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Editorial

Christopher H. Tienken, Editor
AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice
 &
 David Canton

National Curriculum Standards: Let's Think It Over

As of July 1, 2009 chief state school officers from 49 states and territories indicated they will volunteer their states' education systems to take part in what might be one of the largest social and political experiments in the recent history of the United States. They will nationalize public school curriculum through the adoption of a universal set of core standards, and eventually, a national standardized testing program.

The idea of national curriculum standards and nationalized testing for education violates core principles of our democracy and does not take into account the empirical literature that exposes the idea as educationally bankrupt. It is not our intent to chastise those who jumped aboard the national standards bandwagon. We ask only that they and you, the education leaders of America's schools, examine this idea through historical and empirical lenses before going any further.

Reasons and Rationale

The reasons given by proponents for the need to nationalize curriculum standards, and eventually testing schemes, is an empirically unsupported fear that America will not be able to compete in the global marketplace. There

seems to be a re-emergence of some type of American inferiority complex, reminiscent of the days following Sputnik and *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Fear and political ideology are once again driving attacks on public education in this country. There are those who appear ready and willing, perhaps unknowingly, to support the erosion of local control, and thus democracy, in exchange for the illusion of future economic security and increased political power. Is this warranted or even necessary?

U.S. History I

Let us address some basic historical democratic principles that suggest restricting local control by nationalizing education standards and testing is a threat to the democracy because it will expand the control and influence of the federal government over this important local issue. During the formation of the new nation there was a political battle between Federalists and Anti-Federalists. They argued over states' rights and local control versus the desire for a powerful federal government. Anti-Federalists understood the potential negative consequences to the citizenry if an abusive federal

government was able to exercise too much power and control over local issues.

In fact, the American colonists had almost a 150 year history of local control. From the earliest experiences at an outpost in Jamestown, the colonists had to develop local governments and social hierarchies to anchor their fledgling society. Although they were subjects of Britain, they conceived a form of government based on local control and thirteen autonomous colonies. They created their own legislative assemblies and town governments in each colony, managed their own trade within and among colonies, and individual colonies even set up trading agreements with other countries.

The colonists had to develop political and social systems based on local control because prior to 1763 Britain had a more or less hands off policy known as *salutary neglect*. For lack of better terms, Britain left the colonists “on their own.” Over the course of 150 years prior to the revolution, the colonists built the foundation for American Democracy squarely upon local control and what we now call states’ rights. It is important for us to remember that the American Revolution itself was in part driven by the erosion of local control through coercive and repressive policies by Britain after 1763.

After the American Revolution, a debate ensued among the political elite on what type of government was the best for the new country. Some like Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin believed that state and local governments were best because they were smaller and could allow more participation from citizens through local control. They saw local control as a mechanism to lessen the likelihood that the federal government and the states would abuse power over its citizens. Others believed that a strong central

government was the direction America should take. Eventually, the men from both sides formed two political parties, the Federalists and Anti-Federalists.

The Federalists, led by Alexander Hamilton, an Anglophile, James Madison, and John Jay, admired centralized British institutions, such as banking. As a result, they believed that the new country needed a central government to become a powerful nation like Britain (Hamilton, Madison, Jay, and Rossiter, 1987).

Anti-Federalists saw that British tyranny was a result of centralized power and were concerned that similar things could happen to the fledgling country should the central government gain too much control. Thus our democracy was structured to strike a balance between federal control and states’ rights and local control in an effort to keep an eye on federal incursions into local issues, but allow the federal government the authority to right wrongs at the local level through appropriate legislative channels. The balance is exemplified in the 10th Amendment to our Constitution.

Examples of Abuse of Power and States Rights

It did not take long for the fears of the Anti-Federalists to come true. As the Anti-Federalists predicted years prior, the Federalists started to abuse their power under the John Adams presidency. As Americans started to prepare for a war with France, there was an expanding amount of dissent. Adams used the centralized power of the federal government to arrest journalists and others who disagreed with his policies towards France. Adams argued that he was protecting his nation by forgoing state laws and local control and arrested dissenters. Angered by Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison wrote the Kentucky and

Virginia Resolutions that declared that the Constitution was an agreement between sovereign states and if the federal government abused its power states had a right to respond. Citizens responded by supporting local control and electing Jefferson, the Democrat, in 1800.

States rights were also a central issue during the slavery debate of the mid-1800's. The federal Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 made it illegal for a citizen in a northern state not to assist with the capture of fugitive slaves. Northerners felt that the federal government had abused its power when it passed the Fugitive Slave Law. As a result, legislatures in northern states stepped in to blunt the centralized power of the federal government and passed Personal Liberty Laws that protected northerners from the Fugitive Slave Law.

Future of Public Education

States rights vs. federalism started as a political/economic debate during the formation of the nation, but one can see this debate in American education now. This time it is the states that are ready to nationalize education standards.

You might ask how this is an erosion of local control if the states voluntarily participate. Consider that the willingness to shun a vital part of our democracy is driven by massive amounts of federal money being pumped into state coffers through the U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan's Race to the Top initiative.

The money brings strings attached to empirically fraudulent requirements such as linking teacher performance ratings and pay to student standardized test scores and creating more charter schools. Furthermore, national standards will bring a national standardized test

that has to be used to monitor compliance with the requirements.

The influence of a mandated federal standardized test will reach into the local classroom and control local decision making from the federal level. Local control will become but an illusion relegated to discussions in university political science classes. Unfortunately, state education leaders and governors seem willing to drink from the poisoned trough to cover budget gaps in the short-term, but water down democracy in the long run.

The problem is once we shift the balance of control for education to the federal government, which it ostensibly will occur in this case due to the regulations and strings attached to receiving the money, the local citizens lose the only remaining voice they had to help determine some aspects of the curriculum and their children's education. Instead of curriculum changes coming from the bottom up through the voice of the people, those changes become increasingly driven by national political ideology, such as social conservatism and neo-liberalism and not by empirical research.

Everyone remember No Child Left Behind? That is social conservatism, neo-liberalism, and free market profiteering out of control in education. Why would we want to give more control of public education to corporations and the federal government when the federal government only provides about 7% of the funding? State and local funding for public education accounts for about 93% of the money. Should we not want to keep our voice as strong as possible?

Thomas Jefferson was clear on the need for local control. He stated that it is the local government that knows the needs of its people

the best, it is most responsive to its citizens, and most able to deal with democratic issues democratically. He stated, even at that time, that the country was too large to have a central bureaucracy managing local affairs. Local control is the voice of the citizenry. It is part of our culture and who we are as a people. It is what defines us as fiercely independent and ruggedly individual and creative.

To deny we need local control in education in order to strengthen our education system is to deny our history as a country. A quote prior to the American Revolution, sometimes attributed to Benjamin Franklin, prophetically warns those who prefer a false sense of security over freedom: “They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety” (Franklin, 1818).

Economic Competiveness

If an historical argument built on the preservation of democracy and local control is not strong enough, we provide a brief review of the economic competitiveness argument so often used as the main reason for adopting national standards. Those who make this argument reference frequently a piece of disinformation followed by a fraud masquerading as research. The disinformation centers on Sputnik and the idea that our education system failed us. The fraud is the now thoroughly debunked report *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) that so many “reformers” use as “proof” that public education still needs an overhaul.

The disinformation is easily uncovered. If you look in the National Archives you will find the memo of the meeting Eisenhower held on October 8, 1957 with his top aides immediately following the launch of Sputnik. They discussed the federal report that

confirmed that the U.S. military’s Redstone rocket was actually capable of launching a satellite into orbit several months before the Soviets. Eisenhower’s Secretary of Defense Quarles stated, and Eisenhower agreed, that the Soviets actually did the U.S. a favor by opening up space because U.S. officials feared that a U.S. first launch of a satellite via the military’s Redstone rocket could set off a confrontation with the Soviets.

The fraud is equally easy to expose. The Reagan Administration released *A Nation at Risk* 26 years after Sputnik. The writers of the report used Sputnik as an example of American educational weakness. The report played on baseless fears that America was at risk of once again losing its competitiveness to a foreign country. That fraud was summarily exposed and set straight 10 years later by the empirical study *Perspectives in Education in America* (Carson, Huelskamp, and Woodall, 1993).

The current argument used by today’s proponents of nationalizing education is double-barreled and goes something like this: (a) American children need to score at or near the top on international tests of academic achievement in order for the U.S. to remain economically competitive, and (b) a national curriculum will cause that to happen.

Evidence to Support Economic Competiveness?

First, there is little if any methodologically sound empirical evidence that supports the idea that a national curriculum for America is needed for us to remain economically competitive (Zhao, 2009). Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, there is no methodologically sound empirical evidence that supports a cause and effect or even a strong relationship between any of the G8 or G14 countries’ rankings on international tests of academic skills and knowledge and those

countries' economic vitality and competitiveness.

There is empirical evidence, easily located, to discredit that fallacy. Studies from the last 11 years show that the relationship between rankings on international tests and the economic vitality of the top 17 economies in the world are either negative, or so weak, that they are not significant, and certainly do not demonstrate a cause and effect relationship (Baker, 2007; Bills & Klenow, 1998; Bracey, 2003, 2005; Krueger, 1999; Psacharopoulos, & Patrinos 2002; Ramirez, Luo, Schofer, & Meyer, 2006; Tienken, 2008). The strongest 17 economies in the world actually show a negative relationship between their ranking on international tests and economic strength (Tienken, 2008).

With the data so prevalent to the contrary, why do proponents continue to use the economic competitiveness argument? Is this a case of anti-intellectualism driving policy?

Unsubstantiated Rhetoric

Despite 50 years of political noise regarding our eminent demise at the hands of education systems like the Soviet Union, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore, our economy has remained the strongest in the world (World Economic Forum, 2008). While the names have changed recently to China, India, and Singapore (again), we still rank #1 in economic competitiveness on the international Growth Competitiveness Index. America also has the largest number of students who scored at the top levels in Science on the latest PISA for 15 year-olds (OECD, 2009). The U.S. accounted for 25% of the world's top science achievers, almost doubling the next closest competitor, Japan with only 13%, tripling Germany and the UK who had only 8% of the world's top achievers. Korea had only 5% of the world's top science achievers and Hong Kong-China

had only 1% of the top achievers. You probably never heard of this good news, but the information can be found easily online (OECD, 2009).

Keep in mind the mean test score for U.S. students did not rank in the top spot or even top five on that PISA science exam, but we still accounted for the largest percentage of top achievers. What is this infatuation on the part of some education leaders and policy makers with nationalizing the curriculum to "do better" on international tests? Is it perhaps PISA envy? We are not sure, but it is not based on empirical evidence.

Protect Local Control and Democracy

Democracy and local control are not standardized, they are not efficient, and they are not easily managed. A democratic education system is not for the faint of heart. It requires constant tending and vigilance. Education can be a society's greatest democratic gift or a government's greatest undemocratic weapon. Consider the example of China's revolution that began the Mao era in 1949.

One of the first things the new communist government did was change the curriculum in all schools. No local control. No provincial input. The centralized government decided for the people what was best based on government's need to control the people. The Soviets did the same thing when they invaded countries during the 1950's through the 1980's as part of a program known as Russification. History has demonstrated time and time again that a key part of controlling a country's citizenry is through central control of the school curriculum.

National curriculum standards have the power to affect a country's political ideals.

While some supporters of national standards no doubt mean well and care about the country's future, we should all remember the words of Thomas Paine, "The greatest tyrannies are always perpetrated in the name of the noblest

causes." We believe we can do better in the United States than develop and implement policies for our children driven by disinformation, frauds, and anti-intellectualism. We invite your evidence-based commentary on this issue.

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Research Article

Key Skills Influencing Student Achievement

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With the implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind [NCLB PL 107-110], 2002) and commensurate state-level accountability laws, administrators are increasingly being held accountable for the academic success of all students as measured by traditional large-scale standardized tests.

Historically, administrators' daily routines minimized a systemic focus on curriculum, instruction, and student learning. In an era of education reform, the landscape of administrative roles has broadened to include not only curriculum/instruction, and teaching/learning best practices, but also an emphasis on interpersonal skills that encourage collaboration, collegiality, a healthy culture that is responsive to change, and a strong overall sense of community that is inviting to a variety of stakeholders.

Design and Methods

A predictive, non-experimental, cross-sectional design (Johnson, 2001) was used to conduct this study to determine if elementary

administrators' key counseling skills and select demographics predicted state-level student performance indicators in their respective schools. A secondary purpose of this study was to develop a valid and reliable on-line survey that identifies key counseling skills for administrative success.

A literature review (e.g., Waters & Grubb, 2004) provided the framework for both theoretical constructs and survey items. The instrument used to collect the data for this study consisted of 45 items sent to 691 public elementary school administrators in Indiana. Approximately 17% responded. Of the respondents, 68% were from rural/small town districts and 32% were from suburban/urban districts; 44% were male, and 56% were female; 97% Caucasian and 3 % non-Caucasian.

These statistics aligned very strongly with national statistics compiled by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) with the exception of district size. Nationally, 60% of districts are suburban/urban and 40% rural/small town. The data were

analyzed using the item-reduction technique factor analysis and multiple regression.

Research Questions

This study asked three questions:

1. What are key counseling skills for highly effective school administrators?
2. What is the relationship between elementary administrators' counseling skills and student performance levels on state assessments in Indiana?
3. What is the relationship between elementary administrator's select demographics and student performance on state assessments in Indiana?

Factor Analysis

An exploratory factor analysis was employed to answer the first research question: What are key counseling skills for highly effective school administrators? The initial factor analysis resulted in 13 factors with Eigenvalues at or above 1.0. Evaluation of the Scree plot suggested five factors. Varimax rotations using both six and five factors were analyzed. The final 5-factor analysis provided the strongest set of definable factors. Following statistical analysis, 35 items, distributed among five factors were retained.

Formal definition of factors

The items comprising each factor were studied to establish instrument definitions for each factor. Those definitions are listed below:

1. Expert Authority Orientation is the degree to which the administrator established his/her credibility as an education leader among all stakeholders. This factor contained 11 items. Cronbach's alpha was .828.

2. Academic Support describes the degree to which the administrator provides direct curricular, instructional, and assessment assistance. The second factor was comprised of six items. Cronbach's alpha .697.
3. Change Capacity describes the degree to which the administrator values and fosters a culture of change. The third factor had five items load. Cronbach's alpha was .693
4. Success Motivation describes the degree to which the administrator develops trustworthy relationships that genuinely acknowledge, reward, and celebrate teacher accomplishments. The fourth factor had three items load. Cronbach's alpha was .759.
5. Ethical Transparency describes the degree to which the administrator's beliefs and rationale for decisions are apparent to stakeholders. The final factor had four items load. Cronbach's alpha .586.

Multiple Regression

After the factor analysis, a step-wise multiple regression answered the remaining research questions. The second question asked: What is the relationship between elementary administrators' counseling skills and student performance levels on state assessments in Indiana, revealed no significant correlations. The third question asked: What is the relationship between elementary administrator's select demographics and student performance on state assessments in Indiana, revealed statistically significant predictors.

Findings indicated no significant correlations between elementary administrators' counseling skills and student performance levels on state assessments. However, results suggest that several demographic variables were all statistically significantly predictive of state-level student performance measures.

Specifically, Administrative Years in Current Building (.046, $p < .05$), School Counselor in Building (.024, $p < .05$), Ethnicity (.024, $p < .05$), and the combination of Administrative Years in Current Building and Gender (.024, $p < .05$) were all significantly predictive of state-level student performance measures. Ethnicity was removed in the final regression due to the low portion of the response rate (2.56%).

In the step-wise multiple regression analysis of select demographics, several items were found to be statistically significant

predictors of state-level student achievement performance measures. Administrative Years in Current Building (.046, $p < .05$), School Counselor in Building (.024, $p < .05$), Ethnicity (.024, $p < .05$), and the combination of Administrative Years in Current Building and Gender (.024, $p < .05$) were all significantly predictive of state-level student performance measures. Ethnicity was removed in the final regression due to the low portion of the response rate (2.56%).

Discussion

The factor analysis successfully reduced identified key counseling skills into five factors (i.e., Expert Authority Orientation, Academic Support, Change Capacity, Success Motivation, and Ethical Transparency). These are useful for practitioners in identifying areas of strength and challenge as well as inform pre-service programming. Pearson correlations revealed interesting correlations among and between counseling factors and leadership behavior/styles (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1

Pearson Correlations Between Key Counseling Skill Factors

	Expert Authority Orientation	Academic Support	Change Capacity	Success Motivation	Ethical Transparency
Expert Authority Orientation	1.000	.353**	.341**	.349**	.384**
Academic Support	.353**	1.000	.226*	.275**	.298**
Change Capacity	.341**	.226*	1.000	.272**	.343**
Success Motivation	.349**	.275**	.272**	1.000	.218*
Ethical Transparency	.384**	.298**	.343**	.218*	1.000

*Correlation significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Expert Authority Orientation is correlated weakly with all factors, particularly with Ethical Transparency (.384). The role of administrators is increasingly more complex and it is ultimately the responsibility of administrators to ensure all students receive the best education (Ediger, 2007). The combination of knowledge and interpersonal skills is essential. Sergiovanni (2006) posited that moral and ethical transparency were critical components of successful leadership.

Ethical Transparency correlated weakly with Change Capacity (.343). The fulcrum for school improvement is relationships, relationships established through open

communication and a transparency of beliefs/goals (Sergiovanni, 2006). Effective leaders garner support with stakeholders, reframe/refine goals throughout the change process motivating staff to accomplish school goals (Israel & Kasper, 2004).

Academic Support was correlated weakly with Expert Authority Orientation (.353) and Ethical Transparency (.298). Research supports a healthy school climate where staff are focused on the vision and mission of the school, grounded in core values utilizing all resources produces positive results (DuFour, 2004; Senge et al., 2000; Sergiovanni, 2006).

Leadership behavior and style had statistically significant correlations with Key Counseling Skill Factors. Task behavior was correlated with Change capacity (.317 at the .01 level). This behavior is characterized by engaging in one-way communications by determining who is to perform which tasks, when, where, and how each is to be performed (Hanson, 2003; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004).

A delegating style was shown to be more effective. A delegating style, characterized as a low-task, high-motivation style utilized for followers who have the ability but lack motivation, showed statistically significant correlations with Change Capacity (.398 at the .01 level); Success Motivation (.288 at the .01 level), and Expert Authority Orientation (.268 at the .01 level) (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). The effective leader is able to adjust his or her style based upon the situation and the individual.

Finally, there was a weak correlation between a school counselor in the building and a supportive leadership style (.207 at the .05 level). Research supports a school culture in which faculty members espouse a common core set of values, ideals and beliefs relative to education positively impacts achievement (DuFour, 2004; Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton, & Kleiner, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2006).

The regression analysis did reveal several demographic items, individually and in combination, to be predictive of state-level student performance measures. Administrative Years in Current Building (.046, $p < .05$) and the combination of Administrative Years in Building and Gender (i.e., female) were weak predictors of state-level student performance measures (.024, $p < .05$).

Literature (i.e., Andrews & Basom, 1990) indicates that female administrators are

perceived to be stronger instructional leaders, spend more time observing in classroom, are more concerned with student achievement, and value teacher work ethic more than their male counterparts. Additionally, they tend to have more years experience in the classroom. The presence of a school counselor in the building was also found to be a weak predictor of state-level student performance measures (.024, $p < .05$).

Counselors are trained to view children, the school and district through a systemic lens. Consequently, they understand, from a policy and practice perspective, how school change can better meet student needs. Through their interactions with students, staff, administrators, parents, and community members, they can influence individual students, the achievement gap among and between student groups, and the culture of the school (American Association for Higher Education [AAHE], 1992; House, 2005).

Ultimately, the role of the school counselor is to help remove barriers to student achievement.

The emergence of five key counseling skills factors provides an additional lens for administrators to view their leadership relative to influencing student achievement. In an educational era focused primarily on all students improving their results on traditional standardized tests annually, administrators might want to focus on their own personal qualities for student learning growth, which research supports as having a positive influence on student achievement. Educators must be aware of how others perceive them; they need to be cognizant of the influence it has on the school improvement process.

As expectations for continuous-learning gains mount, administrators must seek creative solutions to this complex challenge. The

conclusions of this study indicated that developing interpersonal skills might make a difference in student achievement. By focusing on the five key counseling skills, administrators might be able positively influence student

achievement in ways that are not traditionally used. More research is needed, but this study provides the groundwork and a structure to explore the topic in greater detail.

Authors' Note:

A complete study may be found at <http://panther.indstate.edu:2048/login?url=http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1495951311&sid=1&Fmt=2&clientId=954&RQT=309&VName=PQD>

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Article on Best Practice

The Three Fs of Classroom Management

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Classroom management is invariably a source of concern for school administrators and novice and experienced teachers (Johns, Karabinus & MacNaughton, 1989). In fact, novice teachers consistently express the desire for additional help in the area of classroom management (Stroot et al, 1999).

This desire for extra assistance is well-warranted, given that classroom management is a complex practice that requires teachers to possess a multi-leveled skill set. Such skills are often difficult to convey to preservice or novice teachers as they are, at times, counterintuitive.

In this article I develop a cohesive theory of classroom management, named the three Fs, predicated upon extant empiricism and scholarship vis-à-vis classroom management. This theory of classroom management was devised and implemented over several semesters within a field-based course at the University of Texas at Austin for preservice mathematics majors seeking secondary teaching certification. The preservice students were candidates in the

UTeach program in the College of Natural Sciences.

As a program advisor, I encouraged preservice students to use the three Fs theory of classroom management within field-based courses offered in the UTeach program, with much success reported by the students involved. This theory has also been discussed and successfully implemented by inservice teachers who are also students in the UTeach summer masters program for working mathematics teachers.

Consequently, this classroom management theory may prove quite useful to administrators who are striving to standardize classroom teaching practices within schools or school districts. When using the phrase ‘the three Fs,’ I refer to the following components: (a) *foundation*, (b) *field*, and (c) *flow*.

These terms will be individually defined within the context of an intertwined, holistic behavioral and instructional tool (i.e., classroom management) that has proved

flexible enough to be adapted to the individual content and teaching styles of preservice, novice, and experienced teachers alike.

Literature Review and Implications: The Fs Theory

In a review of thousands of studies, spanning decades, Wong (1998) boldly concluded that classroom management is the most important factor governing student learning. Referencing the works of Martin and Baldwin (1995), Laut (1999) defined classroom management as, “a multi-faceted construct that includes three broad dimensions: person, instruction, and discipline” (p. 2). Person refers to teacher beliefs while instruction refers to routines, time management, and content delivery. Discipline relates to rules and standards set for classroom environment and interactions (Laut, 1999).

This is an inclusive definition implying that classroom management is not, and should not, be considered as a construct divorced from the classroom teaching and learning experience.

Three common themes emerge from a review of the literature on classroom management. First, these themes will be established, before being fully reviewed later in the article.

The first theme, foundation, consists of the rules, consequences, attitudes, and impressions established by the teacher from the first day of class and beyond.

The second theme, field, refers to the environment or playing field that the teacher establishes in her/his classroom. Integral to this environment is the interweaving of social and learning attitudes that are displayed between students and among students and teacher. Issues of equity and individual student needs are inherent to the *field*, along with the actual

implementation of rules and consequences through interventionist, non-interventionist, and interactionist methods.

The last component, flow, relates to the fluid movement of the lesson, such that it can be directed and channeled in its course by both teachers and students toward a learning objective. Flow includes learning theories, questioning strategies, use of technology, and general lesson activities that the teacher designs in order to promote positive learning and content delivery for each student involved in the lesson.

The principle advantage for defining classroom management in terms of the three Fs is that this representation incorporates the entire teaching and learning process into one theory.

The quest for creating a most effective teaching and learning situation in the classroom starts with building a firm foundation for learning.

This foundation includes the rules and expectations for both behavior and performance in the classroom. Douglas (1986) purported that classroom management must begin on the first day of school in order to have the greatest impact (as cited by Wong, 1998). Marzano (2003) maintained that clear expectations relating to rules and procedures must be established along with consequences for not following these rules. The teacher uses the rules to foster respect among students and among students and teacher.

It is important to stress that good classroom management does not mean high levels of discipline. On the contrary, a firm foundation that consists of the abovementioned objectives is a good first step towards fostering proactive and positive classroom operations.

The ultimate goal is to use management to avoid discipline.

Perhaps the greatest inherent strength of this theory is that it does not stifle the individuality, creativity, or personal belief system of the teacher. Rather, the theory aims to serve as the backbone for a theory of classroom procedures and management and affords the teacher the ability to organize and channel instructional beliefs in an effective and efficient manner. Laying the correct foundation from day one in the classroom and consistently fostering this management foundation establishes the ground-work for the next ingredient that is added into the management mix, namely field.

Field refers to the classroom atmosphere established by the teacher. For students, this atmosphere can include aspects such as (a) respect, (b) cooperation, and (c) high expectations. Field can also contain teacher qualities such as (a) withitness, (b) respect and awareness of equity issues and diversity, (c) appropriate implementation of rules and procedures, and (d) humor.

Ultimately, the field aspect of the three Fs theory has to do with two main features. The first feature is the classroom environment with regards to both teacher and student actions and behaviors. The second feature pertains to the actual implementation and enforcement of rules and procedures established by the teacher as part of the foundation. There are numerous studies regarding the merits of various behavior management styles (i.e., interventionist, non-interventionist, interactionist).

Regardless of the behavior management style espoused, the key to its implementation is that the teacher enforces high expectations for behavior and learning consistently. Wong (1998) proposed that the proper environment

sets the tone for self-discipline by the student with the best reward being a job well done (p. 183). Kohn (1996) added that no matter what rules are established or how they are enforced, the most important aspect of these procedures is that there *are logical consequences*.

Logical consequences refer to the notion that the correct premise be in place such that the consequences to misbehavior are appropriate to the actions of the student or students involved. In essence, the punishment must fit the crime.

The main characteristic that influences the environmental aspect of the field the teacher creates in her classroom has to do with withitness. Kounin (1970) defined withitness as:

A teacher's communicating to the children by her actual behavior (rather than simple verbal announcing: "I know what's going on.") that she knows what the children are doing, or has the proverbial "eyes in the back of her head." (p. 81)

Students are adept at assessing the ability of teachers to control their classrooms.

The teacher who displays withitness earns the respect and trust of her students. Thus, these students are much more likely to support the teacher's expectations and procedures in the classroom. This sentiment is backed by the findings of Jones (2000), who stated, "students are astute at assessing the absence of effective structure" (p.111). Marzano (2003) proposed that withitness is vital to a teacher's maintaining an appropriate mental set for successfully managing her/his classroom.

The last characteristic that is indispensable to the field is humor. In an article

on teacher leadership Krisko (2001), opined that:

Humor emancipates creativity and stimulates higher level thinking. Individuals who find humor are persistent problem-solvers taking tasks to completion, yet flexible to consider alternatives. They use humor to relieve tension and are quick to respond in genuine laughter placing value on intrapersonal sense, interpersonal skills, and a sense of humor. (p. 10)

It would be hard to find fault with the teacher who is able to use humor in the classroom in the manner that Krisko describes. In some regard teachers are entertainers for their student audience. Of course the goal of the entertainment is to engage and direct student attention and learning.

The final component of the three Fs is flow. Flow consists of (a) the time management used in presenting the lesson, (b) the learning theories used by the teacher to provide activities and variety to the lesson, (c) the questioning strategies used to drive the lesson and assess the learning of the student, (d) the lesson design, and (e) any materials or technology used as part of the lesson design.

Flow creates the active learning situation that is essential to the proactive classroom management approach that will deter student boredom, frustration and consequent behavior problems. The flow of the lesson begins the moment the period bell rings to start class and should not end until the period is over. Therefore, it is essential that the opening and closing activities are both efficient and effective, with smooth transitions throughout the rest of the lesson. There should not be

wasted or undirected use of time at the beginning or end of the lesson. Charles (1999) suggests that routines and activities should be established such that students come to class knowing that the work begins immediately and continues until the end of class. Marzano (2003) also suggests that teachers use independent and routine student activities at the beginning of class to enable the teacher to attend to such administrative duties as taking attendance or dealing with tardy students.

Likewise, time must be managed at the closing of class in order to allow students orderly ways of storing or returning any materials used during the lesson. Effective closing activities used in the classroom, such as a lesson wrap up, allow students and teacher to pull together important concepts learned during the classroom period.

Of course, time management during the actual presentation of the lesson is exceedingly important to keep students engaged and interested in the learning process. It is within this area that Kounin's (1970) ideas of momentum and smoothness are salient to the flow of the lesson.

Kounin defined momentum as "initiating, sustaining, and terminating various activities during lesson presentation" (p. 92). Smoothness is "the subsequent avoidance of abrupt slow downs, jerkiness, or changes that interrupt student learning during the lesson" (p. 93). Kounin found both smoothness and momentum correlated statistically significantly with student behaviors.

The idea is to keep students active and interested in the learning process. To help do this, lessons must be designed and implemented in such a way that they are meaningful to the student.

Lastly, I propose that a 5E lesson plan be considered as an effective way to present the learning cycle and content knowledge development in the flow. The 5E lesson cycle was originally developed by Bybee et al., (2001) as a lesson-planning tool to facilitate inquiry lessons in science education. Despite its original purpose, the 5E lesson outline is well suited for delivering lessons in mathematics and other disciplines. The 5E lesson plan consists of the (a) engagement, (b) exploration, (c) explanation, (d) extension (or elaboration), and (e) evaluation.

According to Bybee et al. (2001), engagement comes first in the 5E lesson delivery cycle and is used for two main purposes. Engagement is used to capture student interest in the topic of the lesson and to check for student mastery of prior knowledge that is needed for use in the current lesson's objectives.

In the exploration portion, students are arranged in groups, and they are given a task (usually a hands-on task) or problem to explore and discuss in order to discover lesson objectives. The students must present to the teacher and classmates their findings from the explore activity. The teacher facilitates in this phase of the lesson in order to direct discussion and correct any student misconceptions.

The extension portion is used to broaden lesson objectives in such a way as to take the objectives to more complex levels or

connect the objectives to previously learned concepts at more complex levels.

Finally, the evaluation phase is used to provide an opportunity for summative assessment of student learning of the lesson objectives. This can be accomplished through questioning, discussion, a quiz, problem assignment or combination of methods.

Conclusion

Indeed the three Fs theory, consisting of *foundation*, *field*, and *flow* as described in this article offers preservice and inservice teachers a comprehensive theory of classroom management that promotes the use of proper rules and procedures along with active learning processes that allow for effective teaching and learning in the classroom.

This is a classroom management theory that might be of interest to those administrators who are striving to promote a consistent approach to classroom management in their schools. The proactive nature of the three Fs theory is intended to fend off behavior problems in the classroom by engaging students in the learning process through use of smoothly delivered and properly designed lessons. One of the strengths of the theory is that it is structured enough to deliver a blueprint for complete management of the classroom while, at the same time, being flexible enough to allow an individual teacher to inject his/her personality into his/her teaching style.

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Article on Best Practice

“Managed” Teacher Turnover: A Strategy for School Improvement

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Dilemma of Teacher Attrition

Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric, famously stated that 10 percent of an organization’s workforce should be fired every year (Jewell, 2006). These departures create openings for “new blood” to revitalize the organization (Ingersoll, 2001). Teacher attrition in schools could similarly be viewed as an opportunity to (a) remove underperformers, (b) change the school’s culture, and (c) reinvigorate the school with new ideas and best practices.

There is a growing body of research that informs the reasons for which teachers leave schools and the teaching profession altogether. Numerous factors contribute to teachers’ decisions to leave, including individual teacher characteristics (e.g., being relatively inexperienced, nearing retirement age, or subject area taught) and organizational features of schools (e.g., low salaries, inadequate support from administrators, low parental/community involvement, excessive student behavior problems, low student achievement, and insufficient opportunities for meaningful professional input on the job).

Unfortunately, several of these factors are common in schools already facing numerous challenges, specifically, high poverty, urban communities (Ingersoll, 2001; Luekens, Lyter, & Fox, 2004).

The contemporary media sometimes portray teacher attrition as a problem to be avoided. We propose that it is not something to be prevented altogether, but rather, it should be properly managed and used as a tool to improve teaching in schools.

Given the negative implications of unmanaged teacher attrition for student learning and the potential of leadership actions to affect this dynamic, this article highlights the practices of one principal in the Chicago Public School (CPS) system who used teacher attrition to her school’s advantage. Her actions reveal leadership practices that can transform unwieldy teacher attrition into a powerful tool for improving teaching effectiveness.

The story of Principal Pinkston at Johnson Elementary School emanates from a broader study of school leadership in times of

crisis. *Leading Schools During Crisis* (Pepper, Dishman, London, & Lewis, in press) examines the leadership actions of 12 past and present principals as they face crisis events at their schools.

The authors conducted extensive interviews and background research for each case, studying circumstances that threatened the core operation of each school. They purposefully selected a broad range of crises for examination, including threats originating from acts of violence and natural disasters, along with accountability policies, student body issues, and staffing instability.

These crises can fit into one of four typologies: (a) Internal-Normal, (b) Internal-Abnormal, (c) External-Normal, or (d) External-Abnormal. Apropos, the authors derive six principles for school leaders in times of crisis. Principal Pinkston's successful management of teacher attrition exemplifies these six principles along with several theories of change leadership espoused by scholars (e.g., Kotter, 1996; Trice & Beyer, 1993; and Yukl, 1998.)

Johnson Elementary School

Johnson Elementary is a K-8 school serving roughly 450 students on the west side of Chicago. When Principal Pinkston assumed her position in 2004, the school had already encountered several consecutive years of high teacher attrition.

In 2005 a national community group studied 64 schools in low-income Chicago communities, identifying an average annual teacher attrition rate of 22 percent from 2001-02 to 2003-04. Johnson Elementary, however, had an average attrition of 34 percent over that period, peaking at 44 percent (Illinois ACORN, 2005).

Its history of high rates of teacher attrition was of little surprise to Principal Pinkston given other challenges endemic to the school: widespread poverty among the student body and community; low academic performance; and little academic press both within the school and its surrounding community.

Approximately 90 percent of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch (Chicago Public Schools, 2008a) and, at the time Principal Pinkston began her principalship, the students' scores on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) were in the 20th percentile.

Test scores were still disheartening at the completion of her first year on the job with 2005 ISAT results showing the school's best performance was on reading among eighth-graders; yet only 35 percent of this cohort met or exceeded state standards.

Other grade and subject performance fared much worse, with as few as eight percent of eighth-graders meeting or exceeding ISAT standards in math (Chicago Public Schools, 2008b).

Compounding these factors was the counterproductive professional culture that had embedded itself at Johnson Elementary prior to Principal Pinkston's term as principal. She described this lack of teacher professionalism, citing cases of "insubordination ... when I asked them [teachers] to turn in lesson plans and they did not. Not being professional to parents—talking to them as if they were children, just things that they were not supposed to do as professionals."

Finally, there was a pervasive lack of collegiality among school staff.

Principal Pinkston believed that student learning would never improve with uncontrolled teacher attrition. Prior to her term, teacher attrition was high and not well understood.

Thus, the type and quality of teachers leaving was unmonitored. Principal Pinkston set her sights on transforming that dynamic into one in which teacher attrition would be used as a strategy for improving overall teaching effectiveness at the school. To this end, Principal Pinkston stated:

Teacher turnover isn't in itself a bad thing, but you want to make sure that the people who stay are the ones who you want to stay. And the environment that you create minimizes teacher turnover and ensures that the ones who are leaving are not the ones that you need in the environment (Personal communication, 2008).

The subsequent section discusses the three strategies used by Principal Pinkston to manage teacher attrition in her quest to improve teaching and learning at Johnson Elementary.

Specifically these strategies sought to (a) treat the root cause of the problem, (b) strategize the timing of change efforts, and (c) use attrition as an opportunity to build the "right" professional community.

Managing Teacher Attrition to Improve Teaching

Treat the root cause of the problem

Principal Pinkston recognized that any reform at the school needed to focus on the fundamental interaction between teachers and students in the classroom. To better understand the interactions of this instructional unit in her school and keep personnel decisions focused on student learning (Spillane & Louis, 2002), she

began a systematic review of classroom teaching. She frequently took herself into classrooms to "watch the way the teachers communicated with the students, and in turn, watching how the students perceived the teachers."

She drew upon an already accessible resource to enact this practice: the district observation protocol that was meant to be used regularly but was rarely used meaningfully at Johnson Elementary up until this time. In most cases which Principal Pinkston described, this simply meant:

Going into classrooms and observing their teaching. Ensuring that they followed through on submitting their lesson plans. Just having those conversations with them, 'Are your students learning? How do you know? What evidence do you have?' (Personal communication, 2008).

With this practice of formative accountability and feedback, Principal Pinkston enhanced her school's organizational learning capacity (Marks & Louis, 1999). She was able to identify those teachers providing meaningful instruction and target assistance toward teachers not engaging their students. Subsequently, she could detect the teachers that were either unable or unwilling to improve their instructional practices.

Strategize the timing of change efforts

Principal Pinkston realized that she could not make wholesale change all at once in her efforts to transform unmanaged teacher attrition into a manageable tool for school improvement. As she admitted, "I didn't come in changing everything at once." Change leadership theory certainly substantiates her assertion. Scholars, (e.g., Kotter, 1996; Trice & Beyer, 1993; and Yukl, 1998) speak to the importance of taking

strategic steps towards a long-term goal to effectively create new cultural expectations in an organization.

Principal Pinkston's first move was to meaningfully utilize an already required district policy. She used this accountability measure as a tool to unite and inspire cooperative activity, as well as to provide formative feedback and training rather than sanctions (Follett, 1926). Interestingly, not one teacher left after her first year as principal.

However, in the second and third years of her principalship, teacher attrition spiked. This trend was no surprise to Principal Pinkston because she began to increase expectations and accountability among her staff. Following the 2005-06 school year, 10 of 20 teachers departed while nine of 17 left after the 2006-07 school year. Other research has noted similar trends; that is, efforts to raise school standards may actually heighten teacher attrition, at least in the short term (Brown & Schinker, 2008).

But Principal Pinkston recognized this trend as simply a natural step in the process of long-term school improvement and the fall-out of teachers resisting necessary change (Trice & Beyer, 1993).

Use attrition as an opportunity to build the “right” professional community

Following her third year as principal, teacher attrition began to settle, with five of 16 teachers leaving. At this point, Principal Pinkston was able to transition her efforts from removing undesirable teachers to building an improved professional learning community—a community that coupled accountability with autonomy to heighten professionalism and student learning at the school (Peters & Waterman, 1982).

This process was two-pronged, with efforts targeted towards improved hiring practices and induction/retention efforts.

Principal Pinkston ensured new hires would fit into the school's new culture, which paired accountability for student learning and professional autonomy. Through her dissertation work, she was able to utilize research on effective teacher retention.

Simultaneously, she became a member of a school committee focused on teacher induction and mentorship. Her membership on this committee gave her insight into her own teachers' concerns and desires.

Principal Pinkston found that giving teachers a voice through leadership teams and open dialogue was critical for affording them a sense of ownership in the renewed professional community at Johnson Elementary (Marks & Louis, 1999).

Implications for Policy and Practice

As exemplified by Principal Pinkston, and encountered in numerous other case studies featured in *Leading Schools During Crisis* (Pepper et al, in press), a crisis need not destine a school to failure. Rather, crises can be a much-needed catalyst for change.

The key for any school leader is to approach the crisis systematically, taking well-informed steps focused on a long-term goal. In the case of Johnson Elementary, the principal's strategic efforts to improve teaching effectiveness included teacher attrition as a tool, rather than an obstacle, for school improvement.

She created a school culture of accountability and autonomy in which teachers

uncommitted to or incapable of meeting the expectations were removed from the school either by their own volition or Principal Pinkston's determination. This road to school improvement, though not without challenges,

ensured a meaningful transformation of both teaching and learning among teachers committed to the long-term success of Johnson Elementary.

Authors' Note

This article is adapted from the forthcoming book *Leading Schools During Crisis*. Quotes attributed to Principal Pinkston in this article are taken from interviews conducted for the book.

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Article on Best Practice

Building Leadership Capacity On A Budget

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For small, rural school systems, providing quality professional development has always been a challenge, but it has grown especially difficult in recent times. However, a collaboration that began in 2002 has been a means for a university, surrounding school systems, and businesses to provide professional development and build leadership capacity in area schools. This sustained effort has resulted in raising the standards for school leadership.

Collaboration of Community, School and University Leaders

In the spring of 2002, a small group consisting of (a) two superintendents, (b) a university dean and faculty, and (c) local leaders in manufacturing and banking met to begin an initiative that they hoped would influence local school leadership. They discussed the critical need for leadership in the area.

The superintendents were concerned about the need for leadership succession created by a looming retirement wave that would leave a void in local schools, and business leaders wanted to improve the performance and public perceptions of local schools. The university provided the meeting place and faculty in educational leadership facilitated the discussion.

The partnership that resulted has been providing nationally acclaimed professional development to local educational leaders ever since.

While business and social organizations have many aspects of leadership in common, there are also recognizable differences. During many of the early meetings of the steering committee, business and education leaders compared objectives, standards of accountability, resource issues, and the practical aspects of hiring and firing in business and educational organizations.

Business leaders stressed the importance of leadership regardless of the “product” produced by the business.

Educational leaders shared the difficulties encountered when students enter school undernourished and lacking in basic human needs such as safety and security. It was a healthy exchange that provided a common ground for the creation of a unique collaboration.

Academy for Leadership in Education

Since September 2002, business leaders and educators have been examining the differences

in business and educational leadership in a professional development partnership, titled, The Academy for Leadership in Education (ALE).

This organization was created as a program to encourage the study of leadership and develop the capacity for mentoring new school leaders. The collaboration is centered in a local university, and continues to include surrounding school systems and businesses.

The Academy for Leadership in Education, a collaboration begun by the active involvement of local leaders in Salisbury, on Maryland's Eastern Shore, derives its professional development objectives from the literature on transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978).

Characteristics of transformational leaders are: (a) idealized influence-attributed, (b) idealized influence behavior, (c) Inspirational motivation, (d) intellectual stimulation, and (e) individualized consideration. The focus on these criteria continues to be part of the process of preparing new leaders in the ALE.

Building Trust

From the outset, business leaders and educators began to build trust and respect for one another by examining leadership issues. They made presentations and evaluated case studies in educational administration and in business. They participated in discussion panels where they considered issues such as mentoring and providing incentives to all employees.

Bankers discussed how they promoted high standards and expectations in their employees. Manufacturers shared communication strategies and behavior modeling in their work settings. Educators shared how these situations were similar and

different in social organizations. In this way, all presenters had an opportunity to influence participants. They demonstrated strong ideas about issues, high ethical standards, and a willingness to share in the risk of setting high standards and working toward them. The business, university and school leaders were and continue to be actively involved as role models for participants.

Providing Inspiration

Local leaders, as well as nationally known speakers, have provided inspiration and motivation for participants. Speakers introduced ideas on ethics, professionalism, and spiritual leadership in a nonthreatening environment.

Because the sessions were held at the university, a supportive network began to take shape, apart from any evaluation that occurred in the work setting. These leaders invoked energy by envisioning an improved future, setting high standards and goals, and communicating that this vision was possible. Specific cases of success were shared and studied.

Inspirational motivation is a characteristic attributed to leaders who inspire and motivate, and in the process, convince others that the present situation can change for the better (Antonakis, Avolio, and Sivasubramaniam, 2003). The speakers and discussion leaders of ALE brought new ideas and inspiration to participants who were free to apply these ideas in their own settings.

Intellectual Experiences

Many of the nationally known speakers invited to share presentations have been leaders of well-known organizations, such as Dr. Paul Houston of the American Association of School Administrators and Dr. Richard DuFour, former successful Illinois

superintendent. They provided a rich forum for the exploration of ideas on leadership theory and practice. These experiences have served to infuse new ideas and to further transform practice in local schools. Transformational leaders provide intellectual stimulation by providing an atmosphere conducive to creativity and innovation.

These leaders urged participants to reconsider old ideas and practices, accept new ideas and programs, and encourage others to take risks. These leaders continued to reconsider all aspects of an issue, and encouraged constructive controversy.

Recognizing Individuals

The school superintendents and principals of the participating school systems also participated in presentations, panels and discussion sessions. In doing so, they developed relationships with the participants of the Academy. They have also been attentive to adapting the topics of study to the interests and needs of the participants.

ALE leaders recognized the talents, abilities and professional goals of participants, and have sought opportunities to help them develop their potential. The Academy structure provides participants with a supportive climate that celebrates the individual differences in schools and students.

These experiences provide models for school leaders as a way to provide individualized consideration of each individual in the organization. By providing a supportive climate, celebrating individual differences, and encouraging participants to practice effective communication, the ALE provides opportunities that support the development of each participant.

Who are ALE participants?

Participants attend the ALE sessions at the request of their superintendents. Approximately 40-50 members enter in each two-year cohort. Participants are curriculum planners, teacher coaches, coordinators, or assistant principals or principals.

When the Academy began, one superintendent elected to send practicing school principals and assistant principals. Another superintendent selected participants based on recent job performance in which they demonstrated potential as a future school leader.

At present, most participants fall into the latter category, and represent those who have demonstrated leadership in some aspect of their work as a teacher, curriculum planner, assessment coordinator, or assistant principal.

Each cohort attends twelve full-day sessions that include speakers from national, state, and local organizations. These presenters provide background for texts chosen for study. Local school leaders, business leaders, and higher education leaders meet with participants in breakout sessions to discuss topics and presentations.

Curriculum

A steering committee that consists of university faculty, administrators and area business leaders chooses the topics of study and the invited consultants.

The steering committee determines initial guidelines and approves a two-year outline of programs based on the professional development standards from the National Staff Development Council, and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

This steering committee continues to refine program offerings by reviewing participant feedback and reflecting on current issues in educational leadership. The first cohort, beginning in August 2002, engaged in a panel discussion with Dr. Paul Houston and considered the challenges of leadership under the newly established No Child Left Behind law.

Additionally, participants examined demographic trends in their regional area and considered how these might affect their own school populations in the future.

The second year concluded with Dr. Richard Du Four and an exploration of the concepts in *Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement*; and *Fulfilling the Promise of Excellence: A Practitioner's Guide to School Improvement*. Subsequent cohorts have been structured as learning communities with reading and discussion of well-known works on leadership.

The emphasis for recent cohorts was on using recent research results in practical settings through the study of *Good to Great*, (Collins, 2001), *School Leadership that Works*, (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005) and the application of leadership concepts to the school setting with *From Good Schools to Great Schools*, by Gray and Streshly (2008).

The authors or their research colleagues have presented at many of the sessions. Local presenters have also led sessions in which they have provided interpretations of the research and applications of findings to the unique needs of local schools and students.

Budget

The budget is determined by reviewing fixed expenses such as room fees, meals, speaker

fees and travel expenses, materials such as books, articles, binders, bags, and handouts.

Each school system is assessed a fee based on the number of participants. Economic and budget considerations for each school system are considered by superintendents as they review the yearly budget with the ALE Steering Committee.

The greatest advantage is the way in which professional development expenses are shared by the schools, businesses, and the university. Business leaders provided initial financial support in the form of grants. These initial donations provided for administrative costs, and start up expenses. The costs of the presenters, the director and clerical support are supported by superintendents and administered by Dr. Dennis Pataniczek, Dean of the Seidel School of Education and Professional Studies of Salisbury University.

The national importance of the researchers and authors who have served as presenters requires a level of financial support that none of the participating school systems could support alone. However, by collaborating and sharing their professional development funds, they have been able to influence the quality of leadership and the subsequent positive results in student achievement.

Evaluation of Results

The purpose of the Academy was to develop a cadre of potential school leaders that would be eligible to assume positions in the surrounding school systems. Evidence is growing that many participants of the Academy have been promoted to administrative positions in their respective school systems.

Officials in one local school system, Worcester County Public Schools (see Table 1), estimate that approximately 70% of the

cohort participants from 2002 have assumed roles as assistant principals or principals. The

Academy has served its purpose in developing leadership capacity for area schools.

Table 1

Academy for Leadership in Education Cohorts. Individuals Hired as School Leaders, 2002-2010

Cohort	Percent of Participants Hired as Principals and Asst. Principals
2002-2004	70%
2004-2006	40%
2006-2008	36%

The Academy is also evaluated through the use of participant evaluations after each session. The information is summarized, and the steering committee uses the information in planning modifications and enhancements.

Future Directions

The Academy for Leadership in Education is now providing services to the fourth cohort of school leaders. Graduates of the program are identified and their continuing career progress is being tracked.

The impending shortage of qualified leaders has diminished and now a large pool of candidates can be considered for each position. This program, developed by business, community and school leaders, has served its purpose in providing a bridge to practice for beginning school leaders. Dr. Ted Gilkey, current director of the Academy for Leadership in Education stated, “Even before these leadership candidates are hired in administrative positions, they become teacher leaders in their schools. Ms. Ruth Malone, Wicomico County Public Schools Director of

Curriculum and Professional Development, believes that “participants are able to look at leadership from a more global perspective, beyond their classroom, school, and system, and understand theoretical issues in a practical way.”

Dr. Jon Andes, Worcester County Public Schools Superintendent of Schools, affirms, “ALE provides high quality regional professional development that supports aspiring leaders as they become instructional leaders.”

The Academy for Leadership in Education provides a model of how several rural school systems coordinated resources to provide an investment in the quality of school leadership a time when the standards are high and the financial support for sustained, quality professional development is dwindling.

Through ALE, over 150 educators have participated in high quality professional development. ALE is supporting local efforts to grow the next generation of transformational leaders.

Author Note:

Information on speakers and a current schedule of events can be found at:
<http://www.salisbury.edu/academy/speakers.html>.

Author Biography

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Commentary

Classroom Assessment: Some Propositions for Superintendents

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Courtesy of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind [NCLB PL 107-110], 2002) and attendant state and district policies, superintendents' stress levels are higher than ever.

Here is a bit of encouragement for discouraged district leaders: With administrative support, teachers can improve their classroom assessment practices, resulting in higher student achievement by any measure, better classroom climate, and elevated teacher job satisfaction.

But first the bad news.

Many teachers cannot articulate, and subsequently do not use, best classroom assessment practice. Good intentions in this area are inadequate. Have teachers in your district had specific training in classroom assessment design and use of assessment data for improvement of teaching and learning?

If not, they may be using stale assessment models featuring gimmicky, invalid and unreliable tests (like most state-mandated

tests), poorly conceived performance assessments that are little more than fun projects, and simple auditing of students, with little or no data analysis.

This article offers superintendents five assessment propositions for their consideration. Each would likely provoke spirited and productive discussions at district administrative councils or at school staff meetings.

Proposition One

Teachers should anchor lessons and activities to specific outcomes (e.g., expectations, objectives, learning targets). Be mindful that when choosing these outcomes, the distinctions between them are less important than some experts would have you believe.

This is not an endorsement of standards-based education; rather, it's a reminder that teachers need to have goals in mind. No longer can history teachers simply "teach the Civil War."

Instead, they must be clear, in advance, regarding what it is about the Civil War, for

example, that they want students to learn. Most local and state curricula in the U.S. are now well articulated; there is no excuse for teachers who consistently stray far from curricular themes or overarching ideas.

It should be noted that attending to the curriculum is not synonymous with teaching to the test. Thoughtful, well-written curricula and smart district policy provide teachers with (flexibility, breadth) in lesson planning and in topical emphasis, while encouraging differentiation. Given that even high-quality tests simply sample the learning domain, teaching to the test merely narrows the curriculum and stifles rich, engaging teaching.

Proposition Two

Classroom-level summative grades should essentially reflect the level of student mastery of the learning domain. Although we can debate whether mastery should mean how much students have learned (i.e., domain sampling) or how well they have learned (i.e., trait estimation), we can also likely ignore such nuances.

The point is that a summative test, performance assessment, and report card grades should provide trustworthy and valid indications of student success relative to curricular objectives. While peripheral factors (e.g., student attendance, timeliness, homework completion, classroom participation, attitude) are significant, they should be reported on and dealt with separately from curricular mastery—to the extent possible. Teachers do not always accept this proposition. Many possess an understandable, albeit misguided, reluctance to award the singularly rude, troublesome, top-achieving student an A.

Both aforementioned propositions imply that classroom assessment should be tightly aligned with instruction, and that

summative tests should contain predictable content (but not necessarily predictable test items). Tests should be (a) fair, (b) non-gimmicky, and (c) error-free. Indeed, teachers must view paper tests as professional documents.

Furthermore, it must be noted that formative assessments should focus more on improvement of teaching and learning than on the issuance of interim achievement grades.

Another implication of Proposition Two is that grades of 100% (typically recorded as As) should equate to students who have mastered the learning domain, and grades of 50% (Es or Fs) should translate to a student mastery of exactly half the domain.

Admittedly, this raises problematic questions. Let us consider, for example, students at the secondary level, who have mastered 48% of the learning domain in a course (as measured by varied, high quality assessment).

Such situations beg the question: Should these students be awarded an E or F (0 on the typical four point GPA scale)? Wouldn't that be a false negative grade? Although mastering only 48% of the domain hardly represents sterling scholarship, something salient is lost when equating near half domain mastery with zero—with nothing.

Proposition Three

Smart classroom-level assessment plans will generally include both high-quality, traditional tests and performance assessments (i.e., alternative assessments). What constitutes a high-quality, traditional test? The ubiquity of the professionally produced “big tests” (e.g., ACT, SAT, state-level tests, various popular PK-12 standardized tests, such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills) would have one believe that

good tests contain mostly multiple choice items.

This is a faulty assumption. The “big test” writers rely on multiple choice items for four reasons: (a) such tests are relatively easy to write and administer; (b) they are easy and inexpensive to score; (c) results seem

indisputably scientific (e.g, percentile rank, decimal point numerics); and (d) they allow for easy ranking and sorting of students.

In fact, selected response test items have legitimate but limited usefulness if the goal is to find out what students know and can do.

Consider this example from an Algebra I test:

Solve the system of equations:

$$\begin{aligned} 2x + y &= 5 \\ x - 3y &= -1 \end{aligned}$$

- A. (4, -3)
- B. (3, 4)
- C. (2, 1)
- D. (-1, 0)

At first glance this appears to be a straightforward test item. It’s visually clean, the task is clear, and the incorrect choices are parallel and plausible. However, the problem is that this item doesn’t confirm a student’s ability to solve a system of equations, which is, by implication, the outcome being assessed.

Anecdotally, as a former algebra teacher, I can testify that hardly any students will attempt to earnestly solve the system without employing the answer choices in their process. Instead, they will substitute the values from the ordered pairs, simplify, and thereby determine which ordered pair represents the solution.

This is not to say that students who use this approach are dim-witted. On the contrary, they are exhibiting test savvy and doing what is

necessary to choose the correct response. What these students are not showing, however, is that they can solve the system from scratch—a different and more difficult cognitive task. Of course, having students show their work would guarantee that they actually attempted to solve the system and would allow for miscue analysis, but most multiple-choice tests do not include such requirements.

Selected response test items are best used for checking on low-cognition outcomes; a matching section, for instance, offers an efficient way to check on student recognition of state capitals and knowledge of periodic table symbols. But even when it appears that a selected response item is assessing higher-level student thinking, test writers may be kidding themselves.

Consider the following example:

Circle the letter of the best answer:

In what ways did America's divided feelings about the Vietnam conflict, along with the general counterculture movement of the 1960s, contribute to the downsizing of the U.S. space program after Apollo 11?

- a. The Vietnam conflict was tremendously expensive (dollar-wise), and the country was unable to afford an extensive space program. The space program was generally seen as an elitist extravagance.
- b. The Apollo program was a federal program, populated by conservative engineers. The hippie culture rebelled against conservatism in general, and the Vietnam conflict engendered anti-government feelings and distrust.
- c. One of the rallying cries of the 1960s in American was "No more space waste!" Furthermore, the Vietnam conflict spotlighted the fallibility of technology.
- d. A new counterculture-led focus on "Mother Earth" was in opposition to a "reach for the stars" attitude. Also, the air-polluting effects of rocket flight ran counter to emerging environmentalism precepts.

Although students' heads may spin, this item does not require them to do as much synthesis and evaluation as might be supposed. The test writer has done the deep thinking and students are merely being asked to choose the most deeply thought-out response.

Furthermore, the item will likely be viewed by most test-taking students as an intimidating, time-consuming word wad.

The item writer is clearly unfamiliar with cognitive load theory (see Beddow, Elliott and Kettler, 2008). Again, spotting the correct response, while indicative of student thoughtfulness, is not at all the same as being able to construct such a response from scratch.

Also consider that most people identify a well-written short story as being well-written, while few individuals can write one.

If teaching and learning are the focus of assessment, then the bottom line is this: Constructed response items (e.g., short answer, short and long essay) should generally dominate on classroom-level traditional tests. While such items present a time cost to teachers in terms of grading, the educational payoff is rich.

First, student communications skills will be developed, thereby promoting writing across the curriculum. Second, teachers can provide students with highly specific feedback.

Lastly, teachers can gain valuable insight into student learning style preferences, hidden talents, and interests. Unfortunately, selected response items provide little of this.

Performance assessment typically gets short shrift in PK-12 classes, save in art and other highly hands-on disciplines. Well-planned performance assessments can serve as valid supplements to traditional tests. Indeed, performance assessments may be the ideal way for some students to demonstrate what they have learned, and inclusion of such assessments will help to foster the notion among students that teachers are fair.

A good alternative assessment demands student “performance” (e.g., a skit, the production of a collage, the writing of a travel or museum brochure) but it must be more than a fun project. As with traditional tests, students must show what they know or can do. A classic example of a good alternative assessment is asking students in groups of three to write and perform a short skit illustrating Lee’s surrender to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse. An accompanying rubric would require students to demonstrate learning by way of authentic character dialogue, thus setting up the skit as a test with as much legitimacy as a written test.

Proposition Four

Use of quality classroom assessment practices will increase student engagement and foster better attitudes about school. When students perceive that testing sessions are not opportunities for teachers to trick them or to hold them down and when fairness and alignment with instruction are testing themes, students come to see tests, and by extension, school, as doable.

Thus, educators communicate the message to students that, “if you do your part

as a student, you will succeed. I will not hold you back by way of impossible tests.”

In addition, teachers can reinforce positive student attitudes about assessment if they consistently offer study guides and review sessions. Although the use of pop quizzes is time-honored, teachers should avoid this practice as well as the use of extra credit as they are poor learning motivators.

Administrators should encourage difficult staff conversations around these topics, which should occur at both building and district levels. Moving forward, if Propositions One through Four appear reasonable, then logically a fifth proposition must follow.

Proposition Five

Current high stakes testing policies (most courtesy of the original iteration of NCLB) are generally not aligned with best classroom assessment practice, and may be responsible for negative unintended consequences.

The constant and astute reader will not find this premise novel. Suffice it to note that administrators and teachers who understand best assessment practices will likely find much to criticize in NCLB. Ipso facto, this should provoke an ethical dilemma for educators.

From a strictly technical point of view, the pervasiveness of “big tests” under NCLB and their reliance on multiple-choice items limits their usefulness in ranking and sorting of students. Standardized tests can be seen as primarily measuring what children knew, or could do, before they came to class rather than what skills/knowledge they acquired in class.

Extant empirical research has demonstrated student achievement on standardized tests to be indisputably associated

with socioeconomic status (e.g., Cooley, 1994; Grinion, 1999; Kim, 1992; Maylone, 2002; Roscigno, 1996). Yet school, district and state-level Adequate Yearly Progress ratings, under NCLB, ignore these findings.

Furthermore, standardized tests put students in nonsense problem-solving situations: isolated; non-collaborative; unrealistically time-constrained, perfunctory, requiring cold, crystalline, linear logic; ignorant

of reality; black-and-white; and too-neatly parceled and packaged. The article has presented five assessment propositions for administrators to consider as impetus towards future discussions.

In what has become an age of compliance, what would constitute a courageous yet responsible stand against the omnipresence of “bit tests” of dubious utility?

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Commentary

Comments on the Common Core Standards Initiative

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Introduction

Education in the United States (US) has reached yet another critical milestone on the way toward standardization.

On June 1, 2009, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) announced that 46 states, the District of Columbia, and two U.S. territories agreed to join an initiative, called the Common Core Standards Initiative, to develop common standards for math and language arts (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) & Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), 2009b). Since then the movement has gained more momentum.

The Obama administration announced that in order to successfully compete for the \$4.35 billion “Race to the Top” funds, states must develop and adopt common standards that are internationally benchmarked (Duncan, 2009).

This record amount of money, in an unprecedented economic crisis, has tremendous power over governors and education leaders in states facing huge budget deficits. It will be very difficult for states not to accept the money or common standards.

For example, Missouri, whose state board of education had been opposed to national standards and did not agree to join the initiative in the beginning, agreed to join the project (Hunn, 2009).

This effort will cause irreversible damage to American education, which has already suffered from No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It is precisely what is needed to ruin America’s capacity for global competitiveness instead of helping American children “to be prepared to compete globally,” as the initiative promises.

The initiative undertaken by the states to develop a national set of academic standards is based on false assumptions about education and what it takes to succeed in the global economy.

Common Standards Do Not Necessarily Improve Achievement or Narrow Gaps

Fueling the drive toward common standards is one assumption that common academic standards will raise American students' achievement on international tests of academic skills and knowledge so that they compete globally and close the persistent achievement gap among different groups of students in the U.S. But there is no evidence that common standards can do that.

The U.S. is one of only a small number of countries in the world that does not have a national curriculum or standards. Judging from performances of students on international tests, countries with decentralized curriculum do not necessarily perform worse than those with a national curriculum.

For example, the 2006 science PISA results show both Canada and Australia perform well above the OECD average, ranking #2 and #4 among OECD countries respectively (PISA, 2007). Canada and Australia do not have national standards. They had similar rankings on the 2003 PISA results, with Canada ranking #4 and Australia #7 in math, both #4 in problem solving, and Canada #2 and Australia #3 in reading.

There are plenty of countries with national curriculum and standards that perform much worse than these two countries and the U.S. (PISA, 2003). China is a well-known example of how national curriculum and standards do not reduce gaps. Despite years of a highly nationalized system and a homogeneous culture, significant gaps in terms of achievement exists among its students in different parts of the country.

Inside the U.S., some states have adopted common standards in core academic areas for over a decade now and all states have developed their standards and standardized assessment as a requirement of NCLB. But there is no clear evidence that these efforts have either improved student overall achievement or narrowed the achievement gap significantly (Committee on State Standards in Education, (National Research Council), (2008).

In fact, the most recent results of the National Education Assessment Program (NAEP), also known as the Nation's Report Card, show that although gains have been made in reading and math after NCLB was put in place, the gains were actually larger in the years prior to NCLB (FairTest, 2009; Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009).

Negative Consequences Well-documented

The negative consequences of national standards are well-documented. Common standards result in distortions of the purpose of education and thus deprive students of a real education, which is different from acquiring the knowledge and skills to pass standardized tests.

For common standards to be truly enforced, high-stakes testing seems to be an inevitable tool (Hamilton, Stecher, & Yuan, 2008).

High-stakes testing forces teachers and schools to focus on what is tested and spend less time on what is not. Consequently, singling out a few subjects through national standards and testing necessarily leads to a narrower curriculum and an overall depressed education experience.

Because the reputation, even income, of a teacher, administrator, and school is on the line, all will work toward making sure that students do well on those tests at any cost. That means narrowing the curriculum to what is most likely tested. NCLB has also caused widespread reduction of opportunities for students to learn subjects besides the assessed math and reading (McMurrer, 2007, 2008). Although technically NCLB did not impose a national curriculum or national standards, it forced states to use common assessments in math and reading to hold schools accountable.

Thus, in order to ensure that their students performed well on the common assessments, schools increased instructional time for math and reading and reduced time for other subjects such as arts, music, social

studies, science, and even lunch and recess (McMurrer, 2007, 2008).

Lessons Learned From England?

England's national curriculum movement is another telling example of what is to come in the U.S. England replaced a largely locally controlled curriculum with a national curriculum in the early 1990s. The curriculum is broader than math and literacy, including many other subjects (thus in a sense more broadly construed than the current American two subjects standards movement) but only math, literacy, and science are considered core subjects and attached more significance through testing. According to a recent report that has received heavy media coverage, the national curriculum has essentially deprived public school children in England of a real education.

The report, titled *The Cambridge Primary Review*, summarizes the problems of the national curriculum, among them:

- The detachment of curriculum from aims.
- The supplanting of long-term educational goals by short-term targets of attainment.
- The real or perceived problem of curriculum overload, in the sense that many teachers believe that far too much is prescribed for the time available.
- The loss, for whatever reason, of the principle of children's entitlement to a broad, balanced and rich curriculum, and the marginalisation, in particular, of the arts, the humanities and – latterly – science.
- The test-induced regression to a valuing of memorisation and recall over understanding and enquiry, and to a pedagogy which rates transmission more important than the pursuit of knowledge in its wider sense.
- The use of a narrow spectrum of the curriculum as a proxy for the quality of the whole, and the loss of breadth and balance across and within subjects as a result of the pressures of testing, especially at the upper end of the primary school.
- The continuing and demonstrably mistaken assumption that high standards in 'the basics' can be achieved only by marginalising much of the rest of the curriculum. (Alexander, 2009)

Stifling Creativity and Future Innovation

Common standards, enforced with high-stakes testing, stifle creativity and reduce diversity in talents. Being creative is to be different, to deviate from the norm, but common standards ask for conformity and demand a uniform way of thinking, learning, and demonstrating one's learning. Standardized testing rewards those who conform and penalizes those who deviate. As a result, students are taught to do things in a certain way that helps them achieve high test scores and they learn not to deviate.

Once a standard is established and enforced with high-stakes testing, it also becomes a criterion for selection. It is then used as a uniform measure to include and exclude people.

That is, those who happen to do well on that one assessment are considered good and successful, while those who do less well are considered at-risk, regardless of their other strengths. A child who may be extremely talented in art but cannot pass the reading test at the time required by the government is deemed inadequate. A child who can write very imaginative essays or fictions but cannot write the way standardized tests want is also deemed inadequate. A child who does not have strong home support and does not arrive in school with the same set of skills and knowledge as her classmates is also considered at-risk, while she may just need a bit more time.

These "at-risk" children are then forced to fix their "deficiencies" instead of developing their strengths. As a result, other talents are devalued, suppressed, and left to wither.

The Chinese Experience

China is a country that has suffered from national standards and high stakes testing.

China invented *keju*, a national examination system to select government officials.

While initially this seemed a fair and open mechanism to identify leaders from the commons, gradually it degenerated into a system that rewarded those good at mastering the Confucian classics and excluded other more useful talents like critical thinking and creativity. *Keju* caused massive damages in the country's capacity for scientific and technological innovations and was partially blamed for the decline of the great civilization. *Keju* was abolished in 1905. But its spirit now lives in the revamped College Entrance Exam (*gaokao*) in modern-day China. *Gaokao* is the one test that colleges use to select their students in China and thus it is the one chance a Chinese student has to get into college.

The stakes are very high, making it a very powerful mechanism to enforce national curriculum standards. But in recent years, *gaokao* has become the target of criticism and national reform because it is considered the root cause of all education ills in China: from the lack of innovative and creative citizens to deteriorating health among children, from widespread cheating and fraud to student suicides, and from massive inequality in education opportunities to unbearable academic pressure on students.

China has realized the problems and has launched a series of efforts to transform its "test-oriented education" into a "quality-oriented education." One of the major strategies is to relax central control of the curriculum and enable more local autonomy (Zhao, 2009).

Proponents of the common core standards initiative may suggest that they will not develop national high-stakes testing like China's *gaokao* or that they will develop more innovative assessments other than multiple-

choice type standardized testing. But logically if standards are not enforced with high-stakes assessment, their chance of being truly implemented is small.

In fact, according to the FAQ of the Common Core Standards Initiative, “[A]ssessments aligned with the common core state standards will play an important role in making sure the standards are embedded in our education system. NGA and CCSSO will work with those states who adopt the standards to develop a proposal to create common assessments in language arts and mathematics.” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) & Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), 2009a).

These common assessments will likely be used as indicators of student achievement, teacher performance, quality of a school and a state since the motivation behind the Initiative is to provide a common benchmark for all students, regardless of their location. Given the push for accountability and linkage between student performance and teacher pay, we can expect that significant stakes will be attached to these assessments.

The Obama administration has also advocated for more innovative assessments and indeed it is possible to develop them. But according to a recent review of two decades of standards-based reform in the U.S. prepared by the Rand Corporation, despite early promises and aspirations to develop alternative assessment, most reforms return to traditional standardized tests and thus emphasize easy-to-test skills and knowledge (Hamilton, et al., 2008). Even when more innovative assessments are developed and adopted, they are only for a limited of number subjects, currently math and language arts.

What Does It Take to Compete Globally?

When a government develops or adopts a national standard or curriculum, it is staking a bet on behalf of its future citizens’ success. It is betting that the knowledge and skills prescribed by the standard is of more value than others in their future.

The Obama administration, the nation’s governors, and state top education officials in 49 states and territories are wagering that, for now, a standardized focus on math and language arts will make American children globally competitive. American students’ relatively low scores on international studies in reading, math, and science have long and often been used by standards advocates as warning signs of America’s potential demise in global competition. It is thus quite understandable to see math, language arts, and science as the focus of U.S. education reform and investment.

To be fair, I don’t think the Obama administration or other education leaders that support the Common Core Standards Initiative and make math and language arts the priority subjects believe only these two subjects are what is needed to make Americans globally competitive. But the unintended consequences of highlighting these subjects will undoubtedly draw attention and resources away from other things that are as important as, if not more than, test scores in math and language arts.

Test scores are a poor indicator of a person’s or nation’s future success. Andrew Isaacs, Co-director of the Center for Elementary Mathematics and Science Education at the University of Chicago, described as ‘wobbly’ the proposition that ‘a more centralized national curriculum would

lead to higher student achievement, and that higher student achievement in turn would lead to increased economic competitiveness.’ (Committee on State Standards in Education (National Research Council), 2008, p. 62). Keith Baker found no correlation between performance on international comparative studies and national wealth, democracy, creativity, and other indicators of nation’s success (Baker, 2007).

In another study, Christopher Tienken examined the relationship between nations’ rankings on international tests and their rankings on the Global Competitiveness Index, an indicator used to measure nations’ future economic competitiveness. He found weak, no, or negative correlations between a nation’s performance on these tests such as PISA and TIMSS and their economic competitiveness for the more developed nations like the U.S., while significant positive correlations exist for the less developed ones (Tienken, 2008).

Local Control and Creativity

Furthermore, despite all the problems and being labeled “in crisis” for decades, American education has produced citizens that have kept America the most innovative and competitive nation in the world.

What has made America strong and Americans competitive seems to be its tolerance for different perspectives, diversity of talents, creativity, and entrepreneurship (Chua, 2007; Florida, 2002, 2005; Zhao, 2009).

This is why while America has been trying to close the achievement gap measured by test scores through standardization and compartmentalization of information, other countries, especially East Asian countries, whose students constantly perform better in math and literacy tests than Americans, are working hard to close the “creativity gap”

(Hannas, 2003) by imitating US education practices (Zhao, 2007).

For example, China, a country considered a major US competitor and whose education has been glorified by many American educators, national associations, researchers, and political leaders, has been trying to undo the damages of standardization and testing for years.

In an effort to transform itself from an economy built on cheap labor to one built on innovations, the country has launched a series of reform efforts aimed at making its system more flexible, local, and well-rounded to prepare a more creative citizenry. Many of the features these efforts try to create are precisely what American education reformers are eager to discard (Zhao, 2007, 2009).

In the age of globalization, diversity of talents, creativity, and entrepreneurship are even more important, because as Daniel Pink points out, the traditional Left-brain directed thinking skills associated with math, literacy, and science can be acquired cheaper overseas in China and India (Pink, 2005).

American education is better endowed, both culturally and materially, to produce more diverse and creative talents than some other countries. Thus it should continue to build on its strengths instead of moving toward more standardization in order to achieve what might look good but actually matter less in real life.

However, American education is not adequately prepared to help its students to become globally competitive. True global competitiveness requires the ability to interact competently with people from different cultures. That requires education in global competence—understanding of global problems, appreciation of global interdependence, and skills in foreign

languages and cross-cultural communication. The new national standards do not address or foster that type of thinking. In fact, they stifle it.

Conclusions

The Common Core Standards Initiative or any such movement to create national standards risks America's future by destroying its traditional strengths in cultivating a diverse and creative citizenry. This initiative and the general support for common standards are misguided by simplistic understandings of a complex set of educational issues as well as pursuit of political convenience. One of the most complex issues in American education, for example, is the issue of equity; that is, the gaps in educational achievement among students from different backgrounds. America

has been plagued by the constant gap in academic achievement between minority, inner city students and their white suburban peers.

Although research has shown that the gap is more of a result of set of complex social and psychological issues such as poverty and cultural bias (Berliner, 2006) than simple academic expectations, proponents of standards continue to have the blind faith that a set of common expectations will solve the problem.

Adopting common standards and holding teachers and schools accountable for improving their students' test scores on common assessments may have great political appeal, but it will unlikely make them globally competitive.

In fact, such a move causes more damage because it:

1. ruins the traditional strengths of American education to produce creative and diverse talents;
2. distracts attention from really addressing the causes of inequality;
3. wastes tremendous amount of money and political assets on doing something that may not matter at all;
4. sends a strong message that educational professionals are not to be trusted because they are lazy and complacent.

Author Biography

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Book Review

Technology Leadership, Management, and Policy: A Primer and Integrative Model for the 21st Century

by John W. Collins, Jr.

Reviewed by:

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This compact and easy to read text provides a general framework for business, government, and educational leaders considering various aspects of technology management. The central feature of the book is a description of the integrative model or, what the author describes as, the Technology Leadership, Management, and Policy Pyramid.

The model as presented has three planes, namely, organizational integration activities, maintenance activities, and planning activities. Once presented in the text, the model is subsequently interwoven into the content of each of the ensuing chapters. The text is divided into three parts and nine brief chapters.

Part One addresses theoretical considerations associated with the model, Part Two is concerned with pragmatic aspects of the application of the model and, Part Three is a synthesis of both theory and practice.

There are some chapters dispersed among the three parts that warrant special mention. In a chapter in Part One, the author

explores the difference between “state of the art” and “state of practice technology” through interesting examples related to the development of various technological tools.

A chapter on professional links and best practices in Part Two includes a list of web-based resources clustered into the following five categories: general, business, education, government, and a category described as, “outside of the box,” meaning that these links, while valuable, do not fit into the previously mentioned categories.

While not portending to present an exhaustive list of resources, the author provides good descriptions of these websites as well as contact information. Another chapter in Part Two addresses the issue of acquiring resources and includes some weblinks and descriptions associated with this topic.

One of the chapters in Part Three, titled, “Harnessing the Internet and Integrating Technology,” describes the history and development of various browsers, as well as contact information.

Yet another chapter in Part Three, provides an overview of security concerns in a technology rich work environment as well as weblinks and contact information.

The text makes good supplemental reading for school leaders interested in acquiring insight about how to think about technology. While the integrative model or, the Technology Leadership, Management, and Policy Pyramid, is a good general framework in which to think about technology leadership, a much more comprehensive and holistic framework particular to school leaders considering issues associated with technology leadership is provided by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE).

Along with the school leader standards, the recently released NETS 2009 for Administrators, ISTE has developed complementary teacher and student standards, as well as a set of organizational conditions, to

accompany the school leader standards. The ISLLC (Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium) standards also provide a useful framework and some key indicators for school leaders concerned about technology leadership.

School leaders will find numerous texts on the market, based on the ISTE and ISLLC standards for school administrators, as providing more comprehensive guidance related to specific content area knowledge and performance associated with technology leadership in elementary and secondary educational settings. The text provides a good list of annotated websites which serve as a primer for school leaders interested in various resources on the Internet. While this very easy to read and approachable text does not replace more comprehensive works in the field of school technology leadership, none the less, school leaders will find it both interesting and useful supplemental reading.

Technology Leadership, Management, and Policy: A Primer and Integrative Model for the 21st Century is written by John W. Collins, Jr. and published by Ithaca Press, 2009, 140 pages; softcover, \$22.

Reviewer Biography

Gregory Hauser is an associate professor of educational leadership at Roosevelt University in Chicago, IL. His research interests include technology and educational leadership, student transition issues, and school reform. He is a former Fulbright Scholar in Germany. E-mail: ghauser@roosevelt.edu.

Book Review

Teaching Content Outrageously: How to Captivate All Students and Accelerate Learning

by Stanley Pogrow

Reviewed by
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As a former superintendent of schools and middle school principal, I recently found a low cost, effective resource that can provide administrators and their teachers with instructional interventions that can be utilized immediately in their schools.

In *Teaching Content Outrageously, How to Captivate All Students and Accelerate Learning*, Stanley Pogrow effectively describes how classroom teachers can implement methodology that will not only make learning a lot more fun than many traditional approaches but will enhance the learning of content and improve retention.

Pogrow, known nationally for the HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) program, describes “a methodology for creating lessons and units for teaching any content, be it traditional or standards based, in ways that engage and inspire even the most reluctant, resistant, and superficial learner.”

The foundational approach that was used to develop an outrageous lesson is the Dramatized Content Planning Method. The components of this teaching method described in the book are: surprise; the development of a character or persona; how to effectively use disguises, both costumes and voices; the establishment of a setting that incorporates as

many media and senses as appropriate; planning a storyline or scenario with a dilemma, fantasy or humor; the use of props; eliciting an emotional reaction; the transitions to the students’ learning activity; the content materials; and how to debrief the students on the content of the lesson objective. Pogrow clearly describes each of the critical components of the outrageous lesson as he engages the reader in reflecting upon how to transfer this knowledge into the development of his or her own authentic teaching.

Following a thorough explanation of the dramatized content planning method to include a review of the critical components of these lessons, the author describes several outrageous lessons that his student teachers employed during their teaching assignments. These lessons spanned the grade levels from Grade 4 through high school and were designed by student teachers who were at a variety of developmental stages as related to their skill levels. These lessons included such content as poetry, mathematical concepts, persuasive writing, social studies and foreign language.

After each lesson, Pogrow debriefs the strategies that were employed by the teacher and identifies each component. By including these exemplar lessons in the book, the reader gains a thorough understanding of the

dramatized content planning method and will certainly be able to replicate this model when developing authentic lessons to be used in the classroom.

Pogrow goes on to provide a detailed analysis of each lesson and describes why the instructional strategies employed are “outrageous.” He reviews each of the components of the lesson and makes the connection between each teaching technique and its effect on student behavior, learning, retention and achievement.

Although lesson examples for the primary grades are not included in the book (one example is included in the Appendix), the author believes that there can be positive implications at this level as teachers adapt the thinking-development approach to the youngest students with some modifications. Pogrow encourages teachers to plan and implement developmentally appropriate outrageous lessons at the primary level as well.

As a former school leader and now university professor teaching graduate and undergraduate level education majors, I found that the instructional strategies, techniques and lesson planning described in this book certainly demonstrate the potential to make a positive impact on teaching content and will assist teachers in “connecting” with all students.

The author writes, “Outrageous Teaching provides, for the first time, a systemic way to apply humor and dramatic technique to efficiently increase content learning, and strategically contribute to school improvement efforts.”

In addition, this would be an excellent book for administrators to provide to new teachers at new teacher orientations or new teacher roundtables that may be scheduled throughout the school year. Instructional leaders can use this resource for a new teacher professional learning community book study.

Teaching Content Outrageously: How to Captivate All Students and Accelerate Learning by Stanley Pogrow is published by Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2009, 234 pages, softcover \$24.95.

Reviewer Biography

Ralph Ferrie is an assistant professor in the graduate school of education at Georgian Court University in Lakewood, NJ. He served as superintendent of schools for 11 years in New York and New Jersey. He was also a middle school principal in several New Jersey school districts. Ferrie earned his doctorate in education administration from Seton Hall University. E-mail: ferrier@georgian.edu

Mission and Scope, Upcoming Themes, Author Guidelines & Publication Timeline

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* is a refereed, blind-reviewed, quarterly journal with a focus on research and best practices that advance the profession of education administration.

Mission and Scope

The **mission** of the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* is to provide peer-reviewed, user-friendly, and methodologically sound research that practicing school and district administrators can use to take action and that higher education faculty can use to prepare future school and district administrators. The Journal publishes accepted manuscripts in the following categories: (1) Evidence-based Best Practice, (2) Original Research, (3) Research-informed Commentary, and (4) Book Reviews.

The **scope** for submissions focuses on the intersection of five factors of school and district administration: (a) administrators, (b) teachers, (c) students, (d) subject matter, and (e) settings. The Journal encourages submissions that focus on the intersection of factors a-e. The Journal discourages submissions that focus only on personal reflections and opinions.

Upcoming Themes

Below are the themes for the next three issues:

- Navigating Fiscal Crisis with a Focus on Student Achievement
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- Influence of Leadership Actions on Teacher Retention
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Submissions

Length of manuscripts should be as follows: Research and best-practice articles between 1,200 and 1,800 words; commentaries, book and media reviews between 400 and 600 words. Articles, commentaries, book and media reviews, citations and references are to follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, latest edition. Permission to use previously copyrighted materials is the responsibility of the author, not the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*.

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- Full title of book
- Author
- City, state: publisher, year; page; price
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- Contact information for reviewer: address, country, zip or postal code, e-mail address, telephone and fax
- Date of submission

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Spring	October 1	January 1	February 15	April 1
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