructing the
students, giving directions, and making announcements. Socialization and student talk was
noted during passing times between classrooms, as the students lined up to go to special
activities, and at other times when classroom work was not the agenda. References to the
CSAP and "the test" were often heard as a part of the instruction and in the directions for
their work. She felt the ever-presence of the testing monitoring her instructional decisions.
She was not alone in her sentiments about where she began as a teacher, and where she was
now with her entire days filled with test-like behaviors, and an eye for matching content with
the released items.

By contrast, what she and her colleagues did not share with their colleagues in other
schools were their friends' constant posturing, preparing of test items and sample items,
copying and sharing of those with each other on a regular basis. These teachers' particular
school has an above average SES, as noted in the demographics above, whose student body
comes to school without the distractions of daily living experienced by less fortunate
students, and with an already unusual amount of knowledge and experiences that are not
coincidentally aligned with tests such as CSAP. The posturing and prepping of items were
not necessary for them. Their colleagues, however, taught in low SES schools where the
student body, in general, performed one to two grade levels below the stated norms for the
CSAP and other standardized tests. In those schools the stakes were even higher because
they stood to loose substantial resources from the state if they did not score well, or did not
make significant progress over last year's composite scores. For them, teaching to the
formats, to the released items, and to the performance standards came with even more
pressure and stress.

When students followed the requisite formats of the tests and the questions, they
were better able to achieve high scores. The teachers in this school knew that, and made it
one of their objectives of their pedagogies, and infused those formats into their curricula. In
the writing portion, in particular, there was an element of objectivity to the scoring, yet often
the prompts indicated that a subjective answer was necessary. The writing portions were
scored by Kelly Temporaries who looked for certain key words and elements in the students'
responses. If those elements were missing, the scores were lower. That was particularly
problematic for creative students. For example, part of the formula for the writing was to
restate the question within the answer. The difficulty came with those students who
exhibited high intelligence and creativity who gave well constructed and thoughtful answers,
but did not include the key markers for the evaluators. Many teachers believed that the test
scoring was punitive towards these particular students. As Terry suggested:

> Gifted children are not scoring *Advanced* on these things like we want them to. We are getting more high achievers, hard-working kids scoring *Advanced* than truly creative, gifted kids. Because the creative, gifted kids just aren't giving us back our formula. They are really thinking, unfortunately.

When the testing was completed in February, many of these teachers believed that they should continue to teach in the CSAP format and paradigm because these students would again take the next year's version of the tests in the next grade up. The goal among these educators, then, was to "do" CSAP all year long, to "... make it the format in the school throughout the year, so it is all geared around our standards, with CSAP as the model." They believed that if they could make the students comfortable with the format of the tests, then the students could really show the examiners "what they could really do."

PEDAGOGIES OF UNIFORMITY

When a school, district, or state educational institution makes the decision to adopt a set of standards, and its requisite benchmarks and indicators, then there is the probability that an element of sameness appears in the content and the processes of teaching. On the one hand this can be advantageous for schools and other educational institutions because they can indicate where there are gaps in teacher instruction and preparation, in student preparation and learning, and in content knowledge. Filling in or fixing the gaps means that students, teachers, and their communities in general will benefit from a better informed and prepared citizenry. This is rather reminiscent of Hirsch's (1987) <u>Cultural Literacy</u> which raised an outcry among educators over a decade ago. On the other hand, such a movement by institutions precludes the consideration of individual/unique students and their specific strengths and weaknesses. A sameness of expectations and processes in classrooms, then, provides educations for a select segment of students to the detriment of those children who do not fit within the *testing profile* of tests, such as the CSAP, for what counts as proficient knowledge and performance. The hegemonic nature of standardized tests are brought to the fore in just such instances as this.

It is widely accepted that diversity among student populations is ever increasing, and greatly contributes to the richness of any community. To the contrary, in many ways a standardized curriculum requires a homogeneous population among students and teachers for it to be greatly successful. Furthermore, such a curriculum can mean that the uniqueness and strengths of individual teachers are sublimed in order to accomplish the common benchmarks and indicators so valued in high stakes paradigms. Students are denied the advantage of being taught by teachers who have expertise in certain areas which has the potential to contribute to student enrichment. The CSAP testing regimen does not allow for deviations from a particular curriculum, or its requisite pedagogy, else the students, and their teachers by implication, receive low marks on the tests. It seems to be very difficult in the increasing testing climate for students to receive an education marked by excellence in particular areas, thereby undervaluing and under utilizing the human resources within classrooms. As Doug stated:

> [CSAP] does give us something to shoot for. Once we have a chance to look at those items and the release items, a percentage of the items every

year, we have a picture and we can model our own classroom assessments on that. We can instruct to that end product.... How can I adapt what I am doing so that it looks like that, too?.... It's not just my opinion anymore of what I think [the curriculum] should be. Now it is what the general consensus of the state is.

His beliefs indicate that he was altering what he did in the classroom, and the ways in which he approached instruction, in order to align his pedagogy with the format, the content knowledge, and the performances acceptable to the CSAP designers. His statement further marks a significant shift in the trust and the belief by the state as to the efficacy of teachers to deliver a competent curriculum to students in appropriate processes.

In order to better achieve the objectives of instruction in content and processes necessitated by the CSAP testing, the school made a decision to increase its professional development activities. Experts and programs were brought in for "teacher institutes" in their building that specifically addressed gaps in their content and pedagogies that were fundamentally linked with the CSAP testing. More that adopting new math materials which were more closely aligned to the benchmarks and indicators, the district adopted the "Step up to Writing" and "Six Trait Writing" programs because they taught aspects of the single type of writing, the three paragraph essay, tested by the state on the CSAPs. These teachers indicated that each individual school throughout the district was making its own decisions about content, programs, and pedagogical practices based on how their students scored the previous year. As one teacher admitted, "It gives you a basis on which to say, 'This I will do.' 'This is what I will not do.' 'This does not relate to standards, so I'm not doing it.' 'I don't have time to do it.'"

What this meant for the teachers in this school was that the non tested content was given less attention until the testing was completed. Science, social studies, and history in particular were taught cursorily until March. Activities and projects that were open-ended, and accomplished over some length of time with group involvement, were not a part of the testing paradigm. One teacher remarked that such activities "...build confidence. They're fun, if that has any value." This questioning of the value of activities that teach socialization was a shift from recent pedagogical practices wherein a fundamental part of schooling was to socialize children to the norms of society.

What the teachers termed the "fun stuff" was either completely cancelled for the school year, or only tackled during the last month of school when all of the district's testing was completed. As several teachers suggested, keeping focused on the testing precluded doing activities that added enrichment, both academic and social, to the school days. Moreover, the intense focus on teaching regulated by the testing limited the depth of the inquiry by students because there was not enough time to diverge from the core content. The spontaneity of studies that can contribute to a sense of community in classrooms was often lost. One teacher stated that he "[doesn't] do holidays. I just don't have time. I don't do all those holidays, you know, unless somehow I can make it fit a standard that is going to be assessed."

Further elaborating on this idea, he went on to note that because of many shifts in cultural beliefs among the populace, that it was becoming difficult to celebrate holidays in schools, anyway. Many different groups were claiming discrimination if their particular type

of celebration or particular sect was or was not acknowledged. He and others believed that, as far as holidays went, it was best just to not deal with them at all.

GEARING DOWN

One particular phenomenon came to light in the discussions about the ending of the school year that holds significance for teaching and learning, and for society at large. The last of the testing in the regimen was completed a month before school closed for the summer recess. Several of the teachers expressed how relieved they were when April drew to a close, and that they then had time to turn to other curricular pursuits such as dramas, creative writing, field trips and other activities that were shelved during most of the school year, as discussed above. However, there was an attitude that underpinned what the teachers chose to do, and how they approached learning and instruction in the "gearing down" from the intensity of the testing. Terry's statement was representative of these attitudes when she said

> At the end of April, I think we are done. Then we do a lot of field trips, we go swimming at the end of school, we do relax. And most of us felt like school should be over after testing is over, because it feels like babysitting after that. But we are all so utterly exhausted. It is such a mad dash to the finish with the [skills-based test]. We could be joyful and enjoy the children, but we are usually really worn out by that point.... we are still instructing, but there is not that feeling of urgency.

Unarguably, socialization to the norms of society (and School) is an essential part of what constitutes an education in this nation. Children learn patterns of interaction, processes of engagement with others, and how to negotiate and build shared understandings within the social milieu of school. What the teachers, and the students by association, gave up to meet the expectations of the CSAP testing regimen were the social aspects of learning, of being in a community of learners where the language of learning was infused with the life constructs relevant to the students' interactions outside of school, building what Dewey (McDermott, 1981) considered "the stuff of belief and proposition" (p. 713). In the last few weeks of school, the teachers place-held education without truly engaging in a socialization process that would better serve the students in their life pursuits.

DISCUSSION

The focus for the school year was on preparing for the multitude of tests, high stakes or not. Each test required a somewhat different pedagogical approach. The teachers believed that the CSAPs were good tests of performance, but had concerns about the rigor imposed on students both in the testing and in the ratings. Although they believed that testing was necessary as a part of the school's accountability, they had strong reservations about the ways in which the results were used to either reward or punish schools for their performances.

Throughout the academic year, the teachers felt that if the activity could not be measured objectively and statistically in response to one of the Content Standards, then they

would not engage the activity until the testing regimen was over. They believed that they simply could not invest the time in non tested curricula for the majority of the academic year.

The paradigms of learning, then, were set in two venues: the testing and the non testing. The non testing were the valuable social, creative, and interactive constructivist paradigms that were most closely associated with the realities outside of school. The teachers acknowledged these as important to a well rounded education, and worth the time invested once the testing was completed.

One critical concern that may have long term effects was with the main attention focused on the middle and high achievers. The itinerate students who were struggling, who were performing below grade level, were not given the same high level of instruction, or not given the same hopes for achievement. As one teacher termed them, the *throw away kids* were developing into a generation of students who moved often during the school year, and by particular design, often their scores were not counted in the school's composite rating. For schools in the middle and upper middle class neighborhoods, this was not a real issue. However, for many of the inner city and south side schools, and schools on the margins, this issue was of great concern among teachers, as reported by this cohort of teachers.

There are two effects these *throw away kids* can potentially have on education, for which educators must guard against. First, it can allow students to slip through the schooling cracks even more so than now. These students do not contribute to the ratings of the schools, but they do not detract or bring down the ratings either. Teaching them effectively in ways that would promote their growth and development, i.e., earn a *Proficient* rating on their tests, would require time and attention away from those non itinerate students who *do* count towards a school's rating. Conceivably, then, these students could become an invisible minority within the testing community. Funds for schools have a great potential for missing these targets; this group or cohort of students who are in most need of the extra resources.

The second potential effect could be on teachers who are pressured to present high ratings from among their students. As delineated in the discussion above, high stakes testing places heavy demands on teachers' time, energy, and resources. Further, the rumors about individual teacher improvement plans, financial rewards/non rewards, and sanctions could contribute to teachers' unintentional disenfranchisement of itinerate students, or other students with special circumstances such as English Language Learners. As one teacher remarked, the potential for some students not to matter anymore would be "... not because we want them to not matter, but because we are pushed to do something different."

CONCLUSIONS & POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVE EDUCATION

The teachers who participated in this project acknowledged that they indeed were concerned with their students achieving high marks on the array of standardized tests administered in their school. They voiced these concerns at the commencement of the school year, and returned to this theme throughout the interviews. Analysis of the data showed how each teacher made a concerted effort to practice "testing," using materials provided to them by their school, some of which consisted of extracts from the previous year's tests. Furthermore, classroom observations showed how teachers altered their pedagogies from the fall semester in order to *gear-up for the onslaught* of tests. While they felt

concerns about the shifts in their pedagogies, and the affects on their students' learning, they were pragmatic about it. Finally, although the teachers adhered to teaching to the test paradigm, they individually strove to ameliorate the stress on their students in different ways.

This research contributes to the emerging body of knowledge centered on the changes in classroom instruction as a direct result of an expanded testing regimen, and can serve as an indicator of a developing situation within our local public schools. The outcry for accountability was heard and responded to by local and state educational institutions. The long range affects of the shifting pedagogies are yet to be known. Because this project was focused on one local school, the results may have direct implications for other schools in the area. The analysis highlighted the fact that other schools may be experiencing similar phenomena.

Moreover, the results of this work can assist Departments of Teacher Education in their missions to educate teachers for contemporary classrooms. The findings can inform the instruction of teacher candidates in pedagogical strategies for maintaining best practices within the regimen of increasing emphasis on high scores on standardized tests mandated by Boards of Higher Education, and by local school authorities. Researchers are calling for more investigations to establish a deeper base of understanding, and for thoughts and suggestions for alternatives to accountability, other than standardized tests (Hoffman, Assaf & Scott, 2001).

Finally, it is not unusual to be left with more questions as the research data continues to direct the inquiry. Some such questions might be: If you have a good test, then can you have good teaching if you teach to the test? How can we have significant measures of accountability, but without using standardized tests? How can the curricula of teacher education programs reflect what is occurring in schools?

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A MISSING ART FORM IN THE PLANNING FOR THE EDUCATION OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS: THE LYRICS OF CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING, RAP MUSIC & THE EDUCATION OF DISADVANTAGED AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Melvin T. Peters
Eastern Michigan University

The use of specific forms of rap lyrics within school curricula (language, history, and social studies classes especially) is rich with potential for enhancing the educational experience of those who are the music's core audience. This kind of music has made the world sit up and take notice because of it challenging intelligence, poly-rhythmically supported by innovative uses of the African American musical tradition. This essay examines: the intellectual background of this musical form, some of the pedagogical uses for consciousness raising rap music and the benefits of that use with a target audience that is sorely in need of new educational approaches.

INTRODUCTION

Rap music, the last form of African American popular culture to come forth in the 20th century has, like jazz and blues before it, overcome a large amount of resistance to attain its highly influential, much emulated international acclaim. It is not too much to say that it has become an integral part of international youth culture; as such this music is a great source of both intense interest and pride for an African American youth that has huge educational achievement gaps. The use of specific forms of rap lyrics within school curricula (language, history, and social studies classes especially) is rich with potential for enhancing the educational experience of those who are the music's core audience. I refer here to that branch of the music that is the direct descendent of the socio-political music that broke through in the middle of the 1960s, the work of the likes of Nina Simone, Curtis Mayfield, James Brown, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder and the hard-core pure poets: The Last Poets and Gil Scott-Heron are especially important here, and Stevie Wonder; all of whom lead to the similarly socially engaged reggae music in Jamaica of the likes of Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, U Roy, Black Uhuru, et. al., which itself swept the world. Consciousness raising rap music is merely entertainment, it is best known as what one its prime movers, KRS-ONE has named the form, "edutainment" (Boogie Down Productions 13). In short, Black music became legendarily well known as the branch of popular culture that specialized in a forum for ideas rather than escapism. This kind of music has made the world sit up and take notice because of it challenging intelligence, poly-rhythmically supported by innovative uses of the African American musical tradition. As Jalal Nurridin (one of The Last Poets) put it, "The reason rap caused so much excitement/ was because the message contained/ a serious indictment" (Jalal 8). This essay examines: the intellectual background of this musical form, some of the

pedagogical uses for consciousness raising rap music and the benefits of that use with a target audience that is sorely in need of new educational approaches.

MAKING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN RAP MUSIC AND CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING IN SCHOOLING

Its not well enough known that since the emergence of message-centered, conscious rap music in the early 1980s it has played and continues to play an important, role in stimulating an interest in the democratization of education in the USA. The signature song of conscious rap was 1982's "The Message" by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, brought the longstanding problems (low teacher expectations, lack of student motivation and self esteem, and out of control buildings) associated with the education of urban African Americans into focus among its comprehensive array of themes. The narrator voice, a self described recipient of a "bum education" relates that, "My son said, 'Daddy I don't want to go to school/ 'Cause the teacher's a jerk, he must think I'm a fool? And all the kids smoke reefer." The lyric depicts the impact of America's urban blight of the 1980s on misdirecting the youth and highlights the all to common educational result, "You say I'm cool, huh, I'm no fool'/ But then you wind up dropping out of high school/ Now you're unemployed, all non-void" (Grandmaster Flash 6). This branch of the music is in part obscured beneath the much more publicized, shameful depravity of gangster rap with all of its violent misogynistic tribal war. Serious, social engagement, idea-centered rap lyricism, as well as containing hundreds of songs suitable for classroom use, continues to express an abiding interest in the educational deprivation of the African American youth as a central theme.

This genre has consistently offered a rigorous and un-relenting critique of the causes and effects of that deprivation. It cannot be stressed enough that the assessments of these artists are completely in concert with what African American spokespersons have been saying for three centuries. In 1829, David Walker aptly charged that, "It is a notorious fact, the major part of white Americans have, every since we have been among them, tried to keep us ignorant" (Walker 54). All of W.E.B. Du Bois' writing on the subject has beaten this drum. By 1933, Carter G. Woodson, using the racist curriculum as a guide, was warning of the complex dangers that lurked in the fact that even African Americans in the segregated colleges were being trained to accept second-class citizenship. "The same educational process that stimulates the oppressor with the thought that that he is everything and has accomplished everything that is worthwhile, depresses and crushes the at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not amount to much" (Woodson 181). By 2001, William Watkins was reporting (in his THE WHITE ARCHITECTS OF BLACK EDUCATION: IDEOLOGY AND POWER, 1865-195) on the intimate details of the white supremacist beliefs of the promoters of this kind of subservient educational training. With the short-lived exceptions of the nineteenth and twentieth Reconstruction periods in American history, American public schools' mixture of political dominance and a mono-cultural curriculum have severely mis-educated African American students.

The inability of these schools to successfully engage and educate contemporary African American students, especially the males, has become gruesomely legendary. It is very clear that these students are being lost in mass numbers by the time they reach the high

school level. In 1988, for example, in Detroit, "40% of adult Black males were functionally illiterate" (Smitherman & Watson 11). The dropout rates provide a shameful, staggering testimony to the educational system's failure. "In 1992, the Black male high school dropout rate was estimated to be as high as 60% in some urban areas" (12). When compared to European Americans African American students, "are twice as likely to dropout of high school and are suspended three times as often" (Hopkins 3). The crisis with male underachievement is dramatically acute, since even those that remain in school, "tend to fall behind other race-sex groups in reading and math" (Smitherman & Watson 12). In 1991 it was reported, "there were only two Black males for every three Black females on U.S. college campuses" (14). This level of deplorable statistics reveal a calamity that is desperately in need of innovation in curriculum, pedagogical technique, and in teacher training (both in service and higher educational training).

It must be underscored that African American scholars in the field of Education, as well as teachers in the proliferating alternative schools and on the frontlines of public schools have long recognized the need for a heightened and innovative use of the culture of the oppressed in the classroom as an antidote to the to the inability of standard techniques to interest at-risk students in particular. One scholar has written, "the culture of the target group must be taken into account if the curricula is to have full utility for that cultural group" (Nobles 9). Another has stated the case this way, schooling, "for Black males must be uniquely crafted to accommodate their various learning styles and designed to understand their particular culture" (Hopkins 84). Wade Nobles has cogently discussed the importance of infusing school curriculums with strategies of presenting the context and the historical development of African American art, and its functional continuity, as a means of engaging the minds of the target group (Nobles 10-11). Asa Hilliard has written eloquently on the importance of understanding cultural style in both learning and teaching (Hilliard TMWU 173). Ronnie Hopkins knowingly wonders if such students, "resist and reject the culture of public schooling because they are that it is myth that schools necessarily adequately prepare them and other students for survival and citizenship in our society... they see the daily annihilation of Black males in the public schools" (Hopkins 80).

Conscious rap lyricists themselves have long been engaged in this debate. The leader of one of rap's most internationally renown groups, Public Enemy, observes in his book, "Without proper education from a Black perspective to Black youth we're lost. Our youth are uncontrollable right now, because they have anything preparing them for life as Black people (Chuck D 33). Dead Prez's song "They Schools" charges that, "they ain't teaching us nothing related to solvin our own problems... that's why niggas be droppin out that shit cuz it don't relate" (Dead Prez 3). The lyricism of culturally aware African American artists is acutely aware of the crisis in the education of their core audience. Many of their songs provide a rich source of pedagogical tools with which to do battle with the problem.

THE FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF RAP MUSIC IN THE CURRICULUM

There is no question that rap music captivates the minds of African American youth in particular and represents an inherent interest that can be pedagogically utilized. One educator has pointed out that, "97% of African American youth like rap and buy 50% of all the music in America" (Kunjufu 72). One rapper has stated that for the youth the

words of rappers, "are taken as gospel truth, more than those of parents and teachers" (Paris 213). Another has bluntly stated that the youth are, "learning more from the videos and Rap songs than they're learning from the schools" (Chuck D 33). Still another has expressed both the seriousness of the situation by noting the importance of genre in the socialization of the young and the academic potential that lies within that interest. He observes with that commercial rap is already educating, "the urban youth, like it or not", and that furthermore, "These soliloquies explain our people's lack of stability" (Ras Kass 1). Conscious rap provides a means of capitalizing on this student interest because of the thoughtful thoroughness of its concern with being a major advocate of the idea that, in the words of a 1989 song title by Kool Moe Dee, "Knowledge is King.".

An important message that this lyricism imparts is the need for a greater use of Black history and culture in the schools as means of engaging the youths' attention. Through rap's sampling of sound-bites of the actual voices of crucial historical figures like Malcolm X (the most sampled voice of all), Martin Luther King, Kwame Toure (Stokely Carmichael), Huey P. Newton, Assata Shakur, and Louis Farrakhan, the music has long been a force in regenerating interest in African American history and its cultural heroes that have been rejected and neglected by the educational establishment. The influence of the oppositional logic in the content of this music's lyricism directly stimulate curriculum change and fueled student demands for the further development of African American Studies departments and programs in higher education in the early 1990s. Furthermore, it has contributed to the steady growth of African-centered alternative public schools throughout the USA. There is an expanding body of multidisciplinary pedagogical theory and classroom practice that focuses on the role rap's messages can play in the 21st century education of African American youth.

In the world of rap music, there is a large body of conscious rap lyricism. This genre of rap, which is rarely heard on America's establishment media outlets and even more rarely made into videos for American TV, springs directly from the tradition of the West African griots, the anti-slavery literary and folk poetry of the 19th century, the liberated and liberating poetry of the later 1960s and 1970s as fashioned by the still active Amiri Baraka. From the earliest days, rap has produced artist/ activists that have sought to be re-educators of its core audience by presenting a wide range of thematic ideas from a variety of disciplines including: religion, communications, criminal justice (police brutality and racial profiling), psychology, mathematics, nutrition and health, ancient and modern history, psychology, philosophy, literature, linguistics, and (of course) education.

Conscious rap demonstrates the cultural continuity of the Black literary aesthetic in its concern with functional art and collective responsibility. The foundations of knowledge in conscious rap rests on the substantial collective work of the seminal artists still on the scene, whose careers span two decades of recording rappers such as: Melle Mel (author of "The Message"), Rakim Allah, Chuck D of Public Enemy, X-Clan, Brand Nubian, Queen Latifah, KRS-ONE, Poor Righteous Teachers, GURU of Gangstarr,and Paris. Perhaps the best indication of the audacious socio-politics so common to conscious rappers is viewed in Paris' 1993 essay, "... A Rapper's Domestic Policy Plan: How Clinton Can Bring Hope to Alienated Black America" an open letter directed to the then recently inaugurated president:

> As you know, there are now more black men in prison...
> than in college.... address the crisis of public education. The

> inequality of resources between schools in rich neighborhoods
> and schools in poor neighborhoods is a national disgrace. You
> must pay the highest salaries to the best teachers as an incentive
> to teach in the inner cities, while funding a national scholarship
> to recruit people of color to the profession of teaching. Promote
> a multicultural curriculum to reflect multicultural America and
> counteract the alienation felt by so many (Paris 212 & 214)

Currently the "old school" are joined by such "new school" culture-bearers and socio-political visionaries as The Roots, Common (Sense), Lauryn Hill, Ras Kass, The Coup, Goodie Mob, Sarah Jones, Ursula Rucker, Killah Priest, Dead Prez, Mos Def and Talib Kweli of Blackstar, (a short list). Conscious rapp activists have a history of using their art for progressive causes such as is evidenced by their involvement with the anti-apartheid recording SUN CITY (1984), and their production: of the anti-youth violence recording SELF-DESTRUCTION (1989), the anti-prison industry complex collection NO MORE PRISONS (1999), and the Abner Loeuma/ Amadou Diallo focused compilation HIP HOP FOR RESPECT (2000).

RAP MUSIC AND CULTURAL SYNCHRONIZATION BETWEEN TEACHER AND LEARNER THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF DIFFERENTIAL PEDAGOGICAL STYLES

Rap lyricism provides a fruitful instructional means of validating the African American experience. The importance of investigating the pedagogical uses which it can serve the youth is perhaps best expressed in the opinion of Paris cautioning his peers that, "Their words are taken as the gospel truth, more than those of parents and teachers" (Paris 213). The multidisciplinary breadth of instructional possibilities found in rap music's educator/ scholars Joyce King and Thomasyne Wilson have cogently observed thematic substance:

> The truth-seeking testimony of politically conscious rappers is an
> example of the African oral tradition of griot-truth speakers.... At
> its best rap music can be seen as an expressive form of cultural
> resistance, which shows us what, we need to approach and attend
> to in ourselves.... this rap art form suggests possibilities for
> educators to use the fragments of cultural memory and
> human consciousness reflected in the music to develop
> Diasporan literacy.... The lyrics of rap music and its cultural forms
> can be the focus of critical discussion and analysis. This might be
> a point of struggle for teachers who want to develop a
> 'meaningfully relevant' curriculum (284-285).

The works of the conscious artists invariably speak to the weighty educational issues focused on in the above, typically in the commanding tone of "old school" master KRS-ONE's classic song "You Must Learn." Poor Righteous Teachers' NEW WORLD ORDER (1996) is an extremely important collection in this vein. In the song "We Dat Nice", the lead voice, (Wise Intelligent) declares: "My occupation is to stimulate you your elevation/ To motivate

and advocate the revelation/ I shine the light that knowledge ignites" (PRT 13). On the song "Conscious Style" they call for a renewal of the message music of the 1960s, while recalling the ancient wisdom of ancient Egypt. The cut asks: "Where all the teachers went with all that pro-Black shit/ I mean the conscious niggas who used to chat like this/ See I remember yesterday when yall was Gods and Earths/ Egyptians, metaphysicians on the verge of giving birth/ To understandin and plantin seeds that grow" (PRT 10). On "Word Iz Life" they make direct reference to the advanced African-centered scholarship of Cheikh Anta Diop, John Henrik Clarke, and Josef ben-Jochannan (3). Ras Kass' offers an objective perspective on the origins and contemporary relevance of white racism in his 1996 song, "The Nature of Threat"... In 1998 he released the theologically astute "Interview With a Vampire", which elaborates on the origin and practice of religion and features a presentation of the booming voices of God and the devil. The latest conscious rage in the USA is the controversial group dead prez, whose song "They Schools" provide a scathing indictment of the educational establishment, "They schools ain't teachin us, what we need to know to survive/ They schools don't educate, all they teach the people is lies" (Dead Prez 3).

Especially crucial in rap music's potential to enhance the education of disadvantaged African American students is in the disciplines of linguistics and literature. As the quotations above indicate, the form's authenticity hinges on its use Ebonics as the language of choice. It is all too well known that language remains a major barrier blocking educational access of those for whom standard English is not their natural tongue. The scholarship of Geneva Smitherman's (especially in) TALKIN THAT TALK: LANGUAGE, CULTURE & EDUCATION (2000) and John Baugh's OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF SLAVES: AFRICAN AMERICAN LANGUAGE & EDUCATIONAL MALPRACTICE (1999) are both filled with practical ways of aiding students to attain fluency in the use of the language patterns of American majority.

CONCLUSION

The best of rap holds the potential to bring real live drama into contemporary literature classes. It brings with it not only all the standard motifs of the poetic art, but also the distinctively Black ones: the use of the dozens, signifying, virtuoso free-rhyming, extended enumerating, and many startling stylized forms of exaggerated imagery. All of which are present in a sterling example of conscious rap in the following work by the legendary Chuck D of Public Enemy, "Politics of Sneaker Pimps", that demonstrates the contemporary griot's expansive range of thematic scope. The piece, which is part of the soundtrack of Spike Lee's HE GOT GAME (1998) film, is total proof of the facts that poetry is an art which deals in the compression of experience and conscious rap has multidisciplinary (athletics, advertising, marketing, economics, and fashion) uses in the classroom. This poem both gets at the essence of Walter La Feber's textbook MICHAEL JORDAN & THE NEW GLOBAL CAPITALISM and moves beyond it, in its focus on personalizing the psychological ramifications of multinational capitalism's exploitation of non-white people on an international scale:

On the outs I lace up, the world I face up
To score on anybody, its war on everybody
The new guys come in blood hot between the eyes

As long as they sellin that merchandise
And what goes in don't come back
The color might be green, but its also black
And red I know many heads that spent bloodshed
Cursed in Converses, dead in pro Keds
Now every Tom, Dick or Harry, or Joe Smith
Skip the Spauldings, Ponys and K-Swiss
High school and college coaches gettin dollars
With kickbacks in scholarships, them slave ships

(Chorus):
Converses for the pros kids with Filas, Reebok, New Balance, my
Adidas
Ain't part of their clique, spending all the cheddar on kicks
B.S. in the politics
Politics of the sneaker pimps (4 times)

Hey, Dr. J where you got those moves?
Was it from gettin high in the school?
Can it be the shoes?
Truth is truth, I tear the fuckin roof off the house
Expose them foes with my mouth
I see corporate hands in foreign lands
With the man behind the man getting paid behind the man
I hold the rocket stop the hand in pocket
200 a pair but I'm addicted to the gear
They'll make me do things on the court to amaze ya
I heard they made 'em for a buck-8 in Asia
They came a long way baby
Since Clyde Frazier had Pumas
Pullin madd consumers
Them Filas I'm feelin
But I can't touch the ceiling
Them New Balance hits 120 million
The last thing I need is Adidas terminatin my contract
For wearing those old pair of wack
Reebok low tops covered up by floppy socks
Gave a jump shot before I got jumped and shot
Duckin a word from my sponsor
Tryin to end my year like Kwanzaa
(Chorus)

Been paid since the 8th grade
11th grader, pop the champagne
12th grade start the campaign
Gettin fame sign my name in the dotted frame

Nike got me pullin re's and g's
Shit! I could get shot for these
Please God give me 20 more years on these knees
To maintain without this game I gotta do keys
And I don't want to go there cause its fuckin everywhere
Factories want to see me, kids want to be me
Behind the wheels and endorsement deals
Its the politics and the tricks behind the kicks

"Politics of the Sneaker Pimps" is only one hundreds of conscious rap lyrics that illustrate how the genre coincides with educational scholarship such as Asa Hilliard's THE AROON WITHIN US: ESSAYS ON AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY SOCIALIZATION (1995) and INFUSION OF AFRICAN & AFRICAN AMERICAN CONTENT IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM (1990). It is an expansive form of music that fully illuminates the African American condition in a genre that is of crucial importance to the students themselves.

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PLANNING AND CHANGING: EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA SINCE THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Tak Cheung Chan
Georgia Southern University

The focus of the Central Government after the Cultural Revolution was to reconstruct its economic system to address countrywide poverty and unemployment problems. Only limited funding was granted to implement educational plans formulated at that time. It was not until the decentralization policy was confirmed that local governments were given a free hand to solicit other alternate funding in support of education. This articles traces the development of Education in China after the Cultural Revolution and accounts for the dramatic changes that took place after the watershed in China's history.

INTRODUCTION

The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) in China totally destroyed the educational planning system of the country. During that time, education in China was in chaos: All schools and universities were closed; students either joined the red guards or wandered along the streets; teachers were sent to serve as farmers or laborers in the revolutionary reform units; and knowledge or academic performance was associated with evils. (Unger, 1982) No proper order could be maintained in China during the Cultural Revolution years, and educational planning was almost unheard of. In fact, many top educational planners in the Central Government and the provincial governments lost power. Definitely, political stability, not educational planning, was the priority of the time.

After the Cultural Revolution was over, the country was left in such a devastating condition that no properly equipped school building was available, no adequate supply of teachers in all teaching fields could be secured, no approved funding for reconstruction was appropriated, and no direction for systematic planning for education was given. The most difficult problem facing Chinese education at that time was the vast number of students who were waiting to go back to school. (Pepper, 1990) This student population consisted of those who received no education in the past ten years and those who were newly born during the Cultural Revolution. When educators declared a state of emergency and asked for immediate assistance to address the deplorable situation, similar kinds of requests were also heard from all lines of work all over the country (Chien, 1982).

What was brought up to the forefront of attention was the modernization movement in four areas: agriculture, industry, military and technology (Deng, 1983). The development of education was mentioned as the ground support for each of the modernization areas. However, educational development was not given priority funding.

Obviously, the focus of the Central Government after the Cultural Revolution was to reconstruct its economic system to address countrywide poverty and unemployment problems. Only limited funding was granted to implement educational plans formulated at that time. It was not until the decentralization policy was confirmed that local governments were given a free hand to solicit other alternate funding in support of education (Chien, 1987).

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES

Since the beginning of the modernization movement, China has been undergoing enormous social and economic changes that have had significant impact on its educational development. Therefore, it is impossible to review all the educational improvements in China in the last two decades without referring to the social and economic changes that have taken place (Hu, 1998).

One of the first moves towards social and economic reforms in China was to manage the rapid population growth that had slowed down the economic development of the country. As a result, the "one child per family" plan has become a national policy since then. Recent report indicates that the population growth in China is successfully under control (Sing Tao Yat Pao, September 25, 1998).

Second, to experiment on the effectiveness of free economy, special economic zones have been established to practice some forms of free trade and open market. On the other hand, managers of government owned businesses have been given full authority to manage the entire operation with the least intervention from the government (Hu, 1998).

The third major change in economy nationwide was the decentralization of authority. Under this economic construct, many areas of the centrally controlled development were designated to local management. In this way, more dollars are left to the discretionary use of the local governments. Along with this was the introduction of free job market that is gradually replacing the central manpower planning system (Hayhoe, 1999; Sing Tao Yat Pao, August 8, 1997).

Fourth, the environment for foreign investment has been greatly improved. Foreign investors have been encouraged to start their businesses in sole proprietorship or in any format of joint venture with the government. Simultaneously China has been growing strongly in export trade and overseas investments (Hu, 1998).

Fifth, the rapid economic development of urban areas has drawn many rural residents to urban areas. They ignored the residential restrictions and stayed in the urban areas for better job opportunities. At the same time, many rural residents who preferred to remain in rural areas have started small businesses that contribute to the change of economic structure in these areas (Shek, 1986).

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT ON EDUCATION

The social and economic changes of recent years in China have had an enormous impact on the educational development of the country. Since the restructure of the

country's economic framework, the demand for educational support of businesses and industries has been tremendous. The pressure for educational reform to cope with social and economic changes was felt in every level of education. Specifically, concern for the single child in the family, overcrowding urban schools, student dropout in rural areas, teacher shortage, and the need for quality education have been the typical educational issues of the time (Chan, 1997).

The New Generation
The "one child per family" policy has created a new generation consisting mostly of the family favorite males. This young generation of Chinese is generally brought up in well-protected environments where challenges for hardship are few. On the other hand, children in one-child families have become the center of attention and enjoyed the advantage of full family support and high parental expectation (Chan, 1997; Zheng, 1992). The educational development and the growth pattern of this unique generation of children have drawn the attention of educators, particularly at the elementary and secondary school levels.

Pressure on Urban Schools
Economic reforms in the Chinese cities have generated substantial amount of monetary benefits to be attractive to people in the rural areas. Therefore, more and more rural people have ignored the residential restriction to come to work in the cities. Consequently, all the city school systems have felt the pressure of insufficient educational manpower and resources to handle such a continuously increasing load of pupil population (Sing Tao Yat Pao, 1997, March 15). As a result, overcrowded schools, sharing of supplies and equipment, double sessions, and deferred school admission to up-to-age children have been the common practices in city schools.

Student Dropout in Rural Areas
As small businesses and industries started in rural areas, the basic economic structure of villages has changed. While new businesses need people to work, poor village families need some extra income. Consequently, many parents in rural areas ignore the mandatory education law and allow their children to work in factories instead of going to schools. Therefore, the student dropout rate in the rural areas was once recorded as much as thirty-eight percent (General Task Force, 1997; Shanghai Intelligence Development Institute, 1996; Zheng, 1992).

Shortage of Teachers
The shortage of teachers in China has been serious especially in the late 1970s and early 1980s because many teachers gave up their teaching positions to work for companies that could offer higher pay. This shortage of teachers is particularly serious in foreign language studies, science, and vocational education. The situation is worsened by increased student enrollment and limited supply of teachers from the colleges of education and

foreign language institutes. The shortage of teachers continues to be felt both at the public school and the university levels especially in the rural areas (Zheng, 1992).

Demand for Quality Education

When foreign companies started to develop plans to establish their markets in China, local businesses, feeling the pressure of foreign "aggression", have initiated their protective measures and counter attack strategies. In this competition, both local and foreign businesses strive to recruit the best-qualified local workers on their staff. In addition, many parents begin to see the connection between more education and higher pay. The result is that educational institutions are under pressure from parents, local businessmen and foreign investors to restructure their programs to better suit the needs of the business world (Sing Tao Yat Pao, 1997, September 10; Sou, 1996) . This demand for quality education is felt from elementary schools to higher education institutes, especially from vocational institutes (Chen, 1998).

The Values of Education

The focus of traditional Confucian education was the preparation of individuals with high moral standard and excellent personality to serve mankind. Under the direction of the Chinese Communist Party, the educational program has focused on the value of services to the people, to the country and to Communism. However, with the new economic policy, the value of education has changed to the more practical thinking of associating better economic benefit with higher educational qualifications (Guan, 1996).

DIRECTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Maximizing the Sources of Educational Revenue

In 1985, the Central Government instructed the local governments to ensure an annual increase in their education budget to allow a higher per pupil education expenditure. The instruction was intended to put pressure on the local authorities to contribute additional dollars to education every year. However, because of the economic differences all over the country, the instruction was not strictly followed especially in the poor remote areas (Zheng, 1992).

In higher education, policy makers in China have been focusing on three main issues to maximize the sources of revenue for the higher education institutes. First, local governments of all levels including provinces, districts, counties and villages were encouraged to participate in the development of higher education. The Central Government has offered assistance by reducing local taxes to the Central Government. The local governments have been mobilizing their effort to establish higher education institutes of their own (Chinese Educational Finance Bureau, 1988). Second, the decision to allow higher education institutes to organize inservice activities and conduct research for businesses and industries has brought about considerable revenue to help fund the educational programs and the staff benefits of many institutes. Besides, the shops and

small businesses operated by different departments help pay for some departmental expenses too (Zheng, 1992). Third, the policy of free higher education was revised. A fee schedule has been initiated for all university students, except for graduates and college of education students.

In elementary and secondary education, one of the measures to increase educational revenue initiated by the Central Government was to allow the local governments to raise a 1 to 2 percent tax on local businesses for educational use. Evidently, this has been the most successful attempt to help finance education (Zheng, 1992). This small percentage of education tax does not seem to bother the local businesses because they see the investment on education will result in better-prepared graduates to work for them.

Additionally, the Central Government has encouraged the opening of schools and universities by private entities both on profit-making and non-profit-making basis (Sing Tao Yat Pao, 1997 August 16; Sing Tao Yat Pao, 1997, December 3). At the same time, the door for contributions to public or private education is wide open (Sing Tao Yat Pao, 1997 March 7).

Decentralization of Authorities

For years, the Central Government established educational policies that were strictly followed by all provinces. The success of these policies had to depend on very accurate planning on the part of the Central Government in understanding local needs. However, when local needs in a big country like China are so diverse, any uniform planning effort for the entire country by the Central Government is most difficult. Therefore, what frequently happened before was the Central Government established educational goals local educational agencies could not meet or published educational directions they could not follow. Some local governments simply paid lip service to the Central Government while on the other hand did some realistic planning of their own to meet their needs (Zheng, 1992).

The years after the Cultural Revolution saw the gradual change in this central planning effort. Recognizing the need disparities of the many areas, the Central Government has decided to adopt a decentralization policy to allow local governments certain degrees of flexibility in carrying out the educational policies of the Central Government. The rationale behind this change is the belief that local educators know what suits their system best. A classic example of this decentralization effort is the goal setting of mandatory education. Different geographical areas were allowed to set their own goals that were realistic to themselves (Zheng, 1992).

The decentralization policy was successfully experimented in individual educational institutes. In higher education today, many presidents have been assigned with full administrative responsibilities, quite different from years ago when they had to share authorities with the Communist Party Secretary on campus. The presidents in turn assign responsibilities to the department heads and lecturers (Rai, 1994). In elementary and secondary schools, principals have been entrusted with full administrative authority of the schools. Like the site-based management idea in America, many educational

decisions including resource allocation have been actually made by principals and teachers in the building level. Additionally, under the direction of the Central Government, local educational entities have been allowed to implement uniform national curricula with textbooks and materials selected to suit local needs (Sing Tao Yat Pao, 1998, May 23).

The decentralization of educational authorities has been well received by both the Central Government and the local educational authorities. The Central Government feels the relief of central planning burden, whereas the local governments feel the pride of empowerment. However, the key to the success of this decentralization policy is the tax relief attachment that lends financial support to the local governments.

Change in Manpower Planning

For a long time since the Communist Chinese Government was established, manpower planning and utilization had been a Central Government coordinated project. A master plan was divided into provincial plans and then further sub-divided into county plans. Educational institutions of different levels had been assigned with the responsibility of preparing different types of labor to meet the projected employment needs. As a result, the pressure was on the schools to plan and perform the student placement task. Students were given no choice in their study areas and no freedom to work in occupations of their preference.

The change began in the Special Economic Zones in which development opportunities have attracted many foreign investments. When employment opportunities were plenty, the government's central planning for manpower utilization seemed superfluous. The employment markets in the Special Economic Zones were open for competition. The need for manpower was totally adjusted by basic supply and demand. It did not take long for the same manpower model to be experimented in many places all over China. Since 1986, some universities have stopped planning for employment for their graduates. The abandonment of the central manpower planning system was gradual (Hayhoe, 1999).

The effect of this change in manpower planning on education is positive. Schools can now focus on the development of their educational goals. Academic freedom can be restored on school campuses where students are advised and encouraged to study in their areas of interest. The change of educational environment can be explicitly seen in vocational education. "Get training first and employment later" is the slogan that speaks for itself. As a matter of fact, the recently reorganized vocational schools clearly declare "no job arrangement" at time of graduation. In big cities and especially in the Special Economic Zones, unemployment is not a serious problem because of economic prosperity (Shenzhen Research Institute of Educational Science, 1986). All vocational schools in these areas have been very busy expanding their programs to meet the great demand for skilled workers and management staff.

INCRESE IN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Three of the greatest achievements in educational improvement after the Cultural Revolution were the mandatory education, the vocational education reform and the open policy in higher education (Chan, 1999). Because of their direct impact on educational opportunities, these educational endeavors will have long lasting effect in the history of Chinese education. Chinese educational planners are complimented for their vision in identifying the most critical areas of reform and acting courageously to address the most pressing problems of the time.

Mandatory Education
The long awaited Mandatory Education Act finally came in 1986. It requires a minimum of nine years of schooling for all up-to-age children (Department of Foreign Affairs of the State Education Commission of the P.R.C., 1994a). However, when the Central Government recognized the economic differences of various parts of the country, the Act was amended to have mandatory education goals accomplished at different times by geographical areas. The passing of the Mandatory Education Act is a landmark event in Chinese education because of its historical significance of addressing the illiteracy problem in the country. Even though mandatory education encountered much difficulty in its implementation, it has been well received by educators as a progressive legislation and perceived by the general public as a necessary movement towards social improvement. It may take many years for China to achieve its mandatory education goals (Zho, 1987). However, it is universally recognized that the mandatory education program is heading for the right direction (Chen, 1998).

Vocational Education
Before the 1980's, vocational education in China was offered in the senior secondary schools as one of the learning tracks for vocational bound students. In addition, some programs were also designed for business employees as part of their inservice training. Under this configuration, university bound secondary school graduates who failed in their admission to university found it difficult to change their career path to vocational occupations. As a result, many students were lost in the crossroad of universities and vocational schools (Zheng, 1982).

This difficult situation was relieved when a new form of vocational schools was introduced in the early 1980's. These new vocational schools were mainly designed as post-secondary junior institutes to accommodate any secondary school graduates who planned to pursue a career in the vocational field but had no previous vocational courses in secondary schools. In curriculum planning, these vocational schools focus on offering courses of training mostly in service areas not yet covered by other vocational schools (Dai, 1996). Since the first one of these new vocational schools started, many more have been established. The program has received such great publicity that big businesses have started contracting these vocational schools for training future employees. This new offering of vocational education opportunity proves to be a great success. It helps resolve

social problems and enhance the status of vocational education (Department of Foreign Affairs of the State Education Commission of the P.R.C, 1994b; Ye, 1996).

Higher Education

The greatest achievement of higher education in China has been to offer additional opportunities for students to receive higher education. Competition for admission to university is keen because of the increasing demand for knowledge and skill as a result of the economic boom. Never in the history of China was higher education more demanding than it is today. There was a time after the Cultural Revolution that the Central Government strongly encouraged local governments to support higher education. As a result, many new sub-standard post-secondary institutes were established. It took many years of consolidation effort to put these post-secondary institutes back to track (Zheng, 1982). The next attempt to open higher education opportunities is to turn to the development of non-traditional higher education in the form of distance learning. Distance learning in higher education in China is operated by offering programs mainly through television network and CERNET (Tan, 1997). Students completing the distance learning degrees and successfully passing the public open examination are recognized on equal status as traditional university graduates. It is estimated that about forty percent of the current college students are in the distance learning programs (Shu, 1998). Even though distance learning cannot solve all China's higher education problems, at least it provides many learning opportunities to quench the students' thirst for knowledge.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

One of the highlights of the educational reform movement is the improvement of the quality of education. The Cultural Revolution did such damage to education that when schools were reopened afterwards, there was not much basic educational resources left for instructional use (Hayhoe, 1999). It took almost an entire decade to get the educational programs back on the ground. What followed next was the great mission of educational quality improvement.

Quality improvement in higher education is achieved by consolidating smaller colleges, restricting the establishment of sub-standard colleges and the expansion of the graduate programs. The consolidation approach aimed at pulling resources together to achieve higher goals. Locally supported junior colleges of less than a thousand students could not offer much of a quality program to the students because of their limited resources. A careful study of local needs revealed that many of these junior colleges could be consolidated to achieve greater efficiency. Even though consolidation of educational institutes has not been easy, many recommended consolidations have been accomplished and more are still being scheduled. Along with that, any application for establishing new colleges has been very stringently screened to ensure education quality. Since the early 1980's, China has initiated its academic degree programs. Not only have universities strengthened its bachelor's program, but also have worked diligently to expand their graduate programs to the highest academic degree (Department of Foreign Affairs of the

State Education Commission of the P.R.C., 1994c). Accreditation arrangements have been made with other foreign countries for academic recognition. China's academic exchanges with other countries are frequent. In legislation, the Vocational and Technical Education Law, the Academic Degree Law, and the Higher Education Law were passed during this period to improve the higher education structure (Department of Foreign Affairs of the State Education Commission of the P.R.C., 1994b; Department of Foreign Affairs of the State Education Commission of the P.R.C., 1994c).

In elementary and secondary education, to cope with the development of mandatory education, the school curricula have been restructured to reflect academic emphasis on practical life experiences (Sing Tao Yat Pao, 1998, May 23). The Communist ideological hold on school curriculum has weakened. In addition to the core curriculum, students are now encouraged to develop their interest to the best of their potential. Since the central manpower planning system is diminishing, educators are now in a better position to focus on the development of students as individuals (Sun, 1996). To add to this educational improvement effort is the Government's decision to open up the education market for private competition. Private schools, whether profit making or non-profit-making, are invited to participate in this educational reform effort. They challenge the public schools by providing quality programs to children of the affordable parents. In education legislation, the Mandatory Education Law, the Teachers' Law, and the Protection of Juvenile Law were enacted to facilitate the educational advancement of the country.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM ORIENTATIONS

The issues of educational reform in China cannot be fully understood without reviewing their orientations that are deeply rooted in historical, political, and economic perspectives. In the history of the People's Republic of China, reforms carried a strong political sense. The modernization movement was politically launched as a means to re-unite the Chinese leaders who were sharply divided after the Cultural Revolution and also as a way to refocus the attention of the entire country to move forward at the end of a disaster.

On the other hand, the economic perspectives can be traced back to the traditional Chinese political wisdom of ruling a country. The belief was that people of China cared more for living a peaceful and prosperous life than fighting for their political rights as citizens. This explains why economic reform was placed as first priority over other reforms to pacify the disappointed people who suffered during the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, the purpose of the educational reform was to strengthen the backbone of the economic development to ensure political stability (Sing Tao Yat Pao, 1999, December 4).

When the policy of "opening many channels to develop education" is analyzed, it is not difficult to discover its political and fiscal essence. The policy was to draw the attention of well-to-do citizens who have had strong emotional attachment to their

homeland. As a result, many school construction projects and educational programs have been funded by both local and overseas Chinese donations.

The change in central manpower planning is clearly economic in nature because central manpower planning limits the degree of flexibility of manpower supply and demand that a market economy needs. A full market economy cannot achieve its best efficiency without a labor supply structure of free choice. In China today, certain central manpower planning is still maintained to operate an adequate workforce in remote areas.

CONCLUSION

Educational changes in the last two decades in China have been dramatic. Not only have they drastically improved the quantity and quality of education in China, they have also fostered a positive development of educational policies in both macro and micro perspectives. Additionally, these educational changes have called the country's attention to continuously review and redesign the infrastructure of education to meet the social and economic needs. The planning strategies reported in this paper only represent the beginning of a long-range educational plan of enormous magnitude. As Chinese Education Secretary Chen Ze Lit said, "Educational improvements in the last two decades of the 20th Century laid the foundation of a glorious educational development of the 21st Century." (Chen, 1998, p. 3) For all these exciting reforms, credit should be given to all the talented Chinese educators who have worked so persistently and diligently with the hope to realize their dream of a prosperous and highly educated China.

To conclude this paper, the author would like to make the following observations: Strategies employed to support the educational development of China in the last two decades were intended not only to address pressing problems of the time but also to lay the foundation for long range planning. The Central Government's recognition of the importance of education is unquestionable. However, because of the economic problem of the country, there was no way that the Central Government could meet the fiscal needs of the many ambitious educational plans. It was then decided that the development of economy should be given first priority assuming that a thriving economy could well support the educational initiatives.

The strategy proved to work especially in the metropolitan areas and the Special Economic Zones where market economy appears to be doing extremely well. The development of education in these places has been greatly benefited from the profit rolled over from economic prosperity. However, the concern is over the rural remote areas where economic growth is slow. If educational dollars are mainly dependent on local economy, then, the educational development of the rural remote areas has much to worry about, especially in recent years educational subsidy of Central Government to rural remote areas are diminishing. Unless some drastic measures are taken to address the poor schools in the remote rural areas, school children in these areas will continue to be shortchanged.

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HIGH DEFINITION PLANNING FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS: REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIELD

Ganga Persaud
Clark Atlanta University
Trevor Turner
Clark Atlanta University

This paper proposes high definition planning (HDP) as a process for defining a problem into cause-effect relationships for the purpose of choosing and implementing solution(s) to counteract the causes, and for evaluating the implementation in terms of its effectiveness for counteracting the causes as well as achieving the objectives. It justifies the need by reference to the failure of current reforms and models of planning to (a) ensure that all students learn and are not left behind. (b) define students' lack of success in terms of their social conditions, and (c) select and evaluate alternative content, and methodologies to address the social conditions of learners. Data from a teacher, an assistant principal, a principal, and a system-wide program indicate that the model was effective in improving students' standardized test scores, and teachers' use of higher order thinking skills questions in the process of teaching.

THE NEED FOR HIGH DEFINITION PLANNING

The federal government is demanding that no child is left behind in the schooling process, and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) requires colleges of education to demonstrate that their graduates have acquired the knowledge, skills, and dispositions so that all students learn. Likewise, educational planning must demonstrate effectiveness in terms of teaching so that all children learn and no child is left behind. For this to happen, educational planning must begin with the social contexts of learners in explaining why some students are not learning, in order to develop solutions accordingly.

As can be gleaned from Drucker's (1954) definition, planning requires effective decisions about (a) defining a problem as accurately as possible (b) choosing the best possible solution(s)when compared to alternatives (c) organizing systematically to implement the solution(s) (d) evaluating effectiveness with respect to expected outcomes, and (e) utilizing the results for feedback and development of the system as a continuous process. According to Coleman *et al* (1966) it is most important to define and explain the causes for differences in students' performance in the same classroom, where the teacher uses the same curriculum content, methodology, and evaluation. His data suggest that the variation in students' socio-economic conditions explained the differences. Hence, the most essential element of a planning model in education is its ability to generate data for effective decision-making about students' failure in terms of their social and learning contexts.

Studies that account for students' academic performance indicate that: socio-economic variables explain students' academic achievement more than other variables (Coleman *et al*, 1966; Hossler & Stage, 1992; NCES, 1992). Socio-economic variables are also found to be more significant in predicting students' academic achievement than (1) the nature of the content of the curriculum (Good & McCaslin, 1992); (2) methods of teaching (Walberg, 1979); (3) the banking model of traditional methods (Freire, 1970; Barnes, 1976); (4) pedagogically induced helplessness, and learning disabilities as result of repetitive teaching and learning (Beers & Beers, 1981; Ramphal, 1983); (5) lack of appreciation for cultural differences (Freire, 1973; Shade & Edwards, 1987); (6) lack of sustained encouragement for African American students (Clark,

1983); (7) lack of an encouragement model for discipline (Nelsen, 1987) and institutionalization of obedience model (Curwin & Medler, 1988); (8) teachers' lack of integrated knowledge by teachers in terms of content as related to social experiences of students and necessary pedagogy for delivery (Firestone, 1993); (9) teachers' excessive use of the Bell Curve (Bloom, 1976); (10) standardized tests that not take into account variation in student life experiences and textbooks (Schmidt, 1983); and (11) larger class sizes (Glass, McGraw & Smith, 1981).

Most educational planning models have no strategy for defining a problem in terms of the research issues. Strategic planning is a centrally directed process for setting objectives by involving stakeholders in decision-making, and does not examine the causal factors for low student achievement in terms of the specific need of a teacher and his/her students. Odiorne (1965) developed MBO as a system of management whereby managers and subordinates set goals and use the goals as a basis for evaluating results. However, it did not propose a strategy for ensuring that subordinates choose relevant objectives or for assessing the causes for subordinates not achieving the objectives (Bristow, 2001). Planning programming budgeting system (PPBS) seeks quality by emphasizing the selection of a solution through cost effectiveness in relation to alternative solutions. It has no diagnostic function for determining the causes of failure to achieve selected objectives or for determining the relevance of objectives. Hence, the solution might be cost-effective in relation to alternative solutions, while the problem is defined inappropriately. Likewise, total quality management (TQM) de-emphasizes the social context of planning (Brim, 2002). Delphi, and Problem-solving approaches emphasize the participatory aspects of planning rather than a strategy for making effective decisions about the precise definition of the problem in terms of the causes. Pert emphasizes the need for using time as a basis for determining the critical path among sub-plans, hence eliminating ineffective sub-plans. It does not provide a method of analyzing the sub-dimensions in terms of the social contexts of implementation. The Context Input Process Product (CIPP) Model of Planning (Cunningham, 1982) is used to analyze the social contexts so as to account for the causes of the discrepancies between stated objectives and actual performance. There is, however, no strategy for selecting solutions to counteract the causes.

Indeed, the many plans for reforms focused on structural and organizational changes when the problem was to enable teachers to change their professional practices in teaching and learning (Fullan and Miles, 1991). These reforms did not result in teacher effectiveness with respect to fundamental changes in the direction of student-centered instruction and cooperative learning (Firestone, 1993). Firestone contended that district-wide curriculum planning was designed to resolve the problem of teacher lack of participation rather than teachers' lack of effectiveness. The author concluded that student-centered learning can be better promoted when teachers (a) have a better grasp of both knowledge of the content areas and pedagogy (b) know the strengths and weaknesses of their own students, and (c) can work out the complex reasoning processes in lesson planning in relation to actual teaching in the classroom.

HIGH DEFINITION PLANNING: PHILOSOPHICAL AND CONCEPTUAL VALIDITY

Cartwright (1973) suggests that if there were no problems, there would be no need for planning. Hence, planning is necessitated by a problem, and is a process for defining and resolving a problem. How we define a problem is essential for its effective solution. Conceptually, it would be difficult to solve a problem effectively, if we are unable to define the

problem accurately. The fact that the various plans and reforms failed to resolve the problem of students' achievement in low educational and income environments suggest that the planners have not defined the problem in terms of the social conditions of learners. Essentially, a high or accurate definer of a problem is more likely to resolve the problem than a low definer.

According to Cartwright, the way in which we define a problem suggests the solution. Therefore, P (problem) must equal S (solution). Using this strategy, he states that:

If P (Problem) is defined as $P = P (X_1, X_2, X_3, .. X_n)$
        and if $P = S$,
then, Solution $S = S (X_1, X_2, X_3, .. S_n)$

However, the model does not provide a path for obtaining the best possible definition of the problem, and, hence, the solution could be wrongly selected. This is also a problem with strategic, and other models of planning. How are we to know that P is accurately defined?

John Dewey (1939) identifies a means-end relationship in any plan or problem situation and suggests that the means-end relationship is identical to the part-whole relation where the whole is desired and the parts are causally related. Further, his philosophy states that to desire a cause independent of an effect does not make it a means; to desire an effect independent of the means does not make it an end; rather it is the desirability of both in their entirety and in relation to one another that makes one a means to the other.

Clearly, Dewey's philosophy indicates that the key to defining a problem is to identify the means-end relationship in a given situation. This contrasts with strategic planning, etc. That is to say, in order to examine why an end exists one must examine the causes. The causes explain the end.

Following Dewey, Ishikawa (1976) used a fishbone technique to analyze a problem in terms of its sub-parts (as in spine and sub-spines of a fish applicable in quality circles). Deming (1986), following Ishikawa, uses a cause-effect analysis similar to Dewey. Applying these conceptual principles, we can logically state that if a problem as a failure in some desired outcome or objective is defined in terms its causes accurately then the solution is accurate if it is selected to counteract the causes as a basis for promoting the desired effect.

Clearly the solution to the problem must lie in counteracting the causes. Hence, a problem can be defined in terms of (a) failure to achieve the end (desired objective), and (b) means or causes for failure. Therefore, problem $P(failure) = P(C_1, C_2, C_3, C_4...C_n)$. Using Cartwright's definition of a solution:

If a problem P is defined in terms of its causes, then
        $S = S(C, C_2, C_3, ... C_n)$

Specifically, in planning curriculum and/or teaching we identify low achievers as a problem. Then we identify the causes for their low achievement. Next, we choose curriculum and methods to   counteract the causes. Finally, we evaluate to estimate effectiveness

In high definition planning, we define a problem as a negative effect (dependent variable) of a system in relation to the causes (independent variables). In this sense, the model uses a research approach to the definition of a problem, and hence maximizes the chance for an accurate definition of the problem. The definition is also testable in terms of research techniques.

The model predicts that the desired objective will be achieved if the solution counteracts the causes. If a problem is not solved, the model tells us that:

1. The problem was not appropriately defined in terms of the causes,
2. The solution was not selected in terms of causes, or both.
3.

Conceptually, the model proposes that that low achievers in a given classroom could make significant improvement, if the low achievers are identified, and the causes of their failure determined as a basis for selecting and implementing solution(s) to counteract the causes. The model can be implemented in phases by an administrator or grade level team as suggested in the following diagram (Figure 1). The diagram is self-explanatory.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Pre-Evaluation Conference:           │
│        Administrator or Grade Level Team with each│
│                      teacher                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌───────────────────────────┐      ┌───────────────────────────────┐
│ Post-Conference:          │      │ Define Failed Outcomes:       │
│ Evaluate Effectiveness and│      │ Number of Students who failed │
│ Provide feedback          │      │                               │
└───────────────────────────┘      └───────────────────────────────┘

┌───────────────────────────────┐  ┌───────────────────────────────┐
│ Define Transaction Process:   │  │ Define Causes:                │
│ Explanation, questioning to   │  │ Profile of students'          │
│ relate students' social       │  │ characteristics:              │
│ experiences to content,       │  │ Gender, SES, family structure,│
│ etc.                          │  │ Learning style,               │
│ Use Bloom's taxonomy to       │  │ Class size, etc.              │
│ explore range of higher order │  │                               │
│ thinking skills               │  │                               │
└───────────────────────────────┘  └───────────────────────────────┘

┌───────────────────────────┐      ┌───────────────────────────────┐
│ Define resources and time │      │ Define New Outcomes: All      │
│ management strategy        │      │ students learn                │
└───────────────────────────┘      └───────────────────────────────┘

┌───────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Define Solution(s) to counteract causes:      │
│ - Range of teaching styles                    │
│ - Range of learning styles                    │
│ - Explanation and questioning in relation to  │
│   social experience and Bloom's taxonomy      │
│ - Range of hands-on Activities                │
│ - Range of methods                            │
│ - Type of peer tutoring                       │
│ - Type of home mentoring                      │
│ - Reduction of class size or provide          │
│   after school tutoring                       │
└───────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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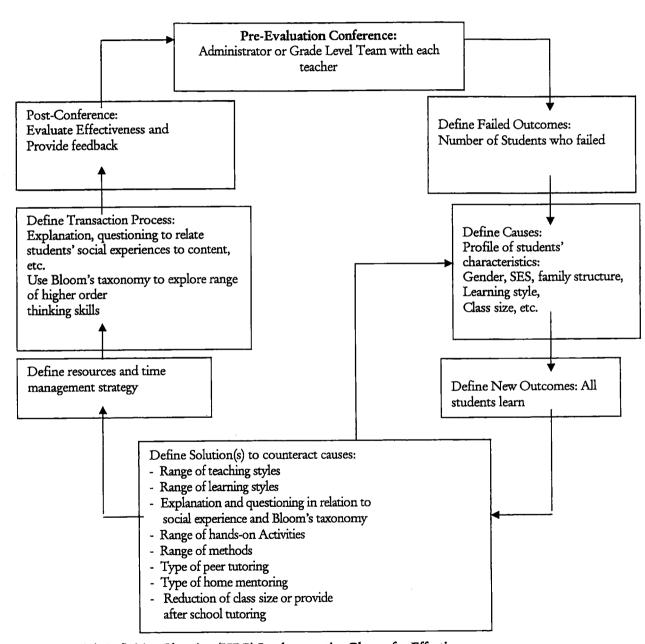
Figure 1: High Definition Planning (HDP) Implementation Phases for Effectiveness
Schools

IMPLENTATION AND EVALUATION OF HDP MODEL IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS

I. *Teacher level*: A teacher was trained to utilize the model in planning, teaching, and evaluation as follows:
- o   Identify low achievers by performance on the ITBS in Language Arts test
- o   Rank order the students from low to high achievement
- o   Identify gender, race, single or two family parents, and parents' occupation: use father or mother whichever is the higher
- o   Identify the learning styles of low achievers as compared to high achievers, and identify the social conditions of each type of achievers and learners. Generally, low achievers are more concrete, feeling and doing oriented rather than observing, listening and abstract
- o   Identify the aspirations and social interests such as hobbies, etc. of low achievers in order to select appropriate curriculum content
- o   Observe the extent to which each factor is related to students' performance (this aspect could be facilitated by inputting the data into excel software)

   A.   Select Curriculum and Instructional Strategies to Counteract the Causes for students' Failure.
   Use the Data on Students' social Backgrounds to:
1.   Select content and methods in relation to the social experiences of the low achievers
2.   Develop questions to probe the social learning experiences of low achievers to provide them an opportunity to make contributions and obtain a feeling of success
3.   Raise the level of questioning to focus on higher order thinking skills with respect to analyzing the social learning of students so as to facilitate both low and high achievers to see the social relevance of such skills
4.   Use the answers to develop a parallel frame of knowledge in the context of the learners
5.   Ask questions to relate the model of understanding to the textbook knowledge, previous knowledge covered in the same subject and different subject areas
6.   Ask questions and demonstrate to students how test items could be constructed to assess learning
7.   Praise students for their answers and elaborate and build on their responses to enable them to see how knowledge is built from their contributions
8.   Evaluate effectiveness in a question and answer format, and, and revise plans

   B. *Managing the Transaction Process for Higher Order Thinking Skills*
   In order to facilitate the teacher in implementing the above steps, a High Definition Teacher Evaluation Profile (HDTEP) was provided. In the profile, the teacher asked questions and used students answers on the following dimensions: Textbook knowledge to be taught, inferences to be made from the textbook and other sources, students' social and life experiences of similar and related knowledge, related knowledge taught in the same subject area, related knowledge of different subject areas, test items that could be constructed to test for learning, and teacher use of students' ideas and praise of students for their answers. These dimensions form the contexts for launching the questions and utilizing students' answers, and/or responding to students' questions.
   The questions were framed using the Bloom's taxonomy: knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, where knowledge and understanding were

considered as lower order thinking skills, and application, analysis, evaluation and synthesis were considered as higher order thinking skills.

In this way the teacher could devote attention to each dimension in relation to the higher order thinking skills. The lessons were video taped, and the teacher was able to score herself on lower order and higher order thinking skills in each of the various dimensions. The data were used to improve her teaching techniques in the process of teaching. the various dimensions

The teacher conducted these activities in the area of language arts to determine if students would make significant gains on the ITBS language Arts. In Table 1, the results of regression analysis indicate that none of the social and economic variables explain students' performance in the Language Arts ITBS. The only significant contributor is entry level ITBS Language Arts performance (with a beta weight of -.754). The negative sign indicates an inverse relationship where the lower percentile ranking students made greater gains than the higher ranked students. Hence, this teacher was able to counteract the causes of low achievement.

Table1:   **Results of Regression Analysis: ITBS Language Arts Percentile Gain Scores (dependent) by Selected Independent Variables**

Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficients: Beta	T value	Significant Level
ITBS Language Arts Percentile Score	-.754	-5.123	.000
Gender	.028	.248	.806
Race (African American, Other, Caucasian)	.061	.531	.598
	-.015	-.138	.891
Parent Type (Single or Two Family)	-.024	-.165	.870
Parental Occupation			

Adjusted R Square = .511; F = 9.719: Significant Level = .000
Source: Tanya Persaud White (1996). High definition planning and teaching for student academic achievement, paper presented at the Georgia Educational Research Association, November.

II. *Instructional Assistant principal Level*

An assistant principal of instruction in an urban school on 75% free and reduced lunch was trained in the above strategies to determine if he could influence teachers on a school-wide basis to increase their questioning in higher order thinking skills so as to counteract the effects of students' social environment. The assistant principal used a true experimental design by exposing all teachers to a workshop on high definition planning, teaching and evaluation. He asked for volunteers and obtained 80% of the teachers. He randomly assigned 16 teachers in each experimental and control classrooms. The pre-experimental teachers were asked to video tape their best lessons. The teachers were trained in conducting high definition planning, and teaching in role-playing sessions. However after a month it was observed that they did not practice any of the strategies. They complained that they were not shown how to do the planning and teaching with respect to their students. The assistant principal used the regular

curriculum content to plan and teach lessons to the teachers' students. In addition, in several planning sessions the teachers were in grade level teams, and planned lessons using the design. Subsequently, it was found that teachers were practicing the planning strategy. No pre-experimental tape was made of the control group. After four months, all teachers made tapes of their best teaching.

The assistant principal and two researchers viewed the tapes and used the teacher observation profile to score higher order thinking skills for teachers and students. When all raters had the same rating, the assistant principal was free to view all tapes and record the number of higher order thinking skills. Three scores were obtained: Control, Pre-experimental and Post-experimental A one-way analysis of variances was conducted for teachers and students as shown in Table 2. The results indicate that: the pre-experimental group scored less than the control group, while the post experimental group scored higher than the control post-test. Thus it is possible to train assistant principals' of instruction to supervise teachers for effective teaching of higher order thinking skills using a high definition approach.

Table 2: One-way Analysis of Variances: Teacher Higher Order Thinking Skills
        Questions (Mean Scores) by Randomly Assigned Control, Pre-Experimental
        and Post-Experimental Groups

Groups	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	F	Significant Level
Control Post-test	14	5.50	8.80			
Pre-Experiment	16	2.75	3.97	43	19.170	.000
Post-Experiment	16	12.31	8.32			

Source: Reid (2002). Training in high definition teaching for higher order thinking skills: Dissertation in progress, Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta.

3. *Principal Level*

The next issue is whether a principal in an urban school could manage the planning and teaching process so that all teachers could improve in the teaching of higher order thinking skills.

The researchers trained a principal in the use of high definition planning, teaching and evaluation so that the principal would train her administrative team to supervise teachers on the dimensions as indicated in Table 3 in the period October 2000. The principal and the administrative team were expected to orient teachers and organize them into grade level teams for planning purposes to: (a) conduct a profile analysis of their respective students (b) plan lessons to counteract the social blockers to learning (c) use the teacher evaluation profile to map the field of questioning and explanation for processing knowledge in the interactive process of the classroom. Twenty-five teachers were videotaped to represent each grade level, and to provide baseline data for teachers in grade level teams to critique their teaching using high definition principles.

However by December, it was found that no orientation session was conducted. As a result the researchers ran the workshops for grade level teams. By January, 2002, no

supervision was conducted. Hence, the researchers conducted a whole school workshop. Thereafter, the administrators observed teachers using the instrument and provided feedback. 32 (80%) of the teachers were video taped in the post-test condition, and the tapes were viewed and scored.

In Table 3, the results indicate that in each dimension, there was a significant increase in higher order thinking skills in the post-test as compared to the pre-test.

Table 3: **Means Scores on Teachers' Higher Order Thinking Skills: Pre-Test and Post-Test in Specified Instructional Dimensions**

Teacher Action in References to	Pre-test Higher Order n = 25	S.D.	Post-test Higher Order n = 39	S.D.	T Value	Sig. Lev.
Literal meaning	.67	.12	1.47	.12	-25.81	.00
Inferential Concepts	.35	..45	1.01	.15	-8.33	.00
Life Experiences	.41	.19	1.09	.12	-16.91	.00
Related concepts in same Subject	.20	.20	.43	.14	-7.53	.00
Related Concepts in Different Subjects	.21	.17	.38	.15	-2.10	.04
Test Concepts	.20	.20	.46	.11	-11.27	.00
Praising, Recognizing	.32	.47	1.41	.30	-11.22	.00

Source: Miller (2002). The Impact of High Definition Training on Teacher Perceptions of the Principal's Leadership, Parent Support and student Improvement: Dissertation presented to Clark Atlanta University for the doctorate in education degree.

SYSTEM-WIDE IMPLEMENTATION OF HIGH DEFINITION PLANNING

In a Metro Atlanta school district, the school board adopted high definition planning, teaching and evaluation for 12 schools identified as the lowest achieving schools. An executive director was appointed to manage the schools. She was provided four instructional coordinators who conducted workshops in each school on high definition planning, teaching and evaluation. The executive director and her instructional coordinators engaged principals and teachers in pre-conference as shown in the following figure. A school achievement team was set up in each school. The team supervised grade level teams. The grade level teams collaborated with the respective teachers to (a) identify and to target low achievers in each classroom (b) identify the causes of failure by conducting a student profile

(d) set the standard of teaching outcomes in terms of 'all students will learn' (e) select curriculum and instructional strategies to counteract the causes of students' failure (f) define resources and provide a time line for achieving students' success (g) evaluate the transaction process to assess the number of higher order thinking skills (as measured by using the Bloom's taxonomy) displayed by teachers and students. At the end of the 1996-1997 school year, the ITBS test scores in reading were analyzed in comparison to schools that initially had higher test scores. The results in Table 4 indicate that the mean gain score for the high definition schools is 1.0333 as compared to -.8056 for the control schools. The difference is significant at .01-probability level in favor of the high definition planning schools.

Table 4: Results of t-Test: Mean NCE Reading Gain Scores for SIIP Schools (n=12) in Comparison to Control Schools (n=18). Matched 1995-96 as set baseline with all 1997.

SCHOOLS	#OF SCHS	RDG. COMP. MEAN GAIN Scores	STANDARD DEVIATION	T VALUE	SIGNIF. LEVEL
HDP	12	1.0333	1.995	-3.15	.004
CONTROL	18	-.8056	1.182		

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the evidence, teachers, students and parents have a significantly greater chance of improving reading scores in the high definition classrooms and schools than in regular classrooms and schools. Teachers and administrators alike can have control over the design, implementation, evaluation and feedback. Hence, policy makers might want to encourage the high definition model for the benefits offered to students and parents.

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WORD-PROCESSING: Double-space all text, with 1.88 inches margins top and bottom, 1.75 inches left and right, and 1.0 inch header and 1.0 inch footer. Lengthy tables, drawings, and charts and/or graphs should be scaled to the dimensions given and should preferably be camera-ready.

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_____

    City   State   Zip   Country

FEES: Professional Membership and Subscription to Educational Planning = $46.00 US
Student Membership and Subscription to Educational Planning = $20.00 US
Payment by check, money order, or Purchase Order required with application

RETURN MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND PAYMENT TO:

Dr. Walter S. Polka, Superintendent
Lewiston-Porter Central School
4061 Creek Road
Youngstown, New York 14174

ORGANIZATION	The society was founded on December 10, 1970, in Washington, D. C. Over 50 local, state, national, and international planners attended the first organizational meeting. Since then its continued growth demonstrates the need for a professional organization with educational planning as its exclusive concern
PURPOSE	The International society for Educational Planning was established to foster the professional knowledge and interests of educational planners. Through conferences and publications, the Society promotes the interchange of ideas within the planning community. The membership includes persons from the ranks of governmental agencies, school-based practitioners, and higher education.
MEMBERSHIP IN THE SOCIETY	Membership in the Society is open to any person active or interested in educational planning and the purposes of the Society. To join the Society or renew a membership, please complete and submit the enclosed form. Please forward check/money order/PO to: ISEP Dr. Walter S. Polka Lewiston-Porter Central School 4061 Creek Road Youngstown, NY 14174

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING