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Teachers' Struggles with Controversial Issues: Facing the Demon

Jeremiah Clabough  
Sarah Philpott  
Lance McConkey  
Thomas Turner  
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Abstract
The researchers used both a questionnaire and interviews to determine teachers’ perceptions, beliefs, and practices related to teaching controversial issues in the social studies classroom. They used a convenience sample of 50 teachers, many of whom were former interns. Both the questionnaire and interviews were directed toward answering key questions derived from the literature. These questions focused around such topics as teacher’s role in discussion, how teachers define controversial issues, and when teachers engage students in discussions about controversial issues. The data collected from the surveys and interviews were then analyzed. Based on this analysis, the researchers posited that teachers need professional development to aid them on pedagogical approaches to use with the integration of controversial issues in the classroom and student appropriate responses when discussing controversial issues. The researchers suggest possible reasons contributing to teachers’ reluctance to engage in classroom discussions about controversial issues.

Background for the study
Teaching about controversy is both a tradition and a problem in the social studies. The tradition relates to the very definition of citizenship itself. The NCSS position paper on citizenship (NCSS, 2001) clearly defines an effective citizen as one who “embraces core democratic values and strives to live by them,” “has knowledge of our nation’s founding documents, civic institutions, and political processes,” “is aware of issues and events that have an impact on people at local, state, national, and global levels,” and “seeks information from varied sources and perspectives to develop informed opinions and creative solutions.” If these are the defining attributes of a citizen, then it follows that students need to learn to hear and weigh with an open mind facts and arguments that run counter to their own points of view, deal with conflicting view points, and ask and answer difficult questions about issues. Dealing with controversy is the heart of decision making and inquiry.

Teaching about controversy is a problem because we fear it as a career destroying monster and demon, because we as teachers have difficulty distinguishing and dealing with ideas at variance from our own points of view, because we do not know how to deal with controversy, and because we almost instinctively want to avoid conflict in the classroom. Other considerations for the avoidance of discussing controversial issues include parental emphasis on equipping students with skills necessary to succeed in higher education and the workplace, parental aversion to the possibility that their children will be indoctrinated with alien values by teachers and peers, and the current contentious political environment coupled with the aftermath of September 11, 2001 (Hess, 2009). Controversy is one of our demons, and teachers and schools deal with controversy in myriad ways ranging from purposeful avoidance to one-sided advocacy of particular points of view.

The major prevailing problem is that, as Haynes (2008) pointed out, most teachers prefer to avoid risks in dealing with conflict issues. The risk with controversial issues is that many issues are open to disagreement without one concrete answer because these issues often deal with values. “These are issues that arise when students are judging the rights and wrongs of public policies or personal actions.” (Lockwood, 1996) Even so, many controversial issues, even those that are high risk, have curricular
Relevance as well as importance to students and their lives, their character and their security. For the vitality of a democracy to be maintained, students must engage in civic discussions with those that have different points of view, and through this discussion, students will gain tolerance for differences in others and will learn important content knowledge (Hess, 2009). An honest pedagogical approach is to deal with controversy in a direct and non prejudicial way, choosing age appropriate controversies, seeking and respecting students’ viewpoints, and raising probing and insightful questions, structuring activities to help students understand the issue, the stakes, and the stake-holders as well as relevant and important viewpoints.

The discussion of controversial issues in the classroom provides students with opportunities to engage in higher order thinking by examining divergent points of view about an issue (Camicia & Dobson, 2010). Soley (1996) explains that controversial issues help students to think deeper about the content and allow the students to self-reflect about their own values and the values of others. The National Council for the Social Studies has given support to discussing controversial issues and helping students form opinions and make decisions in published Council position statement. With the NCSS Position Statement on Effective Citizenship (2001), the Council expressed the belief that:

Citizens in the twenty-first century must be prepared to deal with rapid change, complex local, national, and global issues, cultural and religious conflicts, and the increasing interdependence of nations in a global economy.

Later in this statement the Council asserted that

Our students should leave school with a clear sense of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. They should also be prepared to challenge injustice and to promote the common good. This clearly points to teaching our students to confront and challenge the establishment when they believe that it is guilty of injustice. Such teaching is dangerous, even frightening to us. Yet it is something that we have expected and lauded from our lawmakers and leaders from Jefferson and Adams until the present day.

NCSS (2007) presented another position statement, this one expressing views related to academic freedom. The Council asserted that:

Controversial issues must be studied in the classroom without the assumption that they are settled in advance or there is only one right answer in matters of dispute. The social studies teacher must approach such issues in a spirit of critical inquiry exposing the students to a variety of ideas, even if they are different from their own.

The unfortunate thing about such position statements is that while they demand that teachers do difficult things, they do not delineate the nature of controversial issues nor do they even suggest how teachers can carry out the challenge and duty.

A growing research effort has been made to look at how teachers deal with controversial issues. In McAulay’s study (1965), the researcher surveyed 648 social studies teachers and found that over half (52%) felt that they would be reprimanded if they discussed controversial issues. Nearly twenty years later, Guyton and Hoffman (1983) did a mail survey of a smaller group of teachers about teaching controversial issues. Their sample consisted only of students and former students in their classes at Georgia State University and the response rate was modest (49%). However, most of those surveyed agreed that teaching controversial issues was important and 93% indicated that they were comfortable teaching about controversial issues. These teachers also said that they had to protect themselves from administrators and parents. Pointedly a feeling of lack of school support for teaching about controversial issues from the school and a fear of retribution was still a prevailing concern. However, the apparent growing belief that teaching controversial issues was important was encouraging.

Many concerns continue to exist related to how and if teachers deal with controversial issues in the classroom. Byford, Lennon and Russell (2009) examined the views of high school teachers in two states about teaching controversial issues. Their purpose was to determine the areas that teachers perceived as important in teaching controversial issues and if teachers valued teaching controversial issues. Like the McAulay and Guyton and Offman, these researchers used a survey approach. Based on their responses from 67 high school social studies teachers, they concluded that teachers believed in developing
“informed and enlightened” citizens but were “less assured” about teaching about controversial issues. The teachers did feel that it was important to discuss controversial issues but feared student disruptions and conflict. As Soley (1996) stated it in her article, the discussion of controversial issues is a “cornerstone of our professional responsibility” within the field of social science education that must be discussed despite potential barriers.

Defining Controversial Issues

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare describes the feuding families as two households divided over an ancient grudge. Divided is an apt word to describe what constitutes a controversial issue, for the very nature of controversy is that people are divided about what is right and what is wrong. These individual and group decisions are based on beliefs and personal values (Cook & Eric Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, 1984). For the purpose of this study, we defined a controversial issue as a state of prolonged public dispute or debate where one side of the debate can be offensive to some and provoke passionate discussions.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to describe teachers' perceptions related to the definition and nature of controversial issues, to delineate the issues perceived to be controversial, and to describe their approaches to teaching controversial issues. A secondary purpose was to describe their perceptions related to school policy regarding teaching controversial issues. We attempted to deal with three related research questions adapted from Malikow (2006) in this mixed methods study:

1. How do teachers define the nature of controversy?
2. How do teachers determine when to engage students in a controversial issue?
3. How should teachers conduct themselves when teaching a controversial issue?

Methodology

In order to examine how teachers viewed controversial issues and to better understand how they perceived controversial issues, the researchers developed both a questionnaire and an interview schedule (see Table 1-3 in Appendix). The questionnaire was constructed using a critical factor approach beginning with a literature based identification of the defining components of controversial issues. It was hoped that this would give the resulting questionnaire criterion based convergent validity. To accomplish this, we examined the literature to create a list of specific potential controversial issues that were frequently mentioned and to determine common practices and problems for dealing with such issues in the classroom. The questionnaire developed from this process included a list of possible controversial issues, and questions about comfort levels in teaching controversial issues, the positions that teachers should take in teaching controversy, the range of methods of teaching, and the level of system support. We further determined that open ended interviews of a different sample with a more limited set of questions would produce data that might augment and confirm the findings from the questionnaire. At the same time we were open to any conflict that the data from the interview schedule might produce. The questionnaire was distributed to a sample of teachers and interns. The sample was chosen simply for their accessibility to the researchers since this was viewed as a preliminary study. The sample consisted of 48 recent and current interns from a major southern university and teachers in schools where the researchers had taught. All of the members of the sample had experienced some teaching controversial issues. However, since we found little in the literature to connect age or experience to how one perceived and taught controversial issues, this factor was given little if any consideration. The sample concentrated on teachers with ten or fewer years of experience. Six teachers from the sample were invited and agreed to participate in the interview phase of the study.

The data from the questionnaire and the interview were then analyzed. Since this was a preliminary study and the sample was neither random nor large, the examination of the quantitative data was limited and complex statistical treatments were not involved. We simply looked at rankings and percentages (See Tables 4-7 in Appendix). The qualitative data consisted of the transcriptions of interview response of the six teachers. These transcripts were examined using qualitative methodology, searching for themes and looking at individual perceptions. Those interviewed were given pseudonyms to insure their anonymity. The pseudonyms used in this article are Bruce, Chad, Greg, Lisa, Leslie, and Steve.
Analysis of the Data from the Questionnaire

The first question on the questionnaire looked for consensus about the definition of controversial issues. Ninety-six percent of those surveyed agreed that a controversial issue is a state of prolonged public dispute or debate where one side of the debate can be offensive to some and provoke passionate discussions. The six teachers interviewed further agreed that sparking a prolonged public dispute, where there is no recognizable black or white answer, is an inherent trait of most controversial issues. One common theme found throughout the six interviews is the idea that controversial issues are situations where people have different world views on the same issue. This, in turn, causes disagreements. Controversial issues often pertain to ingrained values such as religion, which came up in Kim’s interview. Her students felt that they had to defend their point of view. Kim indicated that this need rose from the fact that their views represented truth instilled in them by their parents, family, and community. Since controversial issues touch fundamental ways that people define themselves, students can often be hurtful and offensive toward others’ feelings and values. A similar point was raised by Bruce who mentioned in his interview several times that discussion about controversial issues produces emotional reactions from students.

Another common theme of the six interviews was that controversial issues often just come up in social studies classrooms. Since they were often raised by the students, there was simply no way to avoid the issues. Bruce mentioned in his interview several times that this had occurred in his classroom. The teachers’ sense of not knowing how to handle such events was evident because none of the six teachers interviewed had specific strategies or techniques on how to handle situations about controversial issues in the classroom. Both Kim and Bruce discussed handling situations in the moment. This seemed to indicate that these teachers felt a need for school systems to provide professional development so that teachers would be prepared for these types of discussions in the classroom. Both the survey responses and the interviews further indicated that these social studies teachers were not provided training by school systems to deal with controversial issues.

One of the interviewees, Bruce, described controversial issues as topics that do not have a middle ground- instead they lead people to passionately and emotionally embrace one side of the issue as the “right” choice. The researchers found that the surveyed populations’ notions of controversial issues seemed to corroborate Stradling’s definition of controversial issues. Stradling (1984) defined them as “issues that deeply divide a society, that generate conflicting explanations and solutions based on alternative value systems.”

A common theme from the interviews is that teachers should primarily remain neutral when discussing controversial issues. The interviewees used the words umpire and referee when discussing the teacher’s role in the classroom when discussing controversial issues. By doing this, teachers can present the facts about an issue and not support one side of the issue. This is important because students tend to come in with a one sided view about a topic, which allows the teacher to present a balanced perspective on a topic. The idea of teacher neutrality while discussing controversial issues is further supported by Lockwood’s study (Lockwood, 1996).

The survey required participants to rank each of the identified controversial issues in terms of the degree of the controversy it raised. The results of that ranking are shown in Figure 1.

The two most controversial issues were gay marriage and abortion. These issues are certainly divisive issues of prolonged public debate and have ignited passionate discussion since biblical times - they are in essence the subjects of ancient grudges. Figure 1 lists the topics teachers were surveyed about and the level of controversy they designated for such topics. The surveyed population identified gay marriage, abortion, racism, politics, and evolution as the five most controversial issues. These are all topics where there is no public consensus on the right or wrong answer.

Lisa described a controversial issue as “anything that is a sensitive subject for people; where there are two different viewpoints.” This points to the fact that students are usually not neutral. Controversial issues, like the ones included in the survey, are sensitive topics of discussion because not everyone has the same beliefs. Students arrive possessing their own ideas and some are vocally adamant about such beliefs. These pre-formed opinions are shaped with input from families, friends, and community. In a study about
student political ideology, Russell (2004) found that students most often accept viewpoints of family members without question or reflection. Students are also unable to rationally articulate the opinions they possess about controversial issues (Byford, Lennon, & Russell, 2009). When various opinions about sensitive issues are possessed, passionate debates and conflict often ensue (Harwood, Hahn, & Eric Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, 1990).

A common theme among our interview participants was that the discussion of sensitive issues causes some students to feel personally offended and attacked when they find others disagree with their stance. This occurs not just in the classroom but in everyday society as well. Evans, Avery, and Pederson (2000) described controversial issues as “taboo” topics because they are not usually discussed in society as people take personal offense to the discussion. This may be partially due to the fact U.S. society tries to avoid dealing with controversy (Hess, 2009). One participant, Leslie, noted that when students side with one viewpoint it can be offensive to students who side with a differing viewpoint. Students can be deeply offended when they identify personally with the topic. An example was given by Lisa who described a group of her African-Americans students who were personally offended by a classroom discussion of the Civil Rights Movement. These fifth graders were offended by a picture of an African-American being beaten by a white police officer. They angrily showed it to a white female classmate. Lisa quoted the students as saying, “Look at what those white people were doing to us.”

Figure 1 shows how survey respondents ranked the list of issues in order of extremely controversial to not being controversial. The researchers found that respondents identified contemporary issues of values and beliefs as most controversial. Although historic events are categorized as being controversial, the results of the survey show that historic events are not as controversial as contemporary issues in U.S. society.

Controversial issues, therefore, are sensitive contemporary and historic issues of which people take various positions. From the results of question two on part three of the survey, educators find identifying topics that are controversial an easy task, but incorporating them in the classroom is hardly an easy charge.

Findings

The findings from this study are discussed in the following pages by category. The categories include teachers’ perceptions of the need to discuss controversial issues, lack of professional development about controversial issues, discomfort in teaching controversial issues, and system support for teaching controversial issues.

Teachers’ Perceptions of the Need to Discuss Controversial issues

In both the interviews and surveys, teachers stressed that students need to learn about controversial issues. There was a high level of agreement that students should be exposed to age appropriate content material about controversial issues. In his interview, Bruce seemed to explain this well, saying, “We want them to be able to embrace these issues while they may not agree with them to know about controversial issues and share those ideas with others. That is part of learning.” Both interviewed teachers and those who completed the surveys, expressed the belief that controversial issues help students with concepts related to citizenship education.

With the questions in the survey geared toward citizenship education, teachers agreed that controversial issues help students stay informed about the world around them and that learning about controversial issues help students become better citizens. In one of the interviews, Chad raised the point that school is a place where students can ask questions and discuss how controversial issues pertain to their lives.

Teachers indicated in the survey that they felt class discussions about controversial issues helped students’ development. Greg brought up an interesting way that he uses controversial issues in his classroom. For Greg, controversial issues allow the teacher to play devil’s advocate by examining diverse viewpoints of an issue. This is beneficial for students to better understand people that share a different point of view from themselves as illustrated from Bruce’s interview. “Kids have got to understand that as they grow in the workforce and college that they are going to meet people who think differently than they do.” Bruce also suggested that controversial issues can be used to explore questions in the classroom and
make connections between content materials. Bruce used the example that Japanese Americans got reparations because of the internment camps during World War II, but African Americans did not receive any reparations because of slavery and racial segregation laws.

**Lack of Professional Development about Controversial Issues**

From the survey data, social studies teachers cite a lack of professional development from school systems with controversial issues as illustrated by a 4.0 mean score. This is also a common theme found throughout the interviews. For example, Greg, second year teacher, would like in-services to help with different ways to present the material and provide useful resources for the teacher. A common thread found in the interviews is a lack of knowledge by the teachers of school board policy about controversial issues. Both Greg and Bruce suggested that schools want social studies teachers to use their discretion when talking about controversial issues. Chad, a social studies teacher with one year of experience, referenced several times in his interview his trepidation of presenting material in class that would be offensive to his students.

It is important for social studies teachers to be prepared for issues that will come up within their curriculums. There are some important differences that came up between the survey and interview that are mainly linked to the lack of training and professional development toward controversial issues.

**Discomfort in teaching controversial issues**

Previous studies have suggested that teachers feel uncomfortable discussing controversial issues. In the questionnaire used in this study, teachers agreed that they were comfortable with controversial issues. However, in interviews, several teachers mentioned that situations have come up in their classrooms that they felt could have been handled better. Chad described a student of his who felt threatened by a conversation about Islam. She did not take part in class discussion and told Chad it was because she was a Christian. As earlier mentioned, Leslie described discomfort in discussing the Civil Rights Movement when her fifth graders African American students maintained bitterness toward the way that African Americans were treated in the past. Kim described situations where students would blurt out comments that were negative to people of different faiths. These teachers expressed situations in the interviews where students felt uncomfortable when their values were challenged in class discussion. This suggests that the teachers may have needed the knowledge of how to employ other teaching strategies when discussing controversial issues.

**System support for teaching controversial issues**

Almost three-fourths of the teachers surveyed not only felt that controversial issues helped student development but that by learning controversial issues, students became better citizens. This finding supports the NCSS Position Statement on Effective Citizenship (2001) already discussed. Teachers discussed the benefits of using controversial issues in the classroom but did not feel that their school systems encouraged or supported them in the teaching of these topics. Seventy percent of the teachers surveyed responded that their school systems did not provide professional development that prepared them to deal with teaching controversial issues in the classroom. They further felt that teacher preparation programs had not provided needed help in that area. Chad stated in his interview that even in his teacher education program he was not taught how to teach controversial issues. Chad added that he was told in his teacher education program “that you are going to have controversial things and you just need to go through it like it is no big deal”. Chad’s feelings were shared by Kim, a fifth grade teacher with five years of experience. She said she cannot remember being taught how to deal with controversial issues in her teacher education program besides being told not to share her own viewpoints. Jim, a second year teacher was concerned that he had not received any training on how to deal with controversial issues. Richard, a ten-year veteran high school teacher, similarly claimed that the lack of training and policies dealing with controversial issues made it “almost like groping in the dark.”

From the six interviews, there was a common thread about a lack of training of teaching controversial issues. Therefore, school systems must intercede with workshops on strategies for social studies teachers to deal with controversial issues in the classroom.

Our recommendations for workshops dealing with controversial issues have two components. First, teachers will be provided with instructional strategies to use in the classroom that focus on students
examining controversial issues. The presenters of the workshop will model examples of controversial issues and provide innovative ways to address situations that could come in the midst of classroom discussions. Richard felt that this sort of training would give teachers a “better handle” on teaching controversial issues. Training in how to use controversial issues would also provide teachers with more resources to use in their classrooms, and as Jim stated could help teach “how to present controversial issues and make the kids look at things different ways.”

**Discussion and Conclusions**

We began with a premise in the title that teachers feared dealing with controversial issues. That premise was consistent with the earliest research related to controversy and our findings did not contradict it. What has changed is that teachers now, more than ever before agree that they should deal with controversial issues in their classrooms to make students better citizens. Controversy retains its frightening nature for three reasons that seem to be supported in this study and others.

1. Teachers do not feel that they have support from their systems and administrators, and in fact, feel that teaching about controversial issues can bring retribution.
2. Teachers do not feel they have the skills needed to deal with controversial issues.
3. Teachers do not feel that their college preparation or their in-service training gives sufficient attention and scaffolding to the teaching of controversial issues.

We recognize that our survey and interviews lacked questions pertaining to several categories of controversial issues. For example, we did not deal with violence, local issues, or corruption in government. It is perhaps of interest that that the teachers interviewed did not mention these or other issues. This realization along with the understandings we obtained from the data collected in the study, seemed to suggest five problems that may cause teachers to avoid or minimize dealing with controversial issues.

1. There is a lack of historical consensus within the general populace on an issue. Abortion is an example of such an issue.
2. Students may be emotionally involved. Local controversial issues are often cases in point.
3. Teachers do not want to frighten students. For example issues involving violence such as contemporary genocide may be deemed as far too harsh.
4. Teachers are fearful of possible lawsuits about presenting issues and positions that may offend some students and lead to parental involvement. Sexual relationship issues including homosexuality and birth control fall under this definition.
5. Teachers lack the training on how to structure using controversial issues in the classroom. They not only feel uncomfortable, but they have little or no training about how to discuss and how to deal with student reactions and conflicts.

Despite all of these factors, most teachers realize that they must face the demons of controversy. We need to show them that the demons and monsters can be friends in making classrooms and the social studies itself interactive, important and impactful. School systems and teacher educators need to do a much better job of teaching them how.

So, where does that lead us and what questions does it open? First of all, if preparing teachers to deal with controversial issues is as important as we say it is, whose responsibility is it and what should the responsible party be doing? If controversial issues are to be dealt with effectively, both teachers and students must have scaffolding on how to interact with each other when emotion loaded disagreements occur. A heavy emphasis has to be placed on building student sensitivity. Throughout the six interviews, teachers recounted situations where the students lacked sensitivity when discussing values that they did not share. In-service programs need to be provided to model for teachers types of ground rules for student conduct in discussing controversial issues. Obviously, for the millions of licensed teachers, the schools themselves need to get to work. NCSS has to take the leadership in guiding the way. But for the large number of teachers being prepared, teacher education institutions need to add this to their responsibilities. Teachers learn to learn structure classroom participation and discussion in a way that respects personal and cultural values, customs, traditions, and opinions.
References


Appendix

Table 1

Controversial Issues Survey
Completion of this survey constitutes your consent to participate in this study.

Name (Optional):____________________________ Location:______________________
Date:_______________ Experience: 0-5    6-12    12+

Part 1: How controversial would you rank the following topics?
1= Not Controversial; 2=Slightly Controversial; 3=Controversial; 4=Very Controversial; 5=Extremely Controversial

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<thead>
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<th>Topic</th>
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Introduction

Today a “classroom” can consist of students from all over the world. The traditional face-to-face style of learning is becoming a thing of the past. The research literature describes the current situation of online learning as a fast developing field, with academic institutions offering more and more online courses, which are becoming increasingly more popular among students. As online learning continues to grow and become accepted as a long-term strategy in education (Ferguson & DeFelice, 2010), the “quality of the student experience of learning” (Ellis, Ginns, & Piggott, 2009, p. 304) is an ongoing concern.

Caring Online

Sitzman and Lener (2006) conducted a study that explored student perceptions of caring in online classes. They wanted to identify what students believed instructors should do to convey and sustain caring in an online classroom. The 122 respondents were all nursing students enrolled in online classes and they identified the following ten items as extremely important for their success in an online classroom: 1) write out and post clear instructions regarding schedules and due dates, 2) provide a detailed class calendar that includes due dates for postings, papers, and projects, 3) respond to postings and emails within 48-72 hours, 4) write out and post clear instructions re: acceptable length/quality of required online communications, 5) demonstrate respect for the learning process by exhibiting excellence in creating/presenting content, 6) provide supportive/corrective guidance to students via email or telephone rather than in a public venue, 7) express belief that students will be successful in the online setting and verbalize enthusiasm for learning, 8) when responding to students work, refer to specifics so that they know their work has been thoroughly read, 9) provide scheduled phone availability so students know when the instructor will be available to speak to them, and 10) recount challenges experienced in the online setting and share remedies that have worked for self and others.

Purpose of This Paper

The purpose of this paper was to share strategies currently being utilized in Human Sexuality and Substance Abuse online classes at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah that other instructors can use to build positive relationships amongst students and instructors. To personalize the online experience and have everyone really enjoy the class, the first thing all participants should do is follow 10 simple “Netiquette” rules.

1. Remember that people on the other side of the screen are human. Always treat people the way you would like to be treated. Before ever sending an email read it two to three times to check the “tone” of it. Just adding a smiley face at the end of a response can change the entire tone and response of a message.

2. Adhere to the same standard of behavior online that you follow in your real life. Some people believe that a lower standard of ethics or personal behavior is acceptable online, and it is not! Always be ethical, don’t break rules, and remind students that they should never cheat!

3. Look before you leap, know where you are in cyberspace. In a Discussion Group for example, encourage participants to spend a little time “listening” to the chat to get a sense of the personalities in class. Once comfortable, encourage them to jump right in!
5. Respect other people’s time. Don’t post gibberish and respond to everything just to be heard. A student’s time is valuable as most of them are working full-time jobs and have families so make sure that whatever is posted is worth their time to read.

6. Make yourself look good online. Know what you are talking about, try to make sense, and always be pleasant and polite. In most online classes you will never be judged because of your skin, weight, or age because people don’t know what you look like. You will however, be judged on your writing! Spelling and grammar DO COUNT!

7. Share expert knowledge and speak from experience. Learning from others is a goal of online learning but there is nothing worse than a “know it all” who doesn’t know anything.

8. Help keep “flame wars” under control. “Flaming” is when people express a strongly held opinion without holding back any emotion. Is it forbidden? Should it be allowed? No, it is not forbidden and yes, it should be allowed but monitored by the instructor or the “gate keeper” of the Discussion Group or Chat Room. Sharing strong opinions can actually generate a lot of great conversation. Just be respectful and mindful of all participants.

9. Respect other people’s privacy. If students don’t want to talk or participate in Discussions or Chats don’t get pushy. Also, remind students to never forward an email they have received from a fellow classmate to others without their permission.

10. Don’t abuse your power. Having more power does not give you the right to take advantage of anyone!

11. Be forgiving of other people’s mistakes. Think twice before reacting to minor mistakes or what you believe are “dumb questions.” Tell your students that there are NO dumb questions! As an instructor, choose your battles and even if you feel strongly about something, think twice before reacting. When you become frustrated and respond too quickly it’s likely that you will type something that you might not normally say and a major disadvantage to the reader is that they can’t see your body language. If this happens, save the message, cool down and then read it later before sending it. If you need to change the tone do so. Always just try to put myself in the other person’s shoes and ask yourself, “How would I feel if I got this email?” Be forgiving and kind!

Assignments That Help Personalize the Online Experience

After a careful review of the research it was determined that instructors should make every effort they can to help their students feel welcomed and valued. One way to do this is to encourage them to develop online relationships with other classmates in an environment that is not use to fostering friendships. The following is a list of online assignments that appear to do just that.

The first week of classes have all students post a Bio with pictures and encourage them to share all they are willing to about themselves. After students have had a chance to read all of the Bio’s ask them to choose a person or persons that they would like to be Buddies with for the semester. As the instructor you can establish your own policies but one basic rule of thumb is that if they agree to be Buddies they must be willing to check in with each other once a week and be available for those “dumb questions.” When students have a Buddy it will free up a lot of the emails the instructor would otherwise get because one policy should be that they must ask their Buddy first.

Another way to build relationships is to assign Service Learning Projects and encourage students to participate and earn their hours with their Buddy. Service learning projects allow students to contribute to the communities in which they live and going with their Buddy will allow them to make friendships and build relationships with people in an environment where in the past they have felt very alone.

Another activity that will help improve class morale is to create a Scavenger Hunt. Scavenger hunts force the students to peruse the syllabus so they can’t say later “they didn’t know.” Most of the questions should focus on policies regarding assignments, discussions, chats, tests, and contact info, etc. When students “know where they are going and how to get there” it allows them to relax and focus on the content of the class.

Another activity that will keep students involved and will help create a sense of time in the “classroom” is to post Discussion Questions that relate to the topic you are covering at that time. It is the
authors’ belief that you should not force students to participate because they often just do so for the points. Consider assigning “mystery points” at the end of the semester with clear expectations if they have participated in a meaningful way. Discussion questions allow students to express their opinions about sensitive topics (abortion, homosexuality) and to read and respond to how their classmates feel. Remind them often that they might not agree on someone else’s position about an issue and that it is OK to feel this way. Encourage your students to think outside of the box and to “listen” to what others say and believe. As an instructor it is OK to just read what they write but not get involved unless you have to put out a fire. This should be their opportunity to share feelings and thoughts and not have the instructor involved or “listening in.”

As a side note, as the semester progresses you might notice a student who is always silent. The student who is always silent can be a problem. The student who is essentially silent, asks nothing, and communicates little is hard to get to know. Is the silence because they are brilliant or bored? Or, is it something else? How can you tell? Do everything possible to start a conversation. Ask questions directly, and always address the student by name.

Another activity you should consider if you want to build relationships with your students on a more personal level are to have them simply write you Letters. Letters allow students an opportunity to ask questions that they might not otherwise ask, share how they feel the class is going, and communicate little is hard to get to know. Is the silence because they are brilliant or bored? Or, is it something else? How can you tell? Do everything possible to start a conversation. Ask questions directly, and always address the student by name.

Other Online Strategies
If your goal is to build relationships and be an effective online instructor here are some other tried and true suggestions: 1) follow all rules, regulations, and policies established by your institution, 2) timeliness is crucial in all phases of online teaching so be mindful of the person on the other end waiting to hear from you, 3) always give assignment feedback that is thorough, detailed, and positive, 4) establish a good communication relationship with your students and supervisor, 5) always be more than just a minimal presence in the classroom, 6) keep your enthusiasm and motivation to teach obviously high, 7) become a noted expert in your field, 8) attend online workshops and webinars; get involved in Listservs and discussions, 9) continually upgrade your education. Regardless of your terminal degree, seek out more formal education, if possible; attend professional conferences; join professional associations; subscribe to and read journals, books, and blogs, anything that focuses directly on your field.

Other things the instructor can do to build relationships is to grade assignments electronically so they have automatic feedback and always keep your grade book current. Provide very detailed instructions and provide examples if possible. Directions can be in text form as well as narration (Voice E-Mail). Create learning modules that are colorful, use graphics or video-stream your face to face lectures online. Try to meet the needs of all learners by being creative. A really good way to add instructor visibility is through screencasts. There is free downloadable software from TechSmith called Jing (www.jingproject.com/), which allows a created file to be saved in a .swf format or in screencaster as a link that can easily be shared in emails or announcements. The file created can be a single image or a video. Let your “voice” or “self” be heard online. Students need to really “get” who you are. Share your personality and get to know theirs. Encourage students to participate not isolate. You must “walk the walk and talk the talk” however.

Conclusion
As the online learning environment continues to become increasingly accepted as a long-term strategy in higher education, the instructor can take the distance out of distance education by creating a personalized class. This form of education is not for everyone so every attempt should be made by the instructor to help students feel comfortable and afford them an opportunity to learn. A learning
environment that is comfortable and safe will motivate students to participate. Online classrooms can be sterile and unfriendly and incorporating activities mentioned in this paper will create a sense of presence and freshness that is often missing in online classes.

References
Is the “New Economics” Either New or Economics?

Dale R. Funderburk  
Texas A&M University-Commerce

Introduction

Given the title of this paper, perhaps a logical starting point is to define and explain some terms—as used here. First, what is meant by the term “new economics?” Since virtually every aspect of what we call economics today has been evolving almost since the time that the term or concept was introduced, obviously there is a significant degree of arbitrariness in deciding just exactly how to use the term. For purposes of this paper, the “new economics” is generally viewed as the behavioral/experimental body of work, with logical extensions, that roughly corresponds to the appearance of the groundbreaking work of Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky in the 1970s, culminating in the 2002 awarding of the Nobel Memorial Prize in economics to Kahneman and Vernon Smith. And while some might argue that other areas of economics and related disciplines, such as the “new institutionalism” (as reflected in the work of North and DiMaggio/Powell), and neuroeconomics might be more appropriate candidates for the term “new economics,” the judgment made here is that those areas have to date received nowhere near the amount of attention, nor exerted nearly the amount of influence on the discipline, as the behavioral/experimental “revolution.”

In that vein, it is noted that The Economist (2002), for example, led off its treatment of the Kahneman/Smith Nobel award thus: “Bid farewell to the cold-hearted humans that, since Adam Smith’s day, economists have used as their models…. Now meet the new, sensitive homo economicus: he…is more laid back, relying on intuition and rules of thumb to make decisions, often without perfect knowledge.” (p. 74) Others were equally dismissive of and/or condescending toward traditional neoclassical theory—and its logical extensions. And while traditional neoclassical economic theory, with its emphasis on rational decision making by informed economic units, has been subject to criticism and challenge virtually since its inception, in recent years the intensity and the scale of such attacks have risen to seemingly unprecedented levels. The efficacy and the relevance of the primary tool bag used by economists for more than a century are routinely called into question and often dismissed as erroneous and/or irrelevant. Over the last decade, much research time and ink have gone into efforts to prove that the relevance and applicability of the “old economics” is, at best, rather narrow. As one critic of traditional theory argues, not only are decision makers less than fully rational, they are “predictably irrational.”

Relative to the title question of whether the “new economics” is “economics,” the focus here is not one of the breadth or scope of the discipline. Rather the intended issue is whether the terminology, methodology and concepts employed by a proponent of the “new economics” are consistent with what has been generally recognized and accepted as constituting basic elements or principles of economics. Thus, the test essentially is whether the argument involves what we might consider “sound” economics. For example, terms such as scarcity, rationality, opportunity cost, etc., have fairly well established and widely accepted meanings among economists. If those terms or concepts are employed in ways inconsistent with such agreement and/or common usage, most economists would argue that that is not “economics.”

Finally, in addressing the question of whether the “new economics” is “new,” the focus in not on some pedantic search into whether the issue, concept or application has ever been raised before—almost all have been, either directly or indirectly and in one form or another. Instead, the question is whether such is merely a re-emergence or a slightly different form of a long standing debate within the discipline.
Certainly, there is no intent to argue in this paper that much of what has been done in experimental and behavioral economics in the last twenty years is not new. And while the roots of modern behavioral economics and its efforts to effect a reunification of psychology and economics are often traced back as far as Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, as well as to John Maurice Clark (1918) and his “Economics and Modern Psychology” or even to Herbert Simon and his notion of bounded rationality, it seems undeniable that because of the methodologies applied and the breadth of the efforts, modern behavioral economics is indeed modern, and new.

**Economics: Discipline with a Tradition of Disagreement and Debate**

Two general observations relative to the current state of debate in the discipline seem apropos. First, it is not new for economists to disagree—even regarding the relevance, applicability and/or value of specific theories, or even regarding the broad body of economic tools and approaches widely accepted and employed by the bulk of professional economists. In fact, in some ways the assault on neoclassical theory by the behavioralists today seems reminiscent of some of the earlier assaults. For example, the Lester-Machlup-Stigler “Marginalist” exchanges of the 1940s centered on the degree to which “real world” business decision makers employed the tools (and terminologies) that economists employed to explain and predict those decisions. Many of the arguments of the Institutionalists of the late 19th and early 20th century have a familiar sounding ring in the writings of some of the modern critics of neoclassical economics. Consider for example, Collander’s (2006) endorsement of the argument that the economy must be analyzed as a “complex system” (as opposed to a highly complex “simple system”). The implication, he argues, is that “such complex systems are built up in path dependent stages, making individual optimization within such systems history- and institution-specific.” Finally, he asserts, “This means that institutional structure is central to understanding a complex system.” (p. 18) Had these quotes been attributed to a Thorstein Veblin, a John R. Commons, or a Clarence Ayers, would anyone have rejected the authenticity of the alleged source of the quotes on the grounds that the ideas expressed were inconsistent with the views and writings of the named individuals?

As a second point, one could argue that the current challenges and associated debate regarding traditional neoclassical economics are both healthy and desirable. As is the case with medical research, progress often results and new syntheses often emerge as a result of the process. For example, when references are made today to “traditional economic theory” in the context of decision-making, the point of reference is the expected-utility maximization approach developed by von Neumann and Morgenstern (1944) and extended by Savage (1953) Interestingly, their work takes as its point of departure the work of an eighteenth-century Swiss mathematician, Daniel Bernoulli, relative to what has come to be known as the “St. Petersburg paradox.” The basic question giving rise to this “paradox” was why people were willing to stake merely limited amounts of money on better-than-fair bets, even though their mathematical expectation of the total gain is the greater the more they bet at such odds. Ironically, a question such as that posed by Bernoulli sounds a great deal like some of the observed behavior that led Kahneman and Tversky to begin to question the efficacy of expected utility theory.

**Roots of economic debate—A point of departure**

While economists have a long, well recognized history of disagreement and debate, it may be noted that a considerable portion of the current debate between classically trained economists and experimental/behavioral economists centers on a question as fundamental as the nature, purpose and characteristics of good theory. For example, many, if not most, classically trained economists accept the notion that the purpose of theory is to explain and to predict. As argued by one “traditional” neoclassical economist, Milton Friedman, (1953) more than half a century ago, “The ultimate goal of a positive science is the development of a ‘theory’ or, ‘hypothesis’ that yields valid and meaningful (i.e., not truistic) predictions about phenomena not yet observed…. theory is to be judged by its predictive power for the class of phenomena which it is intended to ‘explain.’” (p. 7) In this sense, economic theory differs from mere description that carries limited applicability, and also differs significantly from a presentation of experimental results that describes apparent deviations from expected (or theoretically prescribed) behavior. Additionally, most classically trained economists tend to hold to the premise that the mere presentation of evidence that a theory lacks universal applicability or that it sometimes produces less than
optimal explanatory or predictive results does not constitute a theory itself. Or, as argued by another “traditional” neoclassical economist, Paul Samuelson, (1951) also more than half a century ago, “In economics it takes a theory to kill a theory; facts can only dent the theorist’s hide.” (p. 323)

**How did we get here?**

Given that there seems to be significant agreement that much of the effort of behavioral and experimental economists is aimed at reunification (versus unification—since there was once at least much less of a divergence of methodology) of economics and psychology, it is interesting to inquire as to why such a divergence developed. One noted behavioralist, Colin Camerer, (1999) cites two major reasons. First, he argues, theorists like Samuelson, Arrow, and Debreu, with physics as inspiration, worked hard at formalizing economics mathematically. At the same time, psychologists were also being inspired by natural scientists, but with this group, they were inspired by the natural scientists’ experimental traditions rather than by their mathematical structure. The consequence, Camerer concludes, was that to an economist, theory became a body of mathematical tools and theorems, but to the psychologist, a theory became a verbal construct or theme that organizes experimental regularity. It was that divergence in methods and ways of expressing knowledge that, in Camerer’s opinion, pushed economics and psychology apart.

The second major factor cited by Camerer for the divergence of economics and psychology is what is sometimes referred to as the “F twist”—so named because of its best known advocate, Milton Friedman. Friedman’s preferred test of a theory, whether it yields good predictions, moves the emphasis away from both the underlying assumptions of the theory and the actual process of the decision making. As Camerer put it, “because theories with patently false assumptions can make surprisingly accurate predictions, economic theories that assume that individual agents are highly rational and willful, judge probabilities accurately, and maximize their own wealth might prove useful, even though psychology shows that those assumptions are systematically false.” (p. 10575) This F Twist, he concludes, allowed economists to ignore psychology.

**Revisited: “What is the purpose of theory?”**

To the extent that the current debate between traditional economists and behavioral/experimental economists and psychologists has its roots in questions or issues regarding the purpose of theory and/or how one should judge good theory, the answer, of course, is at heart a matter of value judgment. In a paper titled “What Use is Economic Theory?” Hal Varian (1992) takes the position that “one could argue a reasonable case for economic theory on purely aesthetic grounds.” Along that line, he asserts, “Indeed, when pressed, most economic theorists admit that they do economics because it is fun.” (p. 1) More importantly, though, he argues that economics is a policy science, meaning that the contribution of economic theory to the discipline of economics should be measured on how well economic theory contributes to the understanding and conduct of economic policy. However, a review of experimental/behavioral literature suggests that not all behavioralists today share that view. For example, one could easily argue that many of the experiments described by any number of today’s crop of behavioral/experimental economists fail to fit into the realm of a policy science. They are, however, fun. On the other hand, Varian argues that one of the values of theory as a policy science is that it serves as a substitute for data: “In many cases we are forced to use theory because the data that we need are not available.” (p. 3) In many cases, the behavioral/experimental economists are beginning to generate that data. One remaining problem, however, is a difference stemming from a focus on psychology and the individual on the one hand, and policy science and group behavior on the other. As viewed by Glaeser, a University of Chicago trained, Harvard economist, “The great achievement of economics is understanding aggregation….Our discipline has always been about the wealth of nations, not individuals.” Relative to the behavioralists, he argues “Much of the early work has focused on changing the core of economics with work on individuals. It’s hard to read the bulk of research and not think it specializes more on individuals.” (Stewart, 2002, p. 5) However, that does not mean that there are not significant implications of the research findings that extend well beyond the individual.
Do fun experiments make good economics?

Dan Ariely, a Duke University and MIT behavioral economics professor, is one of the more widely recognized members of behavioral/experimental school of economics because he regularly writes to an audience extending well beyond the halls of academia. In those writings he routinely challenges many of the basic precepts of, as well as the applicability of, much of traditional economic theory. Ariely goes so far as to argue that not only are decision-makers frequently irrational, but that they are “predictably irrational”—a phrase which, in fact, forms the title of his 2008 best-selling book. And while even a brief description of the myriad of experiments that he has conducted and reported on over the years would extend this paper well beyond acceptable limits, it is his self-described introduction to the field that may be most revealing of his mind set. Interestingly, Ariely reports that his introduction to the arena of rationality, or irrationality, in decision-making came from his experience resulting from a terrible burn he suffered as a teen in Israel. He describes the process of changing bandages in the hospital, which he describes as hurting “like nothing else I can describe.” As it happened, he reports, the nurses “would routinely grab hold of a bandage and rip it off as fast as possible, creating a relatively short burst of pain.” He then explains that while the nurses, whom he considered to be caring and kind hearted persons, “had theorized that a vigorous tug at the bandages, which caused a spike of pain, was preferable (to the patient) to a slow pulling of the wrappings, which might not lead to such a severe spike of pain but would extend the treatment, and therefore be more painful overall.” (p. xiv) He explains, however, that as the one who actually experienced the pain of the bandage removal process, he did not share their beliefs—which he notes had never been tested. While casting no doubts toward the relevance or importance of his observations, one might question whether that experience should logically call into question certain basis premises of economic theory.

But do we know the other person’s utility function?

Most neo-classically trained economists can well remember the graduate school price theory exercise of demonstrating that an unrestricted transfer or grant would almost always allow the grantee to operate on a higher indifference curve (achieve greater “well-offness”) than would a restricted grant or transfer. Then why would charitable, well meaning citizens so often opt to restrict the allowable uses of the funds, or else make the grant as a payment in kind? Why grant the needy food stamps (given the administrative cost coupled with the fact that they do not allow the grantee to maximize their own utility) when they would prefer cash? Clearly, the answer to that question lies not so much in whether the grantors understand the preferences of the grantees, but rather upon whose utility functions the grantors are more interested in serving. “If you give them cash, they will just spend it on cigarettes and booze.” But what if that is what maximizes their utility? The answer seems clear: it ain’t their utility that counts. To argue that the grantors are irrational—even if they outwardly show signs of kind-heartedness—is to miss the point. And that, I believe, would be the reaction of most classically trained economists to Ariely’s explanation of his entry into experimental/behavioral economist. Perhaps he was focusing on the wrong (less relevant) utility function. Perhaps the kind-hearted nurses were maximizing their own utility, or at least, minimizing their own disutility by limiting the amount of time that they had to “feel” his pain. At the same time, Ariely admits that the slower bandage removal process that he preferred did extend the treatment, meaning that his preferred process consumed more of the nurses’ scarce time, and kept them from other duties. In either of those scenarios, was there any irrationality displayed? Again, the classically trained economist would answer in the negative. The point: It is shaky economics to declare someone else’s observed behavior irrational whenever we cannot see their utility function.

A straw man tactic?

While on the “economics” of Ariely, let me slip in an illustrative point of the “is it economics?” query. According to Ariely, “one of the main differences between standard and behavioral economics involves the concept of ‘free lunches.’” Relative to this difference, he asserts that “According to the assumptions of standard economics, all human decisions are rational and informed, motivated by an accurate concept of the worth of all goods and services and the amount of happiness (utility) all decisions are likely to produce.” In contrast, he asserts, “Behavioral economists…believe that people are susceptible to irrelevant influences from their immediate environment (which we call context effects), irrelevant
emotions, shortsightedness, and other forms of irrationality.‘ ‘ Knowing that, he offers this optimistic challenge: ‘‘If we all make systematic mistakes in our decisions, then why not develop new strategies, tools, and methods to help us make better decisions and improve our overall well-being? That’s exactly the meaning of free lunches from the perspective of behavioral economics—the idea that there are tools, methods, and policies that can help all of us make better decisions and as a consequence achieve what we desire.’ ‘ Going on, he argues: ‘‘This is the basic idea of free lunches—providing benefits for all the parties involved. Note that these free lunches don’t have to be without cost....As long as these mechanisms provide more benefits than costs, we should consider them to be free lunches—mechanisms that provide net benefits to all parties.’’ (p. 318-319)

Many, if not most, classically trained (or as he calls them “standard”) economists would argue that Ariely’s “free lunch” argument is not “sound” economics. As used by economists generally [and who is not familiar with the maxim: TANSTAAFL, there ain’t no such thing as a free lunch], the assertion that there are no free lunches has to do with opportunity cost, and not with perfect knowledge, rationality and/or information in decision-making. In short, Ariely has set up a straw man, involving at least an implied false representation of the opposing definition and/or use of a traditional economic term and concept. In fact, few “standard” economists would argue that “free lunches” are not ubiquitous—using Ariely’s non-standard representation of the term wherein it is a free lunch if a transaction provides benefits to all parties involved and/or provides net benefits to all parties. Isn’t that the nature of voluntary exchange?

A noted behavioralist unloads on Ariely

In addressing what this paper has characterized as a “straw man” argument, Herbert Gintis (2008), himself a high profile behavioral scientist, is somewhat less charitable, likening behavioral economics to Freudian psychology, which he claims is “just about dead in the self-help arena.” Relative to Ariely type claims, Gintis responds: “The so-called rational actor model was developed in the Twentieth century by John von Neumann, Leonard Savage and many others. The model is often presented as though it applies only when actors possess extremely strong information processing capabilities. In fact, the model depends only on choice consistency. When preferences are consistent, they can be represented by a numerical function, often called a utility function, which the individual maximizes subject to his subjective beliefs.”

In making his case, Gintis offers four caveats: (1) individuals do not consciously maximize something called “utility” or anything else; (2) individual choices, even if they are self-regarding...are not necessarily welfare-enhancing; (3) preferences must have some stability across time to be theoretically useful, but preferences are ineluctably a function of an individual’s current state, and beliefs can change dramatically in response to immediate sensory experience; and finally, (4) beliefs need not be correct nor need they be updated correctly in the face of new evidence, “although Bayesian assumptions concerning updating can be made part of consistency in elegant and compelling ways.”

Assessing Ariely and his work, Gintis opines: “Now Ariely in no way distorts the writings of behavioral economics in this book [Predictably Irrational]. Ariely is a jolly guy who is hard not to like, and he uses his charm to push a popular version of the beliefs expressed in the technical journals and books all the time; the rational actor of economic theory is all wrong, and irrationality is pervasive. ‘People are not logical—they are psychological,’ as the saying goes.” Continuing his assessment of Ariely and other “pop psychology” behavioral economists, Gintis offers: “Despite the extreme value of their experiments, the behavioral economists are mostly a theoretically ignorant and indolent lot, who content themselves with showing that a highly stripped-down version of the rational actor model is wrong, and conclude, sloppily and without warrant, that ‘people are irrational.’ Of course, the greatest behavioral economists have developed better models of human behavior that explain the experimental evidence, but these models are simply sophisticated versions of the rational actor model, not their antithesis.”

The New Economics as a Policy Science—the Nudge

Let us move now into a consideration of behavioral/experimental economics as not simply something that is fun, but as (in the words of Varian) a policy science. In this vein the names and work of Richard
Thaler and Cass Sunstein quickly come to mind. Consider, for example, the widely held view that people, left to their own devices, generally undersave for retirement. This is widely regarded as being not only a personal issue for the undersavers, but also a public policy challenge. Research in behavioral economics points to many possible reasons why people do not save enough for retirement. People procrastinate; People have a hard time understanding the real cost of not saving as well as the benefits of saving. Relative to saving for retirement, Ariely offers the promise that “the potential for free lunches from the perspective of behavioral economics lies in new methods, mechanisms, and other interventions that would help people achieve more of what they truly want.” While he offers one such mechanism in a self-control “new and innovative credit card” scheme that he describes, he also points toward Thaler and Shlomo Benartzi’s “save more tomorrow” proposal. The specifics of the Thaler/Benartzi plan, in brief terms, is that where a new employee could be expected to have difficulty in making a decision to sacrifice current consumption in favor of a higher stock of savings in the future, that person would find it psychologically easier to sacrifice consumption in the future, and even easier to give up a percentage of a salary increase that one does not yet have. In short, if the choice is properly framed, a person can be “nudged” into making the correct choice. The idea is that with a little government intervention and nudging, people can be influenced to eat healthier, plan for retirement better, take better care of the environment, etc. As stated by Thaler, (2008) “Humans respond to incentives…but they are also influenced by nudges. By properly deploying both incentives and nudges, we can improve our ability to improve people’s lives, and help solve many of society’s major problems. And we can do so while still insisting on everyone’s freedom to choose.”

Thaler’s nudges are supposedly effected through “framing” as opposed to through governmentally imposed edicts—or even governmentally imposed incentives such as changes in tax laws. A central idea of nudge theory, which Thaler characterizes as “libertarian paternalism,” is that default outcomes of a situation can be arranged by the person or organization presenting the choices. The “choice architect” is the person who frames the options. However, while Thaler insists that his libertarian paternalism itself insists on free choice—that it is merely intended at giving people the best shot at making a good decision—it still presupposes that the framer or choice architect has the superior knowledge and knows the “right” or at least socially or organizationally desirable outcome. Some of the troubling implications of that mindset are examined later.

A Nudge Forerunner—ZPG?

An interesting earlier delving into these issues of public policy and private decision making related the field of environmentalism, even what might be characterized as an early “cap and trade” scheme, and possibly a “nudge” suggestion arose from the discussion of the environment and population growth. Relative to achieving the then-top priority of many environmentalists—zero population growth, ZPG—it was argued that if the United States could achieve an average family size of 2.2 (versus the approximate 3.2 existing at the time), then ZGP could be achieved. Where a dictatorial government might respond to such a challenge by merely dictating a one child per family rule, such an approach would not be consistent with the values of a society that valued individual freedom and private decision making.

In fact, Stephen Enke (Ehrlich, 1970)) suggested that achieving ZPG would not require such a restrictive policy, but could be achieved with a family size distribution that would allow families considerable more leeway in decision making. Pursuant to that point, he calculated that the size distribution of families could be as follows—and still be consistent with ZPG.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Families with</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No children</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One child</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two children</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three children</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than three (averaging five per family)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, while the vast majority of all families (90 percent) would have one, two, or three children, a small number could have very large families, even under an official ZPG policy. But how could such a family size distribution be achieved? In that vein, Kenneth Boulding (1964) put forward his famous “Green
Stamp Plan” whereby every boy and girl at adolescence would be given 110 green stamps, 100 of which would entitle them to have one legal child. The idea was that under Boulding’s plan the total number of stamps would permit the population as a whole to have 2.2 children per family—the ZPG rate. Surplus stamps then could be sold in a market organized for that purpose. As Boulding (1970) expressed it, “We then set up a market in these stamps so that the philoprogenitive and the rich can buy them from the phoboprogenitive (those who do not want to have children) and the poor.” (p. 38) An incidental benefit, as he termed it, of his plan would be that “the rich will have loads of children and become poor, and the poor will have few children and become rich.” (p. 39) Somehow the redistributive effects of his plan did not make it palatable to the overwhelming majority of Americans. It is interesting to note that even (and perhaps especially) as early as the early 1960s, the public was no more kindly disposed toward market solutions to social issues than it is today. In fact, Boulding observed in his Economics as a Science (1970) that his plan was “received with so many cries of anguish and horror, that it illustrates the extraordinary difficulty of applying rational principles to processes involving human generation.” (p. 39)

Green stamps versus nudges

Despite significant differences—Boulding’s green stamp plan obviously would require externally imposed penalties for failure to have a legal child—it is interesting to compare Boulding’s assessment of his plan relative to the goals and methods of Thaler. Boulding: My plan illustrates well the use of the market as a regulator of the great aggregates of society which must be regulated by social means but, at the same time, with a minimum of interference with the behavior of individuals by outside coercion. Thaler: we will be arguing that better governance requires less in the way of government coercion and constraint, and more in the way of freedom to choose. On the other hand, it was also argued at the time of Boulding’s proposal that the policy for achieving ZPG likely would require no more than a fairly mild tax incentive—that income taxes that currently favored married couples over unmarried people and that offered a flat tax exemption for each child a family added could be replaced with a change in the law that would give tax advantages to unmarried people and eliminate the flat exemption, or at least stepwise reduce it, for children beyond two per family. On a policy level, (versus on a Thaler-defined academic level) is a tax incentive merely another form of nudge?

Nudge anxiety

But some worry about “who nudges the nudgers?” Edward Glaeser sees a bit of danger inherent in nudge practice. It’s a slippery slope, he warns. And while Glaeser (Stewart) concludes that Thayer and Benartzi’s SMarT retirement plan (now offered to some 200 corporate clients), based on the principles of libertarian paternalism, is “a benign program,” he also advises that “we shouldn’t go farther down the slope.” Thaler’s response to that concern is that “once you know that every design element has the potential to influence choice, then you either close your eyes and hope for the best, or you take what you know and design programs that are helpful.” However, that scenario is not necessarily the most comforting to everyone. Some argue that there is the danger that a system that imbues certain individuals, or “nudgers,” with the notion that they possess the knowledge as well as the responsibility to influence the “nudgees” to make the “right” choices could eventually lead to the use of a push or a shove. Is it possible that the CEO, the bureaucrat, or that special brand of bureaucrat, the educrat, might be infected with a touch of megalomania? Perhaps that possibility provides fertile ground for designing experiments to test what most academicians feel they already know—that educrats (or educational administrators as most prefer to be called) are strong believers in individual freedom of choice, so long as the decision makers always make the correct, uniform choice.

At the policy science level, the fact that one of the chief proponents of nudge, Cass Sunstein, currently holds the position of head of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in the Obama Administration does not allay the concerns of those who fear nudge overreach. Given that the Obama Administration is widely considered to be willing, if not eager, to impose solutions when it believes that Americans fail to make socially—or governmentally—desirable choices (such as buying health insurance a la “Obamacare”), there is a certain uneasiness associated with a strong nudge proponent occupying a high position in the Obama regulatory hierarchy. Finally, couple those factors with the Administration’s advocacy of, and strong push for, “cap and trade” as well as its lobbying for government “investments” in
targeted areas such as high speed rail, and some would argue that behavioral economics has definitely become a “policy science.” In fact, some would argue that in the same way that some of its critics chide classical economics for being a tool of conservative politicians, behavioral economics is becoming a tool for liberal politicians who wish to expand government regulation and move toward an “industrial policy” a la Japan of the 1970s and 1980s. 3

A Few Concluding Thoughts

It seems that all too often, economists and perhaps academicians in general, are intent on proving the other guy wrong. Perhaps it is that approach that is the thing that is wrong. Can two very different viewpoints both be correct? Consider the contrast: Thaler, in discussing John Maurice Clark’s contribution as a forerunner to modern behavioral economics, quotes Clark as having written, “the economist may attempt to ignore psychology, but it is sheer impossibility for him to ignore human nature.” Becker, on the other hand, argues that psychology’s impact on economics is limited. “If there’s a tax on wages, it doesn’t matter what you or I do, but how the whole group reacts.” (Stewart, p. 5) Which view is correct? The answer, of course, depends on the intended use of the theory. Again in the words of Clark, (1918) “If the economist borrows his conception of man from the psychologist, his constructive work may have some chance of remaining purely economic in character. But if he does not, he will not thereby avoid psychology. Rather, he will force himself to make his own, and it will be bad psychology.” (p. 4) But does it yield good predictive results?

Notes

1Neuroeconomics combines research methods from neuroscience, experimental and behavioral economics, and cognitive and social psychology. There are those who would argue that neuroeconomics, with well developed graduate programs at institutions such as NYU, George Mason, Cal Tech, Duke, and Claremont Graduate University, with its Center for Neuroeconomic Studies, deserves equal billing with behavioral/experimental economics in terms of its innovative approaches and contributions to economic theory. Others take the position that neuroeconomics is actually a sub-field of behavioral/experimental economics.

2While Thaler differentiates between “incentives” and “nudges,” and, in fact, defines a nudge in such a way as to preclude its resulting in a significant changing of economic incentives, many classically trained economists would make the argument that the mechanism of the “nudge” is, in fact, an economic incentive, and that in accordance with the “rational actor” model, decision-makers react in predictable ways. For example, why do individuals so readily accept default choices in the new software installation process? Are they not merely economizing on a scarce commodity—their time? Given the existence of rational ignorance and/or rational inattention, the line between a “nudge” and an “incentive” is not as distinct or clear-cut as Thaler implies.

3For example, conservative commentators such as Glen Beck routinely mention Cass Sunstein as a serious threat to liberty. One particularly disturbing nudge possibility, as far as many conservative commentators are concerned, has to do with organ donations. By reversing the process, or default option, whereby one would be required to “opt out” versus “opt in” regarding organ donations, the government would be able automatically to harvest the organs of all people who die, unless they had specifically requested that it not do so. To many conservatives, this is a frightening, unconscionable government grab of a sacred property right.

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INTRODUCTION

The legislative record of any American president is an indicator of the success which that president and his administration had in achieving priorities. One central tool in the president’s arsenal of weapons to wield against Congress is the veto, a specifically enumerated constitutional power. While some presidents have used the veto sparingly during their tenure in office, others utilized it extensively. When both patterns occur in the course of a single presidency, the reasons and results are often unique. So it is with George W. Bush, 43rd president of the United States.

The purpose of this study is to investigate why George W. Bush issued no vetoes during his first term as president—becoming only the fifth administration to eschew employment over that length—yet tapped the veto regularly during the final two years of his second term. To uncover said information, it is necessary to approach the topic from several perspectives. First, the research probes George W. Bush’s background, especially his political experience. Second, the study assesses the approach which the Bush team adopted in interactions with Congress at the outset of each of his terms. Third, the study analyses the application of the veto and congressional responses to such use during Bush’s second term. Finally, the study compares President George W. Bush’s veto record to that of other chief executives, including his father.

BUSH BACKGROUND

Born on July 6, 1946, George W. Bush is the oldest of six children born to George H. W. Bush and Barbara Bush. He was raised in a family that was both wealthy and politically connected. For instance, his grandfather Prescott Bush served as a U.S. senator from Connecticut from 1952 through 1962. His father George H.W. Bush served in a series of political posts in several administrations before being elected vice president of the United States in 1980 and president in 1988. His brother Jeb served as a two-term governor of Florida from 1999-2007.

Educated at Yale University and Harvard Business School, George W. Bush held non-political jobs in the Texas oil business and as managing general partner of the Texas Rangers baseball team. But the “family business” of politics drew him in as early as 1968, when he worked on the U.S. Senate campaign of Edward Gurney. After assisting on two more U.S. Senate campaigns in the early 1970s, Bush ran an unsuccessful campaign for Congress in 1978. After his father’s election to the presidency in 1988, he served on the transition team and as an informal advisor thereafter. In 1994, Bush defeated incumbent Ann Richards in the Texas governor race, garnering 53 percent of the popular vote. He was reelected to that post four years later with 67 percent of the popular vote (DeGregorio, 2006).

As Texas governor, George W. Bush gained a reputation for being able to work with members of both political parties to a common end. He is generally given high marks for his record on crime and education, but was not as successful on issues such as state spending and tort reform (Fortier and Ornstein, 2003).

2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The combination of a 1997 poll showing him in the lead among potential Republican contenders for president and his overwhelming reelection as Texas governor in 1998 convinced GOP leaders that George W. Bush had what it took to win the presidency. Within a few months of forming a presidential exploratory committee in 1999, the Bush team had already collected nearly $40 million in contributions.
That pace scared off several challengers, including Donald Trump, Pat Buchanan, Bob Smith, John Kasich, Lamar Alexander, Dan Quayle, and Elizabeth Dole. When the nomination season actually began in early 2000, Bush battled Arizona senator John McCain and a series of lesser candidates, including Alan Keyes, Steve Forbes, Orrin Hatch, and Gary Bauer. As it turned out, the front-loaded and winner-take-all nature of Republican contests allowed Bush to secure his party’s presidential nomination by mid-March.

The calmness and predictability of the nomination season was replaced with the uncertainty of the general election campaign. Bush’s opponent, Democrat Al Gore, was a popular vice president who nonetheless sought to separate himself from the scandals which beset President Bill Clinton during his second term in office. Gore’s campaign suffered from several attempts to change his image, while Bush maintained a consistent message based on the “compassionate conservatism” theme. After a series of debates and other campaign events, the 2000 combatants for the presidency found themselves involved in the closest and most controversial general election since 1876.

On election night—November 7, 2000—television network predictions of the winner alternated between Gore and Bush. While it was evident that Gore had won the popular vote by a half-million votes, the electoral vote totals were unsettled. Eventually, the race came down to the returns in Florida, where preliminary results showed Bush ahead by just 327 votes. From November 8 until December 12, a series of court challenges and political maneuvers kept the 2000 race alive. When the U.S. Supreme Court finally halted the recount of votes in Florida, Bush received that state’s electoral votes, which allowed him to claim victory (Ceaser and Busch, 2001).

FIRST TERM

Political Conditions
The exceedingly close 2000 presidential election contest and its aftermath left the nation bitterly divided. Adding to the drama was the political lineup in Congress. While both chambers were securely in Republican control since 1995, the incoming Senate would be evenly split at 50-50. Though Republicans lost technical control of the Senate when Republican Jim Jeffords switched to Independent in May 2001, they regained it over the last two years of George W. Bush’s first term as president.

Though the heinous terrorist attacks against the United States occurred nine months into President Bush’s first term, it is paramount to understand the impact of the September 11, 2001 carnage on the political landscape. The quick and decisive reaction of the Bush White House to the attacks increased the president’s public standing significantly. Though his personal popularity would prove inconsistent throughout the remainder of his first term, most polls showed public support for President Bush and the Republican party across a wide array of issues (Jacobson, 2007).

Legislative Strategy
At the outset of his administration, President Bush actively sought to cultivate personal relationships with members of both political parties. However, after Senator Jefford’s party switch and the 9-11 attacks, the White House crafted a strategy which relied on House support for initiatives together with conservative Democratic support in the Senate (Sinclair, 2004). Rather than compromising with moderates and Democratic leaders, Bush administration personnel planned to assist Republican candidates in congressional elections in an effort to build party support. This also meant adopting a legislative approach which eschewed traditional devices of governing in favor of unilateral ones such as executive orders and signing statements (Warber, 2006; Savage, 2007).

In the short term, the Bush strategy paid off. For only the fourth time in contemporary history, the president’s party actually gained seats in a midterm election, as Republicans added two seats in the Senate and eight in the House in 2002 (Nelson, 2004).

Veto Use
As part of its legislative strategy in dealing with Congress, the Bush White House made a calculated decision regarding utilization presidential veto power. Specifically, Bush personnel regarded the veto as a sign of weakness. Conversely, they viewed the absence of any vetoes and demonstrating the strength and effectiveness of GOP-controlled government. With that outlook, it is perhaps not surprising that
President George W. Bush issued no vetoes of any kind during his first term, becoming just the fifth president in U.S. history to complete an entire term in such a manner (Tenpas, 2006).

(See Table 1 for list)

Along with a death of vetoes came a concomitant lack of veto threats by the Bush White House. Records show that the Bush administration released seventeen veto threats during 2001-02 and thirty-one over the 2003-04 periods, which except for the first two years of the Bill Clinton presidency was the lowest frequency of veto threats since 1985 (Jarvis, 2010).

Overall Record

According to Congressional Quarterly (2008), President George W. Bush received an impressive support rate on bills where the White House took a public position, earning a 57 percent support score in the House of Representatives and a 77 percent support score in the Senate over his first term in office. This translated into some notable legislative achievements, including the Bush tax cut plan, the No Child Left Behind law on educational reform, passage of the Medicare Modernization Act, creation of the Homeland Security Department, and implementation of the Faith Based and Community Initiatives project. Even so, there were embarrassing reversals on issues such as creation of the 9-11 Commission, campaign finance reform, and overhaul of the intelligence community along with steadily declining support for the mission in Iraq following the 2003 invasion (DeGregorio, 2006).

SECOND TERM

Political Conditions

At the beginning of his second term, President George W. Bush enjoyed a reservoir of political support from his triumphant 2004 reelection campaign and from seeing Republicans continue to increase their hold on Congress. Bush had taken on Democratic challenger Senator John Kerry in the 2004 race, winning with just over 50 percent of the popular vote. Meanwhile, Republicans gained four Senate seats and two House seats in the 2004 election (Jacobson, 2007; Jones, 2007).

However, through a series of White House missteps, controversies, and revelations, events in 2005 seemed to set the stage for what followed. For example, the Bush team failed in their effort to reform Social Security, bungled the federal reaction to Hurricane Katrina, withdrew the ill-advised Harriet Miers Supreme Court nomination, dealt with rising gas prices and budget deficits, revealed that the National Security Agency was eavesdropping on telephone traffic of law-abiding citizens, and struggled mightily to bring stability to Iraq (Mycoff and Pika, 2006; Smailes, 2007).

In the 2006 midterm election, the Bush administration paid the price for the mistakes of the two previous years. Although presidents regularly suffer party losses in midterm elections, the 2006 results were significant in that the Republican party lost control of both chambers of Congress, as Democrats gained thirty-two House seats and six Senate seats (Barone and Cohen, 2009).

Legislative Strategy

As the combined impact of the unfortunate events of 2005, the 2006 midterm election, and the 22nd Amendment caught up with the Bush White House, the strategy for interacting with Congress was altered. The result was a mixture of partisanship and ideology particularly aimed at the new Democrat majority. President Bush positioned himself as a defender of executive prerogatives and as an opponent of wasteful spending. Not coincidentally, he would revert to a familiar but hitherto ignored constitutional device to accomplish his objectives: the veto.

Regular Vetoes of Public Bills

In his memoir, Decision Points, George W. Bush (2010, p. 123) offers his perspective about his initial use of the veto:

Five and a half years into the presidency, I had yet to veto a piece of legislation. I had worked closely with our congressional majorities to pass bills I could accept. But as the stem cell bill was working its way through Congress, I had made clear I would veto it. When it reached my desk, I did.

Actually, the veto was issued in July 2006, when there was still a Republican majority in Congress. Though it was the only veto issued that year, the move was symbolically important for two reasons. First, the veto indicated that the Bush White House was losing the ability to manipulate Republican partisans in
the legislature. Second, the reasons cited for the veto were consistent with President Bush’s previously announced policy on the use of stem cells for research and his pro-life orientation.

After vetoing a single public bill in 2006, President Bush issued six regular vetoes of public bills in 2007 and four more of the same in 2008, for a total of eleven such vetoes during his second term and overall. Table 2 compares frequency of regular vetoes of public bills by second-term presidents since 1889. President Bush’s total is equal that of Richard M. Nixon’s scandal-shortened second term total. Like Theodore Roosevelt, all of Bush’s regular vetoes of public bills transpired during his second term. In terms of all presidents serving since 1889, President Bush’s eleven regular vetoes of public bills matches the total issued by President Calvin Coolidge from 1923 to 1929 and is close to the total of twelve issued by President William Taft from 1909 to 1913 (Hoff, 2003).

Of the eleven regular vetoes of public bills, ten were aimed at bills initiated in the House of Representatives. Of the latter eleven vetoes, nine pertained to domestic area legislation, while two dealt with military and intelligence matters. The total included three bills which were vetoed multiple times: the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act (2006,07), the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (2007), and the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (2008).

Hoff’s presidential support model is helpful in explaining President George W. Bush’s veto employment. In examining veto trends over a century, Hoff finds that variables such as year in term, term of office, level of partisan support, number of public laws, and percentage of unemployment work to increase annual frequency of public bill vetoes by regular means (Hoff, 1991).

In similar fashion to actual vetoes, the number of veto threats released by the George W. Bush White House significantly increased over his last two years in office. There were fifty such statements of administration policy in 2007 alone, more than twice the highest previous annual total (Jackson, 2007).

Pocket Vetoes

Apparantly, the George W. Bush White House had little need for or proclivity to utilize the pocket veto. Over his entire presidency, Bush vetoed one public bill by pocket means. The pocket veto of the National Defense Authorization Act occurred in December 2007. As indicated by Table 3, Bush’s total use of this form of the veto matches that of Bill Clinton and Warren Harding among all chief executives serving since 1889. Conversely, not only did Bush’s recent Republican predecessors in the White House employ the pocket veto more regularly, but they likewise engaged in political and legal wrangling with Congress over the parameters of pocket veto authority (Hoff, 1994).

Veto Overrides

Once the George W. Bush White House embarked on its revised legislative strategy, opposition from Democrats was expected. But what was probably not anticipated was Republican antagonism as well when it came to reconsideration of vetoed bills. The Bush administration suffered four overrides of public bill vetoes over its last two years in office, including one in 2007 and three in 2008. That total matches the number of veto overrides against Calvin Coolidge among presidents serving since 1889, though Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Ronald Reagan each had five public bill vetoes overridden during their second term in office (Hoff, 1992).

All four public bill vetoes by President George W. Bush which reached the second chamber for reconsideration were subsequently overridden, a pattern also evident in the Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Herbert Hoover, and Jimmy Carter administrations. In fact, the only Bush veto not challenged by Congress pertained to the second Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act in 2007.

The George W. Bush White House had the inglorious distinction of tying Calvin Coolidge for the third-worst percentage of regular public bill vetoes overridden in American history, with a 36.4 rate. Only President Andrew Johnson, who saw fifteen of twenty-one regular public bill vetoes overridden (71.4 percent), and Franklin Pierce, who witnessed five of nine regular public bill vetoes overridden (55.6), fared worse. Table 4 presents data on success in preventing overrides by presidents serving since 1889. Over that duration, George W. Bush and Calvin Coolidge tied for last. Though all second chamber reconsideration votes resulted in veto overrides, the percent of second-chamber override of George W.
Bush vetoes was about five percent less than the average of all such override votes over the last century (Hoff, 2009).

**Overall Record**

The veto activity during President George W. Bush’s second term was, except for one case, limited to the last two years of his administration. Employment of the veto coincided with a radical decline in President Bush’s success scores on bills where the White House took a position. In 2007, the administration triumphed on less than 40 percent of bills where a position was announced, less than one-half of the previous year’s total. In 2008, the Bush White House accumulated a 48 percent success score, the lowest for the last year of a president’s term since that of Ronald Reagan in 1988 (“Presidential Support Background,” 2008).

**CONCLUSION: THE VETO AND THE BUSH PRESIDENCY**

As it regards the utilization of the veto power, the George W. Bush presidency was one of extremes: on the one hand, no vetoes were released whatsoever for more than five years, followed by a near record percentage of veto overrides in the waning months of Bush’s second term in office. Though some scholars argue that Bush’s leadership style remained unchanged as governor and president (Jones, 2007), others suggest that the loss of control, routine, and habit precipitated reliance on tools like the veto (McClellan, 2005).

Because of family affiliation and proximity of service, it is appropriate to compare George W. Bush’s veto record to that of his father, George Bush. One similarity between father and son is apparent: both maintained and defended a pro-life orientation which was exhibited in the subject matter of bills vetoed. However, father Bush’s veto employment was much more extensive over just a single term in office and his percentage of regular vetoes of public bills overridden—one of twenty-nine, or 3.45 percent—was the lowest for any president serving over the 120 year duration between 1889 and 2009 (Hoff, 2007).

Veto strategy and use are conditioned by several factors which have been covered in this study, including background, orientation toward Congress, political conditions, and past precedents. While some American presidents have regarded the veto as a sign of strength, others have eschewed its employment and labeled it as a political liability. That the George W. Bush team adopted the veto-as-weakness position is both consistent with the aforementioned factors and the level of success experienced as a consequence: not much. Still, the use of this tool did accomplish objectives not attainable from wielding executive branch devices alone, demonstrating an awareness if not an appreciation of basic constitutional authority.

Though White House statements, veto messages, and memoirs furnish a plethora of primary documents for research at this juncture, it is hoped that the opening of the George W. Bush Presidential Center at Southern Methodist University in 2013 will enhance our understanding of how the 43rd president viewed and used the veto.

**REFERENCES**


### TABLE 1
**PRESIDENTS WHO VETOED NO BILLS DURING ENTIRE TERM IN OFFICE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Years in Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Adams</td>
<td>1797-1801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Jefferson</td>
<td>1801-1805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Jefferson</td>
<td>1805-1809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Quincy Adams</td>
<td>1825-1829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary Taylor/Millard Fillmore</td>
<td>1849-1853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George W. Bush</td>
<td>2001-2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 2
**REGULAR VETOES OF PUBLIC BILLS BY SECOND-TERM PRESIDENTS, 1889-2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Years in Office</th>
<th># of 2nd Term Vetoes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grover Cleveland</td>
<td>1893-1897</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore Roosevelt</td>
<td>1905-1909</td>
<td>18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodrow Wilson</td>
<td>1917-1921</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Roosevelt</td>
<td>1937-1941</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Roosevelt</td>
<td>1941-1945</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Truman</td>
<td>1949-1953</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwight Eisenhower</td>
<td>1957-1961</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Nixon</td>
<td>1973-1974</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald Reagan</td>
<td>1985-1989</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Clinton</td>
<td>1997-2001</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George W. Bush</td>
<td>2005-2009</td>
<td>11*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*comprises total number of regular vetoes of public bills issued by president while in office
### TABLE 3
RANKED POCKET VETOES OF PUBLIC BILLS BY PRESIDENTS, 1889-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th># of Pocket Vetoes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Franklin Roosevelt</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Grover Cleveland II</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dwight Eisenhower</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Harry Truman</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Theodore Roosevelt</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ronald Reagan</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. William McKinley</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Calvin Coolidge</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Benjamin Harrison</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Gerald Ford/Jimmy Carter</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Richard Nixon</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Herbert Hoover</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. George Bush</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Lyndon Johnson</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Woodrow Wilson</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. William Taft/John Kennedy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Warren Harding/Bill Clinton/George W. Bush</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**TABLE 4**  
*RANKED PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESS IN PREVENTING VETO OVERRIDES, 1889-2009*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>% of Vetoes Sustained*</th>
<th>Total Veto Overrides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. William McKinley</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren Harding</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Kennedy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyndon Johnson</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. George Bush</td>
<td>96.55</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. William Taft</td>
<td>95.45</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Theodore Roosevelt</td>
<td>94.44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Clinton</td>
<td>94.44</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dwight Eisenhower</td>
<td>94.29</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Benjamin Harrison</td>
<td>92.86</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Franklin Roosevelt</td>
<td>91.43</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Grover Cleveland II</td>
<td>86.67</td>
<td>2/5**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Jimmy Carter</td>
<td>84.62</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Harry Truman</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>11/12**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Herbert Hoover</td>
<td>76.92</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Woodrow Wilson</td>
<td>76.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Ronald Reagan</td>
<td>75.68</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Gerald Ford</td>
<td>73.91</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Richard Nixon</td>
<td>70.83</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Calvin Coolidge</td>
<td>63.64</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*refers to regular vetoes of public bills

**Grover Cleveland had three private bills overridden; Harry Truman had one private bill veto overridden**
Multicultural Book Club: Creating Third Space through Student-led Discussion and Books with Cultural Content in a Diverse Classroom

Marcella J. Kehus
The University of Toledo

Introduction
This work traces the journey of a class of learners over two years as they were encouraged to use their funds of knowledge to discuss important thematic issues in student-led literature discussions or Book Clubs (Raphael & McMahon, 1994; Raphael, Pardo & Highfield, 1995; Raphael, Pardo & Highfield, 2005). The salient feature of these particular literature-based units is that the units were centered around multicultural literature primarily based in the many ethnic groups within this particular classroom. In fact, over these two years, six such thematic Book Club units based in issues of culture and reflecting the diverse ethnicity of their classroom were created and studied in light of the students who read and discussed them.

Background
The Role of Third Space in Literacy Learning
I come to this work from a sociocultural view of learning which emphasizes the role of language in learning as inseparable from its context. Moreover, language is used by individuals as they act out various identities and membership in various communities (Gee, 1996). These communities include, but are not limited to, home, community, peer, and school communities for the students within our classrooms. Within such a view of language use and learning, many of the difficulties that students may have in learning school discourse have to do with the wide variance between the more formal, middle class discourse of school in its grammar, vocabulary and so forth and the students’ initial acquired discourses of home and community, especially for students from non-mainstream communities such as English Language Learners and those who speak a language or dialect other than “Standard English” at home. While all language users are more or less adept at code-switching, or going from one variant of discourse use to another dependent upon the social context, the specific demands of academic discourse, what Delpit labels “the language of power” (1995) and others call “Standard English” leaves many learners outside the realm of mastery and seemingly “deficient.”

Rather than buy into such a deficiency model, it is my contention that it is just these sort of conversations such as Book Club now taking place more commonly in schools that serve as hybrid or third space (Gutiérrez, Rymes & Larson, 1995; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-Lopez & Turner, 1997) wherein students can bring both their home-based discourse as well as try out the newer discourses of school such as literary terms, critical perspectives on literature and the like. In this newly created learning space, the learning – based in conversation – is clearly social and dialogic. Following this model, learners are apprenticed into such social practice including its accompanying genres, rules of participation and so forth through participation with more knowledgeable others. Here, it is important to note that the more knowledgeable other does not always have to be the teacher. Instead, often with such specialized learning, roles can change and one’s peer can be the expert with important knowledge to be shared.

Book Club: The pedagogy of student talk
Fortunately, the pedagogy and theoretical constructs of the Book Club stand on strong footing as research-based practice with a solid history across nearly twenty years of research across various contexts.
of age levels as well as with a variety of learners. Our shared understanding of Book Club includes the following features:

- Students read high-quality, literature;
- Student write a variety of responses, especially those requiring higher level thinking and making personal connections, before heading into their discussions;
- Thematic units address universal areas worthy of discussion and provide for in-depth learning;
- The teacher explicitly models through Opening Community Share, comprehension strategies, ways of responding in writing, and ways of interacting;
- Fishbowls provide models from which the learners extrapolate standards of what makes for “Good Book Club Discussions” and “Norms” (Kehus & Lee, 2011);

**Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

Culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2000) resides in following values: 1) cultural heritages of different ethnic groups as legacies affecting students dispositions and approaches to learning as well as content worthy of study; 2) school success for students from diverse backgrounds recognizing the disproportionate number of those experiencing failure; 3) improving school success of those from diverse backgrounds by seeking to build bridges between their experiences at home and at school; 4) maintaining or even building competence in home culture and language; and 5) fostering social justice through an emphasis on equity in educational outcomes and celebrating diversity (Au, 2006).

Thus the aims of Multicultural Book Club stem from those of culturally responsive pedagogy and specifically were designed to: 1) include literature that both “mirrors” their world and that provides a “window” into the world outside of the students in the classroom (Cox & Galda, 1990); 2) address the literacy needs of an ethnically diverse population; 3) help students make connections between texts, to themselves, to each other and to world around them; and, 4) increase cultural awareness and tolerance of all students.

**Teaching for social justice: One of the many goals of culturally responsive pedagogy.**

Multicultural education, as defined by NAME (National Association for Multicultural Education) is: a philosophical concept built on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity... It affirms our need to prepare students for their responsibilities in an interdependent world. It recognizes the role schools can play in developing the attitudes and values necessary for a democratic society. It values cultural differences and affirms the pluralism that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. It challenges all forms of discrimination in schools and society through the promotion of democratic principles of social justice (Willis, 2003).

**Use of multicultural literature.**

Because today’s classrooms are increasingly diverse and yet continue to be taught by a teaching population that remains primarily one of white, monolingual, middle class females (Hughes, 2010; Vescio, 2009), the need for the use of multicultural literature as the mainstay of a good reading program is critical. For far too long many children simply have not seen themselves reflected in the stories and other texts used within their classrooms. This was not only true for those learning to read using the McGuffey Readers in the early part of the 20th century or the Dick and Jane series popular from the 1930’s through the 1970’s (e.g. Scott Foresman) since the culture in these books reflected the very particulars of the middle class norms, language, looks and more that were the dominant Discourse (Gee, 1996) yet this trend in fact continued well into other basal series throughout the 1970’s and 1980’s which were predominantly Eurocentric in their focus and hardly divergent in reflecting the great variety of ethnic and cultural variations clearly present in urban as well as many suburban and rural schools, both public and private throughout the United States. In some ways the “literature anthologies” beginning in the 1980’s (thanks to the Whole Language movement) did a better job of representing a wider range of children and authors, particularly those from African-American and Latino backgrounds, it is still rarely the case that a
classroom today is filled with literature that is reflective of the wide variety of ethnicities of the children within it.

And what is the message to an individual child when he or she does not see themselves in the literature and other texts being read in their classroom? Quite frankly, if a child does not see others “like them” in the texts being read in school, then perhaps school is not a place for children “like them.” This message is neither subtle nor neutral. After all, long before one learns to read words, one “reads the world” as a survival skill and socialization tool with which humans interact and survive throughout their lives. Thus, the choice of the literature used in Multicultural Book Club is of primary importance— an implicit curriculum - in that the books we choose to have children read becomes a curriculum in and of itself. Indeed, books are not simply a means to an end but an end in and of themselves and must be considered carefully as such.

**Characteristics of high quality multicultural literature.** Thus, a major component of Multicultural Book Club is, of course, the selection of high quality multicultural literature or “literature that represents any distinct cultural group through an accurate portrayal and rich detail” (Harris, 1996). After working through the six units that we developed, taught, assessed, and re-taught in the classroom— I have refined the following list of criteria for what multicultural literature one might use with students for classroom teaching. Given that “age appropriateness” is one of the criteria, I find this list to be applicable to all levels of teaching. And while here we are considering literature in reference to culture and ethnicity as well as religion, we are currently expanding our work to further take into consideration issues of gender, ability and the like.

When it comes to what qualifies as multicultural literature of high quality, I offer the following standards (see Yokota, 1993):

- Avoidance of stereotypes and generalizations;
- Defining a distinct cultural group instead of “cultural conglomerates” (e.g. Korean or Pakistani instead of Asian) which blur distinct cultures while often ignoring other cultural groups;
- Quality literature as defined by expert groups such as the American Library Association and specific recognized awards;
- Historical, cultural and overall accuracy;
- Richness in cultural details;
- Authentic dialogue, relationships, and language use;
- In-depth treatment of cultural issues;
- Inclusion of members of a “minority” group for a purpose;
- Told from the point of view of member of cultural group; author should be from the culture or have some authority;
- Representation that makes sense within local and larger contexts; and,
- Appropriate to its intended audience in reading level and content.

**Literature as mirror and window.** More importantly to our work, multicultural literature should either mirror the cultures in the classroom or be a window (Cox & Galda, 1990) into cultures such as those the children will be encountering in the world with which they will interact as successful beings in living, learning, and working well with others. While we began with the notion of mirroring or reflecting the range of ethnicities within this diverse classroom by selecting texts for each of the units over the course of the year to specifically include those of Indian, African-American, Japanese, and Korean children we also included those with characters of other ethnicities such as Latino/a and Native American which provided a window into the diversity outside of the local community.

**Research Design and Methods**

**Setting and Participants**

The setting for this study was a single multiage classroom of third and fourth grade students over a period of two academic years. The author took on the role of participant observer while working with The full-time classroom teacher of these students during both years also had prior experience as a teacher researcher, a role she took seriously. The school was a public suburban one with a diverse population in
the MidWest. With 25% Asian students in the district overall, Foxview Elementary, one of the five K-4 elementary schools had a population with 35% Asian students at the time we began our study in 2006.

Although data does not reflect this, the cultural conglomerate, “Asian,” can actually be further broken down into very specific ethnicities which, in this particular classroom would include children whose ethnicities included Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Indian. There was also one African American child, another who had come from Great Britain, one child who was adopted from Russia as a toddler, and one whose parents had immigrated from the Middle East - one from Jordan and the other from Lebanon. It is important to note that this teacher was of Filipino descent and was the only teacher of any Asian background in the district during our study. Both she and the author, a white female, shared their own stories of their names and other questions asked of students as they arose.

From 5-10% of the students in this district spoke a language other than English as their primary language including four students in this classroom; two of the students in this classroom had been in the U.S. less than one year and two were removed from this classroom daily for English as a Second Language instruction. No other assistance was available.

Methodology

The primary methodology used in research was that of the ethnographer studying the classroom over two years as a case study (Hamel, 1991; Dyson, 2005) with an emphasis on thick description (Geertz, 2000). Eventually as the primary researcher came to develop working theories about the ways that language, learning and culture were at work in this classroom, she began to focus on particular students as individual cases. This work with multiple case studies (Stake, 2005) work to both typify the theory in action as well as illustrate possible outlying or exceptions to the theory at play. The cases selected in the discussion portion of this paper are excellent examples of this multiple case study analysis.

Research Questions

As a researcher, I approached this case study with two general questions in mind:

1. In what ways might the reading and discussion of multicultural literature help children make connections to the texts, each other, and the world outside of their immediate surroundings?

2. How might we best assist students to maximize their potential in student-led Book Club discussions?

Data Sources

The data for this study came from the following sources for the academic years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 in four major forms: 1) digital audio recordings of teacher whole group lessons and small group student-led discussions along with transcriptions of this discourse; 2) copies of student artifacts related to literacy and learning such as student’s written responses and student-produced text; 3) the teacher’s lesson plan book, observations and journal writings; and, 4) photos, artifacts, and daily field notes taken by the researcher as participant observer. Because of this large corpus of data, I was able to draw on multiple sources as I began to look for patterns to emerge. With two of us looking at different data sources initially – the teacher viewing student work and the researcher listening to audio recordings of the student-led Book Club discussions, we came to the classroom with different perspectives on how the students were experiencing the text. Both of us were in the classroom daily, and we had weekly data meetings as well as extended planning meetings before each unit.

Data Analysis

The overarching perspective during data analysis was on building grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). As a researcher, I kept two-column notes for my field observations and weekly data meetings. I used the right column for thematic and theoretical notes as well as eventual coding. As the data collection period progressed, it was becoming clear that there were particular students that it made sense to focus on as case studies as Multicultural Book Club was proving an especially transformative experience especially for certain students.

All audio files, whole class and small group discussions (N = 144) were catalogued by type (whole group vs. small group), unit, book title, and book club group. Next, I listened to each discussion multiple times and kept field notes for general trends and open coding. Transcriptions were made for key discussions including at least at least one discussion for each group for each unit. Discourse analysis of
the transcribed audio files proceeded as “language in use” (Cazden, 2001; Gee, 1996; Gee, 1999) as well as refinement of the coding scheme and full coding of 14 full discussions. Working with graduate assistants, an inter-rater reliability rate of .81 was achieved with this coding scheme.

Likewise, student learning artifacts, including all of their written responses to the reading, the teacher’s lessons and journals, and my daily field notes were coded as part of Constant Comparative analysis (Glaser, 1978) as I worked to refine grounded theory about the learners and focused on specific cases within the classroom.

**Results**

**Raja: Becoming Resident Expert**

One of the first moments that we knew we were on to something was the day that The teacher began to read aloud the story of *Ghandi* by Demi. Two female students, both of Indian descent, began giggling immediately when The teacher said the main character’s name. When the teacher inquired why, they corrected the teacher in her pronunciation of the main character’s name almost immediately. They went on to explain that if pronounced Gan–de, as most Americans seem to pronounce it, that this word actually means crazy old woman in India – a remark that produced even more giggles out of the class. Instead, in their native tongue the name should actually be pronounced Gan–dhhee – with the emphasis on the latter syllable and the dh combination making an unfamiliar but more palatable tongue to the top front of the roof of one’s mouth sound. With their guidance, the class practiced saying the name correctly which we continued to do carefully at every point of saying his name throughout the course of reading and discussion for the rest of year. After all, no one wanted to go calling Ghandi a crazy old woman!

One of these two females was an especially quiet and socially isolated child who took her schoolwork seriously. There had been a consistent lack of social engagement within and outside the classroom community that the teacher expressed concern about at the start of the year going so far as to give the mother the homework assignment of making playdates for her daughter. In fact, this student had been at the same school since kindergarten yet she had no significant friendships. After the day of correcting the class on pronouncing “Gan-dhee,” however, she followed up by bringing in her authentic Indian clothes. She seemed to make a transition during 2006-2007 as a resident expert and taking on more and more of a leadership role. By the time my research assistant began to transcribe discussions from the second unit, he commented to me, “Wow, that Raja is really quite a leader.” I was shocked that he was talking about the same girl that I knew from class, so the teacher and I listened to the discussion the next week in our data meeting. It quickly became apparent that she was becoming further empowered as a member of the community of learners with important contributions to make. When her birthday came around, she invited the whole class to a party at her house; most students went and said they had quite a fun time. By the end of that year, however, this young lady was transferring to another nearby school district. Early the next Fall, The teacher received a call from Raja’s new teacher – she needed a recommendation because Raja was running for class president at her new school. The transformation had been quite amazing.

**Jon Michael: “I’m not Chinese and I’m not Japanese”**

Jon Michael joined our class at the start of Year Two as a result of re-districting that, we learned later, split only three Korean students from a much larger group still at his prior elementary school. From the start he used his first and middle name interchangeably, so when the classroom teacher met his parents during Open House the second week of school, The teacher asked his parents which name she should use. His father answered coldly, “It does not matter,” and we quickly regretted that this youngster had missed our very successful naming unit of the prior year. Jon Michael did not smile except when he spoke of Korea where he spent his summers, and he was always the last to linger out to recess and lunch where he spent little to no time playing with the others even when they asked him to join. During parent-teacher conferences, his father seemed very unhappy with the teacher remarking that “this school lacks structure and enough academics,” and he got so upset that at one point the teacher had to stand up to assert her authority. On their way out, the mother lagged behind him and smiled saying, “I like you,” when the father was out of earshot.
During the Cinderella unit, for which I could find no authentic Korean text, as a whole class students read Yeh Shen: A Cinderella story from China and Mufaro’s beautiful daughters: An African tale, while English Language Learners in his class were also given a Japanese Cinderella tale in their native language. When small groups were given another five Cinderella tales of various ethnic backgrounds from which to choose, none of which were Korean, Jon Michael finally spoke out to his group but loud enough to be heard by the teachers, “I’m not Chinese, and I’m not Japanese.” Instead of ignoring his dissatisfaction, I brought in the text, The Korean Cinderella, and Jon Michael and I discussed the problems of the text not being accurately Korean. I assured him that the next unit, a second naming unit, would include an authentic text with a Korean main character and even the Korean writing system. In fact, when we read the text, My name is Yoon, Jon Michael was “caught writing” his name in Korean by another student who said, “That’s so cool, Jon! Can you do mine?” Other students found this cool, too, and he ended up writing everyone’s name in Korean for them and smiling ear to ear the whole time. For the rest of the year, Jon did not have a problem with smiling and he finally started rushing to lunch and recess like everyone else.

Jon Michael was not only feeling especially isolated as the only Korean boy in class and one of only a few Koreans in the school where in his previous school there had been more Korean students. And the problem that Jon Michael experienced was not just about not having a Korean text; it was also that he was having to read text about Japanese and Chinese characters. As a matter of cultural knowledge, one needs to understand the underlying history and animosity between Koreans and both the Chinese and Japanese. In sum, historically, Korea has been alternately conquered by both China and Japan and the atrocities suffered by their people at the hands of these two nations had been horrific and long-suffering. In addition, Jon Michael, as the eldest and only son in his family has a great deal of pressure on him to perform greatly at school which is by no means any comparison to the rigors of Korean school. After all, Korea and its people must excel and achieve!

Andre: “I’m African-American!”

Before we even began our first Multicultural Book Club unit, there was at least one student who was quite anxious for this Civil Rights unit to begin. About a week before we began the unit, The teacher went to leave school one day and found a Post-it™ note on her car’s windshield with an anonymous penciled note asking, “When are we going to start Civil Rights?” She was quite perplexed, and the next day she asked me if I had left the note. Of course I had not, and it was obviously in the penmanship of a third- or fourth-grader. After asking a few students, we found that the note had been left by our one African American student, Andre, who seemed eager to share all what he already knew about the Civil Rights movement. At least he was eager to share it with us as he told us when it was time to go to lunch that he had been watching the Eyes on the Prize DVD series at home over the past few months with his parents. He could hardly contain himself and his pride about various persons and stories privately over the next few weeks during this unit of study. However, besides when the teacher asked him explicitly in whole class discussions about particular individuals, he shared little to nothing during Book Club discussions and no more during the Civil Rights unit than during units that followed (e.g. “Cinderella around the World”) although, again privately in his journal, he worked diligently especially on Mufaro’s beautiful daughters: An African tale with which he was already familiar.

So, what was keeping this student from sharing his expertise in his small group discussions? Part of the answer may lie in his individual lack of confidence. Andre was small, shy and a bit immature for his grade, and he was easily led especially by bossy young ladies in his class. Early in the year, he had been recommended for Special Education placement based on his lack of achievement and test scores in both reading and math, but his parents declined this placement. Given the disproportionate placement of African American boys in Special Education (Kunjufu, 2000), this may have been a placement worth questioning. Moreover, considering that Andre was the only African American in the classroom, he had literally no compatriots with whom to identify in the classroom, particularly regarding race. Without the support of trusted adults, it would have been more surprising to see him bring up such issues in a peer-only setting.
However, by Year Two, Andre did begin to build some confidence as not only was he a fourth grader in a room of third and fourth graders, he was also one of only seven “resident expert” Book Clubber’s as we began to teach the other 18 new children how to “do Book Club,” and others were beginning to know that he had some expertise when it came to Black History.

Finally, by the middle of Year Two during the second unit and the discussion of Show Way, I witnessed Andre take a stand and claim both this heritage and his point of view. His group began their discussion with “What is a ‘show way’?” during which he argued for his answer for nearly a five full minutes. Yes, he understood it as a map, but he also understood how the ancestors in the book had sacrificed to fight for freedom and civil rights so that he and others like him could have freedom. When later in the discussion, his group decided to talk about theme, the other four members looked over to where some common themes were hanging in the classroom including: believe in yourself, overcoming obstacles, helping others, and so on. They were tossing around all of these ideas and reasons why they might fit and Andre was also trying to get a word in, but he had little practice at this since he had not participated in the small group venue much. Then suddenly he broke into the group saying, “I’m African American!” and this stunned his group into silence as he had intended giving him apparent license to speak with authority on this story about his own history. One group member did actually say, “Huh?” then another said, “What do you think the theme was, Andre?” and all gave him them their undivided attention. Andre shared that he thought the theme was a combination of “overcoming obstacles” in the long fight for freedom and then civil rights and “helping others” since many had risked their lives even when they were safe. Finally, he had used his expertise or cultural knowledge in a way that his classmates respected.

Chiyo: Practice Versus Evaluation

Chiyo came to us at the start of Year Two knowing no English, but we had some things going for us. First, now we had a new ELL program. Second, Chiyo was a hard-working young lady who wanted to please. And, lastly, as part of my doctoral coursework, I had learned a good deal about best practices with ELL students. Unfortunately, the first and last items did not co-exist well as we learned when a parent sent us a Japanese Cinderella tale in its original language. We excitedly sent this to our ESL teacher counterparts who explained that their policy was that they, “didn’t do anything in the child’s first language.” Frustrated but not undefeated, we worked with Chiyo and her 4th year counterpart, Yomata, and used this story within the classroom to teach the similarities and differences between the languages and stories.

Chiyo also worked with Yomata in Book Club discussions since the first spoke nearly no English for the first Unit; so Yomata did a good deal of translating back and forth to allow Chiyo to still participate. Chiyo could respond in her writing log with some writing and often with pictures at this early stage. By the second Book Club, she was still in a group of four students including Yomata, but she had learned enough words that, even if the question had to be translated, she could respond with a word or phrase in English. In terms of my thinking as an educator and “best practices for English Language Learners” this was the perfect sort of small group, peer-led social circumstance that we try to construct in which such language learners can get practice using their newly acquired language.

It was not long, however, before Chiyo went completely mute. Even when I offered to and did turn the recorder off, Chiyo had gone silent, and the more she was prodded by myself or her teacher, she could not even explain in her native tongue why – not even to her Japanese peer, Yomata. She simply would not, seemingly could not, speak, in these small group discussions. Certainly not in English like we all expected her to do. The only words that I note her saying during these days was asking her teacher, and often myself, at the end of such a day, “Do you still like me?” Of course we did. We just did not know how to help her.

Eventually, and it was not until the next Book Club cycle some six weeks later, very timidly and with the shortest of answers at first, Chiyo, in a group now without Yomata, spoke in her new Book Club group finally. She was capable as her English had been getting better rapidly. We would not have left her without Yomata if we had not believed that she could comprehend the talk and be able to say what she might want to say. But what had caused her long period of silence?
It was not until I had a conversation with a Japanese peer at a conference in the interim that I think I began to understand. It seems that in Japan speaking in front of one’s teacher – really speaking in the classroom at all – is a different construct altogether and done almost entirely for evaluation purposes. As such, Chiyo (or so explains my informant) would not have wanted to speak English aloud until she could do so perfectly. Thus, what I had conceived of as practice for Chiyo in her newly acquired language of English in a small group setting of her peers in which the teacher or I might occasionally stop by to observe for Chiyo had been an extremely intimidating setting of evaluation. For Chiyo, these discussions were a public performance of her competence (or lack thereof) in which she saw herself as incompetent using the perfection of her native English-speaking peers as a marker of competence and the seeming omni-presence of teachers in the classroom as her ever-possible audience.

Yomata: An Americanized Japanese student?

In contrast to Chiyo, a first-year immigrant to the U.S., Yomata was in her fourth year in this same elementary school as a fourth grader which meant she had a highly Americanized understanding of education. Likewise, she was with our class and study for both years, and thus had a thorough understanding of the teacher’s expectations, Book Club, as well as the thematic and cultural understandings emphasized throughout our units. For example, during our first Naming Unit, Yomata shared a good deal of information about Japanese naming traditions as did other students from other cultures; students also shared the meaning and stories behind their names and pinned their names on a world map to its country of origin. Much like the proper pronunciation of Ghandi, knowledge of African American history, and the Korean writing system, names and their meanings were given prominence in this classroom.

Until one day, when there was a substitute . . . The substitute was innocently reading aloud from a story left by the teacher and when the substitute read the names of two Japanese characters incorrectly, Yomata interrupted her to correct her. And the substitute said, “That’s not important.” Well, that was not the right thing to say to Yomata; she was horrified and indignant. After all, it was important. Names were important. Her culture was important. And she reacted by folding her arms, clenching her fists, slumping down in her chair, and not participating for the rest of the day. This was right after lunch, and Yomata did not say or do one thing for the rest of the day. She did not participate, she did not follow along, she did not do her work. Yomata was protesting and on strike. As a Japanese student, this would have been unacceptable, perhaps unthinkable, behavior. For Yomata, this was behavior never seen before or since. But it was very American (read rebel) behavior.

When the teacher arrived back the next day, she debriefed the situation with Yomata, telling her that, of course, those names were important. Yomata smiled and said she thought her teacher would think so. They said a few more words, and Yomata was back to her usual smiling, hard-working self.

Discussion and Implications

In the following discussion, I again draw attention to the construct of Third Space, wherein the Official/First Space represents the Teacher Script while the Unofficial/Second Space would include the Student Counterscript or those things said by students in the unofficial spaces and which usually remain “off the record.” Thus, this notion of Third/Hybrid Space that is possible when the teacher script and student counter script are allowed to authentically interact and is, of course, unscripted and multi-voiced (Bakhtin, 1981; Gutierrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995).

Language as Resource

We begin with a discussion of Raja and her peer who corrected the teacher’s pronunciation of Gandhi. As teachers and teacher educators all know, teachers are faced with hundreds of decisions a day such as to what to do with such information brought on as an interruption by a student. The teacher could have said, “Please don’t interrupt” or “Here in the U.S, we pronounce it this way,” or even as the substitute did to Yomota, “That’s not important” or simply ignored it. However, she made a conscious choice, much like choosing that book on Gandhi in the first place, to spend a good deal of time on this new information and to highly value her students’ funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, 2005). This is part of a larger belief system that all students come to the classroom with great stores of such knowledge and that a very good teacher is one who is highly adept at accessing these funds of knowledge in the classroom to both show students
how smart they already are, to reflect back that their culture is valuable and worthy of bringing to the classroom, and to give students points in their own stores of knowledge to which they can attach new learning.

As we saw specifically for Raja, this was the beginning of her official sojourn as a resident expert on Indian pronunciation and history which quite quickly translated into a general role as resident expert and leader in small groups for her. It is important, also, to keep in mind, that this discussion began in what was officially Student Counterscript – the girls’ giggling. The teacher had to veer off of the Official Teacher Script and venture daringly into this Student Counterscript to find out that they were giggling about Gandhi meaning crazy old woman. Thus, none of this would have even happened if it were not for the intersection of First and Second Space or this going off the script to create Third Space.

And going off of Official Teacher Script can be scary – just ask the substitute. That is why she kept to the Official Teacher Script and answered Yomata’s Counterscript interruption of the teacher’s read aloud – when the student tried to correct the student’s pronunciation of Japanese youngster’s names – with the Official Teacher response of, “That’s not important.” This is how students from non-mainstream languages and non-mainstream cultures are told daily that their knowledge is not important. And Yomata’s response was dramatic and public for those who were aware of what to look for. Student Counterscript does not usually get much prominence either in the classroom or in the study of the classroom. It is generally ignored all together.

Cultural Knowledge as Resource

Because of his cultural knowledge, Andre was excited to begin the Civil Rights unit and building on this sort of enthusiasm were the sort of connections we sought in all our units via literature and content connected to students’ funds of knowledge. Although during Year One and much of Year Two we had to pry this knowledge from Andre in the public space, he was making connections on his own to his cultural knowledge of African American history in his writing even when quiet in his small group discussions. Just because he was not bragging to all of his classmates about his knowledge does not mean that he was not making leaps and bounds in his own personal connections and so much more capable in all of his reading endeavors because of this; we know that he was.

So, too, were numerous students for whom we had provided books that drew on their own cultural backgrounds whether Indian, Jewish, Russian or the many ethnicities already discussed. In fact, we also could not assume that our students had certain American cultural knowledge, so, as just one example, we had to assign the viewing of Disney’s version of Cinderella one weekend. In only this way could we guarantee that all students could have at least a basic exposure to some of the American values in this version of Cinderella with which to compare other cultural variations.

It is important to note that both students who had difficulty discussing their specific cultures – Andre and Jon Michael – were those who were singular in representing their ethnicities within the classroom. Indeed, it is difficult to be the only African American child in a classroom and more so to feel as if one has to “represent” the viewpoint of African Americans for the class. So, too, to be a Korean child within a milieu of Chinese and Japanese students may leave one feeling defensive or having to “represent.” It is not that teachers put these things upon such students; they may do so themselves, but parents can unwittingly do this and so can cultural “ways of being.” But both of these circumstances speak to the need of a very knowledgeable and sophisticated teacher with a great store of cultural knowledge who understands all that may lie beneath the circumstances of such children.

It is also worth noting that both of these students did very much go off script the Official Teacher Script – Andre with his shocking “I’m African American!” and Jon Michael rebelling with, “I’m not Chinese, and I’m not Japanese.” – into a Student Counterscript, but they did so clearly within the hearing of the teacher or researcher. They both wanted to be heard by this adult, and they both did so within the distance of this safe person. With Andre, he had already tested out these adults and when he made his stand he was doing so within the hearing of someone who “had his back” if anything went wrong. As for Jon Michael, he might have been taking a bigger chance, but he definitely wanted to be heard and perhaps for someone in charge to right the wrongs being done to him. For Jon Michael, too, this venture into Third Space allowed the chance for his voice to be heard in ways he was hoping for and more.
Sociocultural Practice as Resource

Sociocultural practice or “ways of doing” can often be the least visible parts of our ways of doing school and learning if we are not sure what to look for. When we were working with Chiyo and she went silent, it was because we were working from two completely different cultural expectations of “ways of doing” school. What we saw as practicing her English in a non-threatening small group setting, Chiyo’s Japanese culture of schooling viewed as her being evaluated on her oral performance of using English. While I could initially see that this was a clash in views of what we were doing and why, between the language gap and the culture gap, I could still not see how she could do that without practicing – which I thought would require practicing while she was not very good, something she could not seem to withstand.

And, yes, Chiyo’s silence was her own form of Student Counterscript – a silent protest. I continued to work with her trying different options such as drawing, having her translate out her response, but still there was no talking. And then, as suddenly as it had started, it stopped, and she was talking again.

Again, we have to remember that American schooling, and one’s classroom in particular, is only one very unique “way of doing school” and it is only going to be effective for a certain number of children. The children who learn best in your classroom will be children who learn like you teach. So, is your classroom full of children like this? Or might your classroom benefit from listening to some of that Student Counterscript?

Conclusions

In creating the units for Multicultural Book Club, we selected the literature with the particular class of students in mind as both mirror and window with the cultures of the classroom (Cox & Galda, 1990). As such, it was also vital that we created a hybrid space whereby the Official Teacher Script also paid attention to, allowed for, and interacted with the Unofficial and unscripted Student Counterscript. In doing so, the classroom became a place where student’s funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll, Almanti, 2005) were valued, made a part of the larger community, and made accessible as part of student’s schema to connect with new learning.

The teacher’s role of this constant negotiation is no small task. Indeed it requires a deep knowledge of one’s students, their cultures, possible curricular content, pedagogical alternatives and ongoing questioning of who is and is not being heard. First and foremost, however, it requires the teacher creates a safe classroom community in which all of this would not otherwise be possible. For it takes a very safe place for Jon Michael to tell his Japanese and Chinese classmates that he is very different from them, and it must be a very safe place for Chiyo to stay mute when she very much wants to please her teachers and asks daily, “Do you still like me?”

As for further research, we are interested in delving into some of the Student Counterscript that might not be so easily accessible, such as what older students – middle schooler’s and high schooler’s – say and mutter and really think about learning. And we are also looking into how we might investigate various “ways of knowing” that did not readily show up in this preliminary study.
References


**Select Children’s Books Cited**
Learning by Doing: A Constructivist Approach to Assessment and Collaborative Action Research through the Lens of Professional Learning Communities

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study was to analyze how university MAT credential candidates approached assessment and collaborative research practices by participating in professional learning community activities. Candidates were enrolled in one of four different sections of EDU 603 Classroom Assessment and Research Practices over the course of one year. 44 candidates participated in the study and were enrolled in one or more disciplines within the MAT program. The study was largely descriptive in nature and looked at any descriptive and interpretive concepts emerging from the data. From different sources of data, five themes emerged: time, isolation, divergent views, collaboration, and culture. Even though candidate learning outcomes were achieved more effectively and efficiently, it cannot be concluded without further study that candidates were adequately prepared for collaborative action research or the professional learning communities model outside of the parameters of this particular study.

INTRODUCTION
An incredible amount of change is taking place in schools all over the United States. Schools are increasingly being managed like businesses. Without effective strategic planning principals will be involved in crisis management (Van der Linde, 2001). As schools engage in strategic planning, professional learning communities should be heavily depended on to help districts move from infancy to maturity in their quality of instructional and overall educational success. By introducing pre-service candidates in a university MAT credential program to professional learning communities, this may increase the success of professional learning communities and their impact on assessment and research practices.

The purpose of this study was to analyze how university MAT credential candidates approached assessment and research practices by participating in professional learning community activities. This study addressed the need to better prepare MAT credential candidates in the areas of assessment, action research, and professional learning communities. By utilizing local school districts involved action research and professional learning communities, candidates were able to achieve the highest excellence possible in educational achievement.

Professional learning communities (PLC) have over the last few years been almost a household name among educators of all levels. In fact, the term has been used so ubiquitously used that it is in danger of losing all meaning (DuFour, 2004). Each word of the phrase “professional learning community” has been chosen purposefully. Dufour (2004) stated that “a professional” is someone with expertise in a specialized field. He also said that “learning” suggests ongoing action and perpetual curiosity. In a professional learning community, educators create an environment that fosters mutual cooperation, emotional support, and personal growth as they work together to achieve what they cannot accomplish alone (Thomas, Gregg, & Niska, 2004).

Most professional learning communities followed the same protocol. Within each community the teacher as well as leaders were encouraged to pursue personal and professional development, integrating it as part of their regular job responsibilities. For example, the Sunnyside Unified School District implemented PLC time into the school week by creating a weekly early release day for students and utilizing that extra hour for mandated sessions for teachers to be in their specified professional learning...
community. Within professional learning communities, leaders incorporated professional development by asking teachers to discuss and share differing classroom applications.

DuFour, DuFour, and Eaker (2006) wrote about the difference between a PLC’s collaborative culture and a team. The main difference is the interdependence that exists within a PLC. A PLC meeting was more than teachers getting together to share data—it was a group of individuals who met to achieve common goals for their grade level and for the school. Instead of sharing data, they responded to data, which required a sense of mutual accountability and changing classroom practices. Furthermore, building and maintaining a collaborative culture was one of the most difficult aspects of a PLC (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2006). There were events that one cannot always anticipate, such as illnesses, sudden family transfers, personnel issues and divorces that became toxic to the collaborative process. The collaboration often resulted in teachers jumping in to champion the school’s mission.

From those interactions, teachers enhanced their professional knowledge in a more informal approach to professional development. True professional learning communities follow different protocols to evoke dialogue between team members. In some professional development settings, teachers are asked to read books or educational articles as a catalyst to encourage reflection, inquiry, and sharing. Individual and team judgment is valued more than rules, policies, forms, and procedures. Most importantly, everyone is encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and development and this is considered to be a norm of the school’s culture (Thompson, 2004).

These concepts of professional leaning communities may sound simple to implement, this is not always the case. Implementing professional learning communities is challenging. For starters, they require a deep cultural change within the school (Honawar, 2008). Furthermore, what would it take to persuade educators that successfully implementing professional learning community practices is the most promising path for sustained and substantive improvement of our schools and districts? Many experts and professional organizations in education endorse and advocate the development of PLCs.

There are cascades of strategies, theories, district initiatives, and many other ideas to improve student learning. Teacher collaboration is hailed as one of the most effective ways to improve student learning (Honawar, 2008). This can be debatable like most issues. According to Thomas, Gregg, and Niska (2004), many K-12 school are working to become professional learning communities in the hope that student learning will improve when adults commit themselves to talking collaboratively about teaching and learning and then take action that will improve student learning and achievement. Other leaders in the field, such as Schmoker (2004), believe “the most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is building the capacity of school personnel to function as a professional learning community” (pg. 424).

METHODS
Participants

Participants in the study were candidates in a university MAT credential program. At the time of the study, there were 44 candidates enrolled in 4 different sections of EDU 603 Classroom Assessment and Research Practices that spanned from Spring 2010 to Spring 2011. This was a required course in the MAT program. It was also concurrently taken with clinical practice 1 or 2, or while the candidate was in the university internship program. The participants included 28 European American candidates (21 females and seven males), 14 Latino/a candidates (10 females and four males) and two Indian-American male. All 44 participants held a four-year degree and were enrolled in the university’s MAT program. Of the 44 participants, 39 were not employed full time in a school district. The remaining five was part of the university internship program.

EDU 603 Classroom Assessment and Research Practices

Every candidate in the MAT program took EDU 603 Classroom Assessment and Research Practices, as this course was unique to Point Loma. The course description was as follows: This course analyzed assessment types, practices and instruments used to evaluate student academic achievement both formative and summative. Students applied the knowledge and skills to design differentiated instruction and assessments based on student profiles. Relationships between theory and practice provided the basis for reflection to encourage application of proven pedagogical strategies in the classroom. This course
included intentional practice with regards to classroom management, active and equitable participation for English Learners and students with special needs, and lesson planning with effective instructional strategies based on on-going assessment to differentiate instruction for all learners. Furthermore, candidates used an acceptable educational research model to develop an action research study for evaluating one specific aspect of their practicum classroom experience, demonstrating the competence in electronic research tools, presented findings using appropriate, computer-based technology.

Data Collection

The purpose of this study was to analyze how university MAT credential candidates approached assessment and research practices by participating in professional learning community activities, as defined by DuFour, DuFour, and Eaker (2006). Qualitative methods were chosen because they allowed participants the freedom to choose their own words. In addition, qualitative methods allowed responses to open up new emergent topics not initially considered and can reveal complexities in the research data, as well as new approaches to teaching this concept in EDU 603.

For the study, two surveys were used. All 44 participants completed a background survey that addressed prior knowledge of assessment, action research, and PLCs. The purpose of the background survey was to collect descriptive data about the participant’s gender, race, credential program, as well as prior knowledge. Each participant a second survey that addressed what they learned in EDU 603 as it related to assessment, action research, and PLCs. It included 15 open-ended questions on the abovementioned topics and included opportunities for participants to write about both positive and negative experiences they had with action research and PLCs in EDU 603. These surveys were chosen as a source of data because they allowed the researcher to learn about things that cannot be directly observed, they allowed participants to reveal their perspectives, and they allowed for expanded answers.

Field-based (classroom) observations were undertaken to gain insights into the context behind the surveys and participant data. The researcher was the professor-of-record for EDU 603, which helped with observations. Being the professor-of-record allowed the researcher to use the observations to describe the collaborative culture and the extent of collaborative efforts of each team during the respective term. Teams (during each term) were selected based on his or her clinical practice placement and credential for which they are acquiring (e.g., single subject, multiple subject or special education). Participants attended class met one night per week for eight weeks during each term.

Analysis

This study was largely descriptive in nature. The researcher looked at any descriptive and interpretive concepts emerging from the data. The goal of data analysis in this study was to determine if the candidates… Beyond that, the researcher looked at the culture of collaboration among the participants in the study as it related to the PLC activities in class. Data analysis took place simultaneously with data collection.

Answers from surveys and notes from observations were coded based a priori themes and also on themes that emerged during analysis. Specifically, the researcher looked to the data and its relation to the research question that served as the basis of this study. Time, isolation, divergent views, collaboration, and culture were identified as a priori themes. Candidates’ responses were organized into these five themes. Within each theme, similar responses were grouped together and enumerated for the purpose of summarizing the results. Similar responses that did not fit within the five a priori themes were assigned deductive codes. This allowed additional themes to emerge from the data. Conclusions were focused on the research question, based on similarities that occurred. When unrelated responses occurred, these results were also examined to determine what, if any, conclusions could be drawn.

FINDINGS

Time

As a researcher and the professor-of-record, I knew there were going to be several limitations involved with the study. One of the biggest limitations was time and the participants confirmed it. DuFour and Eaker (1998) confirmed that time needed to be purposefully built in to the day for collaboration. All participates in the study indicated that the PLC activities in EDU 603 met their expectations of collaboration (on a small scale), and a majority indicated that their PLC team did not have enough time to
effectively collaborate as a team. However, the time together was focused, structured, and effective given the length of the class. It is interesting to note that two candidates said that if this assignment was not required for the class (but rather an optional assignment) that they would not have chosen to do it. One was quoted as saying, “I do not see the value in this and it seemed like a waste of my time.”

**Isolation**

DuFour and Eaker (1998) indicated that PLCs required teachers to develop a shared mission, vision, and goals and to commit to guiding principles that articulate beliefs of the team (or school). In this study, the PLC activities alleviated isolation by providing an opportunity in class for PLC teams to meet on a regular basis, promoting collaboration, and helping participants build relationships. In addition, the majority of participants reported that they felt PLCs provided a more supportive environment for teachers and was helpful and better prepared for the real thing when they acquire a teaching position.

**Divergent views**

DuFour and Eaker (1998) indicated that PLCs established norms by which they would operate, goals that they wish to accomplish, ways to assess the effectiveness of their PLC, and a process by which to resolve conflicts that occur. In addition, participants were willing to engage in discussions when conflict arose and must be able to come to a shared consensus.

**Collaboration**

Data revealed that the PLC activities implemented in class developed a process to effectively resolve conflict through collaboration. In addition, the majority of the participants reported their PLCs had come to a consensus to identify essential learning outcomes, standards to assess learning, SMART goals and norms, and to develop common, formative assessments.

**Culture**

In class, the overarching hypothesis was that if time, the isolated nature of the EDU 603, and divergent points of view were addressed, then culture would improve. Through student surveys and observations, data indicated that collaboration among PLC teams did not function in the most ideal ways. Given the nature of the class and timeframe in which the class was held, it would be expected that the PLC team collaboration be hindered.

Other themes emerged from the data through the process of coding. The new themes were established when common terms were mentioned by more than a third of the respective class. They were then identified as emergent themes. These included benefits, hindrances, and value. The data represented by these three themes did not fit well with the research question but did, however, reflect the opinions of participants in this study. It provided useful information as to how to improve the course.

**DISCUSSION**

During class sessions, one issue that kept resurfacing (through interviews and observations) was that time must be kept sacred. Individuals in each of the PLC teams valued the collaborative time in class. Many agreed time needed to be kept sacred because it was the time when everyone on the PLC had committed to come together to work toward the shared goals of the team (within EDU 603). The nature of time needed to be communicated to all members of the team as well as the professor of the course. It allowed everyone to know what was to occur during collaboration time including reviewing of the team norms (each class session). Teams were required to adhere to the objectives of the meeting, outlined by the professor. Team members made valuable use of the time allotted and a weekly artifact and reflective writing prompt was due at the end of each PLC collaborative class session.

Another recommendation pertained to the types of team members who did not want to fully participate or who were absent on a consistent basis. This was a recurring concern for some team members. Team members commented that members who did not fully participate or were absent needed some sort of accountability. Some recommended a self- and peer-evaluation at the end of the study. This was not a good suggestion but it also modeled a form of assessment as discussed in EDU 603. Furthermore, members felt too much was “wasted” bringing absent team members up-to-speed (as a result of the absence).

Ultimately, the need for further discussion and collaboration is required. Topics in each meeting needed to be purposeful, meaningful, and productive. Team members suggested that more time be built
into the class for that collaborative discussion; however, given the short timeframe of the class, it was unlikely. Therefore, team members took it upon themselves to meet outside of the given class time. This increased the amount of planned meeting time and made available a deeper discussion about planning, instructional strategies, and assessment.

Finally, in the end, the team members wished they had shared planning time within the school day at each other’s school as to make an immediate impact on student learning. A culture began to form and increased the amount of opportunities each team member had to make contributions to the team for greater good of the students. Ultimately, team members made the best of what was given and if the class went beyond the 8 weeks, the culture of each team and the class as a whole would have strengthened.

Conclusions

Based on the data collected in this study there have been improvements to the collaborative culture of EDU 603. In the past, candidates did not conduct any type of study, let alone a collaborative action research study. Furthermore, the PLC concept was not introduced in EDU 603 prior to the Spring 2010 semester. Based on observations and candidate interview data, the collaborative culture of the class increased as a result of the implementation of the PLC concept and the collaborative action research study. Collaboration between team members was more consistent as this time was built into each class session. Teams had norms in place to structure “meeting times,” had goals and assignments from the instructor to accomplish during those “meetings,” shared data from the previous week’s collection, and discussed similarities and differences as a result.

Over the course of the four terms of data collection, the course has achieved its learning outcomes more effectively and efficiently as a result of the implementation of these processes. However, one cannot conclude that candidates were truly prepared in the field as a direct result of this class. One can only assume candidates were more prepared, but unless further studies were conducted outside of the class the true effectiveness of this process cannot be determined. It was found, however, to make a difference in the context of this study, and revealed the potential for continued improvement and preparation of candidates in the MAT credential program as it related to action research and PLCs. Overall, school districts felt that PLNU candidates were more prepared as a result of this information presented, which was encouraging and could lead to further study once these candidates become employed.
REFERENCES


Positive and negative thoughts have played an important role in healthy and unhealthy behaviors (Beck, 1967 and Ellis 1973). Beck and Ellis have demonstrated that thoughts influenced emotions and behaviors. The purpose of therapy was to change negative thoughts to positive thoughts that transformed cognitions, emotions, physiology and behaviors (Beck 1967, 1976, 1979 and 1985 and Ellis 1973, 1975 and 1977.)

Based on the research of Polivy (1981), that induced and role played emotional states, which produced significant results, Murray, Murray and Murray (2008) argued in a theoretical article that inductions and role playing of depression, anxiety, aggression and assertiveness were possible. Murray, et. al. (2008) expanded the argument by using the research of Schacter, (1964), Sapolsky, (1994) and Seligman (1990). Incites from these various authors suggested that emotional role playing and emotional inductions engaged the totality of the person. Emotional inductions and emotional role playing impacted cognitions, because the process began at a cognitive level. However, the cognitive engagement produced changes in the limbic system that carried over into physiological responses. Murray, Murray and Murray (2008) stated, “The role playing behaviors flowed out from the thoughts, physical arousal and the emotional correlates.”

In discussing Rational-Emotive Therapy, Ellis (1973) pointed out that beliefs and cognitions had an emotionalized output which produced experiences of anxiousness, worthlessness and depression. He elaborated that the therapist started intervention with the recognition of the emotions but quickly attacked the irrational beliefs and cognitions. Through a change in cognitions from illogical thoughts to healthy positive cognitions, the individual was able to create a new positive emotional climate and generate productive thoughts. Ellis (1977) demonstrated that the emotional and physiological state of anger resulted in multiple negative thoughts. These negative cognitions were directed toward other people and were combined with verbal blaming and a physical condition of hostility.

Sapolsky (1994), contributed significant physiological research that indicated that high levels of aggression and prolonged aggression correlated with serious heart disease. These clinical and research findings strongly suggested that negative cognitions were related to stress and physiological decline.

In analyzing the condition of depression, Beck (1997) described the outcomes from negative and self-defeating thinking. These thoughts generated negative automatic feelings and subsequently unhealthy behaviors. In further descriptions, Beck (1997), showed clinically that dysfunctional negative thoughts impacted the emotions and resulted in feelings of sadness, loneliness and anxiousness. The goal of therapy was to change the negative cognitions and produce an environment of positive thoughts, emotions and behaviors.

Seligman (1990), clearly pointed out the negative consequences that resulted from adversity which produced automatic negative thoughts. These negative thoughts stimulated negative feelings and resulted in the production of negative behavioral outcomes. Seligman (1975 &1990) strongly argued that the emotions, cognitions, physiological responses and behaviors were interconnected. Unhealthy patterns in one domain produced negative consequences in the other systems and healthy responses generated a climate for positive growth, development and cognitions. In his emphasis on optimism, he expected the individual to challenge and change his negative thoughts to more positive visions of life. Seligman
(1990) demanded that the individual attack and challenge the negative automatic thoughts and negative belief systems.

Building upon the clinical, therapeutic and theoretical insights, Murray, Murray and Murray (2009) performed two laboratory studies that explored the impact of induced role playing e.g., depression, anxiety, anger and assertiveness. The study examined the influence of these manipulations on negative or positive thoughts and anxiety. In the first experiment, the role played inductions were crossed with the manipulative condition of classical music from Mozart and the dependent variable was positive and negative thinking. In the second experiment, the four manipulations were contrasted with a manipulation of silence (sitting alone) and an aversive frustrating role playing condition. The second study used the Welch Anxiety Scale as the dependent variable.

The first experiment showed significant levels of negative thinking in the depressed and aggressive conditions. However, males in the in the assertive condition and males and females in the Classical Music condition expressed significant levels of positive thoughts. The second experiment produced findings that indicated role playing an aversive frustrating experience significantly reduced anxiety, while sitting alone in silence and induced anxiety significantly increased anxiety.

Murray and Murray (2009) found with the same design that role playing an aversive frustrating experience and aggression resulted in significantly decreased depression on the Subjective Depression Scale from the MMPI. On the other hand, sitting alone silently and induced anxiety significantly increased depression. Rotter’s Locus of Control Scale was the other dependent variable. An aversive role playing condition and induced assertiveness produced a pattern of an Internal Locus of control, while induced anxiety and induced depression reflected greater External Locus of Control (Murray & Murray, 2009).

These various experimental studies generated many consistent findings. The conditions of sitting alone in silence and induced anxiety increased anxiety and depression. Induced anxiety and induced depression showed a pattern of increased External Locus of Control. Finally, induced depression and induced aggression produced a significant number of negative thoughts.

In contrast to these unhealthy outcomes, role playing an aversive frustrating experience reduced anxiety and depression. Induced aggression also significantly lowered the response of depression. The role playing of an aversive frustrating experience and induced assertiveness created an atmosphere that significantly increased the likelihood of an Internal Locus of Control. Significant levels of positive thoughts were generated by males in the induced assertive condition and males and females in the classical music condition. All these results supported Ellis (1973, 1975, and 1977), Beck, (1967, 1976, 1979 and 1985) and Seligman (1975 and 1990).

Based upon the previous laboratory experimental research, Puthoff-Murray and Murray (2010), designed two field experiments to test out the findings from prior research. In this new design, they realized that role playing an aversive frustrating situation was not possible, because this condition applied to an academic environment in which students lost money and academic credits. The new studies kept the conditions of induced depression, anxiety, aggression, assertiveness and sitting alone in silence. The Mozart classical music condition was also included in the manipulations. Sachs (2008) showed the importance of music for healthy behaviors and life enjoyment. With this clinical data supporting the importance of music, the new field experiments examined the impact of other musical forms on automatic thoughts. The expanded musical conditions were Wagner, Classical Music, Rap and Heavy Metal.

These manipulations used the auditory pathways in the brain and in some manipulations demanded the engagement of visual memory neurons. Ramachandran (2011), a neuroscientist, described the multiple interactions between the parietal, temporal and occipital lobes of the cerebral cortex. These activations triggered the higher order functions of the angular gyrus and supra marginal gyrus and all these pathways stimulated the amygdala in the limbic system. If these stimuli were meaningful then the amygdala activated the hypothalamus which ultimately caused the autonomic system to respond. The hypothesis for these field studies expects that the manipulations activate these complex systems of the human body and produce differential response in relationship to positive and negative thoughts.
The two field studies will examine two groups of subjects. The studies will manipulate 18 to 30 year olds and 31 to 49 year olds to determine how these two groups compare with each other. Will these two groups respond in a similar manner and will their responses support previous findings from laboratory research?

**METHOD For Field Study I.**

Five researchers collected data on subjects between the ages of 18 and 30 years of age. Each researcher was to manipulate 18 females and 18 males. The subjects were 88 females and 83 males from the county of Ashtabula. Each manipulated condition had 17 to 22 subjects. Prior to the manipulations, the conditions were randomly assigned for this field study. The subjects in the study had an average age of 22.38 years and the various manipulated groups ranged in age from 20 years to 24 years.

The five researchers, who were from an undergraduate research design course, collected data on 171 subjects. The randomly assigned manipulations were all prerecorded. A female voice performed the seven minute inductions and the silence manipulation was blank for seven minutes. Each musical manipulation was recorded for seven minutes. Some researchers failed to collect data for some subjects in each of the following conditions: female assertiveness, female silence, female Mozart, male depression, male anxiety, male Heavy Metal and male anger.

A 9 x 2 factorial design was used. The manipulations consisted of the four induced attitudes and the condition of silence (sitting alone for seven minutes). The music conditions were Mozart, Wagner, Heavy Metal and Rap. All inductions were performed within a seven minute time period.

**METHOD For Field Study II**

The subjects were 106 females and 106 males from the county of Ashtabula. Each manipulated condition had 23 or 24 subjects. Prior to the manipulations, the conditions were randomly assigned for this field study. The subjects in the study had an average age of 38 years and the various manipulated groups ranged in age from 34 years of age to 43 years of age. The 12 researchers, who were from an undergraduate research design course, collected data on 212 subjects. The randomly assigned manipulations were all prerecorded. A female voice performed inductions and the silence manipulation was blank for seven minutes. Each musical manipulation was recorded for seven minutes. Some researchers failed to collect data for one subject in each of the following conditions: male assertiveness, female silence, female depression and male anger.

A 9 x 2 Factorial design was used. The manipulations consisted of the four induced attitudes and the condition of silence (sitting alone for seven minutes). The music conditions were Mozart, Wagner, Heavy Metal and Rap.

**Manipulations for the Field Studies**

*Music Selection for Conditions CD*

**Track 2: Classical**
- Artist: Wagner
- Album: Overtures & Highlights
- Song: Die Meistersinger von Numberg – Overture

**Track 4: Classical**
- Artist: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- Album: The Jupiter Symphony Violin Concerto
- Song: Adagio – Violin Concerto No. 3 G-Major

**Track 6: Heavy Metal**
- Artist: Megadeth
- Album: Rust in Peace
- Song: Take No Prisoners

**Track 7: Rap**
- Artist: NWA
- Album: Straight Outta Compton
- Song: Something Like That
The manipulated and induced attitudes were anxiety, depression, assertiveness and anger. Anxiety was induced through seven statements from Beck’s (1976) checklist, which through factor analysis was the best predictor of anxiety. Depression was induced through seven statements from Beck’s checklist, which through factor analysis was the best predictors of depression. Anger was induced through seven statements from Ellis’s (1977) *Anger: How to Live With It*. Assertiveness was induced through seven statements from Lang and Jukerbowski (1976) *Responsible Assertive Behaviors*.

The induction procedure was read three times for seven minutes by a female coach, while the subject concentrated on the seven attitude statements. Then the coach said, “as part of our study, you are asked to seriously role play your cognition experiences. You are asked to role-play not a character but an emotion reflected in some cognitive attitudes. The emotions expressed by these attitudes are the following conditions.” At this time the appropriate cognitions are read to the subject. These emotions are listed below under depression, anxiety, anger, and assertiveness. The female coach was prerecorded to create a consistent manipulation.

The coach continued to read, “to help put you in touch with that emotion, we will do an exercise. Sit back, close your eyes and relax. Remember a time when you were feeling (appropriate cognitions will again be read to the subject.) “ Picture a time in your mind when that emotion was the strongest. Remember your surroundings. Were you inside or outside? (If outside, see * below.) Remember the specifics of your surroundings. If you were inside, remember the room; the furniture; the walls. Did the walls have wallpaper or paint? Can you remember the pattern or color? Were you standing or sitting? Picture the people that were with you. Focus on one of your senses. Do you remember any specific smells, sounds, sights, or something associated with touch at the time you were (appropriate cognitions will be repeated)?”

*”If you were outside, picture your surroundings. Were you with any people? Remember who was with you. Remember specific things. Standing or sitting. Focus on one of your senses that you associate with the event.”

The following statements are the cognitions for the individual emotions.

**INDUCTION PROCEDURES**

The seven-minute induction procedure was read three times by the female coach.

*Depression:*
I’m worthless.
I’m not worthy of other people’s attention or affection.
I’ll never be as good as other people are.
I’m a social failure.
I don’t deserve to be loved.
People don’t respect me anymore.
I will never overcome my problems. (Beck 1987)

*Anxiety:*
What if I get sick and become an invalid?
I’m going to be injured.
What if no one reached me in time to help?
I might be trapped.
I am not a healthy person.
I’m going to have an accident.
There’s something very wrong with me. (Beck, 1987)

*Anger:*
How awful for anyone to have treated me so unfairly.
I can’t stand anyone treating me in such an irresponsible and unjust manner.
You should not, must not behave that way toward me.
Nothing ever works out the way I want it to.
Life is always unfair to me – as it shouldn’t be.
Other people must treat everyone, but especially me, in a fair and considerate manner.
Things must go the way I would like them to go because I need what I want. Life is awful, horrible and terrible when I don’t get what I want. (Ellis, 1977)

Assertiveness:
Calm, just continue to relax, as long as I keep cool, I’m in control.
Just roll with the punches.
Don’t get bent out of shape.
You don’t need to prove yourself.
There is no point in getting mad.
Don’t make more out of this than you have to.
I’m not going to let him get to me.

The dependent variable was the measurement of positive/neutral and negative thoughts. After the subjects experienced one of the nine manipulations, they were asked to write down five automatic thoughts. Many subjects did not write down five automatic responses. It was hypothesized that the manipulations had the potential to produce differential responses.

**FINDINGS For Field Study I.**

This analysis examined the nine conditions crossed with sex of subject to determine main effects and potential interaction effects. The Chi Square for negative thoughts was 87, df 8, p .01. These data were significant beyond the probability level. These data showed main effects for anxiety, depression and anger in that these conditions have multiple and significant negative thoughts and no sexual differences. For females, the Silence Condition (sitting alone) and the Heavy Metal condition produced a significant number of negative thoughts. The musical conditions of Wagner and Mozart displayed few negative thoughts and no sexual differences. For males in the Assertive and Heavy Metal conditions, they expressed very few negative thoughts. Negative thoughts were few for females in the Rap condition.

The positive and neutral thoughts had a Chi Square of 89, df 8 and were significant beyond the .01 level. When positive and neutral thoughts were examined, the findings indicated a main effect for classical music in that the Wagner and Mozart conditions produced high levels of positive thoughts with no sexual difference. In contrast, males in the Assertive condition and females in the Rap condition generated a high degree of positive thinking. The conditions of Anxiety, Depression and Anger showed very few positive and neutral thoughts and these data indicated no sexual differences. In the Silence Condition (sitting alone), females expressed few positive or neutral thoughts. The data, that reported the thoughts patterns, are found in Table 1.

**FINDINGS For Field Study II**

The Chi Square for the 9 X 2 factorial design was 105.7, df 8, p.01. These data indicated significance beyond the .01 level. These data showed significant numbers of negative thoughts for females and males in the conditions of anxiety, silence (sitting alone) and anger.

The data also showed few negative thoughts for the classical music conditions of Wagner and Mozart. For males, the assertive condition produced significantly fewer negative thoughts. Another significant finding indicated that males in the Heavy Metal condition had very few negative thoughts.

Again, the data concerning positive/neutral thoughts were analyzed by condition and sex of subject. The Chi Square for these data was highly significant beyond the .01 level with a score of 104.5. The classical music conditions of Wagner and Mozart produced a significant level of positive/neutral thoughts.

In contrast to these findings, the conditions of Silence (sitting alone), Anger and Anxiety had significantly fewer positive/neutral thoughts for both females and males. For females in the Rap and Heavy Metal conditions, the data showed significantly fewer positive and neutral thoughts.

These data are reported in Table 2.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The present research results add support for the models of Ellis (1973, 1975 and 1977), Seligman (1975 and 1990) and Beck, (1975, 1979 and 1985) in that various induced emotional and cognitive manipulations can cause different cognitive responses. Music and induced emotional states produce different cognitive responses for subjects based upon gender, age and manipulative conditions.
The two field studies have some similar results. Both studies show that induced anxiety and anger produces a significant level of negative thoughts, while the classical music of Mozart and Wagner generates significant amounts of positive/neutral thoughts. These findings support the previous research pertaining to anger and Mozart’s music which respectively showed high levels of negative thoughts and positive thoughts, (Murray and Murray, 2009).

The findings about anxiety also contributed to the previous laboratory research that finds induced anxiety caused increased depression and an External Locus of Control, (Murray, Murray and Murray 2009 and Murray and Murray 2009). The findings about anxiety also contributed to the previous laboratory research that finds induced anxiety caused increased depression and an External Locus of Control, (Murray, Murray and Murray 2009 and Murray and Murray 2009). The laboratory research is the result of manipulations with college freshman and sophomores, who reflect the younger sample in this study. These data suggest that a younger sample may be more suggestible to a depression manipulation.

In the present studies, Silence (sitting alone) generates many negative thoughts for males and females in the 30 something group. However, in the younger group, the females respond with multiple negative thoughts but not the males. These data add support to the previous laboratory research that shows that Silence (sitting alone) causes an increase in anxiety and depression, (Murray, Murray and Murray, 2009 and Murray and Murray 2009).

Another inconsistent result is the finding pertaining to induced assertiveness in that younger males generate significantly more positive and neutral thoughts. However, these findings apply to both females and males in the older group. Previous laboratory research shows that males in the Assertive condition produced more positive thinking, (Murray, Murray and Murray, 2009).

The final results from these two field studies suggest a possible cohort effect in that younger females in the Rap condition and older males in the Heavy Metal condition respond with significant numbers of positive/neutral thoughts.

Obviously, these results have many implications for therapy and healthy behaviors in that Assertiveness Training and Classical Music can create positive outcomes. The other side of the picture raises another clinical perspective. If a seven minute induction of anxiety, anger and depression can cause significant levels of negative thoughts then what is the impact of long hours of negative thinking?

These various pieces of research provide a mosaic that indicates the need for positive life experiences. Peoples’ cognitions impact the total system and influence emotions, physiology and behaviors. An environment of positive thoughts creates a climate for a healthy lifestyle and wellbeing.
REFERENCES


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Educational Reform in American Public Education:
Assisted Suicide

James E. Nowlin
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We trained hard, but every time we were beginning to form up, we would be reorganized. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing. And what a wonderful method it can be for creating an illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency, and demoralization.

Petronious Arbiter 210 B.C.

A Brief History of Reform: Magical Illusions

Reform movements have existed since the beginnings of public education in America. Virtually every one of these reform movements has been characterized by visionary educational leaders prompted by noble purpose. As we shall presently see, the reform list is long, both in terms of the number of reforms and the timeframe covered by these reforms. With such a long history of reform behind us, should we not be reaping some benefits from these noble efforts? Based on even the most cursory examination of education in America today, it seems clear that the educational promised land still eludes us. This paper will attempt to examine some of the more conspicuous reforms, and briefly analyze the reasons for the success or failure of these movements.

First, a brief history of educational reform: One can trace educational reform in America to mid-seventeenth century Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Law of 1642 was the earliest colonial law governing education. The framers of this law were reformers in the truest sense because they looked at early colonial ills and decided that education would be the best institution with which to address these problems. This early reform established something of a pattern that has been followed to the present time. The notion of using the educational process to address all kinds of national ills has proven itself to be a “siren song” that has been all but irresistible throughout our country’s history. In 1642, education was deemed essential for maintaining religious piety and social stability. Put simply, the purpose of reform was to insure that reading and writing would be taught throughout the commonwealth to insure that people could read the Bible, become good workers, and be obedient to the laws of society. In a thoroughly modern sounding admonition, the law also questioned whether or not parents were doing their jobs properly to insure that the children would understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of the country (Spring, 1986).

Five years later in 1647, apparently laboring under the conviction that evil had not been entirely eliminated by the Massachusetts Law of 1642 and its attempt at pious educational reform, the good citizens of Massachusetts passed the Old Deluder Satan Law. The gist of this reform seems to have been the notion that Satan was still winning despite the earlier 1642 law. Therefore more stern measures were surely in order. This law/reform stated that every community with fifty or more families must provide instruction in reading and writing, and every community with one hundred or more families must establish a formal grammar school (Spring, 1986). This reform made clear, possibly even to Satan, that education was the key to human success in this world and the one to follow.

It should be noted that even at this early date that educational reform was not without its detractors. There were those who claimed to see less noble purposes in such reform. In a book written in 1692, Robert Molesworth saw early educational reforms less in terms of increasing religious piety and more as attempts to foster less altruistic political agendas. Instead of deluding Satan, he saw such reforms as attempts to link education and religion for the sole purpose of creating submissive citizens who would be good at blind obedience to the state and little else. “By making government appear divine in origin,
religiously controlled education could teach obedience to government as if it were obedience to divine authority.” (Spring, 1986, p.15) Molesworth stated that such education taught, “that the People ought to pay an Absolute Obedience to a limited government; fall down and worship the Work of their own Hands, as if dropt from Heaven.” (Spring, 1986, p15) Molesworth saw such reform as “idol worship” that deludes the reformers and the system to be reformed more than Satan.

Reforms from the period of the American Revolution seemed to move away from religious ideas and toward governmental aggrandizement. The reforms of Benjamin Rush typify the spirit if these reforms. Rush strongly encouraged public schools to “impose” a system of values that could create “cogs” that would effectively fit into the great and beneficent governmental machine (Spring, 1986). “I consider it…possible to convert men into republican machines. This must be done if we expect them to perform their parts properly in the great machine of the government of the state” (Rudolph, 1965, p.5). Rush’s reform seemed to see the educational system as being superior to the family, especially relating to civic matters. The underlying motive of this reform was to subordinate the students to the power of the teacher and the school, thereby preparing them to obey the laws of government (Spring, 1986).

In stark contrast to the almost Machiavellian reforms of Rush, Thomas Jefferson proposed reforms of a more rational nature. In 1779, Jefferson attempted to get his Bill for the more General Diffusion of Knowledge passed into law. Although this bill was never passed, it still represented an attempt at educational reform. Jefferson believed that government had little place in education. He thought that the state had only one educational role; it was to be the guarantor of a free (public) education for at least three years. Otherwise, he seemed to recommend a nonintervention role for government. Unlike Rush or the early Massachusetts reforms, Jefferson did not believe that schools should try to impose political values or mold virtuous character. He espoused the notion that education should give the average citizen the tools of reading and writing. With that simple task accomplished, Jefferson believed that political beliefs would then be formed through the exercise of reason. Jefferson’s reform, not attempted in his own time and not attempted since, stated that education would automatically contribute to the balance of freedom and order because it would give people basic intellectual tools, a knowledge of history, and the ability, through reason, to work out their own happiness and morality (Spring, 1986).

As the eighteenth century turned into the nineteenth century, educational reform began to come into its own. The primary reason for this is the fact that the industrial revolution began in earnest and brought with it a mixed bag of benefits and concomitant woes. This period of reform could best be characterized as the “Save our Society” phase of educational reform. While on one hand the industrial revolution produced jobs and wealth for some, on the other hand it brought poverty to others. The success of the “factory model” that served as the cornerstone of the industrial revolution served as irresistible temptation for the educational reformers of this period. This factory system seemed so successful in the realm of business that it seemed a matter if common sense to adopt the model to the field of education. One such reformer was the Englishman Joseph Lancaster.

His reforms, called the Lancasterian System, were ostensibly aimed at helping the poor children of the cities through the development of “charity schools” which would emphasize the process of schooling as a means of developing moral character and protecting children from industrial exploitation. Unfortunately the intent of the reform was not nearly as pervasive, successful, or long lasting as the method which was used to carry it out. Regardless of the noble purpose stated in the Lancasterian System, what it really accomplished was the attempt to mold schools into a factory model. It stressed lockstep regimentation, and it celebrated submission, order, and industriousness. This system never really “caught on” in England. (Perhaps the English populace took heed of the poet Robert Burns’ warning engraved in the dust of one of England’s earliest industrial edifices, “We can nae heare to view yar warks/ In hopes to be mair wise/ But only, lest we gang to Hell/It may be nae surprise” (Clark, 1969,p.321). This system did find a home in America though, especially in New York City. It was such a success that Joseph Lancaster moved to America to shepherd his reform movement as it grew alongside and became indistinguishable from the industrial revolution. It seems ironic that an educational reform movement that had its methodological basis on the very same industrial model that was in large part, the cause of the ills that the reform movement sought to address could have been so successful. However, the movement did thrive until the
untimely demise of its founder; Joseph Lancaster was killed in 1838. In a final irony, he was run down by a horse carriage after inspecting one of his “Lancasterian Schools” (Spring, 1986). There is probably a message here for future “would-be reformers”, and the temptation to point out is almost irresistible.

As is often the case historically with educational reform, one reform movement would produce an opposition reform. In some ways the Yale Report of 1828 was a reactionary reform to the Lancasterian reforms. Though one reform dealt with pre-college schooling (Lancasterian System) and the other with university schooling (the Yale Report), they exist as polarities in the general field of reform. The Yale Report was an attempt to return education to more classical foundations. The mechanistic approach of Lancaster and other industrial reformers was seen as being useful for automatons but not for human beings. A closer examination of The Yale Report shows that what these reformers really objected to was the methods of the industrial reformers. The actual intent of both reform movements was not much different.

Charity Schools [of the Lancasterian mode] sought moral development through classroom management and instruction that replicated family government...whereas the Yale Report sought to use residential colleges for the same purpose. In either case, however, education was being used to shape the moral character of the individual for social purposes. (Spring, 1986, p.65)

Regardless of the superficial antipathy (methodological) between the two movements, they were very similar in their fundamental proposals.

The 1830s provided something of a benchmark for educational reform. This is the era of the Common School Movement reforms zealously guided with almost religious fervor by Horace Mann. This movement had many components, but it was guided by one primary purpose. The common school movement was designed to search for and produce social salvation. This movement, the Progressive reform movement of the late nineteenth century, which was a natural outgrowth of common schooling, and the Scientific Management reforms of the early twentieth century exert more influence on modern education that any other reforms. Mann, “preached” that education should inculcate piety, justice, chastity, moderation, benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, and temperance and should be based on other such virtues as found in the Bible. Additionally, the school should be responsible for disseminating those articles of republican faith that were approved of by all sensible, judicious, patriotic, and genuine republicans. These pious republican beliefs would form the common bond for our society (Spring, 1986).

Mann further stated that education, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the greatest equalizer of the conditions of men. It is the balance-wheel of social machinery (Spring, 1986). In short, it seems that the Common School Movement saw education as a replacement for parents, churches, and government. Schools were then to be all things for all people. This idea of education as the savior of society holds great weight in modern public education. The Progressive reform movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries merely expanded on this trend of using schools to improve the lives of individuals and society by adding vocational and health related curricular issues to the list of “virtues” preached by Mann.

The early part of the twentieth century ushered in educational reforms advocating Scientific Management. These reforms can be referred to as a cult of efficiency. The reforms updated the pure factory model of the Lancasterian system to a more modern business paradigm. It was believed that the almost heavenly ideals of the common school and progressive movement could be attained only if schools were ordered with business-like efficiency. Obviously, with so much to accomplish in such diverse areas as chastity, republicanism, sobriety, etc., the schools must run with this machine-like efficiency in order to have time to attend to all these goals.

The guiding light of this particular educational reform was Frederick Winslow Taylor. This is surprising in that Taylor was not an educator, and he had little knowledge of the field of education. He was a businessman who worshipped at the altar of standardization and who believed that the efficiency epiphany he received at this altar could be transferred to education. There are four fundamental concerns of “Taylorism”, as it has come to be called. First, there was the conviction that productive knowledge must be gathered. This knowledge was only considered productive if it had some empirical base and only
if it increased production. All other forms of knowledge were considered superfluous. In business, productive knowledge could be exemplified by cost/benefit ratio analyses. In education, such productive knowledge is indicated by graduation rates or standardized test scores or average daily attendance (the basis for much public school funding). Second, Taylor advocated a separation of planning and execution. Management would remove “ownership” from the master craftsman by taking total charge of the planning. The plan is devised by the administration and given to the teachers and students who are expected to assiduously execute it. The practical educational result of this idea is textbooks and curricula chosen by manager appointed administrative committees rather than by teachers. Third, Taylor advocated detailed managerial control of the labor process. It was deemed “inefficient for workers/teachers to maintain their own individual ways of doing things”. Efficiency demanded standardization and standardization demanded an end to individual initiative and creativity. Finally, Taylor proposed that the energy that could keep this machine running smoothly could be supplied through a process of wage incentives. This promise and lure is very much a part of the educational system. One does not need a statistical study to be able to say with some assurance that the primary motivating force for most students is the attainment of a job upon completion of formal schooling. This notion is the quintessential wage incentive and reinforces the negative sense of vocationalism that is rampant in modern education (Ewens, 1984).

Taylor’s reform took hold very quickly in American education. A survey of doctoral dissertations in educational administration completed between 1910 and 1935, the time when “Taylorism” began its influence, reveals that there were 290 dissertations completed. Fifty-five of these were on fiscal administration, thirty-four on business administration, twenty-nine on pupil personnel, twenty-nine on personnel management, and twenty-four on legal provisions. The remainder dealt with educational organization, building management, and equipment (Spring, 1986). In this twenty-five year period not one educational administration dissertation dealt with substantive issues of the teaching and learning process. One suspects that “Taylorism” is firmly entrenched in modern education, and that these administrative trends continue.

Educational reform in post-World War Two America ushers in the modern era of reform. One of the first of these reforms was the Conant Report by James B. Conant. Conant recommended that at least one-half of a student’s education be composed of a core education consisting of four years English, three or four years of social sciences, one year of math, and one year of science. The remaining one-half of the student’s education would be taken up by electives based on the student’s interests and career goals. Furthermore, Conant recommended improved career guidance and counseling, more individual instruction, homogenous subject matter ability grouping, and diversified career and vocational programs. Conant believed that school courses should reflect the job market of local communities. Conant’s emphasis on the vocational aspects of public education is a direct result of Taylor’s wage incentive theory (Gutek, 1986).

The arrival of the Russian bear speeding across the skies on the wings of sputnik brought the reforms of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA). This frightening period can best be characterized as the “Save our Nation” phase in educational reform. The NDEA reforms were based on two overriding principles: national security required the fullest development of the minds and technical skills of American students, and the national interest required federal assistance (money) to help foster those educational programs that were important to national defense (Gutek, 1986). This new development in educational reform, the idea that reform could be “bought”, gained instant popularity that continues to this day.

The 1980’s and 90’s have been of an era of true reform proliferation. One can hardly walk through this decade and a half without virtually tripping over one reform or another. In general, these reforms offer little that is new. They contain many of the same themes that were developed by earlier reform attempts. The only new dimension of these reforms seems to be the spirit in which they were offered. Many of these reforms were couched in language that was sinister and threatening. The notion was advanced that if these reforms were not implemented some catastrophic consequences would soon follow. These implied catastrophes were generally either military or economic (or both) in nature. This sinister nature probably
logically follows from an NDEA act that first coupled national survival with adequate funding. The logic of the argument proceeds as follows: America is being threatened (externally or internally) - these threats can be met through education for the nation’s sake - therefore, we must have more money to improve education and provide for a strong nation.

Examples of these reform efforts abound. The Action for Excellence Task Force for Economic Growth advocated a redefinition of basic skills to meet the technologically sophisticated workplace of the future. They also advocated educational partnership between business and schools to improve the employability of American youth (Gutek, 1986). The Education for the 21st Century reform warned that the quality of our manufactured goods, our position in world trade, our leadership in research and development, and our standard of living were being challenged (Gutek, 1986). The report stated that, “prepared citizens…are required for the operation of the nation’s essential industries and services….and for military service” (Gutek, 1986, p.325).

Without question, the reform movement bearings the loudest rattling sabers was the 1983 report known as A Nation at Risk. The tenor of the report is captured in the statement that,

…..the educational foundations of our society are being eroded by a rising tide of the mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and as a people. If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exist today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen ourselves….. We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral disarmament (Gutek, 1986, p.339).

The report went on to make specific recommendations that would keep the Visigoths outside the gates a bit longer. It recommended five “new” basics: four years of English, three years of math, three years of science, three years of social studies, and one-half year of computer science. If further recommended that universities adopt more rigorous admission procedures and teach classes with measurable standards. It also recommended that both the school day and the school year be lengthened (Gutek, 1986). Twenty-seven years ago this report generated huge amounts of federal funding for education. We await the benefits if this government largess.

There were two reform proposals of the 1980s that warrant mention because they did not follow the almost hysterical reforms of the period. The Carnegie Report was almost “Jeffersonian” in the simplicity of its proposals. First, it advocated the development of critical thinking and effective communication through the mastery of language. Second, the report argued that students should learn about themselves, their human heritage, and the interdependent world through core curriculum based on consequential and common human experiences. Third, the suggestion was offered that work preparation could best be attained through the above core curriculum augmented by an elective program designed to develop individual aptitudes and interests. Finally, the report, in a bit of altruism rarely seen in educational reform, encouraged schools to develop a sense of civic obligation through community services (Gutek, 1986).

The 1984 reform attempt known as Horace’s Compromise: The Sizer Report also moved against the tide of reform offered in inflammatory rhetoric. This report is characterized by three main principles: the idea that we disrespect our adolescents by overestimating their vulnerability and inexperience, thereby producing unacceptably low school standards; the idea that graduation should be a result of students’ meeting mastery standards rather than the simple accumulation of credits from unrelated subjects; and the final notion that curricula and instruction should stress universal human concepts and effective modes of inquiry rather than extensively covering detailed information of isolated subjects. (Gutek, 1986).

The Bush I/Clinton/ Bush II administrations (in terms of educational reform, these administrations are indistinguishable) began a program of reform in 1989. This era of education reform can best be characterized as the “Save Our Economy” phase. This program was begun by President G.H. Bush I. He gathered together the finest educational minds in America (the nation’s governors) and the result was educational reform called America 2000. Because of serious educational questions (curiously enough raised by democrats who controlled both houses of congress) this bill failed. However, the advent of the Clinton presidency addressed these serious questions through the insightful process of convincing congress that he too was a democrat and by making substantial changes to the bill (the name was
changed from *America 2000* to *Goals 2000*). Essentially, this was the only change to the Bush proposals. This package of educational legislative reform was passed in March of 1994.

The goals aim sky high:
- The U.S. will lead the world in math and science achievement.
- Graduation rates will increase to 90 percent or better.
- All children will start school ready to learn, leave school better equipped for life and work.
- Every will be a literate participant in citizenship.
- All schools will be safe and drug free.
- Teachers will be well-trained.
- Parents and schools will join hands for children’s well-being


Additionally, this law encouraged every American business to be involved in the process of enhancing the connection between education and work ( *Goals 2000: America’s Moon Walk*, 1994 ). The above concepts form the crux of *Goals 2000*. Congress has set aside $87.4 million to attain these goals. This package of reforms represents something of a summation of all previous reforms in that it incorporates many of the unsuccessful ideas generated in the past reform attempts. With Bush II and *No Child Left Behind*, we move into the most onerous phase of education reform as the “Save Our Economy” theme sadly morphs into the “Save Our Corporations” phase.

**Common Threads: The Magic Goes Away**

American educational reform efforts seem to prove that both the Bible and Shakespeare were right; there really is nothing new under the sun. A superficial examination of reform in this country would indicate wide ranging reform goals. These goals have run a huge gamut covering such things as escaping Satan, finding God, producing good citizens, competing in global the marketplace, staying ahead of the Russians, curing societal ills, free children from factory labor, and advancing social and political utopias. However, a more analytical examination of most past reforms indicates that there have been only four main themes in the efforts. The initial theme was the salvation of one’s soul. The idea of the separation of church and state generally moved America away from these reforms early in the nation’s history (though in true pendulum fashion, we may be seeing a return to this theme from the so-called “religious rights”).

The second theme has been the notion of the salvation of society. This theme has proven to be an enduring one and can be found in almost all reforms, past and present. This same enduring quality can also be found in the third theme. This theme can be summarized as the salvation of one’s nation and the concomitant theme of the salvation of one’s economy!

Despite the differing rhetoric, despite the smoke and mirrors, despite the introduction of much heat and little light, most American reforms have been characterized by these four themes. The most prominent differences in the reform efforts have been procedural rather than substantive. The intent of most reforms has been very similar; the methods of enacting these reforms have provided most of the so-called differences. Also, most past reforms have been presented to the public in the same general format. This format has taken something of an “if this, then that” approach. For example: the Massachusetts Puritans stated the if the *Law of 1642* and the *Old Deluder Satan Act* were not followed then everyone would go to hell; Mann promised that if the proposals of the common schools were enacted then society would go to heaven; *A Nation at Risk* stated that if its proposals were not heeded then the nation would go to hell. Certainly these themes are not inherently “bad”. Why then have we, as a nation, had so many reform movements in education and so little education reform?

**Educational Reform: Assisted Suicide**

Educational reform in this country has had very little success, by any standard, for one simple, glaring reason. Almost universally, we in this nation have confused means with ends in our educational reform attempts. In our search for reform, we seem to mirror Schopenhauer’s comment that we seem eternally condemned to vacillate between the two extremes of want and boredom (Frankl, 1975). We are dissatisfied with some component of life (social, economic, or political). We recognize this dissatisfaction as a felt want/need. We then attempt to instigate some educational reform to remedy this need. When a child sees a toy on television, he/she is apt to see this toy as the culminating reason for
his/her life. This felt need becomes all encompassing to the child. With a child’s reasoning, he/she comes
to feel that life would be unbearable without this toy. ( The actual statement by the child would be
something along the lines of “ if I had that, all would be well, but without that I will die” - parents of
small children will quickly recognize this line of reasoning.) However when this want is met ( the child
receives the toy), he/she quickly tires of it and casts it aside and begins a new campaign for yet a newer
toy on the market. The old toy just did not fill the need as the child originally supposed, but surely the
next toy will. We are like children in that we believe so strongly that all will be well educationally if we
have some social or political need met. But when we institute reform to get this need met and we receive
our “toy”, we, like the child, realize that this one just doesn’t suffice either. We are bored with it. We put
it aside and await the next epiphany of reform awaiting on the horizon, convinced that the next one will
be the one that fills our need. And so the cycle of disappointment continues.

Most past attempts at educational reform have resulted in an educational system that is worse off than
before the advent of the reform. The reform of “Taylorism” with its emphasis on efficiency has literately
promoted the idea that our schools are businesses which can be “sold” to the highest bidder. We see a
result of this thinking in Hartford, Connecticut. In September of 1994, this entire public school system
was “sold” to the private business firm of Education Alternatives, Inc.. This business was responsible for
the education of 25,000 Connecticut school children. The company was to pay all bills, deal with the
curriculum with the notion of proving the efficacy of the company by improving test scores, and be
responsible for hiring and firing school personnel ( Private firms to run schools, 1994). When a simple
means to an end, efficiency, is mistakenly treated as the end itself, the result can only be a fiasco such as
the one in Connecticut.

The reform of the NDEA treated national security and educational funding as two sides of the same
reform coin, but once again, means were confused with ends. The result of this particular policy has been
educational institutions that have been more concerned with money than with education. “It is sad but true
when an institution determines to do something [ stress the teaching of math and science in case of
schools and the NDEA] in order to get more money it must lose its soul, and frequently does not get the
money” (Hutchins, 1936, p.4).

Those reform movements which aimed at improving society and individual living conditions ( Common
School Movement, Progressivism, Action for Excellence, and Education for the 21st Century)
have also confused means with ends. These reforms have produced the idea that schools must be all
tings to all people; they must educate the whole man. Of all the nonsensical notions inspired by
misguided educational reform, this is surely the most meaningless. Is it really the task of education to
transform the whole infant into the whole adult? Must education do what the family, church, state,
ecomic sector and other institutions were designed to do? “ Are we compelled to assume that students
can learn nothing from life or that they have led no life before coming to us and lead none after they
leave” (Hutchins, 1943, p.37)? Rather than being all things to all students, “is it too much to say that if
we can teach our students to lead the life of reason we shall do all that can be expected of us and do at the
same time the best thing that can be done for the whole man” (Hutchins, 1943, p.37)? The spirit of
educational reform that confuses means such as social, economic, and national stability, as ends in
themselves is the spirit that has our educational system collapsing about us, “and this spirit offers us
nothing but gold, with which we cannot buy salvation” (Hutchins, 1943, p.43)

With means confused as ends, we miss the great problems of our time and send education into non-
education related territory that dooms it to mediocrity if not absolute failure. The great problems of our
time are moral, intellectual, and spiritual not social, economic, nor governmental. When we err in our
understanding of the nature of the problems that beset us, we produce paradoxes that defy solution. We
have a superfluity of economic goods and yet many of our fellows sink into poverty. We have a multitude
of gadgets, but we are no more happy than before the advent of these often cumbersome gadgets. We
have a declining death rate, but we have no idea what to do with our lives. Most of us have a love of
liberty, yet much of the world is in chains. “How can these things be? They can be because we have
directed our lives and our education to means instead of ends. We have been concerned with the transitory
and superficial instead of the enduring and basic problems of life and of society” (Hutchins, 1943, p.92).
One of the primary purposes (ends not means) of education is to draw out the elements of our common human nature (Hutchins, 1936). “These elements are the same in any time or place. The notion of educating a man to live in any particular time or place, to adjust him to any particular environment, is therefore foreign to a true conception of education (Hutchins, 1936, p.66). If education and educational reform is to be effective it must exist as a cultivation of the intellect. This intellectual cultivation is the same for all people in all societies. It is therefore the good for which all other goods are merely means. Thus, social, economic and political concerns are synonymous with intellectual cultivation. Material prosperity and environmental adjustment are “goods”, but there are other “goods” higher than them. Intellectual virtues are “goods” in and of themselves. Intellectual virtues are habits resulting from the training of intellectual powers. These habits and these powers are the province and sole purpose of education (Hutchins, 1936). Reforms not directly dealing with the expansion of these intellectual powers are either useless or even harmful to the educational experience. “An intellect properly disciplined, an intellect properly habituated, is an intellect able to operate well in all fields. An education that consists of the cultivation of intellectual virtues, therefore, is the most useful education…” (Hutchins, 1936, p.63).

This education,

aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasms and fixed aims to popular aspirations, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the idea of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power and refining the intercourse of private life. It is the Education which gives a man a clear conscious view of this own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them….. It prepares him to fill any post with credit…[with this education, man] has a gift, which serves him in public and supports in retirement, without which good fortune is vulgar, and with which failure and disappointment have a charm (Newman, 1959, p.191-192).

The purposes of education are moral, intellectual and spiritual. If education is pursued with these purposes in mind, we will get, as a by-product, social, economic, and governmental stability. But when educational reforms treat these by-products as the “real” purpose of education, we will lose both the purpose and the by-product.

References

The President Obama Healthcare Scorecard:  
The Affordable Care Act in Real Life

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On March 23, 2010, President Barack Obama signed into law the Affordable Care Act, and in September of 2010 the first of the law’s stages, including the new Patient’s Bill of Rights, went into effect. This paper, through comparative analysis, will examine Candidate Obama’s 2008 campaign promises for healthcare reform, President Obama’s 2010 objectives for the healthcare reform bill, the actual law as passed in 2010, and the current reality of the law’s implementation. This paper will answer the following questions: What is the history of our healthcare system leading us to healthcare reform? Where are we with this law as new stages continue to arrive? And, how is it actually affecting the American people? In particular, how do Americans perceive the landmark law as it relates to needed healthcare insurance reforms, costs, and the quality of healthcare for all Americans, now and in the future? The answers are important because public ignorance of what is really in the law has serious political implications and potential impacts upon American society’s healthcare providers and consumers.

To better understand the healthcare crisis of the United States and why it is that presidential candidates and presidents have proposed healthcare reform, it is necessary to examine the historical development leading the nation toward healthcare reform. In the United States, we never really had an organized healthcare system; it was a non-system. Americans value rugged individualism, and thus it has been every man, woman and child for himself or herself, even in respect to healthcare coverage (Rivers, 2008; Quadagno, 2004). World War II accidentally gave us our process for insuring workers. In the 1940’s, with so many men and women serving in the armed services, the country suffered a labor shortage. Yet it was illegal under wartime law for employers to offer higher wages as a hiring inducement, so companies tried offering health benefits instead. And the federal tax code was amended to give employers financial incentives to keep on supplying their employees with health insurance. After the war, Veterans had both the GI bill and health benefits. But, as time progressed, the non-system began unraveling as there were progressively fewer veterans, and subsequent veterans had inferior health insurance. Post war, the technological boom produced new, highly expensive medical equipment and treatments; labor unions led strikes for increased health benefits; and healthcare costs consequently began soaring upward (Quadagno, 2004; Rivers, 2008).

At this time in the United States, healthcare insurance for the individual is generally purchased either by the employer or the individual, with the exception of those persons on Medicare, Medicaid, military or Federal Government insurance. This contrasts with virtually all other industrialized democracies of the world, where healthcare is granted to the individual by the government or through a government-mandated program. In other industrialized countries, there is national solidarity arising out of World War II that reflects the belief that everyone is on the same team and deserving of medical care (Rivers, 2008). This difference of systems between the United States and the countries with universal healthcare insurance has significant impact upon whether an individual can receive treatment for injuries or illness, and the quality of that treatment (Rivers, 2008).

Historically, the United States came close to adopting a universal healthcare insurance coverage system on two occasions. Once was in 1945, when President Harry S. Truman proposed it and 75% of the public supported it. Then there was 1993, when President Bill Clinton endorsed the HMO-based version crafted by Hilary Clinton (Quadagno, 2004; Rivers, 2008). Both times, traditional insurance companies
and the American Medical Association responded with huge fear campaigns charging that Americans would get socialized medicine, lose the right to choose their own doctors, and have long waiting lines. In other industrialized countries, where insurance industries were less mature, universal national healthcare became the norm.

In the United States during Obama’s 2008 Presidential campaign, approximately 47 million Americans at one time or another had no health insurance, and at least 16 million more were officially designated as underinsured (Rivers, 2008; Weinstock, 2007). According to the Rivers’ Health Insurance Anxiety Index, the uninsured are 15% of the population, and the underinsured are another 12% of the population, meaning that 27% of the population has health insurance anxiety (Rivers, 2008).

The preceding data of the Rivers’ Health Insurance Anxiety Index directs us to the existing crisis. The uninsured or underinsured persons frequently obtain their healthcare in hospital emergency departments when they are having a serious illness or injury. They receive no coordination of care, no preventive illness measures, and cannot afford to pay the expenses. The hospitals absorb the cost and attempt to pass it onto paying patients. According to the National Coalition on Healthcare (2008), one person in American declares bankruptcy every 30 seconds due to expenses from illness or injury.

Thus, the stage was set for healthcare reform during the 2008 Presidential campaign.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology being utilized for this paper is that of a comparative analysis between what candidate Obama stated in his healthcare goals in 2008-2010 and the outcome. The procedure utilized is the retrieving of data from journals, papers, and media, and conducting a comparative analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Barack Obama, the Candidate and the President

As the candidates for President in 2008 proposed various plans to potentially address the country’s healthcare crisis, candidate Obama was heard and seen in the media talking about his plans. His campaign produced a television ad on healthcare reform delineating two supposedly undesirable extremes that he promised to avoid. The ad stated that on the one hand we have government-run healthcare with high taxes, while on the other hand we have out-of-control insurance companies without rules denying healthcare coverage. In the ad, Obama says that he finds the two extremes wrong, and proposes a middle ground. Candidate Obama is for: 1) Keeping employer-provided coverage; 2) Keeping your own doctor; 3) Taking on the insurance companies to bring costs down; 4) Preventing insurance companies from denying coverage because of pre-existing conditions; and 5) Promoting preventative care. The ad closes by saying that this is common sense for the change we need, and that it is paid for by BarackObama.com (Obama, 2008).

President Obama was elected in 2008 proposing a dual-track system for acquiring healthcare insurance from the federal government. The first track would be similar to the existing Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan, but available to the general public. For the second track, Obama planned to create the National Health Insurance Exchange, requiring private insurance plans to match the content of the federal plan and assure eligibility for every American regardless of pre-existing conditions. He said he would require that parents insure their children. Other than that, Obama would not require the uninsured to purchase insurance. He proposed to provide subsidies to enable everyone who wants insurance to buy it. He said he would leave intact the for-profit insurance system. Despite his earlier assertions that he was for universal coverage, the word “universal” never appeared anywhere in his campaign materials. Because of the numerous variables and uncertainties inherent in the proposal, there was no way to determine accurately the cost of implementing and running Obama’s program.

President Obama’s Eight Objectives: Met or Not?

There are eight objectives or principles of President Obama’s which he said should be met by the new healthcare law. These objectives were determined by the President approximately six weeks before the bill’s passage.

The first objective of President Obama is to reduce the escalating rate of healthcare spending from the current rate of 2% annually to 1% above GDP (Dentzer, 2010). (GDP is basically all the spending that goes on in a nation. Definition of GDP: “The total market value of all final goods and services produced
in a country in a given year, equal to total consumer, investment and government spending, plus the value of exports, minus the value of imports” [InvestorWords, 2008; Rivers, 2008]). Comparing the percentages of GDP spent on healthcare, according to the Organizations for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), we find that: Japan spends 8% of its GDP on healthcare; the United Kingdom, 8.3%; Canada, 8.5%; Germany, 10.7%; France, 10.9%; and the United States, 15.3% (OECD, 2008). That means that Americans are spending roughly 90% more on healthcare than the Japanese and about 40% more than the French. Canadians are spending just $3,165 per capita annually for healthcare, whereas Americans spend more than twice as much, topping $7,000 annually; and, to add insult to injury, the Canadians are getting superior health results by virtually every measurable standard (Medical Minute, 2007, April 12; Rivers, 2008).

At the current rate -- 4% per year since 1980 (Kaiser Family Foundation report, 2011, as cited in Bush, 2011) -- if America does not get control over its runaway healthcare spending, in 75 years from now all the nation’s economy will be going to healthcare and nothing will be available for such essentials as education or defense. Families’ main concern is that, overall, insurance premiums have more than doubled since 1999, a 131% increase. The tools to curb spending down to 1% beyond the GDP (Dentzer, 2010) are in legislation. The tools include: reducing dollars spent on lawsuits and unnecessary tests; reducing administrative costs of insurance so that 80% goes to medical care; and instituting pilot projects such as accountable care organizations, medical homes, and bundled payment (Dentzer, 2010). Also, the Congressional Budget Office states that legislation is in place to reduce the growth of Medicare spending (per beneficiary, adjusting for overall inflation) from about 4% per year for the last 20 years to about 2% per year for the next 20 years.

The second objective of President Obama is that of expanding Medicaid. Medicaid is to be increased to cover the poor with medical expenses at 1.3X the federal poverty level. Since 1964 only half of the poor have been covered (Dentzer, 2010).

The third objective is to aim for universality of coverage. The estimate of those not covered with healthcare insurance is now at 50 million with the recession adding 3-6 million uninsured (Dentzer, 2010).

The fourth objective of the President is to provide portability of coverage between jobs. There would be no pre-existing condition rules to coverage. One would be able to go on the website and shop for the insurance needed. Standardized market places and national plans would be available. There would be subsidies available to families with incomes up to $90,000. This objective would enable one to have choice of physician and health plans (Dentzer, 2010).

The fifth objective is to promote disease prevention. Conditions and diseases such as obesity, sedentary lifestyles, and smoking drive healthcare costs in this country. 86% of Americans will be overweight or obese by 2030 at the current rate of weight gain (Obesity. 2008, July). The intent of this objective is to provide disease prevention measures.

The sixth objective of the President is to provide meaningful use of electronic health records by 2014 (Dentzer, 2010). The sharing of patient records between healthcare providers in a confidential atmosphere would reduce care fragmentation and resultant expenses. Payments made to Medicare and Medicaid providers would become transparent and thus potentially reduce expenses caused by fraud.

The seventh objective of the President is to focus on quality and patient safety (Dentzer, 2010). The Institute of Medicine Report in 1999 indicated that 44,000-100,000 avoidable deaths occurred in hospitals in 1997. Many initiatives can be implemented to reduce this error rate, including electronic medication records.

The eighth and last objective of the President is to achieve long-term sustainability. The plan must pay for itself by reducing the level of cost growth, improving productivity and dedicating additional sources of revenue. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the cost of healthcare reform would be $1-1.6 trillion over ten years (Dentzer, 2010).

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010, as discussed subsequently by the authors, meets the stated eight objectives or principles asserted by the President (Dentzer, 2010). The question remains how the ACA will actually be implemented.
The Reality of Implementation

The Patient’s Bill of Rights component of the ACA went into effect on September 23, 2010. According to Greg Nelson, White House Office of Public Engagement (Nelson, 2010), the Patient’s Bill of Rights in the ACA would end insurance abuses and put us in control of our health. The abuses he referred to include the insurance companies upping our rates, denying coverage, or just dropping patients outright. Nelson identified that the Patient’s Bill of Rights would mean: 1) No more discrimination against children with pre-existing conditions; 2) No more lifetime coverage limits on insurance and no caps on insurance; 3) Young adults, age 26 years and under, could now stay on their parent’s plan if their job doesn’t provide healthcare benefits; 4) Free preventive care, so that if you buy or join a new plan, the insurance company must provide mammograms, colonoscopies, immunizations, pre-natal and baby care without charging you any fees; 5) Freedom to choose your own doctor in your own network, provided you buy or join a new plan; 6) No more restrictions on emergency care: Provided you buy or join a new plan, insurance companies will not be permitted to charge you more for out-of-network emergency services. According to the White House, it is intended that the ACA will provide basic direction to cut costs, begin to get our fiscal budget in order, and give us peace of mind.

On January 1, 2011, a number of the law’s changes in the way we receive our healthcare took effect. ABC-TV journalist Brian Moore neatly summarized them as the following (ABC Evening News, 2011, January 2): 1) Insurance companies cannot cap off how much care we receive; 2) Insurance companies cannot discriminate against children with pre-existing conditions; 3) The employer must spend 80-85% of the insurance premium on services related to the medical care; 4) Part D of the insurance for the Medicare client, the so called “donut hole”, is reduced -- the seniors will receive a 50% discount on brand names and smaller amounts on generic drugs; 5) Senior preventative care benefits are free, such as mammograms, colonoscopies, and immunizations; 6) Seniors can talk with their doctors about end-of-life care (This is the item that the Tea Party had erroneously referred to as “death squads” for the elderly); 7) Those with Flexible Account Plans will have restrictions on over-the-counter drugs; 8) Tax credits are offered to small businesses to make employee coverage more affordable. These Tax credits can total up to 35% of employer premium contributions. Also, there are tax credits to small non-profits up to 25%. In 2014, there will be tax credits up to 50% of employer premium contributions and up to 35% for small non-profits; 9) In 2014, there will be (contrary to what Obama had proposed in 2008) a mandate that everyone buy health insurance, with subsidies for those in poverty; 10) In 2014, there will be Insurance Exchanges. Customers will be able to shop for insurance or exchange their employer’s insurance. It is expected that the uninsured will be using the Exchange and that it will work like the Government Insurance Exchange available to the Federal Government employees.

One Year Anniversary of the ACA

The ACA turned one year on March 23, 2011. There was no major fanfare although the Obama administration quietly celebrated the event. There have been legal challenges with more than 24 states having signed lawsuits attempting to overturn the law and there have been victories in Florida and Virginia. The law has been ruled constitutional by three federal judges whereas two judges have ruled against it (Barry, 2011). Some states led by Republicans are refusing to implement the law. It will likely be the Supreme Court that will have the final say. Government officials have implemented some of the ACA provisions and are laying the groundwork for the parts of the law yet to arrive in 2014.

As noted by Hellerman (2011), the most significant changes in the law are that 3.4 million people age 26 and under became eligible to sign up under their parents’ insurance policies, according to the group Families USA, which supports the law, and that many seniors will pay hundreds of dollars less for prescription drugs this year due to changes in the “donut hole.”

Additionally, there are more modest changes, including the interim plan to help people with chronic illnesses (Hellerman, 2011). The Federal government has plans in 23 states to help them obtain coverage, and there are other states with their own plans. Under the federal reform, assistance can be given to an American citizen or legal resident with health problems who has had no insurance for the past six months or more. As of February 2, 2011, the Department of Health and Human Services finds that only 12,347 persons have signed up nationwide. The reason given is that the coverage is very expensive. Also of
modest impact is the subsidies provision which helps small businesses provide coverage for their workers. A recent survey by the resources consulting firm, Towers Watson, found businesses are planning to cut back in 2012, and that from 2007-2010, the number of employers confident about their ability to provide healthcare fell from 73% to 38% (Hellerman, 2011).

There are concerns about the total healthcare spending cost, and figures are not yet available. Critic Douglas Holz-Eakin, Senator John McCain’s top presidential campaign adviser in 2008, says that the law has not curbed the expenses. Insurance terms have gotten worse because healthcare costs continue to rise and the recession worsened the risk pools (Hellerman, 2011). For a comparison of costs among a variety of countries, we can consider how much a modern, average, hospital room costs. The cost in dollars per day for a stay in a hospital room in a full-service hospital in a sample of industrialized countries: England, $164; France, $168; Germany, $172; Japan, $181; Canada, $183; Switzerland, $192; and the United States, $1,183 per day (Rivers, 2008; WHO, 2008). Americans obviously can ill afford to continue paying nearly ten times what people pay in universal healthcare countries for the same quality of hospital room. It will be of great interest to see to what extent the Obama reforms mitigate this financial nightmare.

CONCLUSION

Although the one-year healthcare scorecard is incomplete at this time because many of the significant provisions become law in 2014, on its 4th anniversary, the new law provides a beginning with some fundamental rights implemented, such as no pre-existing conditions for children. Those items due to become law in 2014 include the following requirements: Private insurers must cover ill people; individuals have to carry coverage; subsidies are provided to help buy the coverage; and the Exchanges become available (although no one can anticipate accurately how many Americans may choose to use them to acquire or exchange their insurance). Overall, the Obama Administration considers all eight of his original objectives to be met assuming the law is not repealed before 2014.

The Congressional vote to repeal the ACA by the new GOP-controlled House of Representatives in January 2011 was seen as being largely symbolic since the Senate would not pass the repeal. Many GOP House members made speeches boasting that their vote for repeal represented the will of the vast majority of the American public (ABC Evening News, 2011, January). The next day, satirist Stephen Colbert made his humorous reply on The Colbert Report on Comedy Central (Colbert, 2011, January 24), presenting a CBS News Poll (January 15-19, 2011) reported in the New York Times in which 40% of Americans indicated a desire to see the healthcare law repealed (CBS News/New York Times Poll, 2011, January 20). And 40% constitutes a majority, crowed Colbert, echoing the Republican line.

In fact, more Americans would prefer to keep the healthcare legislation than repeal it by a margin of +8%. And support for repeal is dropping: in November, 2010, 45% wanted to repeal the law, whereas in January, 2011, only 40% said to repeal. In 2010, 44% said to keep the ACA, whereas in 2011, 48% said to keep the law (CBS News/New York Times Poll, 2011, January 20). It is not surprising that the differences in preference fall along political party lines. Most Republicans would like to see the healthcare law abolished, while the majority of Democrats prefer to keep the law. (See Table 1 and Table 2.) The level of ignorance about the law is substantial, as evidenced by the fact that 22% of Americans think that the law has actually already been repealed as cited in the February poll by the nonpartisan Kaiser Foundation (Barry, 2011, April).

Considering that this country is so divided in its opinion on whether the government should provide healthcare to its citizens, the relatively modest Obama reforms may be the most that a new law could reasonably offer at this time. Of course, the government already provides healthcare to seniors with Medicare, to the military, to government employees, to the extremely poor with Medicaid, and to the citizens of Massachusetts, Oregon, and Hawaii. Yet some say there should be no government healthcare for the working poor, neither for the underinsured, nor for those going bankrupt because of illness or injury. “On balance, most of us conclude that this is the best set of health reforms possible in a country that is very deeply divided in its belief in government…We struggle with this as a people” (Dentzer, 2010, May 28).

Implications
It is impossible to predict the future, but as Americans experience and learn more about the components of the ACA and what it means to them, they may become less fearful and more satisfied with the ACA. The authors, a nursing administrator and an educator over a number of decades, find that for the United States to equal the healthcare standards of the rest of the industrialized democracies of the world it would be necessary to adopt vast reforms involving comprehensive basic health insurance for every American from birth to death, impartial auditing to prevent fraud and abuse of services, liability protection for providers of care, freedom for private and public medical institutions to compete fairly for the patient’s business, instantaneous and sufficient reimbursement for patients and providers alike, including hospitals and other community agencies, safe and adequate nurse staffing that promotes a climate of safety and professionalism, and a formula of reward for excellence in service and continuous improvement in quality, value, and cost control. All of these seemingly utopian measures already exist elsewhere, and, by implication, can exist in America.

A century ago, America’s most popular author, Jack London, was widely denounced as an evil Socialist for advocating that the United States establish across the nation such things as public utilities (the gas company, the electric company), public hospitals, public highways, and even free public schooling beyond the eighth grade for everyone (Rivers, 2008). Today, even our most conservative patriots support every item on that agenda, and we all feel as if public utilities and the rest have always been part of America. A century from now, will Americans look back and see universal healthcare coverage as one of those old, traditional, red-white-and-blue American institutions that must have always been with us?

The authors’ future research includes continuing with the monitoring of the ACA as it is rolled out for implementation. Will the law be fully implemented including the requirements for 2014 or will the Supreme Court take actions to the contrary? Will there be fine tuning of the law, and how will the public accept it? Additionally, the authors will survey graduate and undergraduate students as to their satisfaction with the ACA.

References


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**Table 1**

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**Table 2**

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Focusing on Teacher Perspectives through Dialogue About The Meaningful Integration of Literacy & Technology

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This study details a research agenda focused on understanding professional development and how it impacts 21st century technology skills and the New Literacies as they are integrated into current early childhood literacy classrooms. The researchers have focused upon the classroom teacher and engaged them in a dialogue to investigate how teachers integrate technology into their early childhood literacy curriculum in meaningful ways. Specifically, the researchers questioned where exemplary teachers gain support and professional development in this important area in an effort to maintain and expand upon their professional practices?

The goal of the conversation was to allow teachers the opportunity to share their voices as they discussed both their classroom and professional experiences related to meaningful technology integration with literacy instruction. Therefore, the following research questions guided this focus group discussion:

1. What technology do you currently use in the classroom?
2. How do you currently integrate technology with literacy instruction? How has this changed over time?
3. Where and how do you acquire the information needed to support your successful integration of technology?

Related Theoretical Perspectives

This research study was supported through constructivist, New Literacies, and Social Constructivist theoretical perspectives. Leu et al. (2004) conceptualized the New Literacies as deictic. Therefore, it was proposed that forms and functions of literacy change rapidly and transform with their temporal context. Employing new technologies individuals imagined new ways of using them and altered the nature of literacy” (Leu, Karchmer, & Leu, 1999). Consequently, Labbo and Reinking (1999) constructed a framework for integrating technology with literacy instruction. This framework encompassed digital technologies being employed and available for literacy instruction while enhancing conventional literacy. This framework also included the transformative effects of the New Literacies including their ability to prepare students for the “literacy of the future” and to “empower students” (p. 481).

Social Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) expresses the prominent belief that children learn through social interaction using tools the culture provides to support thinking. Development depends upon culturally bound sign systems scaffolded by competent individuals to allow learners to strengthen constructions of meaning and gain increasing independence as learners.

Additionally, collaborative relationships have been found to be instrumental in facilitating professional growth in teachers. Gee (2003) suggested that “discourse” allows for the building of relationships of this sort and he purported,

Discourses often constitute a “community of practice,” that is, they are ongoingly engaged in and bonded together through a common set of endeavors within which they may have distinctive, but overlapping functions . . . Such communities of practice reproduce themselves through “apprenticing” newcomers, in thought, word, and deed, to their characteristic social languages, cultural models, and social practices. (p. 37)
Taken together, these two insights anchor a belief that professional development should shift away from solely providing content for improved teaching and focus on building meaningful relationships amongst teachers.

Related research literature on effective professional development suggests that to better serve the needs of teachers in their quest to integrate technology; professional development should be thoughtfully constructed. Effective models must move beyond traditional models based on transmission of information from someone in authority to engage and empower teachers to have stronger voices in directing their own learning. Zepeda (2002) stated “a more empowering view . . . casts teachers as active participants, constructing knowledge . . . applicable to classroom practice and that engages them in more collaborative processes” (p. 84).

Collaborative relationships have been found to be instrumental in facilitating professional growth in teachers. Professional development should shift away from solely providing content for improved teaching and focus more on building meaningful relationships amongst teachers. Indeed research has shown that less than 10% of teachers implement new ideas learned in traditional workshop settings (Joyce & Showers, 1988).

Professional development should be implemented in ways that serve teachers and their needs for integrating technology in meaningful ways. Ultimately, professional development should establish environments conducive for nurturing collegial relationships. Sanders and Schwab (2001) identified “that education is a deeply human process, and that those who teach both need and deserve psychological and social support to keep their energies focused upon what is essential” (p. 277).

The most effective models of teacher professional development must move beyond the traditional model based on the transmission of information from someone in authority. Research suggests that professional development should engage and empower teachers to have a stronger voice in directing their own learning (Educational Research Service, 1998; Lyon & Pinnell, 2001; Rob, 2000). Adults learn best in situations that reflect a constructivist view of learning. According to Zepeda (as cited in Sandholtz, 2002),

Learning is not only a matter of transferring ideas from one who is knowledgeable to one who is not. Instead, learning is perceived as a personal, reflective, and transformative process where ideas, experiences, and points of view are integrated and knowledge is created. (p. 816)

Zepeda further stated that, “When a constructivist perspective is applied to teacher learning, a key focus becomes how teachers learn to make critically reflective judgments in the midst of action and how they subsequently change their actions in response to new insights” (p. 816).

The ultimate model of professional development will result in the formulation of learning communities among staff members involved in the experience. Kinnucan-Welsh and Jenlink (as cited in Sandholtz, 2002) concluded that “learning communities become important ways of supporting individual construction of meaning and knowledge” (p. 816). Shamburg (2004) also found that,

An approach to professional development that emphasizes the social dimensions of learning from classroom teachers . . . would facilitate learning channels among professional developers and teachers, with an emphasis on formalizing opportunities for teachers to share and reflect with each other. (p. 242)

Methods, Techniques, and Data Sources

Focus group methodology was employed to allow the researchers direct interaction with teachers who successfully employ technology in the early childhood classroom in meaningful ways. As Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) suggest, focus groups permit the respondents and researcher to interact and help respondents build synergistically upon their discussions. Meanings are often deepened in this flexible environment which is particularly useful with literate individuals such as early childhood educators. Although there are many benefits, certain limitations are inherent in the methodology which must also be considered. Most significantly, the small number involved in a focus group prohibits broad generalizations; additionally, the interaction may limit independence of thought in the responses. Despite these limitations the focus group methodology was selected because it has been found to be a viable mode
of inquiry when investigating teacher beliefs and practices in the early childhood domain (Laffey, 2004; Makin et al., 2000).

The nature of the focus group was upheld by a nontaxing environment around a dinner table. Participants were offered a broad overview of the topics to be discussed prior to coming to the focus group session. Consideration for the least talkative individuals was detailed in their placement around a large dining table which also afforded eye contact between all members of the group as well as the discussion facilitators. Respondents were given a pen and paper to jot down thoughts that might have been prompted by colleagues’ responses as the discussion unfolded. At the onset of the session, the respondents were asked for permission to record the discussion which was granted by all. As the session began, each participant was asked to briefly introduce themselves to the larger group. The facilitators assured each participant that their input was valuable and indeed essential to success of the discussion. As the interview transpired, careful attention to time spent on each question was monitored to ensure that each very important topic was carefully considered and integrated into the discussion. The discussion was fruitful and extended over a 3-hour period which included dinner and dessert.

The data sources for this phase of inquiry included the tape recordings as well as the transcription of the focus group discussion. Following the focus group a questionnaire was constructed to review if other educators who engaged technology in meaningful ways in the Language Arts curriculum shared similar thoughts as those which emerged from the focus group. Even though the document presented here was a questionnaire, it did reflect elements which might eventually inform the construction of a survey document. As Fowler (2002) suggests, the document was: (1) connected to a focus group; (2) predicated on a set of research questions; and (3) individual laboratory review to detect common flaws (p. 105). Specifically, the researchers noted that a good survey instrument, or even a questionnaire, is to define the purpose and research questions pursued by the instrument. Additionally, the value of a preliminary focus group is well documented and noted as a “valuable [method] to conduct focused discussions with people who are in the study population about the issues to be studies” (p. 106).

In a survey there would be attention directed to three areas: first, sampling; second, question design; and finally, interviewing. The researchers review the procedures for constructing and implementing this questionnaire in contrast to these criteria. Addressing the issue of interviewing and a systematic interview preparation and protocol in this study the issue is negated through the use of Survey Monkey which permits a digital collection of data.

Without a doubt, the attention to sampling is the starkest differentiation between this questionnaire and an actual survey with a scientifically constructed sample. The researchers acknowledge that a survey would rest on a scientifically determined sample which would result in the possibility of developing statistics about the population. In this instance, the questionnaire can only preview possible trends that emerged from responses of a very narrow sample frame. Nonetheless, the researchers would suggest that across the four methodologies the responses presented by these respondents align well with research and thoughts of others in the population expressed through other methodologies. To conduct this questionnaire the researchers accessed the database of two LISTERVS which are resource sites for the population that the researchers hoped to investigate. Each of these sites was peopled by educators who were known to address the integration of technology in the elementary classroom language arts curriculum in meaningful ways. The researchers believed that they had accessed the only national site which addressed this particular population of educators (T.I.L.E. sig of the International Reading Association). The other was a Ning which was known to be a local resource for this population. Certainly, there are problematic issues of which the researchers were aware. Previous research has suggested that this population tends to correspond digitally within a local resource group of colleagues. In tapping into the local Ning we present an inherent problem of tapping into all local Nings. Sampling for a survey would therefore present important dilemmas. For this particular questionnaire each person had the chance of being selected since the questionnaire was distributed to the entire population of each group.

The drafting of questions, even for the questionnaire, was predicated on two previous areas of research. These included a thorough review of the research literature and beliefs expressed differentiating this population during a previous Q methodology study with similar research questions. Moreover,
informal group interviews were conducted to discuss consistent understanding of the survey questions and were valid indicators of what the items were designed to measure (Fowler, p. 109). Care was taken to construct questions that would “mean the same thing to all respondents; answers to the questions would be a task that all respondents could perform;” while, the need for an interview script or protocol was negated due to the digital format of the questionnaire (Fowler, p. 115).

Results and Conclusions

**Focus Group Findings**

The following discussion of results and conclusions is centered on the three research questions guiding this investigation. Through an analysis of the teacher interview transcripts, findings emerged which included the following: Teachers as technologists, Funding and grant opportunities to support technology integration, Sufficient time to implement and integrate technology in meaningful ways, Emulation of real world technology applications within the classroom, and Collaboration and collegial team building between and amongst teachers.

These five ideas are further discussed and illustrated within the context of each of the following research questions which served as the foundation for this investigation.

**What technology do teachers currently use in their classrooms?**

The data indicated that six out of the seven teacher participants currently used Smart Board technology in their classrooms. In addition, they coordinated the Smart Board with peripherals such as Elmo Projectors, Digital Cameras, Image Projection Devices, and Digital Recorders. In all of the classrooms, computers were accessible for students to use on a regular and ongoing basis. Students had access to computer programs including Accelerated Reader, I Excel, STAR Math, STAR Reading, and EarRobics. As one teacher noted,

> We have fantastic classroom programs and great technology in the classrooms. There isn’t enough time in the day to utilize it effectively... We are working on overload. My Elmo sat... for two months. I wasn’t ready for it because I didn’t know. Now that I have it, I use it every day, all day long. I don’t get the overhead out. (Focus Group, 3/3/10).

The teachers in this particular school are collaborative and heavily rely on their colleagues as resources and are supportive of each other’s professional growth. This is evidenced in the following statement: “We’re very rich in the resources that we have compared to some of the buildings. We’re lucky that we have people trained. [We] support each other” (Focus Group, 3/3/10).

Even in this very supportive school community, one teacher noted that there yet remains a number of road blocks. One such issue is related to sources of electrical and bandwidth power within the district necessary to maintain functional levels for the technology. This is suggested in the following comment: “The other issue is we are still working on service to the whole school for the computer. They keep adding and adding programs. They have done some changes downtown. I don’t think they can move fast enough to keep enough” (Focus Group, 3/3/10). Additionally, cooperation within the district impedes authentic use of the Internet. As all participants agreed, “When you find a good place you would love your students to use, a lot of our computers are not able to utilize that” (Focus Group, 3/3/10).

Certainly, the biggest controversy is the proprietary nature of some of the commercial vendors with whom the district has purchased site licenses which prohibits the teacher from engaging in extensive planning opportunities outside of their classrooms as teachers bemoan the fact that,

> The biggest problem with that is you can’t get it at home. If you’re doing lesson plans you’re stuck at school, trying to find the pieces that you want. You can’t even get it at another school. It knows if you’re in your own school. If you go to another school, you can’t do that. (Focus Group, 3/3/10)

**How do teachers currently integrate technology with literacy instruction and how has this changed over time?**

There were several themes which emerged as a result of the discussion around teacher integration of technology with literacy instruction. Teachers in this group noted that technology integration supported them in the following ways: Collaborating, Differentiating instruction, Motivating through constructivism and Embedding real world life skills into the curriculum.
These notions can be illustrated in the following words from the teacher participants. As teachers plan the integration of technology into the literacy curriculum, they recognized the supportive nature of collaboration with colleagues. Teachers commented in the following ways:

Having the internet and having the ability to find or tap into a resource like that. It doesn’t just impact you but can impact the whole school system. The idea of the isolation and building something for my Smart Board for my classroom and only I get to use it, is disappearing. People can tap into something that is fabulous and all you have to do is make sure everybody knows about it. That’s not a hard thing. You have to learn new language and translate it into something else. It’s just, here’s the link. I’ll send it to you. It opens a door and that becomes one of the newer problems. How do I find the best in a reasonable amount of time so that I can make it work best for kids? You could spend forever hunting trails. That’s another issue. When you find the site, I love the fact that everyone is good at sharing that kind of thing. You’re not out there struggling all by yourself. That kind of feeling is unique to our building. Our family reminds me all the time that there aren’t too many [school name] around. There’s a ton of that in that building. I’ve chosen to stay there for a long time because I love that feeling. I cannot say it’s not encouraged in other buildings. (Focus Group, 3/3/10)

Technology integration has also encouraged teachers to differentiate instruction across the literacy curriculum. Specifically, the teachers acknowledged that,

That’s a handheld hundred dollar computer that thinks with a host computer. There’s software on there for math and for reading and some literacy. The teacher can prescribe per student. If you have somebody reading at a very low reading level, or reading at an A, B or C level, you can tune that machine to do work at their level compared to somebody else who may be at a D or an H, or another reading level. That came from a grant from Chase. It’s not in the whole school system. It’s in maybe four and you set up the skill sets for individual students. It monitors and it can give you feedback as to how you’re doing. (Focus Group, 3/3/10)

Technology also proves to increase motivation as students engage in constructing their own connections and making meanings through the literacy curriculum. It was noted that,

I like the fact that they’re taking ownership. This is their learning. They’re helping each other. They’re getting stuff. They’re learning the same thing, but they’re in control of how it’s going. They’re doing the calendar. They’re doing the numbers. It’s interactive with them. They’re learning how to use new technology. I think it’s fabulous. There’s no going back. There’s only going forward, adding more pieces and everybody gets more excited. They tend to sit closer to each other, so that everybody is closer to the Smart Board. The whole feeling of the room changes when we do something. (Focus Group, 3/3/10)

Above all, the teacher participants understood the power of technology in the literacy curriculum to frame their students’ understanding of real world skills as well as the foundational skills necessary for their technologically enhanced futures. The teacher participants concurred that:

One factor is feeling responsible, to have the children as successful as possible. Not so much for their own school, but for their own life. One of the things that you said, when you’re talking about technology, we are preparing our students for a world that’s totally different from the world that we grew up in. Technology is part of that world. The more technology that we can have in their world, helping them use it appropriately, helping them search for information, helping them know how to find things, how to utilize their skills, the better prepared they will be. Their world will never be even the way it is now. Think how much it’s changed in five years. Five years from now, it will be completely different. They will always have this. We grew into this. We didn’t have this and I was talking to someone the other day. The sad thing of it is, see that computer over on that table? You can put this down next to the computer; which one do you think the kids will go for? That’s their generation. This is their time, the computer. It’s not the thing that we have in our classrooms that we think is WOW. It’s not. If we can get them to that path, it’s like this. It’s all over. How awesome can you be? They can do their writing on it and print right off of it. All you need is one computer in the classroom to print off
of. It is what it is. We hold them back. We talk about this all the time. We’re gate keepers. I think we hold them back and don’t mean to. You just don’t have the resources available at this point. (Focus Group, 3/3/10)

Where and how do teachers acquire the information needed to support their successful integration of technology with literacy instruction?

There were three constructions that emerged from the data set informing this research question. It was evident that the teacher participants delineated their acquisition of professional development on three distinct levels which included the district, school, and individual teacher level.

The teacher participants shared that the district had established a framework which allowed for sharing and dialogue around selected professional literature. All teachers were required to participate in this endeavor and were reimbursed for their efforts. The teacher participants explained that,

The books we did in our book study the first semester, the K-3 writing and the café for the upper grades . . . neither one of our groups ever really got through the whole book . . . what we talked about doing was expanding those two books and for six hours, we select a book or two and the teachers put together their own group of people. They push how they’re going to do the books. If we went with café for the upper grades, K-2 writing for the lower grades, that would all mesh together. You know you’re going to need to do at least six hours for the study group. We went back to the Smart Board group, focusing on the literacy component of it, because that’s what the K-2 writing was, and that’s what café is. We began to go back to making use of our technology resources, but taking the literacy, practice in writing that is there for us now. We worked hard to mesh it together and create that sense of community in them. I felt, when we moved to the new building, we’re all on one floor, and sometimes it doesn’t feel like it. We’re spread out. You and I are in our own little world, and then WAY down there is the other. (Focus Group, 3/3/10)

The strongest asset of this particular group of teacher participants was their willingness to share openly with other school colleagues. This is evident in many ways as is illustrated in the following examples:

We would meet and we would just kind of sit and share our ideas about what we did today or how you get into the notebook, how you get to be interactive? What are the steps? We would just sit there and seriously write a note . . . that’s what helps me, to actually sit there and watch somebody do it and multiply that with all the other people around us. If you are at different levels, you have the ability to bounce off each other. You will go to your next level and John will go to his next level and we’re so lucky to have each other to get to the next level. I went to a class of beginner Smart Board. The person that was teaching it couldn’t get anything working. Nothing was working. Finally, [an instructor colleague] came to the class, and was an expert at it, to learn more about it. She ended up going up in front and suggesting gently, “You might want to try that, or let’s try this.” That’s how you learn, by watching it successfully done and just getting together and sharing the different things. I never would have thought to use the smart board as your circle time until you see that. I thought that was brilliant and . . . said, look at this site and this site. I looked at the sites and picked everything I liked, that I thought would work in my class and just adapted it. I’m forward thinking. This is what I’d like to see my kids do. This is how technology can help in Kindergarten, now how can I get to that point? (Focus Group, 3/3/10)

What was truly inspiring was the vision and motivation that these teacher participants possessed although each in very different ways. The strongest of these is represented in the following teacher comment:

If I could dream it and have everybody do it, one would be twitter. Use twitter as a way of getting educational people that are sharing their educational things. There are three or four people who talk. Sometimes, I watch two guys from Britain. I did get a response from one guy. He’ll respond back sometimes, a direct message back to me, or out to the public. He sent one out just recently about his favorite apps on his iphone. I started looking at the apps he had. I didn’t have that one. It’s a free one. I’ll check it. I love it. There’s some great stuff. Most of it is
free. If I could dream that it would happen for us, it would be one to start to build on how you use Twitter for educational people. It would get you what people are doing in their classroom and sharing what they’re doing. Then, we starting to share. I found this site. A lot of times, here’s a site that does this. Click that. I tend to look at it later. The other one I think that’s real powerful is finding a few good sites and work that through Google reader. Use your Google reader to go and just give you a quick synopsis of what those 20 things are. If anything is of any value, that’s when you click that one. You’re sifting just the titles and looking at just the titles. A lot of things I found that I’ve shared like Wordal. A lot of slideshows. There’s 20 ways to use a flip cam or something like that. That all comes from somebody on a blog saying they’re using it or they’re doing that. For me, that would be the dream come true. People using that. (Focus Group, 3/3/10)

The discussion of the integration of technology has an historical presence. Even in 1959, as the Woods Hole scholars contemplated the changing face of education in the post-Sputnik world, they noted the growth of technology but only in the form of a teaching machine (Bruner, 1960). The value of these “automatizing devices” was to lighten the teacher’s load by providing programmed immediate correction and feedback to the learner. Bruner concluded by noting that it was premature to estimate the efficacy of these machines and he felt that early claims had been greatly exaggerated. The importance of the teacher remained central to the classroom as Bruner explained:

Clearly, the machine is not going to replace the teacher – indeed it may create a demand for more and better teachers . . . nor does it seem likely that machines will have the effect of dehumanizing learning any more than books dehumanize learning. (p. 84)

As can be gleaned from the teacher voices in the vignettes shared previously, teachers are paramount to successful incorporation of technology in meaningful ways and fostering their continued development is essential for the literacy futures and lives of this nation’s current and future youth. In closing, the following teacher comment represents its significance:

When I have my Smart Board in front of the class, and when I had my Elmo in front of the class, I think I’m going to be able to use them more. I think you do arrange your classroom around the things that are most effective. I think you become a more effective teacher. I think I’ll do a better job next year than I am right now. I’m looking forward to that, taking a step up from where I am now. (Focus Group, 3/3/1)

**Educational Importance**

Slowly, we are beginning to see “online” digitized workshops transmitted to teachers as models of effective classroom practice. Conversations with practicing classroom teachers suggest that they are taking ownership of their own professional development in this critical area. At present, they are forging professional relationships both “in person” and in cyberspace and are using the Internet as a viable source for enhancing their classroom practice as related to technology integration with literacy instruction. Consequently, researchers also need to understand and embrace this new venue for sharing their professional dialogue. Even more importantly, researchers need to grow strands of research from the Petri dish of the real world classroom environment. We will find a synergy of thought and practice as we seek opportunities for the overlay of our circles of expertise. As we all, classroom teachers and researchers alike pass our specific intellect across the table, the menu of possibilities for early childhood literacy instruction will be expanded to include new solutions and those focused to embrace more appropriate resolutions. In closing, the authors strongly encourage that research of this nature be given a new stage; one that will allow for an intellectual dynamism whereby all stakeholders, teachers and researchers alike, will have a voice that is heard.
References


APPENDIX 1

Teacher Technology Questionnaire

1. How comfortable do you feel with using technology to support literacy instruction?
   o I am familiar with some educational software and websites
   o My students use technology almost daily to support their language arts skills
   o I have given presentations on how to integrate technology into the language arts

2. What is your most useful source of professional development?
   o Attending conferences
   o Subscribing to journals
   o Being an active member of professional organizations
   o Submitting to and reading publications
   o Giving presentations
   o Involving yourself in leadership roles (i.e. mentorships)
   o Collaborating with peers
   o All of the above
   o None of the above
   o Other___________

3. What types of experiences do you think may have been influential in helping to shape your current beliefs about using technology to support literacy instruction?
   o Personal
   o Professional
   o Both

4. Do you work with your colleagues to observe, evaluate, and provide feedback on each other’s practice?
   o Yes
   o No

5. Does your school district support your integration of technology?
   o Yes
   o No
   o NA

6. Does your school district hinder your integration of technology?
   o Yes
   o No
   o NA

7. Does your school building support your integration of technology?
   o Yes
   o No
   o NA

8. Does your school building hinder your integration of technology?
   o Yes
   o No
   o NA

9. Has your current definition of literacy changed since you first began teaching?
   o Yes
   o No

10. Has your current definition of literacy changed since you began integrating technology into your practice?
    o Yes
    o No

11. Do you think your definition will continue to evolve?
12. Do you believe that meaningful technology integration is an important tool in enhancing literacy instruction at your grade level?
   - Yes
   - No
   - NA

13. Do you believe integrating technology has positive effects on the literacy development of students?
   - Yes
   - No

14. Which area of literacy development do you think could potentially benefit the most from meaningful integration of technology?
   - Reading
   - Writing
   - Speaking
   - Listening

15. In your opinion, what grouping structure is most beneficial for students as they interact with technology in support of meaningful literacy activities?
   - Individually
   - Collaboratively

16. Which statement best reflects your philosophy for integrating technology with literacy instruction?
   - It is important for my students to learn to successfully employ the latest hardware and software to produce their best individual product.
   - It is important for my students to work collaboratively with new technologies through a team-based approach interacting with the global community.

17. What does an effective ideal literacy classroom look like?
   - Computers down the hall in a computer lab
   - Computers along the wall in your classroom
   - Computers at student work areas within the classroom

18. Which resources do you use most frequently in support of meaningful technology integration with literacy?
   - Packaged Educational Software Programs
   - Internet-based resources (i.e. websites, blogs, pod-casting, etc.)

19. In your classroom, which area of literacy is most supported through student interaction with meaningful technologies?
   - Reading
   - Writing
   - Speaking
   - Listening

20. Please share any additional information you would like to regarding your integration of technology to support meaningful literacy instruction?
APPENDIX 2
Questionnaire Findings

How comfortable do you feel with using technology to support literacy instruction?

What is your most useful source of professional development?

- Attending conferences
- Subscribing to journals
- Being an active member of professional organizations
- Submitting to and reading publications
- Giving presentations
- Involving yourself in leadership roles
- Collaborating with peers
- All of the above
- None of the above
- Other
In your opinion, what grouping structure is most beneficial for students as they interact with technology in support of meaningful literacy activities?

- Individually
- Collaboratively

Which statement best reflects your philosophy for integrating technology with literacy instruction?

- It is important for my students to learn to successfully employ the technology.
- It is important for my students to work collaboratively with new tech.
What does an effective ideal literacy classroom look like?

- Computers down the hall in a computer lab
- Computers along the wall in your classroom
- Computers at student work within the classroom

Which resources do you use most frequently in support of meaningful technology integration with literacy?

- Packaged Educational Software Programs
- Internet-based resources (i.e., websites, blogs, podcasting, etc.)
In your classroom, which area of literacy is most supported through student interaction with meaningful technologies?

- Reading: [Bar: High]
- Writing: [Bar: Medium]
- Speaking: [Bar: Low]
- Listening: [Bar: Low]
The past ten years could easily be labeled the “decade of accountability” for public education. With initiatives such as NCLB and stimulus funding, the pressure to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs has never been greater. Stakeholder participation in the evaluation process, though desirable and many times required, can be problematic and challenging for administrators. Based on literature review and current evaluation practice, the authors offer school and district administrators a framework for stakeholder participation in program evaluation.

Introduction

A common thread in scholarly discourse and public discussion is the advocacy of designing educational policy and delivering educational programming which meets identified needs and expectations of individuals and groups served. Policies routinely identify the target issue and specify a particular group which will receive services covered by legislation or a policy mandate. Public officials point to goals and results through data which track the impact of policies and programs (Brandon, 1998). With 21st Century initiatives and trends, there is a need to review the process of stakeholder identification and their roles in the planning, implementation and evaluation of educational program and reform initiatives. Individuals are often elevated to administrative and policy positions with minimal orientation to evaluation theory and methods, thus limiting their understanding of the critical need for establishing initial and ongoing relationships with and among key stakeholders and groups as educational programs are evaluated. Poth and Shulha (2008) suggest that understanding and articulating key stakeholder roles and responsibilities in the evaluation process are key elements of developing effective long-term stakeholder involvement. Those relationships are essential for transition of today’s students into the global workplace and society.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate stakeholder roles and participation in the evaluation of educational programs. Findings from a review of the related literature provide a basis for developing a set of implications and guidelines for policymakers, evaluators and school administrators considering the design and/or use of a participatory program evaluation model which will address the needs and expectations of today’s educational stakeholders. Because the educational system is changing in the twenty-first century, we need to acknowledge the need for examining administrative perspective and public awareness to determine whether the appropriate individuals and groups are being encouraged to participate in educational programming and decision-making in ways that are meaningful and beneficial. The overarching question for this study was, “How can administrators and policymakers most effectively involve stakeholders in educational evaluation?” Specific research questions addressed included:

1) What are the roles of stakeholders in 21st Century educational program evaluation?
2) What do we know about research-based, participatory program evaluation models?
3) How can stakeholders be most effectively involved in educational program evaluation?
4) What are the implications for district and building-level administrators?
Literature Review

A review of the literature provides a summary from related studies involving public school, higher education and community-based educational programs in several states. Stakeholders are variously identified and roles delineated based on evolving trends through the last three decades of the 20th century. As early as 1974, Mercurio argued that the educational participant/beneficiary should become a more integral part of planning and evaluating the quality and delivery of services (Mercurio, 1974). With the passing decades, advocates of participatory learning proposed participation as a vehicle to garner satisfaction with and support for funding and resource allocation. In 1991, Stadis, Cook and Leviton presented an overview of theories of evaluation practice. They identify Cronbach (et al., 1980) as a pioneer in articulation of the value of stakeholder participation in program planning and evaluation. Because Cronbach’s five stages of constituency (responsible officials at the policy level, responsible public officials at the program level, local program operating officials, program constituents and illuminators) coupled with four stages of program maturity (breadboard, superrealization, prototype and operating) provide a matrix of twenty possible priorities in evaluation preferences, the authors conclude that program evaluation should be recognized as a naturally complex process (Stadish, et al., 1991).

Burke (1998) believed that stakeholders would contribute more, and contribute more meaningfully, if administrators could become comfortable with sharing information and decision-making during the evaluation process. Rather than including stakeholders primarily as an audience to which a report is presented for approval, Rossi, Lipsey and Freeman (2002) describe a program as “necessarily a social structure in which various individuals and groups engage in the roles and activities that constitute the program: program managers administer, staff provides service, participants receive service, and so forth.” Throughout the literature, there is essential consensus in identifying primary stakeholders as those individuals and groups who may participate in the evaluation or who have an interest in the process or results. As secondary stakeholder level includes those who indirectly benefit from programming or contribute to program evaluation through political and social relationships with primary stakeholders (Rossi, et al., 2002).

Babou (2008) describes stakeholder management as a continuum, with benefits to the stakeholders and managers (administrators/project directors and evaluators), and insists that stakeholder involvement is only as valuable as the administrator’s (or evaluator’s) ability to develop a view of the needs and interests of the stakeholders. Babou lists specific concerns which the stakeholder manager must address including: interests of all who may affect or be affected by the evaluation; potential issues; strategies and communications; anticipation and reduction of potential negative impacts; and negative attitudes of individuals. Several benefits are also noted: stakeholder participation and contributions to program continuation; shared responsibility for program elements; individuals and groups having the opportunity to express ideas and concerns; and enhanced sense of accountability and responsibility; and support for effective risk identification and response planning. The dialogue and collaboration offers an excellent learning and capacity building experience for the project team (administrators and evaluators) and the stakeholders. Babou cautions that there is no guarantee for success in engaging and managing stakeholders, but shares the conviction that it is worth the effort for any evaluator or administrator—successful stakeholder involvement and contribution will strengthen a program (Babou, 2008).

In 1986, Chelimsky suggested that there is a great deal of political manoeuvring to be done (and to be aware of) in educational evaluation. The most efficient, valid evaluative assessment is contingent on the ability of the evaluator and the administrator to recognize and allow representation of all stakeholder groups in the face of perceived differences in philosophy and /or agendas (Chelimsky, 1986). Cousins and Earl (1992, 1995) supported Chelimsky’s observations from a decade before. Cousins and Earl provided field notes and interview analyses over a series of studies which indicated a continuing need for administrators and evaluators to be judicious when selecting stakeholder participants and identifying key informants in order that personal or professional bias and previously established relationships and experiences are not allowed to dilute the efficiency of the program evaluation (Cousins & Earl, 1992, 1995).
Mark and Shotland (1985), Henry, Dickey and Arenson (1991), and King and Elert (2008) spanned three decades in similar discourse on the lessons learned about values and judgments of stakeholder participation in evaluation projects varying in size and scope. The constant among the projects years apart was the element of variance in the perceptions of stakeholders, depending on life experiences, education and exposure to the educational system being evaluated. The writers agree that this is an element to be expected and should be viewed as desirable, rather than undesirable. The evaluator is challenged to get to know the individuals and groups participating and use that knowledge to assist in clarifying and analyzing data received during the stakeholder interview/survey process.

Grubbs (2009) discussed alternative programming and identified the trust issues which might hinder the evaluative process. Grubbs cautioned that, unless the evaluator can adequately serve as mediator among differing parties, and unless business, industry and community representatives can be brought to the table in a collaborative atmosphere, there can be little value to the participatory process. The evaluator, administrator and stakeholders must have an understanding that the mission and programs model will drive the evaluation, and proceed with that agreement in mind at all times.

Perry and Backus (1995) discussed the evolving element of stakeholder empowerment as an effect of participatory program evaluation. In doing so, they identified the leadership development and societal awareness which naturally occur as individuals and groups are given responsibility and accountability in contributing to the assessment of programming in which they are professionally or personally invested.

O’Sullivan (2004) points out that some collaborative approaches are chosen with the intent of making evaluation feasible, while others focus on empowering the participants. As program evaluation evolves as a field, those who would develop expertise are reminded to have early conversation with project administrators to ensure common awareness of project goals. O’Sullivan argues that participant empowerment has additional benefits of increased and broadened individual skills as well as increased capacity of the program in executing future evaluations. O’Sullivan reviews several management approaches built around participatory program building and evaluation, including Stufflebeam’s model which allowed for assessment beyond attainment of program objectives. A further review of Stufflebean’s (2001) critique of evaluation models reveals his appreciation for the client-centered approach (stakeholder participation model). Stufflebean believes that “a receptive client group and a confident, competent, responsive evaluator” are the elements which hold the key to effective use of such a model. Stufflebean states that one of the main advantages of this kind of evaluation is that it “…protects the consumer from shoddy programs, services and products and…guide[s] them to support and use those contributions that best and most cost-effectively address their [particular] needs” (Stufflebeam, 2001).

Another concept explored by O’Sullivan was Scriven’s (1974, 1997) checklist approach to evaluation including cost-effectiveness analyses and comparison of outcomes across a range of program strategies. Stakeholders would be identified and included in conversations at intervals throughout the process (O’Sullivan, 2004). Alkin (2004) also analyzed Scriven’s delineation of program planning stages. Alkin provided characteristics of each stage—program planning (stakeholder preparation/orientation, organizational preparation, consensus building); initial implementation (fluid, unstable, developmental, moving toward stabilization); mature implementation (settling, established rules and procedures, stabilization of process); and outcome (assessment of goal achievement, accountability and determination of future directions). Alkin cautioned administrators and evaluators that stakeholders may have unequal learning curves, and argued that stakeholder capacity, orientation and knowledge should drive the assignment of roles during each stage (Alkin, 2004).

Markiewicz (2008) suggests that the most important first step in successfully maneuvering through any collaborative evaluation project is to realize the “inherently political” nature of the process, employing empathy, language skills and assertiveness as persuasive tools in negotiation. The author recommends evaluators work hand-in-hand with local administrators to focus on characteristics and perspectives of stakeholders, realize the real potential for conflict, and be prepared to negotiate differences in order to facilitate a framework in which values of each participant will contribute to a useful product. The author defines stake as a share or interest…or an individual or organizational aspiration…influence…resource. Stakeholders are defined as those who have a stake in the program
under review or...vested interest (Markiewicz, 2008). Rossi (et al., 2004) expands on Markiewicz’s definition, asserting that stakeholders may be individuals or groups “who have decision-making authority over the program, funders and sponsors, administrators and personnel, and clients or intended beneficiaries.” The list of key groups includes policymakers/decision makers, program sponsors, evaluation sponsors, target participants, program managers, program staff, program competitors, contextual stakeholders, and representatives of the research community. Rossi (et al.) suggests a common issue in stakeholder involvement is the stakeholder who is in appropriately or insufficiently informed. Without adequate stakeholder education, the administrator is likely to experience difficulty in facilitating clear and specific outcome measures for the evaluation project (Rossi, et al., 2004).

Markiewicz explores the question of whether to include the evaluator as a stakeholder—and suggests this should be determined by the characteristics of the individual evaluator and the preferences of the administrator/project director. In describing the critical role of ‘group dynamics’ in successful collaborative work, Markiewicz refers to the negotiation models of Bush and Folger (1994) and Antes et al. (1999) in a comparison of sequential vs. non-sequential, negotiation. He cites Adler’s (1998) work in examining the impact of emotions in the field of negotiation. Other literature is referenced with descriptions of traditional negotiation models (Roberts, 1983) and the concept of the ‘neutral third party’. Markiewicz expresses a preference for negotiation strategies that empower stakeholders to express themselves and move toward constructive resolution, rather than spending time in an isolated state.

Acknowledging the limitations of every individual evaluator (capacity to engage, flexibility, security, learning curve, perceptions) Markiewicz contends that negotiation skills must be learned or strengthened before beginning evaluation projects and as continuing education for stakeholders. If local administrators carefully identify stakeholders and categorize those individuals and agencies according to levels of involvement, the teamwork between administrator and evaluator will be much more conducive to obtaining meaningful results (Markiewicz, 2008).

After a lengthy literature review, Smits and Champagne (2008) conclude that the literature supports (more theoretically than empirically) the argument that participant (stakeholder) knowledge enhances the use of evaluation results. Because government and larger agencies encompass such a large community of stakeholders, the authors surmise that community and smaller group levels are targets for empowerment-focused evaluations. The authors describe the purpose of their literature review as “improving decision making.” They offer elements of a ‘new framework’ for practical participatory evaluation and identify three key factors which they believe to be critical to success when involving stakeholders in program review and improvement: interactive communication, stakeholder knowledge and instrumental context (Smits & Champagne, 2008). This supports the perspective that stakeholder involvement serves evaluation best when it (stakeholder involvement) is an ongoing component of curriculum planning, delivery and assessment.

Jongbloed, Enders and Salerno (2008) present an overview of the relevance of stakeholder individuals and groups to an organization’s responsiveness to community needs, service to society, and the shaping of a mission statement. As they outline key questions they believe essential to defining a mission, the authors cite Mitchell’s (1997) theory of stakeholder salience, with respect to stakeholder power to influence an organization, legitimacy of stakeholder relationships with an organization, and the urgency of stakeholders’ claims on an organization. They advise administrators to identify their “internal and external stakeholders” and then map the relationships of their organization with each of those groups. The authors emphasize how critical concepts of stakeholder theory can help educators and policy makers prioritize roles and incorporate stakeholders efficiently by recognizing the link to accountability (Jongbloed, et al., 2008).

Salter and Tapper (2000) provide a description of how stakeholder relationships have become more important in the British educational system. The authors trace the general shift of Britain’s education to a business model, noting that the trend is especially evident with higher education, but can be seen gradually transforming other levels of education as well. They point to a change in educational language from terms such as professionalism and public interest to terms such as efficiency, effectiveness and economy. Salter and Tapper conclude that education would maximize support (including funding) by
being more publicly responsive to consumer needs, addressing diversity and increasing stewardship of resources. Salter and Tapper argue that increased oversight is accompanied by decreased autonomy of institutions, administrators and faculty, all of whom concede to resulting changes in practice and evaluation in order to maintain a power base and capacity to negotiate in the political arena. The authors identify the 1980s and 1990s as the decades during which education became less subject-based and more student-centered as a result of the increased assertiveness of the public and an increase in demand for attention to the ‘public-as-clients’ business model (Salter & Tapper, 2000). This parallels discourse in American educational circles as policy makers and educators look at the emerging trends in educational practice and performance, and argue the political implications of involving the general public in affairs of educational planning and evaluation.

A Proposed Stakeholder Participation Model

The literature review can be translated into a model for stakeholder involvement in program evaluation (ATTACHMENT 1). The administrator who has chosen to employ this stakeholder participation model will establish initial communication with the identified key stakeholders, and convey the mutual benefits expected by the collaborative effort. As stakeholders discuss governance and resources, individual and group needs and desires, the intent is to build consensus on the logic model and evaluation instrument components. Upon receiving the evaluator’s report, the stakeholder group is once again engaged in examining program strengths and weaknesses. The next step is identifying and prioritizing needs for program updating, modification, or change and developing an action plan for doing so. A successful implementation of an action plan must be followed with collection of formative data and qualitative notes.

The effective stakeholder involvement model will provide a framework for a continuous cycle of collaboration which provides ongoing data accrual from one program evaluation to the next. Stakeholder roles may change as societal and workplace needs change. During the process, administrators and stakeholders may revise individual or group levels of involvement. Stakeholder involvement is a dynamic process. By following the continuum suggested, administrators, project managers and evaluators work together to complete a meaningful assessment of program efficacy and efficiency.

Discussion and Implications

The overarching question for this study was, “How can administrators and policymakers most effectively involve stakeholders in educational evaluation?” Fetterman (2001) expresses the perspective of many education and evaluation professionals that the most effective and meaningful roles of stakeholders in program evaluation include responding, reacting, reflecting and expressing desires and expectations. For that to occur, administrators must correctly identify primary and secondary stakeholders, and, from those, the key informants. By doing so, the collaborative group will be best prepared to serve as a project team with shared goals for the evaluative process. Without this component, the evaluative process will, at best, be fragmented.

General educators recognize students, parents and families as the primary stakeholders in academic course content and delivery (Chen, 1994) while career and technical educators point, additionally, to business and industry employers, community college articulation programs, co-workers and the general public (Taut, 2008). The literature indicates that administrators and evaluators must identify the stakeholders in a particular educational program based on who delivers the services and who receives them. As a part of the evaluation planning process, consensus must be reached among key participants regarding the intent of the evaluation and the dissemination and application of the results. A preliminary agreement should be reached among evaluators and administrators on the driving focus of a particular collaborative approach. The literature generally cautions administrators to expect competition among collaborating stakeholders and suggests focus on excellent facilitation and management during collaborative group interactions.

Because the current generation of students, parents and business/industry partners demands more educational accountability and transparency than ever before, educators are faced with the task of improving administrator preparation curriculum and management models to address stakeholder participation. The West Virginia Department in Education adopted the 21st Century Partnership as an
initiative for career and technical education (as well as general education) in the early years of the new century. With this initiative came a revamping of the content standard objectives (CSOs) for each career cluster. These revisions required the inclusion of regular and continuing communication among school program instructors, administrators, and advisory boards or committees comprised of community and prospective employers for student completers. Program documents encourage school administrators to identify and include representatives from each body which has an investment in, or who will benefit from a particular curriculum package (WVDE, 2009).

The literature generally supports the conclusion that the expectations for and satisfaction with specific educational programming has a significant relationship with the level of involvement of selected groups of stakeholders. The personal investment of time and the level of knowledge about an initiative or educational curriculum will impact the willingness of stakeholders to publicly express support for that initiative or curriculum (Cartland, et al., 2009). General guidelines should be followed; however, the evaluation model should be designed to address the needs of the program, institution and/or agency directing the project. There are research-based models available, but the components may change from program to program. Individualized program evaluation model design is encouraged as the field is relatively new and continues to evolve. Administrators need to be confident that the evaluation model in place for their schools and programs appropriately and adequately addresses the needs and expectations of local students, parents, businesses and community representatives. Because of the complexity of program evaluation as a process, and the natural complexity of interpersonal communication, motivation and collaborative management, there is a need for addressing these topics substantially in administrator preparation programs.

Public officials and educational administrators find a strong support group among stakeholders who perceive themselves as well-informed about the local school and its educational programming. With that comes the requirement that administrators and public officials identify current, efficient, inclusive methods of identifying stakeholder groups, categorizing them according to levels of involvement, and communicating with these stakeholders on an ongoing basis (Daignault & Jacob, 2009). The degree of stakeholder involvement is usually determined by the expertise and comfort level of the administrator/project director in engaging and communicating with students, parents and the community. The evaluator who has been employed to design and execute the evaluation may also influence the level of stakeholder participation depending on prior preparation, experience and models of choice. If either the administrator/project director or the evaluator tends to generally resist the participation of others in curricular and program evaluation, the likelihood of effective stakeholder participation is diminished.

There are many advantages and much value to be gained from stakeholder participation in the evaluation process. These advantages include enhanced stakeholder satisfaction and support for funding and the allocation of resources to the program. Effective stakeholder participation models can develop a sense of shared responsibility for a program, facilitate increased stewardship of resources, and expand opportunities for stakeholders to voice concerns and make meaningful contributions to program continuation. Effective stakeholder participation can produce an enhanced sense of accountability for a program and result in an evaluation that is more responsive to consumer needs. Stakeholder participation can also facilitate increased individual, group and system capacity-building. Ultimately, this increase in capacity, reflected in a more in-depth understanding of the evaluation process, can result in a more effective and targeted use of evaluation results.

Although the advantages are many, adopting and implementing a more participatory model of stakeholder participation in program evaluation is not without its challenges. Evaluation is naturally a complex process and stakeholders enter the process at varying levels of understanding. The resultant challenge is that stakeholders have unequal learning curves and program administrators and evaluators must understand and acknowledge this human factor. Inappropriately and inadequately informed stakeholders also constitute a formidable challenge. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, all stakeholders must acknowledge that some conflict is a natural element of the evaluation process, and that all participants must do everything possible to develop and promote a climate of trust.
Guidelines and Recommendations

Based on the literature, a set of guidelines and recommendations has been developed with the goal of strengthening negotiating strategies and increasing administrator comfort levels with stakeholder involvement in program evaluation. These guidelines and recommendations have been divided into categories for district-level and building-level administrators.

**District-level Administrators**
- Adopt stakeholder participation as an integral component of local school evaluation
- Advocate for stakeholder involvement as a part of principal preparation programs
- Provide professional development for all county administrators and building principals
- Include stakeholder empowerment as an element of new principal mentoring programs
- Ensure adequate funding/policy for stakeholder collaboration/participation
- Develop a sustainable model for stakeholder involvement in the local school system
- Ensure support and guide principals in initial stakeholder communication
- Welcome/Invite collaboration in program evaluation
- Assist building principals in identification of key stakeholders for the individual school
- Provide for periodic assessment of effectiveness and revise strategies as needed

**Building-level Administrators**
- Evaluate personal negotiation skills and comfort level with collaboration
- Seek and participate in professional development related to working with stakeholders
- Become familiar with the various stakeholder roles in program evaluation
- Identify key stakeholders for your school’s program evaluation
- Determine initial programming involvement for stakeholders
- Meet with evaluator early and often
- Create a transparent climate supportive of collaboration in your school
- Seek guidance from district administrators and mentors as needed.
- Model and encourage stakeholder participation strategies for your teachers and students
- Educate policy makers, business/community leaders, parents, students, and staff
- Maintain communication among stakeholders
- Peer-network with other principals to share challenges and success strategies

**Summary**

As educational initiatives mandate the inclusion and assessment of global learning strategies and student achievement, so must the evaluation process reflect those elements as agencies and institutions address the needs of the 21st Century learner. In order to successfully make stakeholder participation a common and valued part of every program evaluation effort, district and building administrators must adopt strategies which will facilitate collaboration and student/client-centered evaluation model design. Only then will all those invested in the local and district educational programming be able to contribute in a meaningful way to program development, modification and improvement.

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ATTACHMENT I

A Proposed Stakeholder Participation Model
Book Review

The Governator: From Muscle Beach to His Quest for the White House, the Improbable Rise of Arnold Schwarzenegger

Ben Miles

Ian Halperin—a Canadian documentarian and biographer—gained a few minutes of media attention a while back with his tabloid treatise on Michael Jackson, Unmasked: The Final Years of Michael Jackson. In that tell-all book, the supposed hook is this: Jackson was gay, yes; he was not, however, a pedophile...Oh, really?

In his latest bio on Arnold Schwarzenegger, The Governator: From Muscle Beach to His Quest for the White House, the Improbable Rise of Arnold Schwarzenegger, the biggest revelation is that ex-chief executive of California and former world-class muscleman wants to lead an assault against the United State Constitution’s 28th Amendment. That’s the one that prohibits a foreign national from becoming U.S. President, even if that person becomes a naturalized American citizen.

After all, as Halperin notes, before seemingly spilling the beans himself, “Arnold has made no secret that he would like to attain the Oval Office.” As evidence of this less than startling disclosure, Halperin uses Schwarzenegger’s own words from a “60 Minutes” television interview. When the correspondent posed a question regarding his ambition to be elected president of the United States, Schwarzenegger offered this reply: “Yes. Absolutely. I think, you know, why not? Like with my way of thinking, you always shoot for the top.” Huge surprise, huh?

The other worst kept secret divulged in Halperin’s sordid yarn is that Schwarzenegger—who in his Hollywood heydays was un-affectionately known as The Groper—is a womanizer who has never exercised marital fidelity with his (now estranged) wife, Maria Shriver. Though Halperin penned this 352 page piece in 2010, before the Schwarzenegger love-child scandal broke, it still would have been worthwhile for the author to tell us something we hadn’t in all likelihood already surmised on our own.

As it is, Halperin’s The Governator is little more than a stringing together of sorry stories, tired anecdotes, conjecture, and allegations. In the midst of such pervasive gossip and “common-knowledge” scenarios—is anyone taken aback to learn that Arnold was a schoolyard bully in his Austrian hometown?—the writer bizarrely spotlights himself and his efforts to solicit facts, even going “undercover,” in his quest to capture The Governator in twenty-nine short chapters. In the book’s seventeen photo displays, Halperin is pictured an immodest five times.

Halperin also wrote Love & Death: The Murder of Kurt Cobain; along with the Jackson book, and now The Governator, as well as other trashy E-Hollywood type screeds. This unsavory Halperin canon of namedropping and character assassination is more than enough to justify calling the author a shameless scandalmonger. Certainly, having Ian Halperin on one’s “true” tale is an omen of a career gone off course, or worse.

Like a gruesome rush-hour traffic calamity, The Governator is disturbing, undignified, and difficult to turn away from. Early (on pages 5 and 6) Halperin confirms—for those who are uninformed or have any doubt—that Arnold’s father, Gustav Schwarzenegger, was in fact a member of Austria’s Nazi party with “a record of complicity with evil that would later haunt Arnold.”

Halperin also tosses in tidbits about Schwarzenegger’s in-laws, the iconic Kennedy clan. In one telling section, far into the book, the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy—Maria Shriver’s uncle—is quoted as saying this with regard to his level of support for Schwarzenegger’s initial bid to be California’s
Governor: “I like and respect Arnold...But, I’m a Democrat, and I don’t support the (gubernatorial) recall effort.”

Nevertheless, according to Halperin’s unverified claims, the Kennedys’ were secretly overjoyed at the prospect of Maria’s husband becoming the Golden State Governor. Indeed, it was Maria, says Halperin, who came up with Schwarzenegger’s campaign slogan: The People’s Governor. One thing that gleans through—for better or for worse—in this shoddy sketch of Schwarzenegger’s unlikely life is the ability to put his mind on a goal, and then achieve it. He did it with bodybuilding; he accomplished it in Hollywood; and, he did become governor of the largest state in the entire U.S.

In Halperin’s words, “Arnold Schwarzenegger had three unshakeable goals. The first was to become the world’s greatest bodybuilder. That would somehow lead directly to his second goal—to make a lot of money and have a lavish lifestyle...But his ultimate goal was to become a movie star...It was a dream he shared with everybody who would listen.”

Though the ability to attain goals is in itself neither good nor bad (depending on the goal, of course), Halperin’s tome does confirm Schwarzenegger’s impressive powers of manifestation and that is the prime positive take-away from this otherwise tawdry compilation of Schwarzenegger scuttlebutt.