# To Be Continued: Carl Glickman's Work as the Beginning of the Story

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## Abstract

Carl Glickman's life has been dedicated to researching and supporting school improvement initiatives that honor purposeful student learning. Currently, this kind of learning stands in contrast to mainstream educational practices. As a means of inviting school leaders to apply his work, this article highlights the commons threads in Glickman's writings, demonstrates their immediate relevance to all educators, and offers suggestions for taking action. With a framework of instructional supervision that emphasizes community, diversity, empowerment, democracy, and authenticity, there is a greater hope for bettering America's schools.

## Keywords

supervision; democracy; student learning; school improvement; transformational learning

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# Introduction

Over one hundred chapters and articles published, over one dozen books, a teacher, analyst, principal, professor, department head, president, endowed chair, founder of a national program for school improvement. . .the list goes on.  For most people, any one of these accomplishments would be the end goal, the prize, the defining glory.  But as I learn more about Carl Glickman, I can see that these achievements are mere by-products, symptoms of a search for something greater, and they do not even begin to define this man or his work.

His style is not provocative; it is straightforward and honest.  His ideas are so familiar that I feel I know their scent, their gait, their texture.  Yet, after twenty-five years of living and breathing education, the experience of reading Glickman's work is stirring and new to me.  Something feels so ripe and relevant, so pressing and real, that, as I read, I have to pace and shake the energy from my fingertips.  As I read what is supposed to be academic writing, heady, theoretical stuff, I am constantly being caught off-guard by emotion. . .excitement, despair, inspiration, indignation, desire, hope.

What I believe is inciting this reaction in me is that Glickman is clearly not writing an isolated book or article to augment his resumé.  He is not manipulating a singular "best practice" as a "fix-it-all" approach to prop up the current system, nor is he touting his own wealth of experiences as evidence for his viewpoints.  He is humbly sharing more than thirty years of research and hundreds of others' stories, and in doing so, he is bringing together everything that I also know to be true about schools.  It is holistic, messy, raw truth, and every cell in my body feels how urgently we need this kind of "knowing" in education right now.

It is my hope that this article will honor Glickman's years of work and service to the field of education, but it will not be a review of his titles.  He himself acknowledges that we have a tendency in education to become enamored with secondary goals and lose sight of the primaries, so this text will attempt to honor the "big picture" by focusing on the themes and messages that are common to all of his work.  Each section will begin with a theme and message that is my personal interpretation of his writings, and then I will present Glickman's perspective as he shared in an August 2019 interview.  (I have to share here, that even as I asked his opinion on whether or not my words accurately captured the primary themes of his work, he responded open-handedly with a question, "Well, I don't know that it's for me to say.  I mean, what is it that's real…what we intend or what people take from it?"  Based on that posture alone, I feel confident that he truly embodies the following messages).

# Reflecting on Glickman's Themes and Messages

I offer five themes and messages from Glickman's work, which I present throughout this article.  First, community is central to schools, and we are meant to live in connection with others.  As such, investing in connection to each other must be part of our lives as students and teachers.  Second, democracy is critical to our society and we should prepare all students to participate and improve our democratic society.  Third, authenticity is required for students to learn by doing real work that directly connects to their daily existence outside of school.  Fourth, empowerment is necessary for all stakeholders to learn about and improve their community, which is the

ultimate form of accountability.  Fifth, diversity is required to honor our individual backgrounds and experiences, and we must accept there is no 'one right way' to teach, learn, or supervise instruction; our approach must be highly contextualized to our schools' local needs, assets, and relationships.

**Community**

Professional development workshops and direct assistance tend to be the traditional pillars of instructional supervision, but Glickman's model actively tasks the instructional supervisor with "building community", (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2018, p. 18).  In his book *Leadership for Learning,* (Glickman, 2002), he opens saying "I cannot improve my craft in isolation from others," (p. 4) and closes saying "Without others, I cannot learn" (p. 106).  His recommendations for approaches to improve instruction are rife with interdependence: peer coaching, critical friends groups, action research teams, and clinical supervision that is conducted in such a way that the "supervisor is involved in an improvement effort in the same way as the supervisee" (Glickman, 2002, p. 14).  His suggestions for foundational school structures include the processes of developing charters and covenants (Glickman, 1993), and his action points for school reform consistently include the establishment of a culture of trust (Glickman, et al. 2018), the facilitation of shared leadership (Glickman, 1993), and the deprivatization of teaching (Glickman, 2003).

Glickman also makes it clear that he would not limit the concept of "others" to mean "others like ourselves".  In *Holding Sacred Ground* (2003), he expresses concern saying, "America increasingly has become a country of enclaves, separation, and private associations where only like-minded people band together according to the same professional, economic, religious, political, or recreational interests" (p. 4), and he consistently maintains the importance of addressing diversity, citing that as yet another primary task of the instructional supervisor (2018).

One can also see Glickman's emphasis on connection to others in his exhortations to provide teachers and students with "a cause beyond oneself."  He specifically calls for the "unification of individual teacher needs with organizational goals" (Glickman, et al., 2018, p.19).  He explains that successful schools know how to nurture this as a common cause, an "authentic, shared vision," that is formed through "shared leadership, collaborative work, and collegiality" (p. 42).

In theory, this viewpoint would appear to be an "easy sell" for educators, but the reality of what happens in most schools stands in stark contrast.  To create authentic community, there must be dedicated time to share stories, build trust when life gets messy, and push through real problems together.  The more time and energy that teachers are required to invest in assessing, labeling, tracking, compartmentalizing, comparing, and reporting on students, the less energy they have to invest in building community, relationships, and connectedness.  And, of course, school leaders are confronted with similar trade-offs in how they prioritize "community building".

In asking for Glickman's current reflections on this theme of community, he spoke of the importance of community in his personal experience:

> I was very much influenced by my initial experiences in education…. I had grown up in New England, and all of a sudden I'm in rural Virginia…. It was very isolated, and many of us were the first white teachers in a still all-black school system. I was drawn there because these were the "War on Poverty" programs…. I went into the Teacher Corps…. We lived somewhat in trepidation, because most of the white people didn't want us there. We were federal government. We were young people. We weren't part of their culture or values. The local African-American community loved, supported, and protected us…. There was a lot of fear and tension…and it just grabbed me about how important education is to people, and how people would die over it, (and who got it and who didn't get it). That just captivated me: 'What is the role of schools and education in a society?' I see this theme as absolutely true, because when you deny children of that…then you rob them of the opportunities to be part of a world that they never would have imagined if they weren't a part of it.

His reflections spoke to the positive impact of community in his life, but also the places that he felt community lacking and his resulting motivation to help form it:

> Later, when I became a principal…we were very innovative. I only hired former teachers from traditional schools who didn't like it there…I always felt, as a principal, very alone, not alone in regards to the staff, but alone as a principal of schools like this because I didn't have any equivalent people that I could talk with. So I wanted to go into university work to create the kind of supports and connections about schools that really saw their purpose as a public purpose.

**Democracy**

According to Glickman this public purpose, this grand "cause beyond oneself", is the maintaining of a moral democracy. He expressly states that "this is the most important fight in which to engage - the democratic education of our students for a just and democratic society," (Glickman, et al., 2018, p. 17). And his conceptualization of democracy necessarily values the participation of every unique individual, without regard for the individual's skills, history, socioeconomic status, or religious affiliation. It is not an association of diverse groups looking to protect private interests; it is more aligned with the ideals of a "thick democracy," an intentional, interdependent association of diverse individuals looking to promote the common good.

Glickman not only sees democracy as the end goal of education, but he sees democratic community as the vehicle for getting there (Glickman et al., 2018). He states that, "Democracy is an essential component of the dynamic school; without it, the school community and its individual members cannot experience optimal moral, social, and intellectual development" (p. 47). From his model for school governance to the roles of instructional supervisors and the very pedagogy used in classrooms, Glickman promotes the regular practicing of inclusion, inquiry, collaborative decision-making, and reflective dialogue.

In reading his work, it is hard to miss that there seems to be a competing message that we have been promulgating in education. Via tracking, grouping, standardized testing, retention, punitive

policies and a barrage of summative assessments, the message is that, in order to participate, you must first meet our standard; you must *earn* your voice in society by first proving your "normalness." What, then, is the message for those who are not "normal"? And what if no one, in the end, is "normal"? Current conceptualizations of democracy tend to focus on defending the freedoms of the individual while neglecting the value of the individuals themselves; individual value appears to be inextricable from performance. If the individual does not meet certain standards, he/she becomes the concern of welfare programs, churches, and charities while the rest of society continues on about their business, "norming" each other. And although the United States is viewed as an increasingly generous society, Glickman (2003) makes it clear that the increase in volunteerism is not the same as democratic participation; one-sided generosity with one-sided agendas is not the same as reciprocal relationships that require listening, learning, and working together to create a better society. In discussing this theme of democracy in his work, Glickman commented,

> I never really fit in one department or program in my university career.... I was a faculty member in four different departments.... I became really interested in political science, democratic theory, the First Amendment, civil rights.... It allowed me to reach beyond, into other questions that put education into a real context for me.... Democracy isn't simply a political theory; it is an educational theory about how people learn and what they do with their learning. So, when you say that how we educate is separate from how we live in society, it's impossible. You can't prepare people for a life in society without being *in* society. . . which actually makes the student work itself not only more meaningful, but deeper, and opens up new worlds to them.

## Authenticity

Glickman's quest to engage more students in the actual work of democracy instead of simply discussing it can be seen in his own public service experiences, such as sitting on the National Commission on Service Learning or participating in the Georgia League of Professional Schools as well as throughout his published works. In *Renewing America's Schools* (1993), he says:

> If our schools were to focus on the main goal of citizenship and democracy and show students how to connect learning with the real issues of their surroundings, then more students would learn how to write cogent compositions, would learn basic skills, would use higher-order thinking, would learn aesthetic appreciation, would excel in academics, would graduate. These secondary goals would be accomplished more readily as byproducts of learned participation and responsibility. The reason why many of our students do not do better in schools is not that they are deficient, or that their teachers are incompetent or uncaring; the reason is that these students do not see the relevance of such learning to altering and improving their immediate lives in their communities. (p. 9)

His first chapter in *Holding Sacred Ground* (2003), entitled "More than a donation," highlights a missed opportunity when George W. Bush asked U.S. students to donate money in support of Afghan children instead of asking students to wrestle with the complicated issues affecting the children and the possible roles U.S. children could play in forming solutions. Similar missed opportunities are repeated in schools all over the country when students participate in events

such as the annual canned food drive but never investigate why some in our society are in need and what they might do about it.  In *Letters to the Next President* (2004), he says,

> . . . citizens of a democracy need a deeper and more comprehensive education that allows them to develop the capacity to apply and contribute their knowledge in broader, more creative, and more independent ways.  Yet we continue to move away from these powerful kinds of understanding as schools become places of standardized learning.  Moreover, the mass media messages that bombard our youth. . .remind them that they are important only as consumers and not as citizens.  (p. 3)

In his own words, Glickman (2013) has devoted his "entire professional life to working with colleagues in creating, establishing and sustaining public schools that are driven by collaboration, personalization, and active and participatory student learning" (p. 233).

In the August 2019 interview, our discussion moved into talking about how most teachers find this kind of learning, (and, therefore, this kind of instruction), both foreign and intimidating.  It is difficult for students who come out of a world of worksheets and textbooks to then teach in a world of application and collaborative problem-solving; their efforts at application often end up looking like models and projects whose only audience is the class itself and only purpose is the completion of an exercise, (usually to fulfill a grade requirement).  Glickman shared his thoughts by saying,

> During the rise of the progressive era, this is where the confusion fell in. . . . is defining what you mean by "real activity."  People would say, you just want kids to be active.  No.  Kids have to be active within a structure . . . so they're connecting what they're learning with the application to how you use it. . . . Students learn best by connecting their learning. . . they produce, they demonstrate, they show how this learning has allowed them to do this. . . . The idea is that students know how education will give them value to a larger community.

Through our conversation, we decided that this theme of "Authenticity" is perhaps better-viewed as a sub-point or a vehicle for achieving theme one, "Community."  By giving students the opportunity to use their learning in an authentic context, we, as educators, are providing them the means to imagine their connection to something greater.  "Real work" is the tool as much as it is the product.

**Empowerment**

I had initially worded this theme as "Individuals learn better under 'empowerment' than 'accountability'."  As he addressed this theme in the interview, I appreciated Glickman's desire to reword my framing of it, and I also appreciated what his word choice taught me about how our experiences form our perceptions, (and, in turn, affect our communication with each other).  My use of the word "accountability" had stemmed from the more-recent practices of evaluating, quantifying, and doling out consequences for "sub-par" performance.  His use of the word seemed to stem from the acknowledgement that our actions cannot be isolated from their impact on others.  He said, "The reason I changed that is. . .the greatest responsibility is being accountable for your purpose.  When I say that I don't want to separate empowerment from

accountability. . .what I'm saying is taking control over what we're accountable *for."* He felt the phrase "empowered accountability" could properly express one of his core beliefs about, not just how children learn, but how adults learn. It conveys the belief that teachers who are allowed to reflect on and make decisions about their learning *as they value its effect on their students* will become more effective teachers, and that schools that are allowed to reflect on and make decisions about their own growth *as they value their impact on communities* will become more effective schools.

Again, this perspective would appear to generate immediate "buy-in" from most leaders in education, however, our investment of time and energy have not reflected that belief. Over the years, schools have largely moved away from site-based decision-making and curriculum development. External requirements have proliferated, standards have become ever-more centralized, and schools have had to designate inordinate amounts of time towards proving that they are meeting these outside standards. It is lamentable that, even in the world of academia, few would question the following statement: "Most teachers receive the most important feedback about their professional growth via an annual, summative evaluation by a supervisor," (unless we were to sink even lower and add that teachers receive their most important professional feedback via their students' standardized test scores). And our tendency in education to cling to these evaluative practices was illustrated almost to the point of comedy when Glickman shared this in the interview:

> When I first wrote this little book called "Developmental Supervision". . . a lot of people, when they read the book, they focused on this quadrant scheme. . . . I was trying to apply supervision with (child and adult) development to teacher development. . . . I made this quadrant scheme in terms of someone who is in any type of supervisory role, how they help can work with teachers in ways that the teacher gains greater autonomy. . . and then I realized later on as people were calling me that they wanted to use this in their *evaluations* of teachers, and I was really confused at first. I didn't mean that diagram to *label* people. I had superintendents coming up to me and saying, "I found out I have 42 teachers in quadrant x". . . . We're much clearer in talking about that now as a device.

He finished this reflection by noting, "Once you put something out in the public arena, you can't take it back. . . .That is something that I regret."

In *Holding Sacred Ground* (2003), Glickman implores educational leaders to recognize the research showing that teacher evaluation does *not* correlate to school improvement, and, therefore, does *not* merit the disproportionate time and resources allotted to it. He also challenges the extent to which our data-driven culture has edged out holistic learning when he says, "Where I draw the line. . .is at the insistence that learning must always be tightly controlled, narrowly prescribed, and clearly specified", (Glickman, 2013, p. 45). Even in the use of clinical supervision cycles, which would seem to address the needs for teacher reflection and professional growth, he warns that *how* we implement these cycles is critical for actually empowering teachers to improve. The instructional supervisor should not be the one giving directives as though he/she is the only expert involved; the teacher must also be treated as an expert and given the freedom to analyze and draw appropriate conclusions.

The status quo in professional development, even with the introduction of instructional coaching in many schools, often sends the message that we need to "save teachers from themselves" by having experts alert them when they are going astray and by providing top-down mandates to ensure the quality of their work. Glickman's approaches, however, appear to be undergirded by the assumption that teachers, led to reflect on and design their own practices, will improve upon them, and in powerful ways. As much as we need to help students imagine their unique roles in improving society, we also need to help teachers imagine how they might use their unique strengths to impact the lives of their students.

**Diversity**

After seeing so many pendulum swings and "cure-all" agendas in education, it is a breath of fresh air for me to receive this message, explicitly expressed, in Glickman's writings. In *Holding Sacred Ground* (2003), he actually states that the "more an empowered school becomes a model of success, the less the school becomes a practical model to be imitated by others" (p. 74). The reason for this is that those schools became successful by attending to their very local needs, assets, and relationships. It might seem like this realization leaves us bound by complexity, but, if we can step away from "the theoretical" for a moment and debunk ideological absolutes in regards to pedagogy, leadership structures, curriculum design, etc., then we can be free to focus on what is real and right in front of us: our community, our teachers, our students, and their stories. Recognizing that, even within these groups, we are all distinct and meant to play unique roles requires that we loosen ourselves from the paradigm of predictability and control in education. In the interview, Glickman said,

> This is what drives some people crazy. When we first started this work in schools, we had other people that would visit, and they wanted to know what the steps were, and there were even regional service people who wanted to do professional development. . . . They wanted to know specifically what to do. . . . Democracy is based on understanding a *framework*, and then they can look at *examples*. . . We worked with over 100 schools, but none of them were the same. But that's what a democracy is supposed to be. Democracy isn't supposed to be taking someone else's prescription and implementing it; it's supposed to be a problem-solving, looking, studying. . . In our society today, there is so much divisiveness. . . We are not a very thoughtful society. It is a very tenuous time. . . . The appreciation of a democracy is that it's an open society. It's supposed to be a society where people can disagree with each other, and then, in the end they can make decisions for themselves.

So the implementation process may look different in every school, but the democratic framework used to determine improvement efforts can be relied upon to achieve the common goal of preparing students to become citizens of a just and democratic society.

## Discussion

My question, as an instructional leader reading Glickman's work, is consistently, "What more can I do?", (not in a helpless, surrendering way, but rather in a yearning and inquiring way). I personally see these themes becoming more prevalent in the pedagogies that are implemented in

classrooms, but I have to wonder about their depth, sustainability and connection to the greater purpose. And I feel that they are almost entirely neglected in their application for school leaders and instructional supervisors. Without unifying organizational goals and individual needs, the results can feel forced, hollow, and sterile. Can we teach students to live in ways that contradict the ways we live? I do not believe that we can transform students into participatory citizens unless we can apply these principles in the way that we, as instructional leaders, live together every day. If we live in structures that exalt power, we cannot transform students into public servants who will seek the common good. If we live in systems that reward "standard," we cannot expect students to value "diverse." If we live in schedules that promote isolation and competition, we cannot hope that students will learn interdependence. And if we live as though our greatest purpose is to complete assigned tasks, we *can* fully expect that our students who do *not* manage to complete these tasks will behave as though life has no purpose. For me, this one stings the worst.

When I asked Dr. Glickman what someone like me could do, he responded by saying,

> We have to somehow get past this idea of "constraint". . . . Is this movement (about the democratization of schools) to change the mainstream or is it to open up pockets of hope for the loyal opposition? The frustration comes about when you think this change has to affect every school. The reality is a lot of schools find themselves constrained because that's all they know. . . . But there's also people there who have some curiosity and are interested in looking at things that are different, and they need a "space of hope". It's not that the pocket of hope is going to move and change everything in the world, but it's at least going to change *some* pieces in the world.

Glickman spoke about working with schools all across the state of Georgia and building networks and relationships to the point that he was asked to help change state policy. He said,

> We created enough attention and enough attraction that people would say "How can we support this work?". . . I worked in some of the most conservative places and people had no issue with me or with what we were doing in the school, because we said that our work is public-purpose work, connecting students to real work outside of schools. . . . Why would you object to that?. . . But it is an opposition position. . . . So the role that I'm real clear on, myself,. . . is the idea that *some* things are possible.

At first, I felt both relieved and repentant upon hearing this response. Firstly, why should I waste my energy dwelling on what *doesn't* work, and, secondly, who do I think I am to try to change *everything*? My role is to do my best right where I am and to support those people that I can, hoping that our voice will gradually become louder. I felt hopeful. I thought, "I can do that!" (I actually said that out loud). I shouldn't expect to turn the entire system, because, by nature, these kinds of schools will *never* be mainstream . . .right?

After digesting this piece of our conversation further, though, I found myself restless again. I wanted to ask a question, but it had a cynical bent, and that was a problem for two reasons: a) I have always seen my role as being a champion for teachers and schools, and I did not want to put any more pressure on them than they already shoulder, and b) I knew that Dr. Glickman was an

even stronger optimist than I was.  In *Renewing America's Schools* (1993), he had made this clear by saying, "The issue is not how to lift public schools out of disaster.  Instead, the issue is how to allow great schools to carry on, enable ordinary schools to strive for greatness, and provide initiatives and support for inept schools to move towards competence" (p. 6).  He continued by saying, "The great problem of American public education is not that public schools are as horrible as they are often portrayed to be in the media. . . . The problem of public education is its ordinariness."

So I wanted to let schools off the hook for any straight-up wrongdoing; after all, I know how hard all of us are working as educators and how difficult the tasks are before us. . . but, the justice side of me could not let go of my question.  Glickman graciously encouraged me to share it, and I hesitantly asked, "Are we to blame in education for what we are seeing in society today?  Should we be taking more responsibility for it as educators?"  (I didn't clarify this then, but in the event that our societal status changes and someone is reading this decades from now, I was referring primarily to highly divisive ideologies, regular mass shootings, and marked increases in suicides, anxiety, drug use and depression.). Glickman said,

> I think we are to blame for the type of education that we provide. . . . We are to blame for not using the practices and methods that equip students to think for themselves. . . . But with blame, I find that if you blame people, they are immediately defensive. . . . Generally people in education are good people with good intent, and they've been in a box. . . so I don't want to blame the people. . . . It's not a good strategy to create a greater movement by blaming people.  I'd rather have a movement that gives people something to become curious about. . . . I've also been in a political sphere my whole life. . . The schools themselves are not responsible for solving the inequities that exist in society.  They may improve upon it. . . but they are not going to solve the societal conditions by themselves. . . . If we have wiser, more-informed citizens, they can create a better society. . . . Schools can be the engine for much more educated citizenship, participation, and more thoughtful solving of problems.

He posited that, even if we had perfect schools, we would never have a perfect society.  Issues such as racism and violence would never be entirely eradicated.  "But it shouldn't be an excuse for schools not doing what they're to do," he added.

I couldn't disagree with a word he said, and I think this must be one of his greatest gifts as a leader, to say things in such a way that no sane person could contest.  I was still wrestling, though.  If education is a tool to improve society, is that all it is?  If it's *not* improving society, is there such a thing as neutral education?  I shared with Dr. Glickman,

> I'm struggling with this and the urgency that we have, because instead of seeing education as just a tool to improve, I'm now questioning. . .Is there such a thing as neutral education at all?. . .Are we *either* preparing students to maintain this democracy in the right way or are we teaching them to tear it down?  Is there any middle ground?  I don't think there is. I think if we're not teaching them that they have a role to play, then we're tearing down the democracy.

"I agree with you," he said, "but I would say that they're tearing it down because they don't care. They see education as only useful for their own individual pursuits. . . . I just think we need more schools and more settings as what I call demonstrations of hope. . . places that other people could watch and see." And then he passionately added, "And that's what my work's been about! What I'd rather be doing is be working directly with people to see if we can make something happen that other people don't even know is possible." I could not agree with him more!

## Conclusion

When a lifetime of wisdom and experience intersects a deep societal need, we must be compelled to do more than politely applaud. Carl Glickman has done truly thorough work, and for those of us coming after him, we can only honor this kind of work by trusting it, applying it, and building on it. What is the next chapter that we will write in the continuing story of American education? As educational leaders and instructional supervisors, how do we share the vision and guide the next steps?

Philosophically, we may have to address one particular impediment first: the connotation of the word "democracy." Much like our diverse interpretations on the word "accountability," my understanding and Dr. Glickman's understanding of the word "democracy" vary. I would say that his view of "democracy" is purist, while mine is culturally corrupted, and it appears that my interpretation is not unique to me. Already, in his 1998 book *Revolutionizing America's Schools,* he commented, "The truth is that America has never really been a fully functioning democracy, and there are now signs of further public retreat from the very concept of democracy." And, as he discussed the process of co-authoring his current book, he talked about receiving one particularly helpful review on his draft: "Most people will not understand what you're talking about. . .you mention the word democracy, and they won't know what you're talking about. They see schools as 'Is it preparing my kids for college, for the test, for a career?'" Dr. Glickman said that he agrees with this conceptual concern, saying,

> I've done this with parents. . . it's not on people's minds. . . The tension in this for me is that when people look at schools for career, doing academically well, tests. . . those are best-served by dealing squarely with the overall purpose. . . . They've never experienced that as the purpose of the school. They'll give some grace to citizenship or civic engagement, but not to the kinds of things that we're talking about, as democracy infuses the entire enterprise of what we do, what happens in the classroom.

This might be viewed as a generational issue, but even for me, as someone a generation removed from the incoming class of teachers and parents, the word "democracy" feels political, systemic, and governmental. I have grown skeptical of anything related to politics, systems, and government, and I do not feel motivated by this concept of democracy so much as I feel weary, wary, and defensive. Intellectually, I can appreciate that this is not how I *should* feel about democracy, that I *should* be able to embrace it as an entirely human, relational, and worthwhile enterprise, but I cannot deny my emotive response. If my purpose in learning is to uphold this structure of democracy, I struggle to engage, but, it if is framed more as presented by Peter Senge (2005), if the point of my education is to "learn instead from a future that has not yet happened and from continually discovering our part in bringing that future to pass" (p. 86), if I

am meant to be part of something so great that I cannot fully comprehend it, something that might *redeem* this concept of democracy, then I feel myself compelled to act. If I can imagine concrete ways in which my everyday, local interactions lead to the creation of something new and better, instead of maintaining something that feels old and broken, then I feel hope. So, perhaps our first step as educational leaders is not to deny what we know to be true about the purpose of education, but to confront the power of ideology and intentionally leverage it to reframe how that purpose is conveyed to teachers, parents and students. We, as educators, are not to be disseminators of information as much as we are to be facilitators of imagination, the imagination of what learning *could* do, and it is on us to help others see their personal potential to create a new story.

This, however, is a vision that we cannot convey with words alone; it must be clearly cast by our actions. And Glickman has given us a practical road map for what to do next, (not a *formula*, but a *framework*). He has spent a lifetime working with educators, students and parents in hundreds of successful, progressive schools. Below he offers are what he thinks our next steps should be.

## Establish a Growth Mindset Culture

Glickman concludes *Leadership for Learning* (2002) with statements such as, "no matter how well or poorly one is currently doing - one must always learn how to be better," and "the aim is always toward more individual autonomy for achieving collective learning goals," and "we have to step out of the privacy of our own work and publicly open ourselves to the critiques of others." (p. 104). To create this kind of school culture, we know it is imperative that there be authentic relationships and trust, the kind of trust that frees people from fear of judgement, (or, worse yet, losing their jobs). This is where his model of clinical supervision comes in. . . setting the example for reciprocal relationships that have the ultimate purpose of learning together, not labeling performance. What would it look like if we, as educational supervisors, spent more effort on inspiring teachers than on holding them accountable to a particular agenda? What would it look like if we prioritized their collaborative sharing of practices over our explaining of them?

## Make Decisions Collectively

In *SuperVision and Instructional Leadership* (2018), he states that, "Historically, democracy has never been defined merely as majority rule" (p. 456). In schools, he sees collective decision-making as a necessary attribute for living the model of democracy that we're teaching. In this model, problem-solving happens best when, without exception, *all* minds are invited into the exploration of ideas and *all* voices are heard. This inquiry approach necessarily sees more value in process than in product, perhaps even sees process *as* the desired product. What would it look like if we structured our schools and schedules around intentional, regular, dialogue sessions where "askings" were more important than "tellings", and where time was given for diverse members to explore and share their ideas? What if, instead of just politely listening, we started *acting* on those ideas?

**Use Learning to Evaluate and Meet Real Needs in the Larger Community**

Students *and* teachers need to be reminded regularly of the ultimate purpose of their learning; they also need to practice it, not just to hone their skills, but to be able to envision the possibilities. First-graders can use their learning to initiate and promote a community-wide composting program, fifth-graders can raise money and design learning experiences for children in a local foster home, and tenth-graders can address the city council regarding disparities that they find in the water quality of various neighborhoods. In *Holding Sacred Ground* (2003), he says, "We should be asking schools to reshape school time, curriculum, and assessment to challenge students to demonstrate each year how they can use their education in real ways to serve society (p. 9)." And, yes, this will mean shifts in the ways we ask students to evidence their learning, making room for more formative, qualitative assessments over the summative, quantitative versions that currently occupy so many of our resources. This will also mean that we will have to collaborate more with others, both inside and outside of the school. What would it look like if we designed these kinds of learning experiences together and actually *experienced* them together? As educational supervisors, what would it look like if we provided time and resources for teachers and students to do this kind of work?

In *Humanizing the Education Machine* (2017), analyst Rex Miller describes his first encounters with education reform: "From my years of experience at every level of business, I could see that we were dealing with one of the most fragmented, siloed, contentious, compartmentalized, and toxic institutional hairballs on the planet", (Miller, Latham, & Cahill, 2017, p. 16). No matter our experience with American education, we all have to admit that we've sensed this at some point, this overwhelming urge to say "Impossible!" But it isn't, because *we* are here, and Glickman's work reminds us that *we*, as supervisors of instruction, as educational leaders, as professionals, and as members of this democracy, are equipped to take on our role in this redemption story by making choices that honor community, democracy, empowerment, and diversity. So, let's be bold in discarding the practices that do not honor these, and let's lead humbly, transparently sharing our learning journey, our successes *and* our failures. Let's test our practices to see if they are promoting trust and openness or judgement and fear. Let's heed Glickman's warning that, "Any comprehensive changes made without the understanding and support of at least a core majority of educators and parents will fail, not necessarily because of the changes themselves but because of the way they came about", (Glickman, 1998, p. 39). And let's be willing to ask the hard questions about our communities' needs as we invite *all* into the hard process of addressing them, because, although the work will be hard, the results will be worth it. It is time to listen to Glickman's wisdom, amplify his voice, and boldly write the next chapter in our story.

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