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Whole Schooling Consortium

# International Journal of Whole Schooling

## Inside this issue:



**The six principles of Whole Schooling are…**

(1) empowering citizens for democracy;

(2) including all;

(3) providing authentic, multi-level instruction;

(4) building community;

(5) supporting learning; and

(6) partnering with parents and the community.

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The Journal seeks to discuss issues relevant to Whole Schooling, with contributions from a variety of stakeholders including students, parents, academics, educators, and administrators.

Contributions and feedback are welcome. Please contact Tim Loreman at tim.loreman@concordia.ab.ca or Billie Jo Clausen at bclausen@mesd.k12.or.us

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*Commentary*

# No child left behind: The emperor has no clothes

Andrew Johnson

In regards to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the emperor is not wearing any clothes. This bill uses impressive sounding buzz words and phraseology with which one can hardly disagree, but in essence it offers no new innovations or does nothing to improve the fundamental quality of education. This bill is not based on educational research and research-based theory. Instead, it is an illusion built upon ideological fallacies, nested within the narrow confines of a parochial paradigm, and sprinkled with a lot of I-think-isms. Sadly, NCLB will ultimately cost a great deal of money to implement and enforce; money that could have been spent on things that really matter such as books, smaller class sizes, professional development, early childhood education, child care, and parenting education. And in the end, our students, schools, and teachers will be worse off and education will have taken a giant step backwards.

*"(NCLB) uses impressive sounding buzz words and phraseology with which one can hardly disagree, but in essence it offers no new innovations or does nothing to improve the fundamental quality of education."*

**Research-Based Methods**

This bill states that schools are required to use scientifically based research to come to conclusions, yet NCLB does not do what it advocates. There is no real research to support the majority of things in this bill. The emperor has no clothes. This bill has not wrapped itself in rigorous, scientific educational research. Instead, it seems to be based on I-think-isms, business paradigms, and conservative ideology. Simplistic solutions that are validated only by popularity and perception are described for complex problems. And when these simplistic solutions fail to reach their desired result, as they inevitably will, blame will once again be focused on teachers, parents, and students, or that old standby punching bag, teachers' unions.

Some of the programs contained in this bill such at George Bush's Early Reading Initiatives give the impression that they are research-based, when in fact, the vast majority of "*research*" cited on their web sites are studies conducted by government agencies or conservative think tanks. While there is nothing wrong with government agencies and think tanks per se, to be science, these programs have to be publicly verifiable (Stanovich, 2003). This means that the results need to be presented to a jury of one's peers for evaluation. This is why peer-reviewed academic journals are so important to our field.

Doing a report or study where data are collect to support pre-conceived conclusions, hardly qualifies as scientific. Yet, this type of "research" has been used to come to conclusions about the Early Reading Initiative. Gerald Coles describes this research as "theoretically, empirically, and conceptually deficient" (Coles, 2004, p. 346). Ignoring what we know about the nature of reading, reading volume, and holistic approaches, this "*research*" supports splintered, skills-based, phonics-only reading programs. This approach does not enhance comprehension or promote voluntary reading and certainly does not address the issues of our gifted readers or other students with special learning needs.

### Accountability

Most would agree that teachers should be accountable for what goes on in their classroom. But this is not the case with NCLB. Here teachers are held accountable only for standardized test scores. These scores have little to do with what a teacher actual does in the classroom or how much learning is taking place. Yet, test scores are viewed in this bill as a form of quality control in an educational assembly line, used to assess the effectiveness of schools and teachers. What is never reported or discussed is that the most significant variables affecting students' performance on these tests are not curriculum approaches, methodology, or teachers' pedagogical strategies; rather, parents' level of education and social/economic status (Popham, 2001). Yet, these test scores are made public and used to justify important educational decisions, under the guise of teacher accountability.

*"We spend millions of dollars sending students to special learning centers; buying the latest, untested magic bullet of the month; or moving low-numbered students to high-numbered schools."*

Like doctors and lawyers, teachers should not be held accountable for particular outcomes, but only for engaging in the best professional practice (Cunningham, 1999). Best practices are the validated strategies and research-based approaches that have been shown to be effective in enhancing learning. These strategies and approaches can be flexibly applied in a variety of situations (Brophy, 1986; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1998). Best practices in education include such things as cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001), providing both choice and time for pleasure reading (Allington, 2001; Campbell & Donahue, 1997; Goodman, 1986), embedding thinking skills within content areas (Johnson, 2000), allowing teachers to make decisions related to teaching and learning (Marks, & Louis, 1997; Sweetland & Hoy, 2002), using homework as practice and not as a measuring device (Good & Brophy, 1995), teaching the processes of writing instead of only the mechanics (Allington, 1994; Goldstein & Carr, 1996), and using silence in the classroom (Jensen, 2000).

NCLB asks for report cards to be issued for each school for stronger accountability, however, NCLB report cards would only contain test scores. If stronger accountability and more accurate dissemination of information related to the effectiveness of a school are indeed goals, a report card should include the following: (a) number of students per classroom, (b) number of books per student in the classroom, (c) number of books per student in the school library, (d) square foot of space per student, (e) the number and type of professional development opportunities given to teachers, (f) daily preparation time for teachers, (g) teacher empowerment in regards to educational decisions, (h) the number and type validated researched-based strategies utilized by the school, (i) the number and type validated research-based strategies used by teachers, (j) the number and type of student products and performances unrelated to test scores or grades used to describe learning, and (k) the number and type of educational books, academic journal articles, and educational research read by law-makers, school board members, administrators, governors, commissioners of education, presidents, and other decision-makers. Put in this context, standardized test scores could reasonably be included as one of many criteria used to describe a school's overall functioning.

### The Fallacy of Numbers

NCLB uses only numbers derived from standardized tests to assign the worth or value to an educational experience. However, the work of Robert Sternberg (1996) and Howard Gardner (1995) demonstrate that these tests measure only a small part of what intelligence might be and hence, offer a very incomplete view of learners and learning. Using only standardized test scores to measure the quality of an education experience also reinforces the notion that all our students should be high-numbered students. High-numbered students become like Star-Belly Sneetch in the Dr. Seuss story who are seen as better than low-numbered students who are the Plain-Belly sort. So we bring in Sylvester McMonkey McBean, the Fix-it-Up Chappie. We spend millions of dollars sending students to special learning centers; buying the latest, untested magic bullet of the month; or moving low-numbered students to high-numbered schools.

"Then, when every last cent

Of their money was spent,

The Fix-it-Up Chappie packed up

and he went.

And he laughed as he drove

In his car up the beach,

'*They never will learn.*

*No. You can't teach a Sneetch!'"*

*"Multiple criteria should always be used in identifying or describing students."*

Moving low-numbered students to high-numbered schools will do nothing to change or enhance the quality of education. The movement will only serve to make high-numbered schools less high-numbered.

Also, NCLB wants all students to have numbers that are at or above grade level average, but misses a very important fundamental fact about averages: averages are average. That means they are halfway between one end and the other. With averages, there are always some below average and some above average, all aligned in a pretty bell-shaped curve used to describe this distribution of scores. It is good to insist on high standards, but if every student reads at grade level average, pretty soon average is below average and above average is average as our bell-shaped curve continues to shift dangerously to the right.

Finally, describing students simply in terms of numbers is one-dimensional and not very accurate. Multiple criteria should always be used in identifying or describing students. This means not only standardized tests that describe in terms of numbers, but some other product or performance. We know that there are multiple ways to demonstrate intelligence and achievement. In the same way, multiple criteria and multiple forms should be used to identify schools for recognition or remediation. A successful or failing school cannot be described only in terms of test scores.

**Factory Models and Business Paradigms**

This bill is built upon a rigid, outdated factory model. In these NCLB educational factories students step onto a 13-year conveyor belt in kindergarten and progress slowly forward, moving in lines lock-step with all the other widgets and gizmos, until they reach the end. Standards then become synonymous with standardization as the same parts are added at the same places for every widget, gizmo, and student. The gifted widgets, gizmos, and students are given a few more parts and put on a conveyer belt that might be going a little faster. Widgets, gizmos, and students with learning disabilities are put on a slower conveyer belt and given few less parts, but essentially, the conveyer belt is the same, same, same.

The basic essence of NCLB is this: some schools are identified as failing schools (based solely on standardized test). Parents then have the option of moving their students to successful schools (based solely on test scores). This is it. This is the great NCLB innovation built upon a business paradigm by business thinking people. The untested hypothesis is that all the happy successful schools will grow and prosper, and all the "bad" failing schools will disappear someplace. The "reasoning" behind NCLB (if you want to call it reasoning) is that this system seems to work well with Wal-mart stores, McDonald's burger joints and Kwick-E Mart convenience stores, so it must therefore work equally well with schools. With "competition" the successful prosper and "unsuccessful" fade away, or so they say. However, while this paradigm may work in the business world where profits are the bottom line, it is not transferable to education where the bottom line is people.

*"(NCLB) promotes a test-and-measure mentality that serves only to create winners and losers"*

**Final Thoughts**

If we want fundamental change in the quality of education, then we must focus on the quality of education. A novel thought, yes? We need to take a qualitative look at the teaching methodologies and curriculum used in schools and classrooms and make changes in the way we do education. This bill does nothing to address the quality of education. NCLB does not change how we go about the business of educating our children. Instead, it promotes a test-and-measure mentality that serves only to create winners and losers.

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*Research and Analysis*

# Collaboration, co-teaching, and differentiated instruction: A process-oriented approach to whole schooling.

Lorri Santamaria and Jacque Thousand

Today a central concern of U.S. educational stakeholders is to ensure equitable access to the core curriculum for all children, including students eligible for special education, students for whom English is not a first language, and students with diverse cultural backgrounds. This concern is captured and communicated in legislation ranging from the equity in education foundation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) to the 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which articulates the school's responsibility to ensure students with disabilities access the core curriculum of general education, and placement of first choice in the general education classroom with appropriate supports and services. These federal legislative changes are inclusive of all children regardless of ability or perceived disability. As a result school administrators and district personnel are scrambling to meet the needs of all of their students, while attempting to ensure that all teachers are highly qualified.

*"...school administrators and district personnel are scrambling to meet the needs of all of their students, while attempting to ensure that all teachers are highly qualified"*

This article describes one school's year-long effort to provide equitable access to the core curriculum to a very culturally, linguistically, and academically diverse student body while increasing teachers' needs for responsive professional development by piloting a dramatic change in the special education service delivery system with the support of professors from a local university. The successes and challenges chronicled in this article serve as examples for other schools to study and personalize to active collaboration, co-teaching, and differentiated instruction as means to improve student and teacher performance. First, we briefly examine the literature on collaboration, co-teaching, and differentiated instruction. Next we describe what happened at Bienvenidos Elementary School with regard to collaboration, co-teaching, and differentiated instruction. We do this by organizing the outcomes according to the Six Principles of Whole Schooling that are the philosophical underpinnings of this journal; namely: 1) empowering citizens for democracy; 2) including all; 3) providing authentic, multi-level instruction; 4) building community; 5) supporting learning; and 6) partnering with parents and community. We close with a preview of the school team's goals and vision for the second year of its journey toward whole schooling.

## An Examination of the Research-Base for Collaboration, Co-Teaching, and Differentiated Instruction

### *Collaboration: Definitions and Outcomes*

What is collaboration? According to an Intelligence Community Collaboration (1999) study, collaboration can broadly be defined as the interaction among two or more individuals encompassing a variety of behaviors, including communication, information sharing, coordination, cooperation, problem solving, and negotiation.

Friend and Cook (1992) offer a definition, specific to the needs of educators, of school-based collaboration as joint planning, decision making, and problem solving that may occur in a variety of formal or informal group configurations for the purpose of accomplishing a common goal (Cook & Friend, 1991; Laycock, Gable, & Korinek, 1991). More definitively, Friend and Cook (1992) list defining characteristics of successful collaboration as: 1) being voluntary; 2) requiring parity among participants; 3) based on mutual goals; 4) depending on shared responsibility for participation and decision making; 5) consisting of individuals who share their resources; and 6) consisting of individuals who share accountability for outcomes. Professional collaboration then includes empowering citizens for democracy by building community through partnerships. Such partnership includes parents and community and can take the form of a) consultation (Gerber, 2000; Howland, 2003; Stanovich, 1996), b) coaching (Lam, Yin, & Lam, 2002; Little, 1982; Joyce & Showers, 1982; Sparks, 1986; Singh & Shifflette,1996), c) teaming (Correa, Morsink, & Thomas, 2000; Santamaría, 2003), or d) a combination of all three.

Overall, studies on professional collaboration paint a promising picture of success resulting in student needs being met by the most highly qualified people working together toward a common goal (Howland, 2003; Lam, et. al., 2002; Singh & Shifflette, 1996; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2004). In a study of 57 university-school collaboration projects measuring variables including program quality, outcomes, and success, Kirschenbaum & Reagan (2001) found collaborative endeavors to be typically long standing, varied in type, serving large numbers of school students, satisfying to university partners, and perceived as generally achieving their goals. Programs with high levels of collaboration were judged to be more successful than those with limited levels of collaboration.

Collaboration as an ideal intervention is plagued by dynamic complexities inherent to most educational environments, often making it difficult for educators to reach and maintain the optimal conditions needed for successful collaborative endeavors (DeLima, 2003; Gottesman & Jennings, 1994; Miller & Shontz, 1993; Stanovich, 1996; Williams, 1996). Still, in light of current and future legislative demands for meeting the needs for the largest number of students, collaboration remains at the forefront of educational stakeholders' thinking as a viable solution when it comes to teaching in inclusive educational settings (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2004; Villa & Thousand, in press).

*"Collaboration as an ideal intervention is plagued by dynamic complexities inherent to most educational environments, often making it difficult for educators to reach and maintain the optimal conditions needed for successful collaborative endeavors"*

*Co-Teaching: It's Power and Promise*

Co-teaching in American schools can be traced back to the 1960s when it was popularized as an example of progressive education. In the 1970s, co-teaching was advanced by legislated school reforms and teachers' increasing need to diversify instruction for a more diverse student population. Co-teaching offers a means for educators to move from feelings of isolation and alienation to feelings of community and collaboration, as teaching in isolation is replaced with teaching in partnerships. Furthermore, based on interviews of co-teachers conducted over the past two decades, co-teaching helps educators meet their basic psychological needs of belonging, fun, choice, power and survival (Villa et. al., 2004).

Co-teaching has been found to be effective for students with a variety of diverse instructional needs, including English language learners (Mahoney, 1997); students with hearing impairments (Luckner, 1999; Compton, Stratton, Maier, Meyers, Scott, & Tomlinson, 1998); students with learning disabilities (Rice & Zigmond, 1999; Trent, 1998; Welch, 2000); high-risk students in a social studies class (Dieker, 1998) and students in a language remediation class (Miller, Valasky, & Molloy, 1998). To illustrate, Welch (2000) showed that the students with disabilities and their classmates all made academic gains in reading and spelling on curriculum-based assessments in the co-taught classrooms. Mahoney (1997) found that in addition to meeting educational needs "for special education students, being part of the large class meant making new friends" (p.59). There is, then, an emerging database for preschool through high school levels (Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Malgeri, 1996) supporting the conclusions that: a) at all grade levels students with disabilities can be educated effectively in general education environments when teachers, support personnel, and families collaborate; and b) student performance improvements occur in both academic and social, relationship arenas.

At least five factors appear to account for the success of co-teaching arrangements. First, students become more capable collaborative learners as they emulate the cooperative and collaborative skills their teachers model when they co-teach (Olsen, 1968). Secondly, co-teaching provides co-teachers with greater opportunity to capitalize upon the unique, diverse and specialized knowledge, skills, and instructional approaches of other educators (Bauwens, Hourcade, & Friend, 1989; Hourcade & Bauwens, 2002). Third, teachers who co-teach often find they can structure their classes to more effectively use the research-proven strategies required of the No Child Left Behind Act (Miller et al., 1998). A fourth success factor is that co-teachers tend to be inventive and come up with solutions that traditional school structures often fail to examine (Nevin, Thousand, Paolucci-Whitcomb, & Villa, 1990; Skrtic, 1987). Finally, there is evidence that co-teachers feel empowered by having the opportunity to collaboratively make decisions (Duke, Showers & Imber, 1980) while simultaneously increasing their skills (Thousand, Villa, Nevin, & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1995).

*"Differentiated instruction can be thought of a compilation of good educational practices with roots in theoretical research and the successful outcomes programs such as gifted education."*

*Differentiated Instruction*

Although widely celebrated in testimonials and classroom examples available in periodicals, books, and on the internet, differentiated instruction is just emerging as an empirically-based educational approach. Differentiated instruction can be thought of a compilation of good educational practices with roots in theoretical research and the successful outcomes programs such as gifted education. Differentiation practices have been described for the full range of learners (Gregory, 2003); English language learners (Heydon, 2003); particular content areas (Chapman & King, 2003); and conceptual frameworks such as Bloom's Taxonomy and Multiple Intelligences (Rule & Lord, 2003). Tomlinson (1999, 2001) reports individual cases of success in which differentiation appears to be promising. With colleagues Brimijoin and Marquissee, she also has devised a student self- assessment tool that yields results enabling teachers to better differentiate instruction for students (Brimijoin, Marquissee, & Tomlinson, 2003).

Differentiated instruction involves instructional practices and teaching strategies that are inclusive in nature, practices that enable all children including those with disabilities to access and succeed in the general education classroom and curriculum. Tomlinson (1999) describes differentiated instruction as a set of behaviors enabling a teacher to: (a) take students from where they are, (b) engage students in instruction through different learning modalities, (c) prompt students to compete more with their own past performances than with others, (d) provide specific ways for each student to learn, (e) use classroom time flexibly, and (f) act as a diagnostician, prescribing the best possible instruction for each student.

**Progress at Bienvenidos Toward the Six Principles of Whole Schooling Through Collaboration, Co-Teaching and Differentiated Instruction**

The school that is the focus of this article will be referred to as Bienvenidos Elementary School. Figure 1 briefly summarizes some of the ways in which the faculty and staff at Bienvenidos School addressed the six Principles of Whole Schooling this past year as well as the ways in which it plans to do so next year. The figure illustrates the progressive and dynamic aspects of becoming a Whole School through the implementation of collaborative, co-teaching, and differentiated instruction (CCDI).

*Figure 1.* Collaboration, co-teaching, differentiated instruction actions and plans for the six principles of whole schooling.

| 6 Principles | This School Year's Actions | Next School Year's Plans |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Empowering citizens for democracy | Including learners with special needs as full citizens of general education classrooms with access to core curriculum.<br><br>Bringing ancillary services in the classroom rather than the students to the service (i.e., pull-out).<br><br>***Collaboration*** among teachers and university partners for professional support and development. | Continue including K-1 learners with special needs in general education classrooms for academic subjects; with general and special educators co-teaching with support of 4 paraprofessionals.<br><br>Adding a parent component.<br><br>Continual ***collaboration*** with teachers, university partners, shifting from a *consultation* to a *coaching* role. |
| 2. Including all | Special education personnel ***collaborating*** to deliver support services in a team approach in general education. | Continuation of special education personnel ***collaborating*** to deliver support services in a team approach in general education environments limited to focus on K-1 classroom. |
| 3. Providing authentic, multi-level instruc- | Effective planned and on-the-spot ***differentiated instruction*** and ***co-teaching***. | Deliberate professional development on ***differentiated instruction*** and ***co-teaching models*** provided by university collaborators. |
| 4. Building community | Former Special Day Class teacher, paraprofessionals, student helpers, general education teachers, university collaborators work with all students.<br><br>***Collaboration*** team viewed all learners as members of one collective classroom. | Building community activity will be extended to parents which may include a parental core council, parent advocacy tips, opportunities for parents to inform larger groups (e.g., PTA), etc. |
| 5. Supporting learning | Paraprofessionals support all children in need of support regardless of "label" by providing ***differentiated instruction.*** | Paraprofessionals will receive professional development on deliberate ***differentiated instruction*** to further enhance inclusive support practices. |
| 6. Partnering with parents and community | Current and planned presentations on participant successes and challenges and plans to continue for the next school year.<br><br>Parent involvement and school-wide understanding and support are continuing challenges and goals. | Development and implementation of parent component as described above in building community.<br><br>Sharing of the process and progress toward Whole Schooling in order to inspire other schools to also work toward Whole Schooling. |

*The **Whole Schooling Consortium** is an international network of schools and individual teachers, parents, administrators, university faculty and community members. We are concerned with the following central problems that deepen our social and individual problems: segregation of children based on ability, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status and other characteristics; standardization and narrowing of curricula, stifling creativity, critical thinking, and democratic engagement; narrowly focused standardized assessment that centers schooling around the taking of a test rather than learning and creates competition and rivalry across schools; punishment of schools and educators rather than providing help, support and assistance; consequent creation of school cultures of tension, anger, and pressure preventing what should be a place of joy, fun, community, and care; and lack of attention to economic and social needs of children. Schools, we believe, are central if we are to have a democratic society and inclusive communities where people of difference are valued and celebrated. Schools must be places that encourage the development of the whole child – linking talent development and social, emotional, cognitive, and physical learning. We believe this is necessary and possible.*

**WE INVITE YOU to join us!** You can make a difference! We are growing the Consortium through the grassroots efforts of teachers, parents, faculty, administrators, and community members. If you are interested in being involved, contact us at:

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## Education for a Democratic Society

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