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ABSTRACT

This think piece examines the role of community in educational reform. The paper maintains that while many scholars, business people, and politicians have advocated the creation of a community covenant--a mutually beneficial relationship between schools and their communities--such programs have never really taken hold. The paper advocates that as the reform movement develops in the 1990s, it is time to consider actively engaging students in the community. Such thinking may provide the philosophy and programs necessary to change dramatically the way schooling is done in the United States and reconnect parents, business people, and community agencies with schools for great benefit. The paper argues that in doing so, confidence can again be restored in public schools. (EH)

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Robert Shumer

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REFORMING AMERICAN EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY

"It takes a whole village to educate a child"

African Proverb

"Every community as a school"

Diane Ravitch

"Education is not the filling of a pail,
but the lighting of a fire."

William Butler Yeats

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INTRODUCTION

Americans are concerned about improving their educational system. They have been for several decades, with educational reform a major issue for the past thirty years. In the decade of the 1970s educational improvement took the form of career education, values clarification, and behavioral objectives. In the 1980s the educational system adopted a back to basics movement, emphasized higher standards, and instituted more academic requirements for all students. The decade of the 1990s is here and there is unprecedented national attention on school improvement. Not only is the President of the United States concerned, but almost every governor and every state citizen feels change is needed because the reform of past decades has failed to renew public confidence in the educational system.

The focus of educational reform has been on the classroom and on the school. From behavioral objectives to cooperative learning, from increased academic requirements to mentor teachers, efforts have been devoted to making the classroom a more efficient instructional unit. Unfortunately, except for a few cases, the use of the community as a serious educational partner has been neglected. What a waste! In times when educational dollars are stretched beyond belief and cutbacks loom large on the political horizon, the vast resources of the community are barely being tapped. Filled with capital riches such as computers and modern equipment, peopled with experts from architecture to zoology, abounding with experiences which make learning exciting, connected, and relevant to the lives of students, communities are a treasure chest just waiting to be opened. Perhaps it is time to rethink educational reform in terms of using the community as part of the instructional program. And why not? Students use the community for all kinds of learning after school, during breaks, and after they leave formal schooling. In fact, the large dropout rates

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across our country (state averages from 9% to 42%) suggest that many students opt for community learning experiences before their formal education is supposed to be finished (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1991).

Using communities as schools has mutual benefit for both. Students become human resources to address community needs. Students learn applications of subject-matter in real world settings. Teachers become facilitators of community-based learning, constructing new curriculum which is personalized and meaningful to students. Teachers also become resources to solve community problems. Schools become genuine community partners. And communities provide students with opportunities for meaningful relationships with other adults. Communities provide use of up-to-date equipment and study of practical problems. Communities provide businesses to explore and opportunities to learn about the economic, political, and social systems. Communities offer students a chance to engage in actions as citizen, helper, and consultant.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of community in educational reform. While many scholars, business people, and politicians have advocated the creation of a community covenant -- a mutually beneficial relationship between schools and their communities, such programs have never really taken hold. As the reform movement develops in the 1990s, it is time to seriously consider actively engaging students in the community. Such thinking may provide the philosophy and programs necessary to dramatically change the way we do schooling in America and reconnect parents, business people, and community agencies with schools for great benefit. In so doing, confidence can again be restored in our public schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORM

While the role of community has been a topic of research and policy analysis for many years, review of past research provides insight into problem areas with our educational system. In 1974 a major report headed by sociologist James Coleman called for reform in our schools (Coleman, 1974). Coleman noted the isolation of youth from society and called for restructuring which allowed students to flourish as individuals and to engage people outside of school through internships and community service experiences to learn to become adults. Students needed to assume more responsibility for their learning and needed more opportunity to participate in the educational process.

Reports on education in the 1980s called for more change. Major studies of schooling, primarily at the secondary level, challenged the kind of education practiced in schools. In A Place Called School (1984), John Goodlad found that education in classrooms was essentially the same as it was decades before: teachers spent most of the time talking to students and students spent most of the time

listening, following directions, and responding to assignments and worksheets. Teachers were active and students were passive. Recommendations of this study were for restructuring which made schools active places of learning. Goodlad wanted more student participation in the development of assignments, more student talking and activity, and more involvement of students in the community through projects, internships, and community service.

In another report commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and directed by Ernest Boyer (High School, 1983), schooling at the secondary level was found to be as Goodlad described: passive, filled with routine, and isolated from the outside world. Recommendations from this report called for more flexibility in teaching and learning, more connection of academic learning with preparation for work, and the inclusion of a community service component to teach students about the responsibility of living in a democracy.

Elliot Eisner, Professor of Education at Stanford University, has similarly sounded alarm at the misdirection of educational reform. He says:

at present, American schools are embarked on a set of educational priorities that are both narrow and shortsighted. We need a more generous conception of what it means to know and a wider conception of the sources of human understanding. The poet, the painter, the composer, the playwright, as well as the physicist, the chemist, the botanist, the astronomer have something to teach us. Paying adequate attention to such forms of understanding in schools is the best way to make them a meaningful part of our students' intellectual lives.

Eisner, 1991, p.15

Educational reform must embrace a more diversified approach to knowledge in order to encourage learning. The ways of knowing and expressions of knowledge are different for people such as artists, workers, and scientists. Eisner suggests that schools need to respect this diversity and to allow individuals to develop their own talent and their own "voice."

Educational reform is at the forefront of the federal agenda to improve schools. "America 2000", supported by Presidents Bush and Clinton, has defined specific goals and processes for enlisting innovation to make schools functional in the twenty-first century. In "America 2000: An Education Strategy", six goals are described. These recommendations stress preparation for learning, academic achievement, graduation from high school, literacy, security, and citizenship. Specifically, Goal 3 calls for academic achievement tied to preparation for successful citizenship. Civic and social responsibility has thus become a focal point for many new reform

efforts. The passage of the 1990 National and Community Service Act supports Goal 3 by calling for integration of academics with service activities to enhance citizen participation. The notion of national service is also changing from a past focus on transition to adulthood to a more comprehensive approach to learning and youth development (Kielsmeier, 1987). Community involvement is no longer viewed as a rite of passage; rather it is an integral part of the learning process of young people.

Drafters of "America 2000" commend projects and initiatives which already address many of these concerns, such as Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools. Sizer (1984) calls for reforms which empower teachers to develop curriculum, which personalize teaching and learning, which measure learning through mastery, and which view students as workers. In these reforms the teacher becomes more of a coach than a lecturer, guiding students individually as they demonstrate skills and abilities.

Chester Finn, professor at Vanderbilt University and past member of the U.S. Office of Education under President Reagan, has suggested the problem with American schools is lack of leadership (Finn, 1990). Education leaders have failed to embrace clear objectives which tie reform to academic achievement and basic skill development. By focusing on the outcomes of learning, Finn believes education can be made more accountable and "the range of materials and mechanisms by which one can legitimately study and learn will expand hugely (Finn, p.592)." Outcome-based education allows for learning to occur anywhere.

High dropout rates ("Chronicle of Higher Education", 1991) and dissatisfaction with school among racial and gender groups indicate a need for flexible, more effective school models. Such alienation requires programs which address individual and group needs, which connect young people with adult role models, and which stress alternative learning environments (W.T. Grant Commission, 1988 and 1991; Carnegie Council, 1991; Orr, 1987; Weis, Farrar, and Petrie, 1989; American Association of University Women, 1992). Schools need to do a better job of integrating social, cultural, and human differences into the educational process. This cannot effectively be done without active involvement of the community.

REPORTS ON SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITIONS

Recent research in vocational education has also called for more change. Business leaders and vocational educators have requested the inclusion of more academic activities in vocational programs. The Unfinished Agenda (National Commission on Secondary Vocational Education, 1984), a report on the state of vocational education, calls for a merging of vocational and academic programs and an expansion of field-based learning. A similar recommendation was made by the W.T. Grant Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship in their 1988 report, The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in

America. Non-college bound students were found not ready for the labor force, so it was suggested involvement in community activities through pre-employment training, monitored work experience, internships, apprenticeships, and community service would better prepare them.

Current federal legislation for vocational education (The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990) requires a stronger connection between vocational education and academic curriculum. Successful models, such as Tech-Prep programs, integrate academics with applied technical learning. Research and program goals of the Act require states to develop creative models which integrate academic and vocational learning, and which involve more student learning in actual work settings through cooperative education and apprenticeships (American Vocational Association, 1990).

In another report on school-to-work transition programs, Stephen Hamilton, Professor at Cornell University, suggests apprenticeships be used as a model for adult development. In Apprenticeship for Adulthood (Hamilton, 1990), he recommends students begin with exploratory apprenticeships through mentoring and community service programs to get exposure to occupations and adult behavior. Students could transition to school-based apprenticeships and then to formal work-based relationships in specific occupations. The latter would be for purposes of specific skill acquisition and refinement of interpersonal skills necessary for transition into the world of work. Hamilton contends that through the student-adult contacts in the world beyond the campus students can best learn adult responsibility and adult behavior.

Still other reports dealing with school-to-work programs describe the need for students to acquire interpersonal and broad based skills and attitudes. A report from the Labor Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills detailed the skills high school graduates needed for entry level work: ability to apply knowledge, teamwork, reasoning, ability to use computers, and a passion for learning (SCANS, 1991). Another study done by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) and the Department of Labor reported on the skills employers want from their new employees. Included in their list of seven categories of skills were the ability to learn how to learn, apply basic skills, communicate effectively with co-workers and supervisors, be adaptable, develop with the job, work effectively in groups, and influence others on the job (Carnevale, Gainer, and Meltzer, 1988).

Almost every report from business and the world of work was consistent in what employers wanted: employees who had good social skills and habits, such as enthusiasm, cooperativeness, flexibility, and willingness and desire to learn. In addition, employees needed to know how to apply basic and academic skills in

work contexts. These skills, it could be concluded, were the kind primarily learned in workplace activities through cooperative education, work experience, vocational education, apprenticeships, and community service.

THINKING ABOUT COGNITION

Research in the field of cognition recommends a different kind of apprenticeship. Resnick and Klopfer (1989) discuss educational reform in terms of developing a "thinking curriculum," programs which bring students in contact with their environment for critical thought.

During the 19th and early 20th century people were expected to do most of their learning when they would practice their skills: in families or in apprenticeships. Despite important limitations, traditional apprenticeships had certain advantages over schools. Most important, because learning took place in the context of actual work, there was no problem of how to apply abstract abilities, no problem of connecting theoretical to practical activities, and no temptation to substitute talk about skills for experience in actually using them.

Resnick and Klopfer, 1989, p.9

Because of changes in modern society, there is a need for a new kind of apprenticeship -- a "cognitive apprenticeship" -- where students perform real tasks, apply contextualized practice, and observe others doing the work they are expected to learn (Resnick and Klopfer, 1989). Real tasks involve activities such as writing a report for a community agency or producing a useful brochure for a non-profit organization. Producing reports for people and agencies beyond the school encourages serious work, the kind that has meaning for others besides the teacher and student. It also places the learning in context so the abstractness of the work is focused and grounded for a particular purpose and for a particular audience. By observing others do similar work, students have the opportunity to watch people perform a task prior to executing it on their own. This process is similar to the one Bandura (1982) describes as social learning -- learning from modeling the behavior of others or through direct experience. In both cases the student continuously interacts with the environment to ultimately perform the desired behavior.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM AND THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Seymour Sarason, in his book The Predictable Failure of Educational Reform (1991), turns our focus away from the individual learning experience and suggests meaningful change will only occur when we focus on the systemic nature of education. Schools need to be

viewed in terms of the total society and we must recognize reform will not take place until the many entities involved in school and society deal with issues of power sharing and educational purposes. Effective reform requires more power sharing between all the players in society's educational endeavor, from teachers, students, and administrators, to community members, business leaders, and other community representatives. But power sharing is not enough if there is no well defined mission and purpose for education.

ESTABLISHING A PURPOSE FOR EDUCATION

Sarason's comments raise the important issue of educational purpose. We must understand the purpose of schooling before we embark on another set of "well intentioned" programs to improve education in America. "Education for what?" is the question often asked when the topic of reform is discussed. The next section of this paper will discuss the purposes of education described by reformers and the programs required to implement those goals.

John Dewey, in his recommendations for reform in traditional education, suggests the "ideal aim of education is creation of power of self-control (Dewey, 1963)." Since learning is a life-long process, students must master the tools of education -- basic skills, thinking, appreciating, etc.--, but most importantly, must learn how to learn and learn to want to learn. Learning how to learn allows students to grow throughout their lives; thus human growth is an important purpose for education. And growth is predicated on attitude; thus creating a desire to learn is perhaps the most important outcome of any educational program. This desire is enhanced when students can connect past experience with present and future situations.

Seymour Sarason (1991) cites the mission statement of the New Rochelle School System as a strong statement of the purpose of education.

The mission ... is to produce responsible, self-sufficient citizens who possess the self-esteem, initiative, skills, and wisdom to continue individual growth, pursue knowledge, develop aesthetic sensibilities, and value cultural diversity

Sarason, p.155

Thus individual growth, citizenship, ability to use and formulate knowledge, develop values and aesthetic sensibility -- these are the overarching goals for students. Helping students to see relationships between their life experiences and formal learning activities is one of the major purposes of education.

Elliot Eisner, cited earlier, suggests multiple purposes for education. The aims that count in schools include six fundamental goals. First the "journey should be the reward" of education.

Students should enjoy the process of learning. Second, children need to learn to formulate questions and seek answers. The primary function of education is to solve problems in life, and students must learn to ask questions which lead to satisfying answers. Third, children need to understand there are multiple forms of literacy; not just reading. Understanding occurs in many ways, and schools need to provide opportunities for children to experience variety in knowing and appreciating knowledge. Fourth, we need to encourage imagination. Children need to dream, to create ideas and thoughts which will improve their lives and the lives of those around them. Fifth, we need to help children realize they are part of a caring community. Children need to learn to work in groups and to be effective social actors. Sixth, we need to help children realize they are individuals with distinctive skills, abilities, and interests. Children should have opportunities to express themselves personally, connecting their learning with the process of self development and self fulfillment. Thus, Eisner suggests that we need to emphasize the process and environment of learning, in opposition to memorization and regurgitation of specific facts.

Bruce Wilshire, in his discussion of the moral collapse of the university, describes the role of education as one which "leads out or draws out by exciting students so that they freely initiate the learning process, and bring to bear their own energies and responsibilities (Wilshire, 1990). He bases his analysis on the Latin words "educare", which means to lead out or draw out, as opposed to "instruere" -- to build in. Educators draw students out of experiences to make connections with their lives and the world. Instructors, on the other hand, "merely build in information and techniques, answer questions", and define a rather fixed view of education.

THREE MAJOR PROBLEMS WITH SCHOOLS

How do we develop educational systems which draw students out, make them think about their world, their values, and engage them in the process of developing life-long skills and strategies to continue learning? While there are no simple answers, review of previous research indicates consensus on possible problems with schools. Examination of the above mentioned reports and studies reveals three major problems with schools: they are passive, they are isolated, and they are boring. To correct these problems, we must develop reforms which reverse these trends. Programs must be presented which make learning an active process. Schools must be connected with communities so students can understand the problems they will face as adults and learn adult roles in society. And student motivation, the desire to learn, must be an important ingredient to help students acquire a love for learning. Opportunities for students to engage in learning that is intrinsically motivated need to be included in educational programs.

There are many reforms which address the problems of schools. Because the issues are complex, no one reform method or program will solve all the problems. Cooperative learning, outcome-based education, computer assisted instruction, independent study -- all these reforms contribute to the improvement of the educational process. It is not an either/or proposition, where one program excludes the implementation of another.

Yet, of all the reform recommendations made to effectively deal with the major problems of schools, service-learning stands out as perhaps the single most comprehensive solution. Service-learning is active. Students learn by doing. Service-learning is connected. It cannot be done effectively without involving the community and without involving adult role models. Service-learning is interesting and motivational because it engages the mind, the heart, and the soul. It returns passion to the learning process and challenges students in ways impossible for classroom exercises or simulations. It allows students to choose activities which are personally satisfying and engaging. It provides an opportunity for students to apply basic and academic skills in a real context. It embodies living and learning in a social environment and potentially is the essence of citizenship in a democratic state. It recasts the role of student from passive recipient of information to active producer of goods and services of genuine value to others.

Because of its unifying nature, service-learning can be a catalyst for reform. Service-learning has been called the "sleeping giant of school reform" because it embraces most of the elements necessary for meaningful change in the way we educate young people (Nathan and Kielsmeier, 1991). Service-learning means more than just a special program; it embraces both a philosophy of education and programmatic characteristics. As a philosophy,

service-learning reflects the belief that education must be linked to social responsibility, and that the most effective learning is active and connected to experience in some meaningful way.

Giles, Honnet, Migliore, p.7.

Program characteristics, as described by the "Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning, (Honnet and Paulsen, 1989)" include active involvement for community improvement and student learning, as well as opportunity to reflect on experiences to learn more generalizable knowledge. Service-learning programs use community experiences as the basis for learning and growth.

WHAT LEARNING THEORISTS SAY ABOUT EXPERIENCE

Experiential learning has a solid foundation in educational theory. Jean Piaget bases much of his learning theory on the interaction of the child with the environment. His notions of accommodation and

assimilation are the mechanisms by which children make sense of and organize their experiences. Experience is the foundation of learning from which an individual constructs meaning throughout his/her life (Ginsburg and Oppen, 1976). Philosopher John Dewey describes the learning process as one of continuously connecting one experience with another; of building a foundation of experiences which serves as the base of meaning for an individual. Learning occurs when persons interact with the environment, comparing new experiences with past experiences. This "continuity of experience" is the basis of growth in an individual, and as long as the individual desires to have constructive experiences, learning will occur throughout a lifetime (Dewey, 1938). David Kolb describes learning as a process which starts with an experience, and then goes through a cycle of reflection, hypothesis generation, and then hypothesis testing through new experiences (Kolb, 1984). He and others (Boud, Keogh, and Walker, 1985; Mezirow and Associates, 1990) describe the importance of reflection in the process of deriving meaning from experience.

CONNECTIONS: COGNITION, MOTIVATION, AND EXPERIENCE

Resnick and Klopfer suggest that thinking and motivation are inextricably linked. Motivation to learn is based on prior learning and experience, a concept supported by Merlin Wittrock at UCLA. He suggests that learning and understanding occur because students, using previous knowledge and experience, generate new understandings of phenomena through personal constructions of knowledge. The term, "generative learning," describes this process where students create meaning from the context of prior experience and understanding (Wittrock, 1986). Thus experience becomes the building block of learning: without it knowledge cannot be generated, and motivation to generate knowledge is based on the ability of the learner to see relationships between previous and current experience.

This connection between motivation and experiential learning is further described by University of Chicago psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihali. His research focuses on hobbies and play, where people voluntarily spend long, pleasurable hours learning. He suggests that learning occurs when a situation is challenging; when it is neither too boring nor too overwhelming. He calls this range of optimal learning "between boredom and anxiety," (Csikszentmihali, 1988). Optimal learning occurs during "flow", when the student is directly engaged in a practical experience, one in which feedback from the experience constantly informs practice, one which requires active thinking, and one where motivation to learn comes from within the individual (Csikszentmihali and Csikszentmihali, 1990). This self-regulated learning is, in fact, the ideal goal of education. The challenge to educators, according to Csikszentmihali, is to produce environments which allow this kind of learning to occur naturally.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING--A CHALLENGE TO THINKING

From these and other learning theorists and philosophers, experience is determined to be the basis of learning and knowledge. To expand an individual's ability to learn means to expand their experiential repertoire. Each new experience can broaden the knowledge base of the person and enhance the ability to think and construct meaning from future experiences. Research on higher order thinking suggests that thinking is not context free, but tied to specific situations and to knowledge bases (Thomas, 1988). This means learners are least challenged cognitively when the situation and the knowledge base are commonly known and there is little complexity in the environment. The incremental, structured approach to learning in the classroom has frequently led to little challenge on the part of complex, critical thought. Conversely, learning in real world environments is often "complex and messy" (Schon, 1988; Thomas, 1988). Such learning requires situational thinking, thinking which applies a knowledge base to a new and uncertain problem. It is in this situational environment that the potential for higher level thinking emerges, occurring naturally as a function of facing problems in the world. It is the unpredictability of experiences in the community which provide this intellectual challenge to individuals and, at the same time, provide the environment where consequences are attributed to learning. There is reality experienced in the community which is not replicable in the school. Thus experiences in the community and in life have greater potential for critical, high level thinking and for retention than experiences in classrooms, which are often seen as unrelated to learning in life.

RESEARCH ON EXPERIENTIAL AND SERVICE-LEARNING

Past research on experiential learning, community service, and service-learning indicate these theories have merit and that such programs have delivered promising outcomes. The most comprehensive study of community service and experiential learning programs by Conrad and Hedin (1981) indicated that such programs have positive impact on intellectual, social, and psychological development of young people. This study, and others (Rutter and Newmann, 1989) found the most effective programs included reflective components, where students had opportunity to discuss the community experience and to relate it to their schooling and their lives. This conclusion was consistent with earlier research on experiential learning programs which determined that students did not automatically relate their learning from experiences to general, overarching themes and concepts. They had to be assisted by teachers through reflective discussions and assignments (Moore, 1981). A related conclusion was reached through research on independent schools, where community service programs which were tied to the mainstream curriculum had the greatest potential for learning (Levison, 1986).

Service programs have demonstrated positive effects on personal attributes of students and on social and civic responsibility. Students in community involvement programs seem to develop a better sense of self esteem, more favorable attitudes toward others, and more effective skills in dealing with others than students in traditional education programs (Conrad and Hedin, 1981; Luchs, 1981; Newmann and Rutter, 1989). Community service programs enhance students' civic and social responsibility by allowing them to be involved in the activities of citizens and by engaging them in the solution of civic problems (Ferguson, 1991; Cornbleth, 1982; Newmann and Rutter, 1983; Rutter and Newmann, 1989).

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND SERVICE-LEARNING

Service-learning programs have also demonstrated effectiveness in other areas of the curriculum. Students who work in hospitals, classrooms, convalescent homes, or public agencies seem to be more motivated to learn. This is consistent with information from researchers in vocational education who have found that service experiences provide students with responsibility and allow them to work cooperatively with clients and fellow students to solve real problems. Harry Silberman, in his study of vocational programs across the country in preparation for The Unfinished Agenda (1984) said:

In my visits to various high schools around the country I was most impressed by those programs that provided tangible service, e.g. child care, food preparation, dental care, residential repair, health care, tutoring, assistance to senior citizens, manufacture of home appliances, etc. The dedication and involvement of those students in cooperative team projects rivaled anything else that I saw.

Silberman, 1985, p.10.

Thus service experiences enhance student motivation to learn and provide tangible opportunities to combine vocational experiences in a new context--helping others. Numerous examples include this service dimension in activities beyond the school (Silberman, 1992). Project MAIN (Mobile Assistants in Nutrition), a collaborative project which combines a university, a high school, and a senior services agency, hired secondary school students to operate and evaluate a grocery delivery and escort service for elderly and disabled citizens (Blake, 1986). Students from several high schools in rural Alabama studied water quality and other quality of life indicators and made formal recommendations to their community (Knopke, 1984). In these programs out-of-school experiences are incorporated into the mainstream of the educational enterprise. Students do projects which have value to the community and provide opportunities for students to apply academic knowledge and vocational skills in the process.

SERVICE MEANS MORE THAN CHARITY

Yet, the notion of service is a delicate one. For some it connotes giving and helping others in a positive way. It makes the giver feel good about assisting people perhaps less fortunate because of economic condition or educational background. But for others, it suggests charity and conditions of servitude. People with money and skill take the time to help those less fortunate, but in a way that does not make those receiving the service feel good. Their dignity is compromised, their sense of self worth injured in the process. This issue of the relationship between server and those served is raised in Adolph Guggenbuhl-Craig's book, Power in the Helping Professions (1971). He believes we need to study the potential for taking power from others in the helping process. In too many cases those served remain in the "shadow" of the server, unable to exercise their own strength and self worth. This notion is amplified by Simone Weil (1951), who suggests that we examine the role of service as a function of ensuring social justice, not charity. Charity can certainly be the guiding principle for religious organizations and other volunteer organizations which prescribe helping others as a mission of their purpose. But educational institutions, funded by the public, have an obligation to examine the educational dimension of service. Such an obligation requires students to "reflect on their experiences in a deeper, broader way, examining the social structures which give rise to the needs being addressed (Schultz, 1992)." It is in this context that the service experience takes its rightful place in the academic curriculum, requiring students to understand why and how working with others in a social environment is part of the process of citizenship in a democratic society.

FAILURE OF PAST REFORM EFFORTS

It is the integration of the service experience into the mainstream curriculum which is most important to the effectiveness of learning, the integrity of the program, and to the longevity of the reform. Previous experiential learning programs have failed to endure. According to Stephen Hamilton, "experiential learning gained prominence during the school reform movement of the late 1960s and 1970s, [yet] nearly everywhere did they fail to move beyond the marginal status of special programs (1990)." Marginality was thus a major problem because the programs never were perceived to be part of the regular educational system. They were considered to be about peripheral issues -- career education, vocational training; not the main function of education, which is basic and academic skill development. Programs were resisted by the academic community because they considered experiential learning to be more about preparation for employment than about more global areas of learning embraced by English, social sciences, science, and mathematics.

Yet many community service and service-learning programs begin or

exist as marginal programs (Newmann and Rutter, 1986). Offered after school, on week-ends, or other times outside of regular schools hours, they provide students with a chance to do something different: to participate in a constructive, volunteer experience. While these programs have great value and merit and should be continued, such programs have historically been shown to fail as a reform effort (Ferguson, 1991; Hamilton, 1990). Rather, service-learning programs recommended are ones which fundamentally transform the school from a focus solely on classroom learning to learning which is community-based, supported by the academic curriculum and professional staff, and perceived by the entire community as a fundamental element of the educational enterprise. To implement community service/service-learning in its strongest form is to fundamentally restructure the school.

Restructuring schools to include community-based learning as an integral part of the educational program is no easy task. If we take community service seriously, as advocated by this position paper, we need to identify the problems which need to be overcome (Shumer, 1987). First, and foremost, is convincing traditional educators of the academic value of service-learning. Although several studies have indicated this is so (Conrad and Hedin, 1981; Bucknam and Brand, 1983; Hamilton and Zeldin, 1987)), most people believe there is a difference between classroom and experiential learning (Coleman, 1976). While there is a difference in approach, there need not be a difference in learning outcomes. In fact, the learning outcomes from community-based learning are potentially more potent and long lasting than any experienced in the classroom. Second, involving the community in the educational program involves a sharing of power and responsibility with many people and institutions. Students, teachers, administrators, schools boards, community members all take on significant roles in making the reform effective. Sarason (1991) reminds us that until we take the power relationships of the whole community into consideration, reform will not be successful and enduring. With community service, nothing could be truer. Third, teacher education and development institutions must take an active role introducing, promoting, and developing new teaching skills to implement the integration of community-based learning into the academic curriculum. Without this support, the innovation will fail for lack of professionals able to deliver the new educational process. Fourth, the educational community, including K-12 and college levels, must be willing to re-examine the role of the classroom in teaching and learning. As long as the classroom is considered the sacred temple of learning, meaningful experiences beyond the campus will never be accepted.

DOING SERVICE-LEARNING

How can service-learning programs be implemented in a meaningful way? To answer this question, we must examine the role of all the "community members" who are agents to this change.

First, students take on a completely different role in service-learning programs. They are no longer passive listeners, but active doers. They contribute real time, real work, and real solutions to community problems. They are placed in positions of responsibility where mistakes on their part can cause harm and expense to others; thus their actions must be taken seriously. Students have input into the development of the learning agenda and become active partners with community members in designing and implementing the learning program. Numerous examples, from students restoring a building in the Bronx Regional High School to others conducting a child care needs assessment, demonstrate the kind of responsibility and potential learning arising out of service activities (Nathan and Kielsmeier, 1991).

By being active in the community and by solving real community problems, students have an opportunity through service-learning to acquire and demonstrate leadership skills. Not only can they lead in doing community projects, they can lead other students to perform tasks necessary for social improvement. This philosophy is influenced by the work of Robert Greenleaf (1977) who describes the "servant-leader" as an individual who leads through the actions of service to others.

Second, teachers must break the mold of being told what to do and begin to create curriculum and program elements which meet the needs of the student and the community. Like the students, teachers must be risk-takers, willing to use textbooks as supplemental material and to place the community experience at the heart of the academic agenda. Teachers must be creative, resourceful, and willing to allow students to learn about new areas. Teachers must become facilitators of knowledge, able to guide students to meaningful community experiences and then able to connect the learning with traditional areas of knowledge. Much of the teacher empowerment literature, represented best by Ted Sizer's work, suggests similar roles for teachers. They need to do more of everything: collaborate with peers, collaborate with community people to enrich classroom and out of class offerings, support each other, individualize student learning, and evaluate their own programs for modification and improvement. The decentralization of power spreading across the country provides the opportunity for teachers to move into more professional roles, able to redesign programs and to become active creators of curriculum. Just as community involvement promotes increased motivation on the part of students, so too does it work to revitalize teachers and give them a new context for teaching.

But individualized, community-based learning programs are very demanding on teachers. It is initially harder to teach in this environment and teachers need assistance from a variety of sources. First they need support from administrators and local school boards. Administrative personnel have to recognize the new demands on teachers and provide for assistance in the classroom. Either

through expanded budgets or volunteer assistance, teachers need extra people in the building to help personalize instruction and to monitor the quality of learning for individual students at school and in the community. This requires different staffing patterns for schools, with people assigned to work with community sponsors and agencies to assure adequate supervision of students and attention to the academic requirements of the program.

College students can work in classrooms as mentor/tutors as field work for their college courses, as volunteers, or as paid assistants (possibly through work-study programs). Senior citizens can help, as can parents, business volunteers, or any number of human resources available in the community. For younger students, cross-age tutors from upper grades or junior or senior highs can provide assistance in supervising learning both in and outside the classroom. These aides can work in small groups or individually to meet the instructional demands of community-based programs by teaching lessons, helping students write learning goals, or just providing the support necessary to help students transition into community-based programs.

District administrators and school boards can also provide the leadership to support these different educational structures and the commitment to develop these programs over multi-year periods. One of the major drawbacks to meaningful educational reform is it does not occur rapidly; few people and few school districts have the ability to commit resources and program support for several years. Reform is often short-circuited when mid-point evaluations do not produce all the expected outcomes. Programs are stopped or cut back before they ever have enough time to develop sufficiently. Service-learning programs are complex and require a great deal of energy, coordination, and change on the part of students, teachers, and community members. Without timeframes of several years to develop, the reform will not take hold.

School boards must also support the innovation by providing necessary insurance coverage and transportation so community agencies and personnel are willing to participate and parents are secure in knowing their children are safe. One of the concerns of parents, teachers, and community members is that students are safely transported to their community assignments and that they are properly treated at the sites.

Besides supplying undergraduate students as community volunteers, institutions of higher learning, especially schools of education, need to supply faculty to conduct staff development and to hold classes which allow new teacher trainees to work in these community-based schools. Existing staff need assistance in developing the skills and perspectives necessary to successfully implement these programs. Thus classes in community-based learning need to be integrated into the fabric of teacher education programs. The innovation will not thrive unless teachers are

prepared to teach in these new kinds of schools.

Schools of education can also assist by encouraging more evaluation and research on service-learning programs. Master's and doctoral level students can participate in the study of community-based learning programs, focusing on the learning and growth dimensions so necessary to support the reform effort. While there is a literature on experiential and service-learning, it is in need of expansion and increased sophistication. Long term studies of the effect of service-learning on civic and social responsibility, as well as on academic achievement, are necessary to answer questions about the impact of such programs on citizen participation and learning. While there is initial evidence that service-learning is linked to civic responsibility (Ferguson, 1991; Cornbleth, 1982; Rutter and Newmann, 1989), no long term studies have verified this relationship. In addition, research is needed on which practices are best for service-learning programs.

Merchants, business people, and those involved in non-profit organizations also need to participate in the development and implementation of the program. Without them, there is no program, so it is important to get their support and work with them to develop educationally sound field experiences for students. Both private and public community sponsors need to open their doors and develop on-going relationships with schools so young people can learn about the world beyond the campus and the people served there.

To do this, though, educational institutions must assist in developing an awareness of the academic connections between the classroom and the world beyond the school. Successful programs send personnel to assist community members in writing guides for students so they can select sites based on current information. In addition, school personnel, working with community sponsors, help write curriculum for the field site so the community people can see how academic instruction connects with work in the field. Community sponsors need to be educated about the process, just as do the teachers and students.

Similarly, school personnel need to listen to community members to find out their needs and the best way to serve. Frequently, students perform their own needs assessments as part of their educational program, determining priorities for community assistance and program elements for necessary implementation. Listening to community members and giving them serious input into program elements and services is important to the establishment of relationships based on mutual trust and support. Educational programs which use community sites as "laboratories" or strictly for the purposes of the educational institution frequently alienate community members and undermine the whole intent of the community service effort.

Besides the local community involvement, state educational agencies, from the state departments of education, to the state board, and the chief state school officer need to provide the moral leadership for such an effort. Through technical assistance, public support, and personal interest on the part of the state educational system, teachers and district personnel become more willing to spend the time and effort necessary to start and develop programs. Such support can also bring in additional resources and recognition which in turn, makes local school boards more willing to support the venture. It cannot be overstated that to successfully implement a service-learning program which can be sustained over time takes the efforts of everyone connected with the educational enterprise. There will be enough naturally occurring obstacles to sideline the program if there is not unified support.

One very potent obstacle is testing and evaluation. Lauren Resnick, in a discussion of implementing a "thinking curriculum" in schools, cites the negative influence of standardized tests and other traditional measures of educational progress on educational reform and on encouraging thinking in educational programs (Resnick and Klopfer, 1989). If we are to encourage more active involvement of students in community experiences which facilitate thinking and relationships to the academic program, then we need to encourage the educational community to embrace more authentic testing, more measures of product outcomes, than the simplistic approach of standardized testing. State school officers, as leaders of their respective state systems, can provide the moral and practical leadership in this area, encouraging the educational system to adopt more flexible, outcome-based forms of assessment which are more suitable to the more complex community-based learning.

State school officers, in collaboration with state and local politicians, must be willing to wage the political battles over service-learning. There are many special interest groups which do not embrace the concepts of community-based service-learning. Such programs threaten the textbook industry because not all students will be covering the same topics and because students, teachers, and community members will be working collaboratively to develop their own curriculum and materials. Such programs are of concern to the insurance industry. Risk managers question the wisdom of allowing students off-campus for school activities. "What happens if students are injured or not properly supervised?" are questions frequently asked by this group. Teacher's unions question the use of community volunteers as co-instructors in the learning program. The issue of controlling quality of learning is often raised by teachers, parents, and school board members. Thus, there are many who do not believe service-learning should be part of the regular educational program. Their concerns must be addressed, their support encouraged, or the reform opportunities envisioned through service-learning will only be minimally implemented in schools.

SAMPLE PROGRAM MODELS

Imagine what a model service-learning program looks like if it were implemented. It can be a comprehensive, district-wide plan, grades K-12, and involve activities within the school and within the community.

For elementary school, the program can include several components. For instance, K-2 students can go on field trips to community agencies with "buddies" from upper grades or junior highs, and then do language experience activities. The K-2 students tell their stories, the upper graders write them on paper, the K-2 students do the pictures, and together, they produce books for their own library. These books become the reading material for the K-2 classrooms.

K-6 students can adopt "grandparents" from the community and write them letters, visit them periodically, and get assistance on school work from their "grandparent." Upper graders can do oral histories with the "grandparent", help the "grandparent" with their personal budgets, and write letters for them to other relatives and friends. Students can also study nutrition and mathematics by making meals, calculating caloric intake, and writing manuals for senior citizens on proper eating habits.

Upper graders and middle school students can engage in a variety of ecology projects as part of their science program courses, monitoring pollution, trash, and other problems. They can write reports to governmental agencies about their results. Students can also serve as consumer advisors, assisting community members to resolve complaints. They can research the issues and make suggestions for proper resolution of problems. Thus, they would serve as an arbitration board for the community.

In addition, middle and junior high students can serve as cross-age tutors to children in lower grades. They can teach mini-units on various topics, from writing, reading, and math, to more advanced areas of science and art. They can work with community agencies, such as the Red Cross, to teach entire mini-courses on first aid (Basic Aid Training -- BAT -- is a Red Cross course for fourth graders). This can be done as part of a health class on the junior high level.

Interdisciplinary core programs at the junior high (English, social studies, math, and science, for example) can develop long term relationships with government, media, or business to perform tasks, such as community surveys, weekly reports on community members or activities, and media programs on topics of interest to teens. Students can also shadow various professionals in the community and write essays and produce media about occupations and economic issues related to employment. These essays and displays (videos, slide-sound programs) can then be compiled and used in other

instructional programs. The important part is students engage in long term activities in the community which result in information and/or services which have value for others.

In senior high, students can participate in complete programs where all their academic learning is in some way related to community activities. They can learn foreign languages by serving as translators for non-English speaking members of the community. They can do science projects with local zoos, animal shelters, and nature centers (and produce materials in the foreign language of study). They can do publicity for various community agencies (and produce bilingual materials), and surveys which analyze the effectiveness of programs. They can work with local political representatives to study government in practice, as well as engage businesses and community agencies in the implementation of various programs and policies. Apprenticeships can also be done in public and private businesses.

In each case, students work directly with community members to plan and implement activities. Community members serve as co-evaluators, along with credentialed teachers, to assess learning. Students are themselves responsible for determining what they expect to learn from the activities and assist in the evaluation process.

Students read material about the issues they are addressing, frequently writing background essays on topics related to their community work. Readings often cover content in traditional subject-matter areas and are often discussed in seminars or classes.

Teachers in the program serve as facilitators of learning. This means they perform roles of both teacher and counselor. They oversee the educational programs, and assist students to plan learning activities which meet district requirements. They help students write project plans which identify the outcomes of the community learning and relate it to district curriculum. Teachers supplement the community-based learning with workshops and courses to include all the necessary requirements for promotion and/or graduation. They also hold reflective sessions to discuss the specific nature of the learning in the community activities.

Teachers and students can be assisted by college students who, themselves, are involved in academic service-learning programs at local universities. These college students provide individual tutoring and mentoring services, in addition to running small-group instruction in areas of their expertise (e.g. language arts, foreign language, science, mathematics, etc.). College students can also assist high school students to write their project plans and provide support and ideas for the community learning.

Often a teacher is assigned to supervise the community-based

learning activities, visiting community sites and assisting with instruction in the field activities. This teacher enlists local businesses and community agencies to work with the program, and provides community sponsors with instruction in the community-based learning process. Curriculum guides are written for each agency or business describing possible learning activities for the site.

Evaluation of students can take many forms. Students can opt for regular letter grades and traditional units of credit. In addition, courses can be taken pass/no pass, with variable units assigned based on the amount of work and learning which takes place. Portfolios, media projects, and other non-traditional forms of evaluation and documentation of learning can also be utilized for assessment.

Program configurations for school districts can take many shapes, from a full school-wide program to an individual class. In every case, the program is developed to meet the wishes of the local teachers, administrators, and school board. Various examples are found in sourcebooks such as Growing Hope: A Sourcebook on Integrating Youth Service into the School Curriculum, (Cairn and Kielsmeier, 1991), Combining Service and Learning, Volume II (Kendall and Associates, 1990), and Youth Service: A Guidebook for Developing and Operating Effective Programs (Conrad and Hedin, 1987). The process for developing a local program differs from community to community; yet the impetus for the program usually starts with the desires of students and/or a teacher to do a service program. With the new emphasis on service-learning as an educational reform element, support for program development can now come from school administrators, schools of education, and state educational systems.

CONCLUSION

America is again attempting to improve its schools. Years of research and reform efforts have failed to drastically change the basic workings of the educational system. For all the rhetoric about school reform, what goes on in the classroom is essentially the same as before. Teachers talk, students listen, and everyone goes through the motions of schooling. Schools remain essentially isolated from the communities within which they reside, with students venturing out occasionally for a field trip. The rapid change in the world outside the schoolroom in media, social structure, and economic condition has made the classroom seem even more removed from the world at large.

Several experts on school reform agree. They suggest we change schools to make them active, connected to the community, and interesting. The mechanism to accomplish these three changes simultaneously is school-based service-learning. Engaging the community in the educational process brings in a wealth of new resources: materials, people, and opportunities to learn outside

the classroom. In turn, it creates a new human resource, students, to work on social problems. In so doing, students gain an understanding of the basic systems and structures of our social existence and examine the role of social justice in our culture.

Service-learning will do more than just stimulate students, rejuvenate teachers, and excite business persons and community members alike. It will allow students to practice the one essential job required of everyone -- that of citizen in a free, democratic society.

Thus, restructuring schools to embrace service-learning as an integral part of the instructional program does a great deal to bring our educational system in line with our political and cultural philosophy -- valuing the right of each individual to participate in decision-making and to have a voice in the direction of society. It is the participatory nature of service-learning which makes it such a potent force in schools. To miss this opportunity to make service-learning a central core of American education would be a serious error on the part of educators and members of the community, and a disservice to the young people of our country.

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