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**MARKETING CLASSROOM PHILOSOPHY
TO ACHIEVE CRITICAL LITERACY**

**A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education: Reading**

**by
Christie Bayless Gorsline**

June 1994


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Approved by:


Joseph W. Gray, First Reader

May 25, 1994
Date


Thom G. Gehring, Second Reader

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to provide educators with the resources and motivation to actively market a classroom philosophy that honors creativity and problem solving. This philosophy focuses on the attainment of critical literacy in order to develop a citizenry capable of a participatory democracy. Teachers utilize the media within their classrooms as a creative teaching tool, but seldom do we position ourselves as leaders and inform the media of our projects, programs and philosophies in an effort to establish a constituency of philosophical support. Educators recognize the power of print and electronic media and this project provides teachers with the resources to utilize the medium to deliver a vision for education.

The literature review explores educational research in the atmosphere of a service oriented business climate and the corresponding need for critical literacy as a common vision for schools in the twenty-first century. The review of the literature explores educational research findings in an effort to focus on the formula that will best prepare children

for a future of constant change and produce a populace capable of creative problem solving, able to think critically, to make connections, and to participate actively in democracy. The literature review stresses the importance of advocacy and the power that the media has on belief systems and coalition building.

The project is a media guide and is intended to facilitate educators' writing press releases and accessing the media. A copy of the guide is in the Appendix. It will be distributed to the seven hundred fifty certificated teachers and counselors in the Redlands Unified School District.

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INTRODUCTION

American schools are under attack from politicians and the media. The public is beginning to doubt the legitimacy and effectiveness of public schools and something has to change. The unrelenting attacks in the media will ultimately bring profound change, and the question is not if change will occur, but what kind of change will develop in our public school systems. When educators align with the business community toward a mutual goal of producing an employable and creative workforce, then the two forces can be a team working toward a common goal. Visions of literacy and literacy education that include not only the development of a literate and skilled workforce, but also a critical literacy ensures a citizenry capable of a participatory democracy. Students cannot learn decision making and inventive problem solving in an atmosphere that requires them to sit quietly and respond to specific questions. The essential importance of literacy is the awakening of the imagination and the creation of a critically intelligent populace. This vision of literacy honors our capacity for a quality life and marshals hope for a strong democratic society.

Critical literacy requires that people understand themselves and others, have the capacity to make connections, and view learning as a lifelong pursuit. Educators embracing the tenets of critical literacy offer a curriculum that empowers students to participate in the control of their lives, to analyze social contradictions and to discuss democracy as a means to social justice rather than an end to itself. Literacy encompasses more than the ability to decode words and make meaning. A literate person in the twenty first century will need to be educated, employable, functioning, questioning, and aware. With this definition of literacy, the vision for educational philosophy can be shaped to meet the challenges of the future. Students need to be prepared to live in a democratic society and educators are the key to guiding students to achieve personal fulfillment and self realization. Upon completion of formal schooling, students need the skills to perceive the complexity of social, economic and political problems, be able to take an active role as citizens and know how to work for change in a democratic society. They will need to understand the value, importance and fragility of democratic institutions, to understand the conditions

that encourage democratic prosperity, to care deeply about the quality of life in their community, nation and world. Teachers cannot give students all of the answers needed in a changing society, but they can enable students to be inquisitive, and instill in them a desire to learn and the tools for finding answers. Today's students need to develop a level of critical literacy that empowers individual and social responsibility.

Pursuing a vision of critical literacy questions the assumptions upon which the "vision" is based. A vision that builds a society of lifelong learners, creative problem solvers and productive citizens will allow all voices and arguments to be heard regardless of race, class and gender. Education research indicates that this vision can best be achieved when education begins with classrooms that are learning centered, meaning focused and holistic. Teachers produce independent thinkers when they set the stage for children to explore and experiment, and the teacher functions as a choreographer, learner and observer. Teaching needs to be a process of leading from behind by providing experiences that move the child toward greater literacy in all disciplines and creating an

excitement for the learning process. When teachers empower children to make choices about what they learn, students are naturally involved and enthusiastic about learning. Literacy activities that are literature based and meaningful to students lead to the natural attainment of literacy across the curriculum and the development of critical literacy. When teachers value risk-taking in students, they learn to become risk takers. When a teacher creates learning activities that are language rich and success-oriented, students learn to view and value the process as well as the product, and therefore, learn how to learn.

The curriculum that will lead to this kind of empowerment for students builds on learners' strengths, creates social situations that promote problem solving and critical thinking and is child centered and literature rich. In such a classroom there is an emphasis on risk taking, predicting and decision making. The nature of the curriculum presumes flexibility and spontaneity.

Teachers with a philosophy that fosters implementation of what research knows about the nature of the development of literacy and the growth of children know that curriculum cannot be text or test

driven if the goal is to develop creative thinkers and problem solvers. Students are empowered by their choice to have ownership of their learning. With choice comes responsibility and in the process children learn self-evaluation, self-confidence and self-appreciation, all vital skills to the business community and the future of corporate and democratic America.

A curriculum of critical literacy leads to the development of lifelong active learners. This requires an early education that focuses foremost on the learner. When the teacher trusts the student to be a capable learner and decision maker the student feels successful and the successful model can be translated to the greater community. Only when teachers access the media will parents, business people, and political leaders understand education goals and support a successful classroom environment.

Mass communication can divide us or bring us together. New technologies enable us to send and receive messages in an increasingly rapid manner. If we do not like an idea, program or political leader, media access provides the forum for talking back. Mass media has the power to help form social agendas,

develop coalitions and create policy. Communication is becoming two-way. In 1992 one man from Texas, Ross Perot, proved he could use communication technologies to bypass and challenge old political structures to reach large audiences and alter the political agenda. Mass communication is becoming more like person-to-person communication: exciting, involving, strange, unpredictable and challenging. Communication has entered a new era, and teachers, as professionals, have the opportunity to set the agenda for education and build a coalition to support their beliefs. The key is to agree on an agenda and to present the message actively through the media.

These are key issues that we face as teachers, business owners, parents, and citizens. We need to shift our thinking with the shifting world. It is not sufficient to close the classroom door and teach. We need to bring the public into an understanding of our goals for today's children as we build tomorrow's citizenry. The message of student responsibility for learning can be presented through the media, with an understanding that students who have choices become adult decision makers. Inventive children in the classroom will become accustomed to the free flow of

ideas and find fresh solutions. Children who have ownership of the curriculum demonstrate fewer discipline and motivation problems and continue to be motivated leaders.

If we do not have a critically thinking educated populace, the impact on society will be measured in dollars spent on dysfunctional, unemployable, disenfranchised adults as well as by the loss of productivity and the ultimate loss of democracy. A mind trained to range freely is the initial source of innovative problem solving and creative solutions to economic and social questions. Ingenuity does not develop in minds that are uniform, lock stepped and bored. Inventiveness and fresh solutions result from the free flow of ideas, building their own momentum, leapfrogging to answers that work.

Creative thought is joyful. When a great idea emerges there is an adrenalin high that is totally drug free and positive. New directions, different approaches, and exciting solutions emerge from a place in each of us that cannot be tapped without practice. Like an out of shape muscle, the brain needs to be encouraged to think creatively. It is unwise to take this resource for granted. By understanding how best

to tap into the creative resource of every child in every classroom, we can ensure development of lifelong creative thinkers.

Businesses try to ensure that the workplace is conducive to clear thinking and spend millions providing a comfortable environment, seminars and speakers. Untold resources are spent on products and strategies designed to enhance creativity. The business community can function supportively as an enthusiastic partner in the concept of beginning the training of future employees and become participants in an education philosophy that engenders creativity. This partnership can be achieved when educators share their vision and commitment through the media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher reaffirmed our nation's need to be a leader in world affairs in a speech to the United States Senate, stating: "we must be more engaged internationally, not less; more ardent in the promotion of democracy, not less; and more inspired in our leadership, not less" (Newsweek, 1993). The mandate for educators to engender a classroom vision that produces students who are equally engaged, ardent and inspired is critical. Creating a meaning making instructional environment is integral to the development of involved and literate students, capable of leading and participating in democratic society (Harste, 1989). President Bill Clinton, speaking of his vision for the U.S. Department of Education policy encouraged the "formulation of what we must do now to prepare for the future. We are committed to producing a positive change as we move toward a shared vision to create schools for the twenty-first century. We must all share that vision" (Clinton, 1993).

Definition of the 'vision' that will lead to the empowerment of students to be productive citizens requires a review of literature including current

predominant classroom philosophies, research regarding learning patterns, and analysis of skills and education levels predictably required for functioning in the twenty first century. The literature review will also explore the power of the media and it's impact on attitudes and behaviors.

Historical perspective: Determining a common vision for schools requires analysis of predominant education patterns and effectiveness. In the past, a basic education was assumed to be the right of every individual. It was also assumed that education in the area of 'higher order thinking skills' that requires one to use ideas, abstractions, theories and creativity should be reserved for those with 'an aptitude for learning' (Shannon, 1990). Today schools are expected to educate all students at this higher level of creativity. These expectations require educators to assume responsibility for additional challenges. The skill and drill environment of the present school structure grew out of a purpose for schooling that is inconsistent with emerging social and economic realities (Meek, 1992). "Schools do not prepare all children to function effectively in the world of ideas. All children do not learn to think critically and creatively or to be lifelong learners; schools do not prepare the young for life in an information-based

society; the society in which America's children will be required to function as adults" (Schlechty, 1990).

The American public school system was invented at a time when the purpose of education was to promote civic literacy in a community of farms and small towns. The environment was rural agrarian and these early schools were intended to teach children to read the Bible and understand numbers at a minimal level. The overriding purpose of the public school system was to provide a common core of learning for all students. Implicit in this vision for education was a relatively homogenous community, a general agreement on values, and a society that did not require advanced critical literacy in order to participate (Shannon, 1990). Much of the mythology of America is tied to the view that education is not only liberating, but essential for liberty (Dewey, 1916). Thus, the survival of the republic depended on children developing an understanding and respect for the traditions upon which the republic was founded. It was essential that these young people be literate enough to fulfill their civic duties.

When America became a society of industrialists and factory workers the primary function of the school system shifted to producing children with the potential

for fulfilling work roles in the urban industrial economy. An influx of non-English speaking and non-Protestant people, increasing urbanization and industrialization had a major impact on American education (Shannon, 1990). Emerging communities were multi-racial, multi-ethnic and urbanized. The challenge for schools was a change in expectations to include an economic function as well as cultural and civic purposes. The business community required a well-educated elite as well as masses trained for semi-skilled or low-skilled jobs. In this shift the vision of effective public education moved to a model embracing efficiency as the prime value (Goodlad, 1984).

In the early twentieth century, with the creation of the American public high school, the educational system was based on a tracked curriculum. The curriculum became an assembly line where students were viewed as products to be molded, tested against common standards, and inspected carefully before being passed on to the next workbench for further processing (Schlechty, 1990). In this view of education, students were the raw material and the students' aptitude for education, which was determined by his socio-economic status, determined his chance for success in the educational enterprise (Rose, 1989). In schools

following this model, curriculum design and curriculum supervision are the centerpiece for control. It is assumed that teachers have sufficient skill to do things right, but it is up to others to judge what teachers ought to do. Texts and tests are pre-packaged to insure uniformity and continuity. In factory formatted schools the measurement of success is achieving and sustaining control (Silberman, 1970).

Throughout American history there have been conflicting ideas that challenged these standards, but education philosophy has remained the handmaiden of American industry (Gang, 1989). As we enter the twenty first century the need for clarification of President Clinton's definition of "vision" is heard from the business community's request for employees who are creative problem solvers. "Schools are part of the promise of a democratic society because schools are capable of endowing all our children with the knowledge and reason to function as fully enfranchised citizens. Education cannot be neutral. You educate either for conformity and the preservation of existing structures, or for transformation" (Friere, 1984).

There is wide spread agreement that schools need to change in order to reflect the needs of society. American education is not preparing students to compete in the emerging information-based global economy

(Carnegie, 1986). Given that our present system of schooling was designed to meet the needs of first an agrarian rural society and then an urban industrial society, it is not surprising that a revised vision is necessary to meet the needs of a changed world. The disagreement is not on a definition of the problem, but on parameters of the solution. There are large constituencies that view the path to effective schooling to be greater accountability, better testing, 'back to basics,' greater funding, year-round schools, competition through vouchers or restructuring. The debate rages, time marches on, and a clear vision has not been endorsed. Schools for the 21st Century compares the American school system to the railroad. The railroad system has not disappeared, and neither will public schools. "The railroads have simply decayed and become second class. The public schools may decay and become a second-class option. The signs of decay are apparent. Unlike the leaders of the railroad industry, who did not see a vision of the future, leaders of American education must get their business right before it is too late" (Schlechty, 1990).

The future of America's experiment in public education and democracy may well be determined by a willingness of educators to be involved in new and

uncharacteristic ways (Woodring, 1983). Until there is a general consensus regarding the purpose of schools and until this purpose is articulated in a way that is consistent with the conditions of the emerging information-based, post-industrial society, substantial improvement in the effectiveness of public education is unlikely (Peters, 1982).

A fundamental reconceptualization of the vision for education requires a definition of the needs of society in order to shape education to meet those criteria. There is agreement among business leaders, economists and education leaders that America is becoming an information-based society and economy. To say that American society is shifting from an industrially based society to an information-based society means that economic activity increasingly requires a high level of technology and telecommunications in an integrated global economy. The change includes a decentralized society with multiple options and relies on personal responsibility. Participation in an information-based society requires critical literacy involving problem solving and risk taking (Naisbitt, 1992). This shift in societies requirements for it's workforce does not mean that manufacturing will decrease. It simply points to a shift from an emphasis on machinery and muscle to an

emphasis on the management and use of knowledge (Kelley, 1985). A successful clothing manufacturing plant that previously operated in an assembly line format now is competitive with off-shore competitors by shifting to a work team format. In this manufacturing design, employees are paid based on production of the team. In addition to operating the equipment, they must know how to communicate, problem-solve, and think creatively. Presently, fewer than 2 percent of Americans farm, yet America's farms produce more today than they did when the country was agriculturally based. Farming now includes genetic engineering, chemical fertilizers, improved nutrition for livestock and complex financing and regulations. Farm work is productive because of the application of knowledge and requires critical literacy to be competitive in the current marketplace (Kelley, 1985).

In 1920, 22% of American's under age 30 had completed four years of high school. By 1940 the number had increased to 41% and by 1960 the figure was 64%. In 1985, 87% of those under age 30 had a high school diploma, and the figure is expected to be 89% in 1993 (Newsweek, 1993). An increasing percentage of the population is completing high school, however, the United States Chamber of Commerce reports a decreasing number of employees with the skills to adequately

perform the tasks created by a service oriented economy (US Chamber of Commerce, 1993).

The basic argument that compels business leaders to commit themselves to improving education in America is the argument that the only way for America to compete in a global economy is to increase the critical literacy of the citizenry (California, 1992). Jobs that do not require a significant use of knowledge are too labor intensive to demand American wages. If these jobs can exist, it will be in foreign countries at the depressed global rate (Peters, 1982). An economically sound America requires a populace capable of knowledge based work. Jobs that require critical literacy command the wages needed to sustain life in America. If schools are to help young people develop so that they can take their place in society as fully integrated human beings, education has to consider all the factors that build the personality. Schools that cultivate independent problem solvers recognize the human element in learning through fostering individual choice and social cooperation. Through applied and experiential learning the student will develop personality concepts in a holistic environment that leads to his productivity (Gang, 1989).

The primary obligation of twenty first century education professionals is to meet the needs of

students who need an environment where they are free to take risks (Brown, 1991). Students will grow intellectually through shared experiences and meaningful, relevant activities (Gang, 1989). To meet this objective curriculum becomes a highly individualized prescription. Learners need to be involved in the creation of the curriculum. An environment that involves student responsibility, decision making, and allows for safety in risk taking will develop the critical literacy required of our children (Short, 1991). The principles that fuel democracy are taught by example in environments that foster inquiry through action research and experiential learning. By contrast, a traditional skills oriented classroom denies experience as a component of the learning cycle (Friere, 1984). Experiential learning offers an approach to education that emphasizes the critical link between the classroom and the "real world."

Preservation of democratic society: Schools are not only designed to develop individuals; they are a means by which societies, especially democratic societies, perpetuate the conditions of their existence. When students are empowered to "experience freedom of choice in an atmosphere that emphasizes personal responsibility; encourages self respect and

respect for others, underscores the meaning of all people are created equal'; provides opportunities whereby children develop self direction and independent thinking; imparts, by example, democratic values; and helps students understand that a variety of solutions may be valid in any particular circumstance; they develop a critical literacy." (Gang, 1989). Those who deny that schools should serve the purpose of civic literacy overlook one of the most basic principals of the American republic: liberty and ignorance cannot co-exist. Literacy is essential to defeat ignorance (Dewey, 1916). Education must enable each generation to embody the democratic ideal.

Literacy activities are typically the center of instruction in a holistic classroom where the focus is literature based reading and process writing. (Harlin 1991). Holistic teachers recognize that literacy is a developmental process requiring hands-on experiences, active participation and talk while learning. They recognize that speaking, reading and writing are inter-dependent and inter-connected. Children learn to engage in activities involving reading, writing, listening and speaking (Brown, 1991). Students focus on the task at hand, participating in activities they have chosen. The environment is conducive to exploration, experimentation and social interaction.

The concept of educating the whole person conflicts with the traditional education method of dissecting the world of knowledge into isolated categories. The fragmentation of curriculum into different areas of specialization is an artificial construction resulting from assembly line models which are extracted from the mechanistic mind set (Hirsch, 1988). Holistic education seeks to help the student develop lifelong learning habits by comprehending the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge. Whether a student best processes information through a rational, sequential, linear or metaphoric learning style, holistic education realizes a balance. Assimilation and integration resolve the imbalance of externally administered curricula (Short, 1991). Whole language principles offer educators an excellent means to develop active, literate citizens (Goodman, 1986).

Economic necessity: A vision for twenty first century schools includes the economics of society. Schools serve an economic function wherein education is essential to livelihood. There was a time in American history when an illiterate person could find productive employment. Given the service oriented nature of today's business climate one needs greater creativity and problem solving skills than a master craftsman needed at the beginning of the twentieth century. Jobs

in an information based society require working with ideas, symbols and abstractions (Carnegie, 1986). Critical literacy is the attainment of the tools that today's productive citizen needs to survive. The skills to reach new conclusions and a sophistication about problem solving that is the province of a life long learner are not luxuries but requirements.

The image of a student as worker suggests a vision of drudgery and compliance if the education model is skills based. The vision of a twenty first century student, following a holistic education model, suggests excitement and creativity (Gang, 1989). In this vision teachers are not conveyors of knowledge, they are guides to information sources. Students will be empowered to participate as leaders and resources as opposed to sitting passively and receiving information. Schools will encourage students to make independent choices based on personal interests (Short, 1991). In this manner the child's responsibility to society is developed throughout the school career and the student practices skills required for participation in a democratic society.

The American economy can only succeed on the basis of effective applications of knowledge and growth of a critically literate populace (Hirsch, 1988). The means of production in an information based society is

founded on knowledge and the ability to put critical literacy to work toward creating, inventing and problem solving. Those with critical literacy skills have access to power that those without the knowledge cannot exercise. Critically literate employees are of significantly more value to employers, and to the body politic, than those who have no means of power other than muscle (Kelley, 1985).

Corporate leaders, when asked what they want from schools, responded: "We need people who know how to learn" (US Chamber, 1993). Knowing how to learn, on purpose, from books, from peers; to actively seek information to solve problems and to use others as resources in solving problems -- these are far more complex qualities to develop than simple skills in decoding words and manipulating numerical symbols (Silberman, 1970). Even if schools were successful in teaching 100 percent of students to read, write, and perform arithmetic equations, the students could not meet the needs of the information based society America has become. What is needed is a school system that can ensure that all children will be able to learn and will like learning enough to continue to learn and to think (Gang, 1989). Young people need to emerge from school with an open mind; one that can appreciate a range of solutions for a set of given circumstances. A

traditional lock-step approach to reality produces students with linear logic who have difficulty with cooperation and the collaboration that are foundations of a democratic society (Gang, 1989). Teachers who insist on the right answer, with no concern as to how a student reaches it, smother the student's efforts to become an effective intuitive thinker. A person who is groping to understand, and is on a fruitful but somewhat misdirected track, needs to learn how to redirect thoughts and to try a parallel but somewhat different problem solving scheme. Telling students that they are 'wrong' discards the opportunity to engage in questioning about logic and approach. Well directed questions by teachers promotes critical literacy (Rose, 1989). Einstein's philosophy concurs: "It is in fact nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry; for this delicate little plant, aside from stimulation, stands mainly in need of freedom; without this it goes to wrack and ruin without fail (Einstein).

Whole language background: The ability to think creatively in an atmosphere that fosters independence is the principle behind holistic education (Harlin, 1991). Whole language teachers embrace these philosophies in curriculum implementation and

thoughtful business leaders are seeking to fill their work force with these workers. Those who have been educated in a traditional environment are trained in the basic skills. This education formula calls upon students to engage in low-level recall, to be punctual in turning in assignments and to gain mastery at multiple choice and form completion (Silberman, 1970). These students will not do well in the America emerging in the twenty-first century. Students who are engaged, active interpreters of information, rather than passive listeners; become involved in lasting study rather than being involved only in the superficial processing of information. If schools are to serve the purpose that the emerging information-based society requires them to fulfill: to develop students as thinkers, problem solvers, and creators, then the tenets of whole language need to be embraced as the vision for the twenty-first century.

Education and democratic citizenship means teaching young people about the ways of society and enabling them to participate. This evolves when the educational process stimulates self direction and independent thinking. It requires group and cooperative work that builds mutual respect and fosters trust and equality. In order to be so engaged one needs group interaction skills and the ability to

confront and resolve conflicts. These abilities are integral to the democratic holistic framework.

Conditions of work in a knowledge based environment require an ability to function well in groups, exercise considerable self-discipline, exhibit loyalty while maintaining critical faculties, respect the rights of others, and expect to be respected. This list of characteristics describes the virtues of a citizen in a democracy and the goals of a holistic classroom (Purkey, 1970).

When schools become the kinds of organizations they need to become, they will be directed by qualitative results, not by programs and procedures. Leaders in progressive businesses work toward doing the right thing, as opposed to doing things right. Effective leaders know that a vision of the universe that is interconnected and unified is vital to progress, whereas, isolated and unrelated information is not (Woodring, 1983). The fragmentation of curriculum into different areas of specialization is an artificial construction resulting from assembly line models which were exacted from the mechanistic mind set (Shannon, 1990). An education system that helps students to synthesize learning and discover the interrelatedness of all disciplines will prepare the student for the twenty first century.

A critical literacy vision demands attention to elements of culture. It is in a multi-cultural environment with a broad range of ideas, beliefs, symbols and modes of explanation that society operates. The multi-ethnic fabric of American society is integral to the business climate as well as the social and democratic arena (Rose, 1989). Workers must be attentive to the needs of human beings with whom they interact because people are the most important resource in a work organization (U.S.Chamber, 1993). Again, the vision of business leaders parallels that of whole language advocates.

In a holistic classroom students are active participants and leaders. They are valued as learners and participate in decision making. The teacher structures and coordinates activity centers and helps students to make choices while observing their progress. Students share in decisions and set their own goals. The authentic nature of whole language learning activities develops lifelong learning habits and critical thinking skills (Goodman, 1986). Students cannot learn from an assignment that they do not complete just as a business enterprise cannot make a profit from a product that is not produced. Leaders in successful American businesses treat employees as important contributors to the enterprise, valuing their

contributions, and involving them in the decision making structure. Xerox and Ford are examples of companies whose financial recovery is based in large part on restructuring aimed at empowering and developing all employees. Participatory hierarchy improves employee productivity as well as job satisfaction (Peters, 1982). These businesses demonstrate that a primary benefit of participatory leadership is success. Successful schools will emulate this model in the classroom. Holistic classrooms have long subscribed to this theory. Students who participate in decision making share the vision and become life long learners.

The education professional: The teacher's role is to support the child's language and literacy development. The teacher is simultaneously a choreographer, leader, learner, and risk taker. There is a high quality of interaction between the teacher and students (Short, 1991). The teacher honors the values of students and the methods of interaction model the world outside the school. Students learn social interaction skills through practice and modeling. Students learn by demonstration rather than being told. With each hands-on activity, children experiment, observe, manipulate and play. Language is developed with each experience and extended through writing,

reading, talking and listening. Children interact with each other and a critical literacy is established (Meek, 1992). Open-ended questions encourage students to respond with thoughtful answers. Students know they are expected to think and to share their interpretations. This atmosphere of experiential learning involves the student with practical experience in working with others and creates an involvement in the learning process. This approach to education is encouraging to learners and leads to critical literacy.

Summary: The standards are high in a holistic classroom, which meets the needs of businesses. A democratic lifestyle insists on standards, because it is standards, rather than rules and procedures, that govern life amongst a citizenry (Dewey, 1916). A vision that embraces a success-oriented environment is not without failure. Success has to do with achievement, risk-taking and accomplishment. One does not achieve by doing what one knows how to do, one achieves by risking failure. A success oriented school sets student expectations that ensure the risk of failure, but at the same time creates conditions for producing success (Weaver, 1982). Failure is not a motivator. Education for democratic citizenship means teaching from an educational vision that stimulates self direction and independent thinking. Young people

are to be encouraged to make choices and to reap both the positive and negative consequences of those choices. It is in this atmosphere that mistakes become opportunities for further learning. Incorrect responses are viewed as a challenge for deeper understanding (Weaver, 1982).

Measurement of student progress should be relevant and not discouraging. A holistic environment assesses performance in an authentic, ongoing manner. A business environment assesses profit and productivity in the same way (Naisbitt, 1992). In a success-oriented participatory leadership environment, students participate in establishment of evaluation criteria, thereby involving the student and limiting failure.

Research about learning oral language indicates strong parallels with learning literacy (Meek, 1992). Children learn in natural and developmental ways. Language is acquired in a self-generated manner. Children learn to use language without external motivation (Smith, 1985). The reward for success is the ability to communicate, and additional reward is not necessary. Learning can take place without external motivation. This is a valuable life skill, learning for the sake of learning, doing something for the satisfaction of accomplishment.

Language learning is a holistic process. Children learn to use words in meaningful contexts, not through analysis of components. Children learn language and develop literacy skills by participating and observing (Smith, 1985). Instruction that is focused on accomplishing communication rather than on isolating the forms of language will help children learn about form and function simultaneously (Goodman, 1986). They learn phonetics (sounds), pragmatics (rules), syntax (word order), and semantics (meanings), all at once. Children do not learn to speak by learning the rules and sound symbols before they can talk any more than they must understand the mechanics of a bicycle and the laws of physics before they can ride a bicycle (Cutting, 1993). Language is learned by using it, not by dividing it's components and studying them individually. Literacy across the curriculum is best developed when children are involved in actual experiences that involve reading and writing (Harste, 1989).

It is well known that children advance at variable rates and that language learning progresses individually for each child. This is, in part, attributable to the child's unique set of experiences and ethnicity. A classroom environment that honors background differences and alternative learning styles

encourages the students' success by involving him and honoring his belief system. Children acquire mastery of literacy through repeated practice with frequent constructive feedback, not forced artificial situations. Children who feel successful tend to continue the education endeavor (Rose, 1989). In this manner life long learners are developed.

Learning to write is like learning to speak and to read. It is a developmental process. When classrooms encourage and celebrate oral language, children engage in activities that invite thinking, talking, reading, writing, and sharing. When children value each other's work and teachers value the work of children, life skills are developed that build a democratic society of creative thinkers and problem solvers.

Literacy is not a single process, but a sequence of activities that build on each other (Meek, 1992). The development of self-esteem is achieved when teachers respect students as learners, honor their diversity and generally believe in them as successful people. A belief that schools exist for students, and not that they need to be molded by behavior modification or assertive discipline into a predetermined mold, will contribute to the child's sense of success and worthiness.

Impact: Currently 25 million adult Americans cannot read sufficiently to understand a voter's ballot or job application. An additional 23 million people can read, but according to the US Department of Education, not well enough to participate in modern American society (Binkley 1988). Reading is a survival skill and adults who cannot read often end up jobless, on welfare, or in jail. Half of all prison inmates cannot read and eighty-five percent of juvenile law breakers are illiterate. Fifty percent of the unemployed are illiterate. The United States ranks 15th in educational achievement and 49th in literacy among 158 member nations of the United Nations. Illiteracy costs the nation billions of dollars in welfare costs, crime, and loss of human potential. Conventional education methods have failed to educate to a minimal level (Newsweek, 1993). The problem is escalating because in the 21st century, simple literacy will not be enough. Today's youngsters need more than simple attainment of decoding and encoding skills. They need critical literacy.

An education philosophy that meets the needs of the twenty first century honors the cultural and civic purposes of the early American schools, encourages the commitment and initiative designed by the industrial age schools and includes the nurturing and child

centered emphasis endorsed by the holistic practitioners. "Academic success, or any kind of success, demands commitment, discipline and initiative" (Schlechty, 1990). Schools cannot make children successful, but schools can create an environment where children will succeed. Schools cannot provide students with supportive parents, but schools can provide significant adult support to children who do not have supportive parents (Schlechty, 1990). A vision that will enhance and empower students as well as honor and reward them encourages excellence.

Practitioners of whole language principles have been encouraging this type of education for many years. They hope that now that the American economy supports the end product typified by a student educated holistically, that an increased number of education professionals will embrace the philosophy as the vision to lead schools into the twenty first century. Excellence is required in order to achieve critical literacy. Excellence in public education is directly linked to excellence in all areas of life in a democracy. Change begins whenever someone is in a position to recognize the need for change and has the capacity to conceptualize and articulate the nature of the change (Capra, 1982). Teachers have the capacity to teach holistically and to articulate their successes

through the media. Change can most effectively be implemented when those with energy, commitment, and goodwill are involved. Support for change will come from awareness created by aggressive use of the media.

Media utilization: Educators utilize multi-media tools in curriculum design through photography, film, video, animation, movies, and newspapers. Prolific use of television and newspaper in the classroom demonstrates that educators recognize the value of the media to impart a believable and compelling message (Reese. 1990). However, there is no published literature suggesting the utilization of these resources by educators to build support coalitions. All literature references regarding "educational media" focus on the student and embrace the educational and motivational value of the medium when used appropriately. The goals of the "National Agenda for Children," established by the National PTA (Newsweek, 1993) encourage "more extensive use of technology and related mediums" and support the increased "use of technology to reform and improve education". The implication is that these mediums are useful and powerful and designed to be used by educators to enhance classroom effectiveness. The application of this medium can be extended to build community awareness of the vision for the twenty first century.

Marketing: When educators are committed to building a support coalition, marketing the vision evolves in a natural progression. Change requires commitment on the part of the professional teacher. Marketing the vision so that it is widely understood and embraced within the community is the job of everyone participating (Reese, 1990). In a participatory democracy, the responsibilities are shared by everyone.

Marketing begins with the customer, what the customer values and what the customer needs. Effective marketing organizations are successful because they relate their production capacities to what their customers value (Lord, 1984). In order to market change, the marketing effort begins from the viewpoint that change must satisfy the needs and values of those whose support is essential. Marketing change proceeds from the assumption that overcoming resistance to change is not the same as creating commitment to change (Wicks, 1991). There is a vast difference between toleration for change and support for change. In order for a change of vision to be successfully marketed, the market needs to be defined, segmented, and support tactics made a part of the entire organization's responsibility (Adams, 1987).

A "market" consists of all the potential customers. Customers are people who have valued resources they can exchange for whatever the organization has to offer. In the context of marketing a vision for education reform, the customer base includes students, teachers, school boards, and administrators as well as parents, civic leaders, union leaders and business owners. The customers for change are all those whose support is needed to successfully instigate the desired change. The key is to know who the customers are and the values that they bring to the transaction.

The needs of customers vary from marketplace to marketplace. Their differences include what they value and what they expect (Adams, 1987). To deal with these differences, the market must be segmented. As the market population is segmented into specific areas of needs, the marketing strategy that will be effective to engender support becomes evident. Some questions that a marketing professional would ask to market educational change are:

"What are the critical values held by the various constituencies who would be affected by the change?"

"Are these values likely to be manifest in different ways by different groups or subgroups?"

"Which of these values are likely to be served by the change and which will be threatened?"

"How can the proposed change be organized and implemented so that the values served are increased and the values threatened are minimized?"

An immediate result of careful market segmentation and analysis is the ability to assess a "target" market. While the support of all markets would be utopia, any marketable product or change has supporters and detractors (Wicks, 1991). Marketing a change in education vision requires the active support of some groups more critically than others. Analysis of the needs and motivations of the target market can be addressed when segmented. The primary market for change is those persons, groups and agencies that will be called on for active support. A key to successful marketing is to address the needs and gain support of the target market while minimizing negative forces of detractors.

Change is always marketed from a positive standpoint. Coalitions cannot be established when scapegoats and blame are assigned. Marketing that begins from a negative standpoint breeds defensive reactions, lacks creativity and bears the characteristics of failure (Dozier, 1990). Successful marketing requires a means of encouraging people to

support change in a manner that elevates their feelings of worth rather than denigrating them.

Marketing techniques embrace a compelling vision. Visions are intended realities, as opposed to literal realities. Because people like to be involved in change, a marketing strategy that is inclusive is successful. An invitation to a target market to participate in the change effort will lead to marketing success (Wicks, 1991). A marketing oriented leader of educational change uses various approaches to meet the needs and concerns of a variety of constituencies. Business leaders who want test scores to go up are asking for convincing evidence that schools are engaging students in activities that result in the child's learning things that are socially and culturally valued. Carefully assessing the market segment's needs will assist in developing marketing strategies. A parent who is dissatisfied with test scores is unhappy with the education the student is receiving and the test scores are a convenient medium. When the teacher can display other measurable examples of the student's abilities, reliance on test scores will abate. A marketing oriented educator will call the parents and ask how the student is doing and what the school can do to be increasingly effective, as opposed to waiting for negative labeling to begin

through lack of proactive marketing on the part of the teacher.

Building support: Ideas are more likely to be accepted if people understand them, participate in them and believe in them. Building support for a principle, ideal or method of operation is done one person at a time. Groups do not think anything, they simply create structures for thought and action. Ideas and attitudes belong to individuals. Identifying the customers' needs and values and finding ways to satisfy them is what marketing is about. Those who successfully market change understand the goals of the customer base. The customer has needs to be met, including the need to be viewed as an honored participant.

The key to a vision for schools meeting the needs of the populace in a twenty first century participatory democracy and service oriented global society embraces the tenets of whole language. This is based on the bedrock belief that every child can learn and that every child will learn if he is presented an invitation that is creative, relevant, and appropriate. In this environment, the curriculum is driven by values and vision rather than by programs and textbooks and teachers and students are empowered to share leadership and accept responsibility for the inherent risk taking involved. Students and their needs are central to the

education enterprise. None of this can happen without the proactive leadership of teachers building coalitions of support within the school community of parents, business and civic leaders through individual advocacy.

GOALS FOR PROJECT

The importance of building a coalition of support for a meaningful learning environment is accepted by educators and administrators. What has been missing is specific marketing information regarding accessing the media.

This project is a MEDIA reference file folder that can easily be utilized by education professionals. Teachers will realize that the media wants their information and with the assistance of a convenient method of retrieving contact phone numbers the process of utilizing newspaper and television coverage to enhance education will lose its mystique and difficulty. The media folder gives educators all the local phone numbers for contacting the media, simple instructions for contacting these professionals and is a beginning tool to assist educators in accomplishing education goals in a proactive manner.

Educators with a propensity for change and an outward vision are likely to utilize the media access reference folder. As educators find success and news coverage occurs, the success of this medium for advancing education philosophy will progress rapidly.

LIMITATIONS

A limitation of the project is that change is difficult to implement without extensive need or motivation. The delivery of a file folder to a teacher may not be sufficient motivation to adopt a new system regardless of its' apparent virtues. Educators are inundated with paper memos, and this file folder format was designed to overcome this negative aspect of delivering another memo to a teacher. It is intended that the unique and useful design of the piece will contribute to the usefulness of the media guide.

This format is replicable in various markets, but not without changes. Every marketplace will have it's own media sources, and therefore, this media contact list has a limited geographic usefulness.

The nature of a teacher's work day does not readily facilitate making phone calls that require follow-up. Teacher's may be reluctant to add this task to their work day. Some administrators will impede the teacher's independence by requiring that all media contacts be disseminated through a central administration office contact. On campuses where this transpires, the project will have limited utility.

IMPLICATIONS

We can talk about the importance of an education, but when we act as though school is a holding tank rather than a launching pad, students pick up the undercurrent and fail to become active and creative learners. Learning takes place at the optimum level when the teaching style is flexible to the student's needs, relevant to his life, and exciting.

Children must be given the chance to master skills they need, to cope with the demands that life will make on them, so they can grasp opportunities. They must have the support of adults who understand and can offer constructive counsel. They need safe places where their opinions are welcome and they are free to take risks without fear of failure. They need an educational environment that honors their creativity and individuality. Children need a vision of dreams that are attainable and goals that can be reached. They need the critical literacy and problem solving that will enable their active participation in twenty first century society.

This vision can be empowered when teachers utilize the media as a coalition building resource. Students who see their name in the newspaper for a unique accomplishment gain valuable reaffirmation while fellow students gain a role model to emulate. Community and

business leaders are gratified when they read about leadership and inventive problem solving taking place in creative classrooms. Students perceive that their learning is meaningful when it relates directly to the community and they can effect change. Parents become increasingly involved and supportive in their child's education when they visit an open house, a science fair, or a class play. Students and the community respond positively when they participate in a campus improvement project. These events are pieces of the vision toward an education that embraces the values and potential of each student. Every teacher needs to take personal responsibility for publicizing learning events that have the potential for building a supportive coalition. Conceptualizing and marketing the vision for schools of the twenty first century is a compelling concept that will shape the future.

Schools today look very much the way they did a hundred years ago, however, the job they need to do has changed substantially. The old methods of doing business simply cannot prepare children for the level of literacy required in the twenty first century. The nation's public school systems face the challenge of preparing students to function productively in a complex world. Businesses need students who have been prepared in a meaning focused and holistic environment.

A student-centered, total literacy immersion program that values risk-taking and celebrates differences will empower children to make choices and prepare them for productive lives. Teachers must be proactive in generating support for this concept through active use of the media in coalition building. The future of democracy requires this approach.

APPENDIX

PROJECT

This project is a Media file folder for use by educators to access the media. Printed on the front cover are guidelines for contacting media representatives. On the back of the folder is a listing of local sources: including all local newspapers, radio stations and television stations. A sample Press Release is enclosed as well as suggestions for learning situations that offer opportunities for media contact.

Teachers routinely utilize the media within their classrooms as a creative teaching tool, but seldom do we position ourselves as leaders and inform the media of our projects, programs and philosophies in an effort to establish a constituency of philosophical support. Educators recognize the power of print and electronic media and this project provides teachers with the resources to utilize the medium to deliver a vision for education.

It is not sufficient to close the classroom door and teach. We need to bring the public into an understanding of our goals for today's children as we build tomorrow's citizenry. The message of student responsibility for learning can be presented through the media, with an understanding that students who have choices become adult decision makers. Inventive

children in the classroom will become accustomed to the free flow of ideas and find fresh solutions. Children who have ownership of the curriculum demonstrate fewer discipline and motivation problems and continue to be motivated leaders.

If we do not have a critically thinking educated populace, the impact on society will be measured in dollars spent on dysfunctional, unemployable, disenfranchised adults as well as by the loss of productivity and the ultimate loss of democracy. A mind trained to range freely is the initial source of innovative problem solving and creative solutions to economic and social questions. Ingenuity does not develop in minds that are uniform, lock stepped and bored. Inventiveness and fresh solutions result from the free flow of ideas, building their own momentum, leapfrogging to answers that work.

Children need a vision of dreams that are attainable and goals that can be reached. They need the critical literacy and problem solving that will enable their active participation in the twenty first century.

This vision can be empowered when teachers utilize the media as a coalition building resource. Students who see their name in the newspaper for a unique accomplishment gain valuable reaffirmation while fellow

students gain a role model to emulate. Community and business leaders are gratified when they read about leadership and inventive problem solving taking place in creative classrooms. Students feel that their learning is meaningful when it relates directly to the community and they can effect change. Parents become increasingly involved and supportive in their child's education when they perceive events transpiring that empower the student to develop his own potential and embrace the value of each student.

Every teacher needs to take responsibility for publicizing learning events that have the potential for building a supportive coalition. Conceptualizing and marketing the vision for schools of the twenty first century is a compelling concept that will shape the future.

The project includes a list of suggestions to assist teachers in developing ideas for contacting the media through a Press Release.

Classroom learning events are of interest to parents, businesses, and fellow educators. Consider writing a press release when:

CHILDREN ARE EMPOWERED TO MAKE CHOICES

CLASS IS PARTICIPATING IN AN INTEGRATED THEMATIC UNIT

LEARNING ACTIVITIES ARE LANGUAGE ORIENTED

ASSESSMENT IS ONGOING AND AUTHENTIC

LITERATURE BASED INTEGRATION OF CURRICULUM IS DEMONSTRATED

LEARNING IS ACTIVE

TEACHER ISSUES INVITATIONS AND OBSERVES

LITERACY DEVELOPS NATURALLY

RISK TAKING IS VALUED

CHILDREN HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING

READING AND WRITING ARE TAUGHT THROUGH CREATING MEANING

CLASSROOM AUTHORS PROJECT IS IN PROGRESS

READERS THEATRE IS TAKING PLACE

LANGUAGE RICH ENVIRONMENT IS PRESENT

LANGUAGE AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES ARE TAKING PLACE

FORMAT FOR A PRESS RELEASE

(sample included in project file folder)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

name/number

Photo request:

Double space the article and utilize the writing style of a similar article in the publication to which you are submitting. All opinions must be quotes. Don't editorialize.

List a **RELEASE DATE**: the date(s) you would like to have this article in the paper. ("Immediate release" in this sample).

Photo request: If a photograph would be desirable, give date, place, time for photograph. Call to confirm. Contact your local paper to determine their policy for photographs submitted by you.

CONTACT NAME and phone number. List yourself if you will be available, otherwise list someone who is knowledgeable and available to a phone. If the newspaper has a question, they will probably call once if they don't get an answer, your article's chances for printing decrease!

CONTENT..... Write the Press Release as though it is a finished article. Usually, the news article will be printed exactly as you submit it. If it needs much editing, it probably won't get into print. It's simple write the article the way you would want to **READ** it in the paper if you knew nothing about the subject. Be unbiased, brief, and interesting. The paper is in the business of serving it's readers and the item must be of interest to the readership.

Mail or hand deliver each press release, addressed specifically to a person. Assignments change at newspapers, so call to find out who the education reporter is. A few days after the release is sent, call to follow-up. Be brief, helpful, and considerate of their time.

The following list is included:

DO

Contact the media regularly

Type, double spaced

Provide a contact phone number and make yourself accessible to answer questions.

Be persistent

Be respectful of the reporters time

Be a professional

Mark your calendar and note intended subject matter for each release (once a month is a good target)

Meet with colleagues to brainstorm ideas for media releases.

DON'T

Expect everything you send to be acted upon

Hand write, phone information

Get "too busy" to return a phone call

Self destruct by thinking negatively

DISTRIBUTION DESIGN

The folder is for utilization by the Redlands Unified School District as a test market for it's usefulness and success. RUSD employs 750 certificated personnel and the RUSD print shop agreed to print enough folders for distribution to all teachers and counselors within the district. Redlands Unified School District will distribute all the folders through school mail to every teacher in the district. New teachers to the district will be given personalized encouragement to utilize this tool.

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