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Summer Gleanings



Find out why educators from twelve states attended Community Works Summer Institute at Shelburne Farms. **Story on page 8.**

Cultures and Community: Creating Video Voyages

by Eve Pranis

During the 2000-01 school year, educator Eve Pranis worked with Nilah Cote's fifth and sixth graders in Sheldon, Vermont on a media literacy curriculum strand woven into a unit on Abenaki and other Native American cultures. The goal was to help students consider how media represent different groups and how our attitudes, understanding, and treatment of other groups can be influenced by such portrayals. The sixth graders later learned to use video cameras and a digital editing program so they could communicate something they found meaningful to a selected audience. After interviewing local Abenaki and further researching issues that concerned them, the youngsters produced a powerful 17-minute digital video to "help open the community's eyes." The following year, the new sixth graders, eager to take on a video project, created an interview-rich production on dairy farming in their community. Here, Eve shares how the process, products, and students' passions unfolded.

A thirty year teaching veteran, Nilah Cote is ever alert for new ideas and innovations to keep her teaching fresh and to prompt her 5/6 classes to engage with their local and global communities. Intrigued by our discussion on cultivating "media literate" students (those who engage thoughtfully and critically with all media they encounter and who learn to produce their own media messages), she was curious about how to apply the concept to her already full curriculum.

We saw some exciting possibilities for weaving a strand into her Native American unit (centered on local Algonquin/Abenaki cultures). The idea? Engage students in looking closely at Native American representations (e.g., in Hollywood films, art, popular culture items, magazines, and newspapers) and asking probing questions about

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OUR MISSION is to promote exemplary teaching practices, programs and models that help students become caring, responsible and active members of their communities.

ABOUT Vermont Community Works

VCW serves as an educational resource for innovative community-based and service-learning curriculum strategies and models.

We believe that learning opportunities grounded in the local community are critical to promoting a connected, purposeful and positive school experience that contributes directly to the development of young people as healthy, caring, informed, and active citizens.

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ABOUT *Community Works Journal*

Vermont Community Works, Inc. publishes *Community Works Journal* quarterly in support of teaching practices that build community.

The *Journal* is now in its eighth year of publication and continues to serve a crucial need for models and resources that inspire by example. *CWJ* is mailed nationally to schools, programs, and educational networks.

We showcase innovative educational strategies and practices that involve teachers and students in meaningful work within their communities.

We welcome unsolicited article ideas; they will be reviewed and their authors contacted promptly.

Co-Editors: Joe Brooks and Susan Bonthron
Contributing Editors: Greg Sharrow, Eve Pranis
Erica Zimmerman
Editorial Assistant: Cynthia Fairbanks
Accounts: Traci LaMarche
Contributing Artists: Mary Azarian and Dede Cummings
Student Intern: Devon Sparks

HOW TO REACH US:

Vermont Community Works
ATTN Community Works Journal
PO Box 2251, S Burlington, VT 05407
tel: (802) 655-5918 email: journal@vermontcommunityworks.org
Web site: www.vermontcommunityworks.org

A Note to Our Readers

Dear Readers,

As we find ourselves slipping from summer into autumn, many of us are immersed in new or existing projects. We hope the summer has been a time of reinvigoration and fruitful endeavors for our readers.

Community Works, along with our partners at Shelburne Farms, salute the participants at this summer's highly successful Institute on Service-Learning. We were joined this year by teachers from more than twelve states—representing schools and organizations from Vermont to Louisiana, Montana to New York. We were all impressed with the energy, dedication and powerful ideas represented by this year's participants. Our guest faculty were a wonderful group to work with and clearly dedicated to supporting their fellow teachers. A 2003 Institute retrospective is featured in this issue on page 8. Look for articles featuring participants' curriculum projects in upcoming issues.

We welcome an old friend, Greg Sharrow, as a *CWJ* Contributing Editor. Starting next issue, in a regular column, Greg will consider some of the larger issues encountered by those seeking to connect young people to their local communities. He continues to be a rich source of tools and ideas for studying and understanding local communities.

Eve Pranis also joins us in this issue as a Contributing Editor. Aside from her talent as a writer, Eve brings a wealth of experience and ideas that draw upon her background in curriculum development for the National Gardening Association and as a media literacy consultant to schools.

This issue of *Community Works Journal* also marks our first with a new on-line format. A simple explanation is that we will deliver each new issue electronically, using a generally universal format (Adobe Acrobat PDF)—friendly to both Mac and PC users. Readers will now be able to easily make copies of *Community Works Journal* available to their colleagues.

If you find *Community Works Journal* useful and inspiring, we ask you to consider directly supporting its publication with a tax-deductible donation. With assistance from supporting grants we have been able to provide subsidized subscriptions of the *Journal* to teachers across the country. However, for Community Works to continue to thrive and increase its impact, we truly need your support. Contributions are tax deductible and will be used to fund story research, publication and distribution needs.

Thank You!

*Joe Brooks and Susan Bonthron,
Co-Editors, Community Works Journal*



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Cultures and Community: Creating Video Voyages

cont'd from p.1

the images: What facial expressions, dress, and objects do you notice? How do the characters seem to relate to each other? What message was the creator sending? My goal was to help students practice close viewing, consider whether patterns exist in media's cultural representations, and ponder how our attitudes, understanding, and treatment of other groups can be influenced by such portrayals. The multidisciplinary project would address a variety of standards, from interpreting media to understanding the relationship between generalizing and stereotyping.

This multi-week Fall unit, along with students' research on local native groups and a visit from an Abenaki university student, inspired the first of two community-focused video production projects. In February 2001, with \$500 in hand from a district grant and access to two digital cameras and an I-Mac computer with I-Movie software, we set out to enable eight 6th graders to become video producers.

Cultivating Independent, Investigative Learners

As facilitator of this project my goal was to guide a student-directed, inquiry-oriented planning and decision making process. Among the group's first challenges was deciding what they felt was important to communicate via their video that related in some way to their Fall social studies unit. After a brainstorming session and discussion about the range of options, the group hit on a theme: "We want to clear up stereotypes like 'all Indians are alike' or 'they all live in tepees' and show how the media help us get these ideas. We had never thought about them or where they come from or how sports mascots might be hurtful." Eventually, the discussion led students to focus on a general storyline in which they would pair up some common stereotypes with an exploration of realities. The essential question they wanted the video to examine was, "How have myths and stereotypes about Native Americans been transmitted, what are the realities, and what is their impact?"

Before digging in, the media makers decided not to take a neutral stance. Rather, they had adopted a point of view and wanted their video to be a persuasive piece so "people would think about things differently." Their sense of unfairness and indignation was certainly age-appropriate. That said, the youngsters realized they'd need to think about their audience before planning a storyline. Who are we targeting? What might they already think or know? What ideas or production techniques would be best for reaching this group? Fifth graders to adults, they decided, would be able to grasp the concept of stereotyping.

Rather than teach students elements of good video construction, I let them investigate and puzzle out some of the answers themselves before sharing pointers or conventional wisdom. For instance, we initially viewed a variety of video clips, most of which were produced by teenagers. I asked the group questions that required them to look closely and reflect on elements that caught their attention and effectively conveyed ideas—about images they found powerful, the producer's point of view, and so on. They responded with insightful observations: "I noticed that when people are talking about something, they often show a clip or scene about what they're talking about," said one student. These "ahas" inspired their own production.

I chose not to lead with lessons about camera angles, framing shots, shooting interviews, and so on, but, again, structured opportunities for students to try things out for themselves, and then reflect on what they noticed and decide which techniques were more or less effective. Because I only visited the class every week or two and was a relative novice with I-Movie, and Nilah was unfamiliar with the technology, we were true co-explorers with the students. Under those empowering circumstances, the youngsters' technical skills and confidence flourished.

To set the stage for creative collaboration, the crew worked together to come up with a name for their "production company" (The Sixth Grade All Stars), generated a list of guidelines for how they planned to function as a team, and explored the range of roles required to complete a production. They decided that everyone should have a chance to serve in a variety of roles: scripting, shooting, acting, interviewing, logging, and editing. Ultimately, pairs worked together to conceptualize, plan, and produce different video segments.

Interviewing: Uncovering Community Connections

Before they started planning for the video, the class had a chance to talk to a local Abenaki student who had recently enrolled at the University of Vermont. "For my kids, it was the first opening of a door to another culture and he was close to their age, so he really made an impression," explains Nilah. "He shared his interest in learning some of the dying language of his culture and the commitment it took to do that. Then he taught the kids some Abenaki words and phrases and shared a few stories they could connect with." For instance, in response to interview questions about stereotyping, he talked about being judged because of his long hair.

Thus inspired, the students wanted to conduct more interviews with local Abenaki members and advocates so they could include snippets in their production. They were also eager to interview students in other classes with probing questions such as, "What do you think of when you hear the word

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Indian?” Nilah identified members of the community who could share insights on Abenaki history and issues that interested students, such as stereotyping, tribal recognition, and burial ground preservation. Next, the group conducted background research, which included examining old issues of local newspapers. Their gleanings became fodder for interview questions.

Class discussions on conducting good interviews yielded some thoughtful and powerful questions. Here are some examples students generated to pose to Jeff Benay from the Indian Education Center and Professor Fred Wiseman from the local tribal museum: Is the Abenaki heritage being avoided by the schools, teachers, and students’ families? Why do you think it’s important for students like us and Abenaki students to learn about Abenaki culture? What is your heritage and do you think it changes the way you look at Abenaki people? In an interview with Abenaki chief, April Rushlow, students sought her perspectives on key issues affecting her people.



Checking equipment.

Adult viewpoints were fine, but the earnest researchers were also eager to hear from younger people. Again, thoughtful questions emerged in preparation for a videotaped interview with Stacey, an Abenaki high school student: What do you wish other students knew to understand you and your culture? Have you noticed discrimination against yourself or your heritage? What issues or concerns bother you most? “It really put a human face on the concepts of prejudice and stereotyping when kids had a chance to hear details from someone close to their own age,” explains Nilah.

These personal connections and the video research continued to spark students’ thinking. A girl who had examined the phenomena of sports teams using Native American images and mascots and reflected on the implications, had a brainstorm: Why not interview a friend who attends a high school that has a team named “The Little Indians?” The revelation that her friend didn’t see anything wrong with the moniker prompted the young producer to dig for sources that reflected a different stance.

Another outcome of these interviews was that the students began to think more about their own conceptions, assumptions, and actions in relation to Native Americans. “My sister and I always played cowboys and Indians, and would whoop and holler. Now I realize that was disrespectful and I say something when I see other kids doing it,” says Brittany. Early in the fall, they had made drawings and written words

that came to mind when they heard the word “Indian.” Inspired by the impact of that exercise, the youngsters put forth that same question during interviews with students in other classes.

Immersed in exploring this local community and the issues they’ve faced, a number of students probed for information at home and uncovered artifacts and relatives with Abenaki heritage. In some cases, these connections had long been unspoken. (To survive and be more readily accepted, many Abenaki had gone underground.) Nilah explains that one boy used a home video camera to interview an



Taping an interview.

uncle. “It surprised me that this particular student took that on; he felt really good sharing it with the class. I think it helped him understand and better respect his uncle and appreciate his heritage. Some kids went nearly unrecognized until we opened up and started looking at a community through a new lens. Now classmates value them as resources.”

Of the hours and hours of interview footage, much ended up on the cutting room floor and some was lost due to technical glitches or poor quality, but some strong clips made it into the final 17-minute production. Students wove them into the “stereotypes and realities” segment along with clips from Hollywood movies and images of popular culture items, student-designed replicas, drawings from history books, newspaper clippings, potent quotes, and spoken student scenes. Ideas from many of the interviews also found their way into required portfolio research papers and fifth graders’ PowerPoint presentations.

Community Screening

The entire school viewed “Open Up Your Minds: On Native American Stereotypes” at a daytime screening; parents and school board members turned out for an evening event. “The adults were thoroughly impressed with the complexity and magnitude of the project,” says Nilah, “although most parents were more engaged with seeing their kids on screen than in the content!” But she made sure they’d have opportunities to delve deeper; each student went home with a copy of their

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labor of love. “Finishing up the last week of school meant that I didn’t get to walk it over to meetings of Abenaki parents. That’s the kind of thing that needs to happen next time in order to get it out to more of the community.”

Reflection and Assessment: How They Grew

No question: The technology was a great motivator and sparked students’ interest in using video as a medium for creative expression. It also became a wonderful vehicle for prompting reflection and assessing what youngsters gained from the experience. The final video content offered a window on students’ grasp of concepts, as did their journals. Perhaps one of the strongest segments, which was student-inspired, portrayed both the fifth and sixth graders sharing what changed in their thinking or understanding as a result of the project (“I used to think . . . but now . . .”). They had time to ponder and write about these ideas before being captured on film in an informal class discussion.

“Today’s interviews with my students were fantastic,” wrote Nilah in an e-mail. “The video is an incredible assessment tool. Going back through the tape gave me time to hear students a second time. It seemed to inspire a greater focus and deeper thought than the same questions asked without the tool.” Once students wrapped up the editing, we taped another video session—a “fishbowl” in which the fully engaged sixth graders, who had reflected in advance on some questions about the project, process, and “ahas,” shared thoughts for nearly an hour. (The fifth graders, meanwhile, sat outside the circle, listened, and occasionally made queries.) “The fishbowl, along with ongoing reflections and students’ local research helped them pull ideas together, develop a better understanding of the concept of stereotyping, and recognize how it can happen in their own community,” says Nilah.

What students revealed during these taped sessions spoke volumes about what they reaped from their experiences, personally, socially, and academically. Here’s just a smattering of responses:

“I used to think you could trust one resource, but now I know you need to get different perspectives and check many resources.”

“I’d never really studied Native Americans before and had a lot of questions. I ended up learning a lot about some of my own ideas and now I’m much more aware of what people might feel like.”

“Now when I watch TV with my brother, I don’t just sit with him anymore and think that’s how things were (like Pocahontas); but now I’m much more aware of stereotypes and some of the realities.”

“What you’re used to seeing on TV and movies is much different from what we learned from interviewing people.”

An e-mail from Nilah points to another aspect of students’ growth: their capacity to collaborate and their appreciation for the process. “As a class they have really formed a learning community. They continue to stay on task when I leave for a bit. The classroom has a wonderful feeling when students are reading, researching, and meeting in teams to discuss and share. . . . You’ve helped me realize the importance of allowing time for processing how things worked and didn’t work.” Sure, there were times when students were confused or lacked focus during the planning process, but some “muddling,” after all, is part of true inquiry and a necessary ingredient for critical and independent thinking.

Students noted that working in pairs to script and edit segments, and in larger groups to film, helped them move forward and made the whole process “seem more manageable.” Even a pair of recalcitrant boys, with guidance, found an entry point that hooked them (figuring out how to animate the concept of “greed” using monopoly money!). That filming success behind them, they became active contributors to the project.

One of the girls who truly blossomed throughout the process had this final word to say about collaboration: “We had to take turns and have patience and give encouragement to each other. That was so important. I mean, I needed a lot of encouragement at the beginning of the year because I was so afraid of the camera. But look at what I’ve done.”

FARMING IN FRANKLIN COUNTY: YEAR 2

Jump, if you will, to the following school year. The incoming sixth graders, inspired by their former classmates’ project, were eager to take on the role of researchers and videographers. They’d had the chance to try some camera shots the previous year, engage with the production team, and visit the public TV station to learn a bit about camera work and editing. But where to go?

“I wanted students to somehow dig more deeply into their community,” says Nilah. “Because many of our kids are from (sometimes struggling) farm families, it seemed that this might be a good focus.” Together, the class decided to make a video of Sheldon dairy farming that featured on-site interviews. To get a real overview, they realized, they would need to make ample local connections.

This time, a mini-grant and two community volunteers helped pave the way. Retired teacher and friend Nini Worman worked as a sub in Nilah’s classrooms and pitched in at other times to support the project. “I can’t emphasize enough how important it is to engage other adults in this kind of project to keep it manageable,” says Nilah. Nini’s husband Nat, a re-

tired journalist and practiced interviewer, helped lay the groundwork for students' community connections. He modeled the interview process by meeting with a retired farmer in front of the class. First, he primed the youngsters by discussing interview techniques such as leaving enough "wait time" for people to respond and then had them note these strategies as they observed him in action. The kids taped the session for future reference. He also generated a host of interview questions for farmers, which the young producers later selected and adapted for their own sessions.

Harvesting Family Farm Tales

So began a series of fruitful meetings between these young media producers and farm owners and workers from operations large and small. Pairs of students typically conducted the formal interviews and the rest of the group followed up with spontaneous questions.

The youngsters gathered loads of information on farm equipment, animals, and environmental practices. At a more personal level, they were privy to reflections on farming as a business and way of life, growers' relationships to the land and natural cycles, and the future of farming. Says Nilah, "It was great for these kids to be able to hear how community members feel about the land." But some students gleaned something even greater: the rewards of having classmates come to respect and understand their families' professions and culture and a sense of validation. In some cases, it also strengthened their own interest in and connection with the family's farm.

"Early on, the kids interviewed a student's dad and grandfather at the farm," reports Nilah. "After the interviews, the other kids showed interest in this student's farm knowledge and he was valued as a resource for the project." She explains that this otherwise reluctant writer was highly motivated to write a paper on agriculture, and he was successful to boot. Another girl whose grandfather was interviewed reportedly became much more engaged in the family farm. But it wasn't just the kids who glowed. The class talked at school with a student's mother who works on a large farm. "She spent a long time talking about feeding and nutrition of cows—even sharing samples of grain—and the kids' questions kept flowing. When I went with a few girls to visit her at the farm, she couldn't have been more pleased to be recognized for her knowledge," explains Nilah.

"Throughout the project, the students continued to make connections to neighbors and friends who have farms and expressed interest in visiting every one," reports Nilah. "One girl acknowledged, 'I learned a lot about the town I live in. I've been here all my life and I never knew anything about farming.'"

A Community Responds

"The reaction to our community screening, run entirely by students and attended by nearly 100 parents, grandparents, and farm family members, was overwhelming," reports Nilah. (They had a later screening at a nearby school.) "Even interviewees with no kids in school felt connected and made the effort to come. The farm community really felt honored that someone wanted to know more about their place of business. After all, how often are farmers interviewed?" A question that tended to leave these dairy producers stumped was, "Do you think your family will continue with the farm once you retire?"



Videotaping on location.

With that in mind, the students concluded their 17-minute documentary on farm life in Sheldon by asking the audience what they (the kids) had already pondered—"What do you think farming in Sheldon will look like in 50 years?"—and opinions were rendered. After the screening, each farmer who had been interviewed was presented with a final copy of the production. "It's something I wished we'd done the previous year, but you learn as you go," says Nilah.

How else would she adapt the project were she to do it again? Nilah explains that it would be nice to visit different types of farms and to get a range of perspectives, especially on controversial issues. "There's just a wealth of resources in this small community," she observes. She'd also like to find time and opportunities to get the production out to more people. It is unlikely, however, that this exemplary teacher would do the same project two years running. She's inspired to read David Sobel's book, *Mapmaking with Children: Sense of Place Education for the Elementary Years*, and to learn more about place-based education, which fits squarely with social studies standards related to human communities. That said, there's no telling which aspects of community Nilah's next batch of students will capture! □

Kudos! Nilah got the Vermont Agriculture Teacher of the Year award for this project. Eve Pranis has a self-designed M.Ed. in media literacy education from St. Michael's College in Winooski, VT. She provides planning support and resources, classroom facilitation, and thematic in-service workshops to educators interested in integrating media literacy strands with teaching goals and standards. Her favorite topics range from "cultivating cool: the big sell" to "exploring image and election campaigns." You can reach Eve via e-mail: epranis@aol.com

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Embracing Change, Finding Common Vision

Community Works Summer Institute On Service-Learning at Shelburne Farms

Photos by Tammi Quinn

During the last week in July, more than 30 educators from all over New York and New England and as far away as Montana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Texas, and Louisiana convened at Shelburne Farms for Community Works' annual Summer Institute for Service-Learning. The group included teachers, service-learning coordinators, school administrators, VISTA volunteers, and faculty with a wide range of expertise. Vermont Community Works will be following, supporting, and helping to document the work of these educators throughout the coming year. Joe Brooks, Executive Director of Community Works, stated, "We are deeply honored to have the opportunity to work with such talented educators who are so evidently passionate about service-learning."

Blessed with perfect weather for most of the week, Shelburne Farms—a 1400-acre working farm and non-profit environmental education center on the shores of Lake Champlain — generously provided a magnificent setting for our work together. Guest Faculty included Pat Haggerty, author of *Oral History: Let Their Voices Be Heard*; Joey Hoffman, Maryland State Fellow for Service-Learning; Casey Murrow, Co-Director of Synergy Learning International; Cynthia Parsons, author and Founder of SerVermont; Sarah Pearson of the American Youth Policy Forum in Washington; Gregory Sharrow of the Vermont Folklife Center, and many other talented and resourceful individuals.

From Concept to Practice

Symposiums included presentations and discussions with Marc Chabot, Martha Rich, Susan Hessey, and Joey Hoffman. Mark, a physics teacher at Thetford Academy, shared his students' work in problem-solving (designing prototypes to help solve the educational or physical problems of two special needs students).



The Coach Barn at Shelburne Farms, home to the Summer Institute

Martha Rich, Head of Thetford Academy, shared insights about site level practices that have helped Thetford become a Service-Learning Leader School, inspiring a thoughtful conversation around Michael Pullan's statement, "You can't mandate what matters." Susan Hessey, a teaching librarian at Guilford Central School, encouraged the group to consider the terms coordination, cooperation, and collaboration. She emphasized the "human connection" aspect of service-learning, encouraging participants to recognize and take advantage of opportunities for

collaboration that already exist at the site.

With Joey Hoffman, the group looked at levels of student participation and responsibility in service-learning projects. We looked at a continuum from teacher-established choices through shared responsibility to students "doing it all" with the teacher as facilitator. In small

"...it was such a great opportunity to have time away together, in an intentional setting, to plan and steep some ideas.... I wish others had the luxury of experiencing this with a co-worker."

*Sarah Blythe, YouthBuild
Burlington, Vermont*

"Marc provided many creative and inspiring ideas and insights as to how service-learning can enhance student engagement, learning, and compassion."

*Sue Babcock, Sentinel High School
Missoula, Montana*



Marc Chabot brought his classroom life to share.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

groups we discussed some of the challenges to full student participation and suggestions for overcoming those challenges, and then shared these in the larger group.

Rich Resources

Workshops provided a wide array of additional explorations. Erica Zimmerman of Shelburne Farms' "Education for Sustainability Project" inspired us to think of Sustainability ("Improving the quality of life for all living things for present and future generations") as an overarching "umbrella" for all service-learning. She encouraged us to remember and keep in balance the three "E's": Equity, Environment, and Economics.

One way I'm impressed is by how the passion inside of me surged with Erica's education for sustainability workshop.

*Angie Barger, Youth Environmental Coalition
Association of Vermont Recyclers*

"Service-learning, under the umbrella of Sustainability, may be the best educational program to produce citizens who regard the worth of every human, every animal, and the environment."

*Sue Jenkins, Casady School
Oklahoma City*

In other workshops, Sarah Pearson shared a variety of approaches to service-learning that schools are using around the country, helping the group with site-level challenges. Pat Haggerty introduced her Oral History project, describing how her students' connection to veterans helped them hone writing and social skills and explore intergenerational issues. Later, Pat helped us explore a variety of reflection techniques, while Casey Murrow encouraged potential educator/authors to write for an upcoming issue of his *Connect* magazine that will be devoted to service-learning.

"I plan on using Pat Haggerty's lesson, "Let their voices be heard" and her simile reflection tool. I'm very excited about incorporating this new unit in my teaching."

*Emily Cause, Park School
Summerville, MA*



Greg Sharrow helped us look at ways to bring history alive.

Greg Sharrow of the Vermont Folklife Center renewed our interest in harvesting the stories of our friends, neighbors and community characters as a way to preserve the "experienced past" and

"This institute and ALL the participants have made my task of creating/implementing a service-learning curriculum seem less daunting. The ideas and support that I will be taking back to my school are immeasurable. I feel more secure in accomplishing our endeavor."

*Mary Drexler, Hamilton Terrace High School
Shreveport, Louisiana*



Study groups focusing on best practice were a critical feature of the Institute.

enliven our understanding of history. Eve Pranis of the National Gardening Association who is also a media literacy consultant offered a rich array of books, ideas and resources to help many of our group who are interested in gardens, food, and sustainability issues.

I am confident now that I can go back to my school this year and apply and practice new ideas and skills, working towards a successful, happy experience for all.

*Cindy Perry
Theford Academy
Vermont*

Study Groups

In smaller study groups, we took turns focusing on each participant's specific challenges or dilemmas. Pooling our knowledge to offer understanding, experience and



resources, we shared the weight of this powerful work. By listening to others, each of us broadened our own understanding, and many of us came away with greater confidence in ourselves and new ideas to take home and try.

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Common Vision cont'd from p. 9

A Panel On Learning

In a midweek panel discussion moderated by Casey Murrow, we had a chance to question experienced faculty and guests and get feedback on ideas we have encountered. One topic of discussion was whether or not a “canned curriculum” can work with service-learning, and why using such curriculum can lead to a missed opportunity for true ownership by all participants. We all agreed that we wanted the panel to go on longer—the issue of how much can be meaningfully squeezed into five days emerged continuously during the Institute.

The Institute has reinforced my beliefs and provided much needed time to clarify my place and my vision.

*Anne Young, Harvest Program
Leicester, Vermont*



Study groups provided participants immediate feedback from peers in a supportive environment.

Great Conversations

Having Best Practices for Service-Learning as a center point of discussion helped us understand how many different approaches there are to good service-learning practice.

Perhaps most important of all was having the time for reflection and deep conversation. The electrifying presence of Cynthia Parsons on the final day of the Institute left a lasting impression on the participants. As Institute participant Ellen Berrings said, “Cynthia was inspiring. She reminds us that sometimes we complicate what is so practical and full of common sense.”

The Best Practices will change my work, since I now have a solid framework or structure to maximize my students’ experiences with service. I feel more confident about connecting service-learning with the academics.

*Sherri Glebus, YouthBuild
Burlington, Vermont*

“Stopping to reflect and ponder this week has shown me that I will see clearer. I will not have to rely on stumbling across solutions but will reach them through slowing down.”

*Margrethe Horlyck-Romanovsky
Community Food Resource Center
New York City*



This year’s panel discussion participants tackled tough questions.

Susan Hessey remarked, “As we discovered, having a common language doesn’t necessarily mean that you have a common understanding. Knowing that there are differences didn’t so much create difficulty as it enriched our understanding of what those practices mean from different points of view. This strengthens the educational community at the same time that we are broadening who the stakeholders are. We are a group of people who are daring to change things. This is a messy process.... It’s not going to be perfect, but we can learn to embrace this time of change.” □



Veteran educator Cynthia Parsons (at right) raised questions and challenged assumptions.



"When we despair or doubt we must remember that our work is key to making education more relevant and meaningful to the youth we work with. In the final analysis, our work will change the landscape of American education."

*Kevin Mann
Shoreham-Wading River High School
Middle Island, NY*

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July 19th-23rd, 2004

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Thanks to the rich feedback and suggestions from this year's Institute participants, next year's Summer Institute for Service-Learning at Shelburne Farms will be much enhanced. It will build in opportunities to take advantage of the spectacular setting of Shelburne Farms itself as well as the many resources of the greater Burlington area. The Institute will serve the needs of educators experienced in service-learning as well as those new to the practice by offering optional workshops at varied levels. Practitioners at all levels will continue to benefit from each other's perspectives in larger group meetings and smaller, intensive study groups. Institute 2004 promises to be better than ever. Sign up individually or better yet, with a planning team for an unforgettable summer experience. Those already on our waiting list are guaranteed a place.

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The Bus Bully Project Third and Fifth Graders Take Action On a Schoolwide Problem

by Pamela Roberts

Over the years, third grade teacher Karen Lefave had become increasingly concerned about how the morning bus ride affected her students at Brayton Elementary School in North Adams, Massachusetts. "Bullying on the bus set the tone for the whole day and often left my third graders in tears," she said. She also saw her students dawdling at the end of the day, trying to avoid riding the bus back home. When Lefave took a course on using community service learning (CSL) in the classroom, she realized that CSL could help her address the bus bully problem. CSL combines students' service to the community with academic learning. In Lefave's case, the community served would be the school.

Lefave approached school adjustment counselor Nancy Gallagher, who also was frustrated with trying to address the school bus problem. They realized that eradicating bus misbehavior was beyond the scope of one CSL project. But they also knew they didn't need to fix everything at once.

A Project is Born

Lefave and Gallagher began talking about general bus concerns with the students in Lefave's classroom. The children discussed their bus worries and drew pictures and wrote stories about them. For a week, the students recorded examples of bullying behavior such as name-calling, pushing, teasing, and yelling. They then brainstormed: What can be done to make things better?

Involving Fifth Graders

As the third graders investigated the problem, it became apparent that older students were the ones who were doing much of the bullying. What if, the third graders wondered, we got some of



the big children on our side? Lefave and Gallagher identified five fifth graders who would be beneficial to the project. Twice a week, during language arts period, the third and fifth graders discussed what bullying felt like and why some people might bully other people.

Breaking up into groups of six or seven, each group having a fifth grader in it, children role-played bullying behavior, its outcomes, and possible ways to prevent it. Some children learned that they had the power to say "stop" to bullying behavior; others learned they could walk away or get help from an adult.

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Bus Bully, cont'd from p. 11

As a result, bullying behavior on the bus decreased and children felt safer. In fact, student responses to a pre- and post-project survey showed a significant drop in the number of third graders who said they worry on the bus.

Involving the Bus Drivers

The bus drivers, however, felt blamed and unsupported and wanted their side to be heard. Realizing the importance of addressing the drivers' concerns, Lefave and Gallagher planned a follow-up CSL project in which bus drivers would have a role.

One thing the two had learned from the first project was that the problems on the bus weren't necessarily created by the expected "troublemakers." "It was everybody," said Gallagher.

So in the second year's project, which involved a new class of third graders and a whole classroom of fifth graders, teachers brainstormed with the children about why so many children "go bananas" on the bus. Students reasoned that it had to do with students' anonymity—they didn't have a relationship with the bus driver. "Kids realized that they don't act this way in class because they know their teacher. What if they know their bus driver?" said Lefave.

The children decided to interview the drivers. They came up with a list of questions, practiced interviewing, then made appointments with the eight bus drivers for interviews and picture taking. With the information from their interviews and the photos, the children made posters and hung them all over the school. "Meet the driver of the Flower Bus," said a typical poster. "His name is Mr. Wilson. He has a dog. He likes to travel."

Creating Kid-Friendly Bus Rules

Also during this second year, students focused on another important reason why children behave better in the classroom than on the bus—because the classroom has rules. Did the bus have rules? Yes. But because of the way the rules were written, the students couldn't understand them. Sentences such as "Do not behave in a boisterous manner" and "If seats are not available, proceed toward the rear of the bus, remain standing in the middle aisle, and grasp a seat bar firmly," while crucial, didn't mean much to the children. So the students took on the project of rewriting the bus rules in kid-friendly language. With some funding from a \$300 mini-grant from the school district, and with the help of a parent who did the graphics, the class made copies of the kid-friendly rules and distributed them to all the students in the school.

A Day to Celebrate

The culmination of this second year's project was "Bus Driver Appreciation Day," to which the children invited the drivers, the whole school, and the press. The children also asked the rest of the school to make appreciation posters.

At the end of the celebration, the whole school met outside on the grass. The children who had interviewed the drivers greeted them, introduced them to the school community, said one thing they had learned about the drivers, and presented them with flow-

ers. Then everyone gave the drivers three cheers of "Hip, hip, hooray." "The bus drivers were beaming," said Lefave.

Looking Back at the Two Years

Noting that the projects empowered both her students and herself, Lefave said that her students became young social activists ready to tackle a long list of projects. "They wanted to take on the world after this," she said.

In addition to learning they could make a difference, students used a range of academic skills. In the course of the project, they wrote in their journals, shared entries, wrote letters, composed short skits for role-playing activities, created a brochure of bus rules, and spoke in front of an audience—all of which called on language arts skills. In identifying and recording bullying behavior, they learned the process of scientific inquiry and observation. Throughout the project, they practiced the important social skills of active listening, empathy, and assertion.

And the projects had positive results: Behavior incidents reported by bus drivers were cut in half. An important element in the projects' success was the pairing of younger and older students. Working with fifth graders gave the third graders something to aspire to. Conversely, the pairing allowed the fifth graders to take care of the third graders by being role models. As one fifth grader wrote: "I am learning that... I should set a better example on the bus, since I am a fifth grader and students look up to me." □

This article contains adapted excerpts from Northeast Foundation for Children's new book, Kids Taking Action: Community Service Learning, K - 8 (<http://www.responsiveclassroom.org>)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Writer and artist Pamela Roberts lives in western Massachusetts. She became interested in community service learning when her two children participated in CSL projects at Greenfield Center School, Greenfield, Massachusetts. Pam has a BA in Asian studies from Cornell University.

ABOUT THE EDUCATORS

Karen Lefave teaches third grade in North Adams, Massachusetts. She has taught special education for twenty-four years, teaching in an inclusive third grade class for the past nine years. Karen attended a Responsive Classroom summer week-long institute two years ago and uses The Responsive Classroom approach in her teaching. Strongly committed to community service learning (CSL), she has helped many colleagues enhance classroom learning through CSL.

Nancy Gallagher is a school adjustment counselor at Brayton Elementary School in North Adams, Massachusetts. Nancy has been a school counselor for seven years; she has worked with children and families in a variety of settings for twenty years. Nancy completed a Responsive Classroom summer week-long institute in 2000. She works to integrate The Responsive Classroom approach and CSL in her work in the classroom and the larger school community.

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Sustaining Service-Learning: Lessons From a Decade of Change

by Martha Rich, Head of School—Thetford Academy

“You can’t mandate what matters.” This pronouncement heads the list of Michael Fullan’s lessons for reform in *The New Meaning of School Change*. I first read Fullan’s work years ago, when I was a fledgling administrator seeking advice on the change process: How does it happen? What should I do to move it along? Most important, how could positive changes be sustained? Fullan’s research offered a set of “lessons” for people like me, though most of his statements looked more like paradox than prescription. If you really “can’t mandate what matters,” how should a school leader proceed?

I knew what mattered to me, at least, and I believed it was important to the faculty and board of our school as well. Applying for the position as Thetford Academy’s Head of School in 1991, I had stated three convictions: “that the most important responsibility of a school head is to support faculty in doing their best work...that all students can be successful learners... [and that] the effective functioning of a school depends on collaboration.” I came to Thetford (an old independent academy that serves as a local public high school) with no experience as school administrator, but I did have a strong conviction about the potential of “learning community” as a model. Inspired by Roland Barth’s *Improving Schools From Within*, I believed that the quality of adult relationships in a school shapes all other interactions. If professionals could work together in active, positive ways, that collaboration would affect everything else.

Change as a Journey

Among all the models for organizing a school, collaboration is the one least likely to succeed by mandate. It cannot be coerced or imposed; it needs instead, as Barth suggested, to be built from within. Fullan’s conclusions underscored this. A “mandate for what matters” is impossible, he asserted, because there is no single, linear route to success. The second lesson on his list was: “Change is a journey, not a blueprint.” Genuine reform is not a paint-by-numbers exercise, but a remarkably complex process, in which multiple forces work together over time to transform a school. In my early years as an administrator, I felt oddly comforted by this message about respecting complexity. It meant I would not be responsible for figuring it all out and telling everyone else what to do. Instead, I would need to support the best possible conditions for all of us to figure it out together.



Primary Partners getting to know each other.

Now, after ten years, the value of this approach stands out most clearly in our school’s experience with service-learning. From a modest beginning in 1993—a single project that brought twenty high school students together with a class of kindergartners as “buddies”—we’ve become a place where over 90% of all students participate in at least one service-learning project each year; where service-learning is integrated in a rich variety of forms across the curriculum, including local, national, and international components; and where students are real leaders in proposing, planning, and carrying out civic initiatives.

Collaboration and Service

This service-learning experience provides our most compelling evidence that building professional community can make a difference in a school. While creating a collaborative culture for adults was an aim from the start of this decade of change, the emphasis on service-learning was not originally a goal. Over time, though, the principles and practices of this approach have emerged as a defining element in our ongoing change process. As we’ve sought to make professional collaboration a core experience for faculty, we’ve also sought to make service-learning a central experience for students. While the school has pursued a wide variety of other improvements—in curriculum, climate, facilities, governance, and financing—our most consistent and powerful results have come from the sustained commitment to these two initiatives: improving teaching through collaboration, and improving learning through service.

At this point, in fact, we’ve come to see the two themes as closely linked. We now understand that service-learning works best when it’s supported by effective adult partnerships—by teachers and community members who work and learn together, and who model that collaboration for students. At the same time, the climate of collegial support fosters

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SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

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innovation and outreach. Teachers are more willing to connect student learning with community needs and issues when they have their own context for shared work.

Over time, our work on sustainable service-learning programs has come to reflect many of the “site-level best practices” identified in the Vermont Community Works guidebook *Connecting Service-Learning to the Curriculum*. (See sidebar below.) If creating conditions for teachers to do their best work is the general goal for any school improvement effort, these practices define the specific conditions for service-learning to take root and flourish. They fall into three categories: Mission and Policy, Organization and Resources, and Professional Development. Some examples from our experience in each area will help explain how the process evolved at our site.

Our first service-learning project helped us discover several of the key practices. It began when two teachers, one at our school teaching seniors and one at Thetford Elementary School teaching kindergarten, decided that their respective students might benefit from some interaction. They brought me an idea for getting the kids together, with the older ones serving as mentors in the kindergarten classroom. It happened that a request for service-learning grant proposals had just crossed my desk. I encouraged the teachers, Barb Sorenson and Joanna Waldman, to apply for grant support, and helped them write the initial application. Although the teachers “owned” this project—their ideas, energy, and classroom expertise drove its implementation—my early interest



Barb Sorenson and Joanna Waldman sharing their work with participant teachers at Community Works Summer Institute 2002.

and assistance felt important to them. It helped establish the pattern of one “best practice,” that “the administration is visibly active in supporting an integrated approach to service-learning.”

As my support role has expanded over the years, though, I’ve stuck to that initial pattern of relationship with faculty: the program has to come from them. (Unless, of course, it comes from students or community members. In any case, an administrator’s role is support, not initiation.)

A Schoolwide Approach Evolves

Another set of practices emerged from the early experience Barb, Joanna and I had with proposal writing. Preparing an application for funding established a dialogue among us, and pushed us to think clearly about goals and activities. This planning also laid the groundwork for sustained evolution of the project, as we continued renewal applications over five years.

BEST PRACTICES FOR SERVICE-LEARNING SITE LEVEL

1 Mission, Beliefs and Goals

- Service-learning is promoted and systematically practiced as central to the school or program’s mission, beliefs and goals.

2 Policy

- School or program policies support the use of quality service-learning on a system-wide basis.

3 Funding

- Service-learning activities and goals are funded through the school and/or district or program budget.

4 Transportation

- The school district or program provides transportation for service-learning related activities.

5 Scheduling

- The school or program schedule supports service-learning.

6 Administrative Support

- The administration is visibly active in supporting an integrated approach to service-learning.

7 Risk Management

- The school or program has a risk management plan that covers service-learning.

8 Coordination of Practice and Resources

- Service-learning practice and resource needs are coordinated and supported by school system or program. Structural elements and resources exist to sustain quality service-learning practice.

9 Service-Learning Training

- Teachers/leaders are provided with strong training in the philosophy and pedagogy of service-learning.

10 Ongoing Professional Development

- Teachers/leaders are offered ongoing opportunities to network, observe, and problem solve with other teachers, within and outside their school or program, in order to refine their practice.

Excerpted from Connecting Service-Learning to the Curriculum: A Workbook for Teachers and Administrators. These best practices were developed by the CLASS Focus Group and are based on The Essential Elements for Service-Learning, developed by The National Service-Learning Cooperative.

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The original Primary Partners project led us, through the regular reflection required by grant reports, to articulate a series of principles for service-learning. Motivated by the teachers' natural and immediate interest in figuring out what worked in their classroom project, we arrived over several years at our own vision and mission for service-learning. As it developed, we were able link it with the Academy's simultaneous work on defining a schoolwide mission, which included an emphasis on principles of "cooperation and caring." Through this gradual and complex process (which seems far more systematic in retrospect than it did at the time) our school found its way to the site-level best practices in this category: that "service-learning is promoted and systematically practiced as central to the school's mission, beliefs and goals" and that "school policies support the use of quality service-learning on a system-wide basis." Now, service-learning is cited in our school's formal mission statement and strategic plan, in the contractual professional standards for faculty evaluation, in the public-relations communication plan, and in virtually all publications, from the course guide to the school profile sent to colleges.

Coordination of resources—including organizational, budget, and other systemic supports—is another category of practices necessary to sustaining service-learning. At our site, this category most clearly demonstrates the complex, slowly evolving nature of schoolwide change. For example, a long struggle here to improve the school schedule (after six years of experimentation, we've settled into a long-block pattern) ran parallel to the growth of the service-learning program.



A student led activity during Thetford's Operation Day's Work.

Long blocks have proved to be extremely helpful in community-based work of all kinds, whether for school-to-work, service-learning, or curriculum-of-place goals: freed from the constraints of 40-minute periods, kids can get out and do the kind of "real world" study and work that goes beyond

the neat packaging of the traditional academic curriculum. (It should also be noted that no schedule is perfect. The semester block pattern we use for the upper grades here means that courses last just half a year—which can undermine the personal relationships central to many service-learning ex-



Martha Rich (at right) regularly observes and participates in classroom life at Thetford Academy.

periences. For our middle school, we use long blocks in courses that last all year, but meet on an alternating-day system; this can hamper coordination with the outside world, which doesn't do its business on an every-other-day basis!)

Balancing Funding

Funding, of course, is an ongoing challenge for most schools. Securing the necessary financial support for service-learning is especially difficult if these programs are viewed as adjunct or enrichment experiences, vulnerable to cuts when fiscal constraints send districts "back to basics." Outside grant funds can therefore be an important asset, particularly for getting service-learning started; even a small grant award can go a long way if disbursed as mini-grant "seed money" to multiple teachers. Eventually, sustaining service-learning, requires the commitment of "hard money"—regular local funds. Clearly, the most effective strategy is to assert the value of service-learning as part of the core curriculum, rather than a separate "special" program.

In Thetford, we've had partial success with this effort. While our budget now reliably supports basic service-learning resources—funds for transportation, materials, and professional development—funding for personnel costs has been more variable. Those costs arise from the need for coordination; sooner or later, well integrated service-learning is likely to require coordinating personnel, at least on a part-time basis. Some schools create a position for this, perhaps combin-

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SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

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ing it with other outreach or curriculum development functions. At the Academy, we've used a different model, committing equivalent funds to supporting team teaching; the partners can then conduct system-wide planning and take turns traveling for outreach (with no need for a substitute), as well as working together in classrooms. Testimony to the instructional value of teaming came recently in a message from a student: "I'm intentionally addressing this letter to the both of you because with your powers combined, you can stop all evil on the planet... sorry, got carried away there. On a serious note...I want to thank you guys for being such a good team. It was truly my pleasure and privilege to be a part of your class."

This year, however, the school funding crisis forced elimination of this kind of staffing from the regular budget, and we've turned back to seeking grants. As the school budget debates dragged on in Thetford this spring—it took three votes to pass a budget here—one heartening aspect of the public discussion was community members' expressed support for service-learning. When school board members proposed cutting service-learning programs to help bring the tax rate down, citizens defended the programs, sometimes passionately. Intergenerational projects (like a third-grade unit that brings senior citizens into Thetford Elementary for six weeks of shared storytelling and puppetry each year) and highly visible service efforts (like the Academy's annual community work day) were most often cited. It was encouraging to hear taxpayers advocate investment in this unconventional educational approach, even when funds seemed critically short.

Professional Development

Site-level best practices for professional development are perhaps the most obvious elements in building sustainable service-learning program. Even with a promising start in one



Physics and special needs students have formed a powerful partnership.

project generated by dedicated individuals, systemic change requires that many more teachers be "provided with strong training in the philosophy and pedagogy of service-learning" and that following this orientation they "are offered ongoing opportunities to network, observe, and problem solve

EIGHT LESSONS FOR SCHOOL CHANGE

1. You can't mandate what matters.
2. Change is a journey, not a blueprint.
3. Problems are our friends.
4. Vision and strategic planning come later.
5. Individualism and collectivism must have equal power.
6. Neither centralization nor decentralization works.
7. Connection with the wider environment is critical for success.
8. Every person is a change agent.

—Michael Fullan

The New Meaning of School Change

with other teachers, within and outside their school, in order to refine their practice."

In our experience, two factors were critical in arriving at these practices. One was teacher-led training. After a couple of years, Barb and Joanna were so enthusiastic about their experiment that they wanted to share their ideas; they believed that at least some of their colleagues could adapt the principles of the Primary Partners project to other subjects, grade levels, and needs. We therefore used most of our successive grant funding over three years to offer local summer institutes, training both faculty and community partners, and to provide small "in-house" mini-grants to those who designed new pilot projects. While we had valuable help from outside presenters—Cynthia Parsons of SerVermont, Faith Dunne of Dartmouth College, activist writer Grace Paley—the leaders were our own local experts, teachers who were encouraging their own colleagues to try something new. After three years of training, there were more than twenty new projects under way at the Academy and Elementary School.



Physics teacher Marc Chabot appreciated the welcoming environment he found at Thetford Academy for his belief in hands-on learning.

A Nice Surprise

The other key factor in professional development here was related to Fullan's first lesson: our promotion of service-learning was an invitation, not a mandate. Despite the eventual

Sustaining Change, cont'd on p.20

Jump into the River: The “Flow of History”

by Susan Bonthron

In 2003, a number of towns on or near the Connecticut River in Vermont are celebrating the 250th anniversary of their official beginning, or town charter. What better time could there be to revive interest in local history as part of a federal effort to improve American history education in our schools? So thought Fern Tavalin, director of a Teaching American History grant called “The Flow of History.”

“The Flow of History is part of a network of people along the Connecticut River Watershed who are building an awareness of the river’s heritage,” according to Fern. With funding from the United States Department of Education, the Flow of History is currently working with educators and historians to use the local history of watershed towns to help American history live and breathe for students, educators and community members in the Connecticut River Valley and beyond.

A Vermont Collaboration

Partnering with organizations such as the Vermont Rural Partnership, the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, Vital Communities/Valley Quest, Vermont Alliance for Social Studies and Vermont Community Works, the Flow of History (Flow) offers opportunities to connect educators with rich local resources that include people, places and artifacts. With activities such as summer institutes, museum workshops and book groups for educators, Flow aims to foster understanding and appreciation of these resources and how they can inspire students to discover their own place in the context of regional and national history.

Summer Institutes

“Movement and Settlement” was the theme of the first summer institute, which took place in late June. Sponsored by the Vermont Alliance for Social Studies and the Northeast Kingdom School Development Center, the institute featured a broad range of presenters and sought to answer questions such as “How did European colonization impact Native Americans?” “What is forced migration?” and “How can we see ethnicity in the landscape?” Educators came away with increased content knowledge about American and Vermont history that will enrich their history teaching in the coming year. One participant wrote about the institute, “I will continue to look for and investigate stories of migrations and settlements, incorporating these into our study of



The Connecticut River Valley observed in an earlier day.

courtesy of Putney Historical Society

history. Primary source documents, artifacts, personal narratives and countless memories are instilled in me.” Future themes for institutes include “Conflict” (2004) and “Transportation and Technology” (2005).

Public Events and Museum Workshops

Public events such as “Old Home Day,” Dummerston’s 250th Town Charter Celebration, have sparked student involvement in local history (see “Playing with History” in this issue). The museum workshops to be offered to educators in the coming year will focus on “harvesting history” through primary sources available in local communities, whether they are historic buildings, people with knowledge and stories about local history, or documents and artifacts that reside in private and historical society collections. For the state’s northeastern educators, a two-day museum workshop is scheduled to start in early October in Barnet to explore Ben Thresher’s Mill, one of Vermont’s rich historic landmarks. Peggy Pearl, Education Director of the Fairbanks Museum, will conduct the workshop with Lynn Talamini, Flow’s Assistant Director and a teacher at Peacham School. Future museum workshops are soon to be scheduled in mid and southern Vermont as well.

Book Groups

Self-study has always been a powerful way to learn. Mix in some colleagues, an historian, and a few gripping topics told through fiction and nonfiction and you have a Flow of History Book Group. Book Groups will be offered twice a year in both northern and southern Vermont. Teachers receive books and a stipend for participation. Nick Boke of Vermont Reads will lead the Book Groups.

Flow of History, cont’d on p. 20

PRESERVING LOCAL HISTORY

Hands-On History Activity Ideas

by Greg Sharrow

Greg Sharrow continues to offer Community Works Journal readers tangible resources and ways to connect local history and culture to curriculum.

Landscape

Organize a field trip in your town to look for physical evidence dating from its earliest years. Before you go, identify the original center/s of settlement, discuss probable reasons why these were located where they are and what contributed to or discouraged their growth. On your trip do a visual survey of residential, commercial, or industrial buildings in the oldest areas of the town. Discuss building styles, materials, construction techniques, and architectural details as clues to a building's age. Have each student sketch a building facade and try to identify general patterns in the buildings you see.

Create an exhibit displaying maps of your village and or town from different eras. Check with the town clerk, historical society, and the Vermont Department of Transportation to see what kinds of maps they can loan or copy for you. Set up the exhibit to draw kids' attention to the changes that have occurred across time.

If possible, photocopy a 19th century map of your town for kids to use for a "History Hunt." Many of these early maps will identify individual buildings around the town. If you have one that does, have the kids track down abandoned 19th century roads, houses, district schools, or mill sites in their neighborhoods. When possible have kids bring in photos of what they find. Have a knowledgeable towns person lead one or more Saturday hikes on abandoned town roads.

Compile a town history map. Show the location of current and former roads, foundations holes, brooks, mill sites and mill ponds, the location of district schools, historic town buildings, churches, bridges, old houses, historic sites, cemeteries, and so on.

Create a self-guided tour of your town. Include the sites listed on the town history map with an essay describing each site and a small map or directions.

Do a place name survey. Research the names of roads, buildings, hills, mountains, brooks, fields, and any named area in your community. Talk to as many people as possible

and include all stories that explain how something was named. Include all former or multiple names.

Buildings

Discuss the concept of regional patterns using speech patterns or house types as an example. Select one or more patterns in local buildings (for example, coffin/lazy windows) and have kids explore their neighborhood to locate as many examples as possible. Use the information they collect to create a display.

Discuss cape-style houses and have kids use a map to locate any examples in their neighborhood. If they know some-

one who lives in one encourage them to arrange a visit to learn about the house's history. Ask them to make a list of "clues" to the history of the house.

Have kids sketch the front doors of their homes (or the doors of other houses they think are interesting) and make a display "Doors of our Town."



Find out if your town clerk is willing to have students from your class visit the clerk's office. Ask the clerk to talk about and show examples of the types of records available in your town and explain what your students can learn from them.

Photo by Ben Tucker

Have each student research a building in your town that is at least 50 years old. Possible resources include deed books at the town clerk's office, probate records at the county court house, town histories, current and former owners or occupants of the structure, historic photographs, knowledgeable local people, and historic town maps. A finished history might include an essay presenting the research results, a floor plan, and photo documentation or sketches of exterior facades and interior spaces.

Invite a carpenter or an architect to visit your class and talk about changes in construction techniques during the past two hundred years. Discuss the basic indicators of pre-Civil War residential construction: post and beam framing or plank construction, hand-hewn timber and up and down saw marks, hand-forged hardware, single sheets of split lath, horse hair plaster, piled stone

Hands-On History *cont'd on p. 21*

Playing with History: The New Hampshire Grants

An Interview with Cindy Daly by Susan Bonthron

When the Historical Society of Dummerston asked for school participation in Dummerston's 250th birthday celebration, social studies and language arts teacher Cindy Daly and 10 student volunteers from the sixth grade stepped up to the plate. One of the ideas the Historical Society had was to have the students do a reenactment of the signing of the town charter, and that's what Cindy volunteered for. First she contacted Tom Johnson, who is a friend as well as president of the local Historical Society, and asked him what resources he had. "He handed me a piece that he had written for the town report about the signing of the Charter, and a map of what the lots looked like when they were laid out. That's what we started with."

Cindy sat with Tom and had him tell her the story of the town charter. "I made a flow map of the sequence of events, and tried to get more information. I knew the Green Mountain Boys had been up to something, and that there had been a land grant dispute that involved them, and that the Revolutionary War came at a time when they would have legitimate cause to fight. But I didn't know the finer details. So I got him to tell me the story and made a thinking map out of it. I took the Vermont stuff I'd used in the past and tried to piece together a story to give it a little more background. I called a retired teacher who I knew was active in the Historical Society in Marlboro and asked her about land grant charters. "What did it mean to have a charter? What was it exactly?" She said, "I'll call around, I'm not sure."

Cindy's friend spoke to Marlboro Historical Society people. When two people told her she should call Gregory Sanford, the State Archivist, she knew that Gregory must be a significant resource. "I'd seen him do a presentation for the Vermont Bicentennial. He's wonderful," said Cindy. "He gave me the ideas that gave the piece some pizzazz. He taught me what a land grant was." As the keeper of the state records, Gregory shares office space with the Secretary of State in Montpelier. He told Cindy, "We're moldering here Monday through Friday 9 to 5 — we wish people would call us!"

"I wrote the script based on what Greg told me and the information I got from the old *Vermont Geography Book*." This was originally published by Northern Cartographic, but is now being revised and put on-line by the Vermont Geographic Alliance at www.academics.smcvt.edu/vtgeographic/

"Retired teacher Winnie Vogt provided wonderful classroom support. We had less than two weeks to do the whole thing, from first hearing about it to a finished performance. I



Cindy Daly's students preparing for "Old Home Days" performance.

had the students read what I wrote. They changed words in it to keep it on a 6th grade level, including replacing words that were hard to pronounce."

I asked Cindy what the learning process was like for herself and the students. She described learning about how the equivalent lands exchange came about because Massachusetts had wanted its borders to be straight lines on both its northern and southern borders. In order to obtain a certain piece of land, they traded an "equivalent" piece of land further north. These equivalent lands included Brattleboro, Dummerston, and Putney.

"The kids learned a lot of history from this. I'd get off the phone and say, 'kids, we've got to change page two, because it turns out...'" The students saw that a place's own history couldn't just be found by reading a history textbook. They and their teacher conducted primary research, read old documents such as the Charter and reworded them in language they could understand.

"We ended up with a 20-minute performance that we presented at Old Home Day, the 250th Town Charter Celebration. We performed it in front of an audience of community members at the Congregational Church. It was pouring rain. We followed the Church Service, which was part of the celebration on Saturday. The rain was loud on the roof, but you could hear the students really well — they were spectacular. They had a calm and presence. They were a bit stiff at first. I wrote some jokes into it and they began getting laughs. Then their natural stage presence kicked in. The boys who were the Allen brothers put their arms around each other's shoulders in a perfect gesture. And they began to get into their roles."

Playing with History cont'd on p. 22

Sustaining Change, *cont'd from p. 16*

proliferation of service-learning projects and programs, we have never made participation a formal requirement for teachers or for students. Instead, we've sought to build a culture that makes voluntary involvement attractive and rewarding—and we've left room for those who don't make this choice.

This approach has yielded some interesting and unexpected results. One of the most compelling examples is our Physics Project in Assistive Technology, started by a teacher who had no training and no expressed interest in service-based models. Marc's project began with a far more humble goal—his wish to combat “senioritis” by finding some way to engage students more actively in the study of physics during the spring before graduation. His idea—to assign them an engineering problem-solving project that would address the needs of students with intensive special needs and be evaluated by a community panel—has evolved over five years to become an award-winning program, recognized as a clear exemplar of the way quality service-learning can be integrated with advanced science instruction.

It was a whole year, though, before we even gave it the “S-L” label. One day, as Marc was describing his plans for the second year, I pointed out that the project seemed to have all the elements of good service-learning practice: would he like to learn more about that? By this time, the Academy had developed some of those “ongoing opportunities to network, observe, and problem solve with other teachers,” based in the Critical Friends Group model for promoting reflective practice. Marc's commitment to that work helped him refine his integration of service-learning as an explicit element of the physics unit—and other teachers got to learn from his ideas as well.

For me as an administrator, the best part of this story is the evidence that midway through our decade of change, the conditions were in place to support innovative and powerful curriculum development in service-learning—and that no mandate was needed. Marc described the school to an interviewer this way: “Something has happened that makes this a great place for me to be.... There is a belief that true learning occurs when more than just your brain is active, when all of you is active and engaged. I think Martha really supports that in a lot of different ways. She doesn't go around banging a stick on the table—it's part of the vocabulary that we use here. It's in my conversations with people. It's just here, it's present. A lot of it has to do with... my comfort level with being able to experiment.”

As time goes on, we see mounting evidence that students, too, experience the school climate in a way that encourages them to generate their own ideas, projects, and forms of leadership. For example, all students who experienced the Assistive Tech project this spring advocated strongly for the school to organize more inclusion for students with intensive special needs—and some of them will be working on that initiative this fall. As both teacher-led and student-led projects continue to emerge and evolve, it seems safe to say that service-learning has become “central to the school's mission, beliefs and goals.”

To other administrators, then, I can offer a few “lessons” of my own. I'm fully convinced now that Michael Fullan was right with his number one lesson: you can't mandate what matters. Amid all the complexity and unpredictability of the school change pro-

cess, however, there are a few simple things you can do: Trust teachers. Trust kids. Give them room to experiment. Coach, support, and celebrate their work. Then shape the vision out of what's best in their work—and keep linking new experiments to that evolving vision.

It may also help to keep a final Fullan lesson in mind, the one that concludes his list: “Every person is a change agent.” That potential lies in a seventh grader as well as a veteran teacher, in the head of the local garden club as well as the Head of School. Getting the conditions right to tap their potential may be a long journey, but it's a trip worth taking. After traveling for a decade on that road to change, I feel more confident than I used to about our direction. I still can't know exactly what's around the bend, but I do feel I'm in good company. That, more than anything else, makes the going good.

Editors' Notes: More information on the programs of Thetford Academy along with the story of Marc Chabot's Physics class' project, accompanied by student reflections, can be found at Community Works On-Line at: www.vermontcommunityworks.org

Other books by Michael Fullan include: What's Worth Fighting For? Working Together For Your School and Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Reform. Additional information on the writing of Michael Fullan is available at www.michaelfullan.com

Flow of History, *cont'd from p. 17*

Case Study Schools

While Flow of History offerings will be available to all teachers, those from two schools will be closely documented. Dummerston School (K-8) is one of two case study schools that the grant will follow to determine whether Flow of History opportunities expand teachers' knowledge about the content of American history and how to translate that knowledge into engaging curriculum for students. Peacham Elementary (K-6), a member of the Vermont Rural Partnership, is the other case study school. While teachers at Peacham explore how to develop new standards-based curriculum in local and American history, Dummerston teachers will find ways to link local history to the national story. This will occur through teacher investigation of primary resource collections held in local, state, and national archives.

With help from the Flow of History grant, educators throughout the region will encourage their students to “jump into the river” of local, regional and national history. □

For more information, contact Lynn Talamini (email: lynnatalamini@hotmail.com) or Fern Tavali (email: tavalin@sover.net) or call (802) 463-4280. You may also visit: www.flowofhistory.org

As the documentation and dissemination partner for the Flow of History grant, Community Works will help participating teachers and students tell their stories and share resources and curriculum. Look for upcoming features on our Web site at: www.vermontcommunityworks.org

Hands-On History *cont'd from p. 18*

foundations, etc. Also discuss the "cape" and story-and-a-half as characteristic early nineteenth century Vermont house types. If possible, arrange to visit one of these houses in your community.

Have students research the history of the structure in which they live. Research could be presented as a narrative account, labeled floor plan, and sketches of the front, rear, and side views of their house, mobile home, or apartment building.

Have each student research the history of a domestic space or a work space. For example, students might interview parents, grandparents or older people to find out what kitchens were like during their childhood and compare those memories with the kitchen in their home today. This project could also focus on how people live in their homes: students might compare their parents' memories of childhood homes with their present home. This history could document both how rooms are named (living room, family room, den, parlor) and how rooms are used (reading, watching TV, working on projects, visiting with friends, doing homework, and so forth.) by members of the family.

Town Records

Find out if your town clerk is willing to have students from your class visit the clerk's office—or if he/she would visit the school. If possible ask the clerk to talk about and show examples of the types of records available in your town and explain what your students can learn from them.

Photographs

In collaboration with your local historical society and families in your town, mount an exhibit of post cards and old photos of village scenes, local vistas, and individual structures. Choose several homes or commercial buildings for kids to go out and sketch from the same angle as they look today. Mount kids' sketches as part of the exhibit.

Local Businesses

Arrange to visit the oldest business, factory, or farm in your town. Ask about objects, photographs, newspaper clippings, equipment, stories or other evidence that dates from its earliest years. Try to get a sense of how it has changed (physically, organizationally, operationally) over the years.

Cemeteries

Discuss generational patterns in naming children, using contemporary examples, i.e., Jason and Jessica vs Mildred and Harold. Have kids visit local cemeteries to collect interesting first names from headstones. Encourage them to write down each person's approximate date of birth. When the kids bring in this information make a timeline of names and watch for patterns.

Visit a cemetery and do any or all of the following: make drawings of ornamentation and inscriptions, locate the graves of original proprietors, first settlers, soldiers, and/or famous people, compile a handbook of inscriptions, look for evidence of epidemics, and chart changes in life expectancy.

Using the headstones themselves as a resource, describe changes in style, materials used, inscriptions, and decorative motifs across time. See if you can construct general statements describing these changes as a chronological sequence.

Tools and Household Objects

Assemble an historic artifacts collection. Ask parents and grandparents, fellow teachers, school personnel, interested community members, and the local historical society to loan objects for a temporary class museum. Have each student research a favorite object and report back to the class on its original role in daily life. Encourage students to include information not only about how it was used but also about who used it, where and when it was used, how common it was, why it is no longer used, and so forth.

If possible have an "Object of the Week" and invite someone in to explain and/or demonstrate its use.

People

Identify several older people who enjoy talking about the past and are willing to visit with young people. Arrange for students to tape record an interview with them (as a whole class, in small groups, or as individuals—in or out of school). Select general topics and develop topic ideas in advance. Using daily life in the past as a focus, topics might include: memories of childhood, school experience, holiday celebrations, entertainment, neighborly relations, community life, transportation, making a living, courtship, marriage and funeral practices, and so forth. (Kitchen junkets/hops/tunks and shivarees are interesting practices to ask about.) Have each student write an essay, draw a picture or build a model to present information from the interview.

Traditional artists and craftsmen are people who have not had formal institutional training in the art form they practice but have learned informally from family members or friends. Traditional art forms include, but are not limited to, wood and stone carving, whittling, basket making, metal working, furniture making, quilting, tating, rug hooking and braiding, crocheting, embroidery, model making and painting. This list could also be expanded to include activities which result in a less durable product such as gardening, cooking, and music making. Traditional art forms often are associated with a person's family or involve skills associated with a particular occupation. As a class project survey your area for traditional artists. If possible, arrange to visit their workplace or have them come to school to demonstrate and talk about their art form.

Much "old-time" knowledge and information continues to be a part of our daily lives and can serve as the basis for a student collecting project. Choose a category (for example family remedies for colds, nosebleeds, hiccups, or warts; traditional weather predictors; proverbs; traditional sayings and figures of speech) and have each student collect examples from family members and neighbors. Encourage students to include as much background information for each item as possible and compile the research results in a class book. □

Gregory Sharrow is Director of Education at the Vermont Folklife Center in Middlebury and a contributing editor to Community Works Journal. Greg holds a Ph.D. degree in Folklore from the University of Pennsylvania and is a former Vermont classroom teacher. He has done extensive field research with Vermont dairy farmers and produced the public radio series "Never Done: Farm Life in Vermont." Greg is author of a number of publications, including a multicultural textbook Many Cultures, One People. His current work focuses on the interplay of folklife and personal identity and the role that culture plays in our construction of self.

PROGRAM EXEMPLAR

Playing with History *cont'd from p. 19*

The performance began with girls in costume quilting and talking. Boys joined the conversation wearing tricornered hats, with green plumes for the Allen brothers. Governor Benning Wentworth sported some gold braid and carried a purse as well, which he patted smugly as the tale recounted how many lots of prime river front the Governor got to keep or sell. In the grand finale, each actor got a line as the group summarized the story of the land grant charters: "And so our land progressed from wilderness to the possession of England, then France, Holland, and back to Great Britain. From territory belonging to Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, to an independent republic with towns joining us from both New Hampshire and New York, to our final and enduring status as the 14th state in the United States of America." One enthusiastic audience member said, "I never understood this so clearly before. Can I have a copy?" Cindy suddenly found herself being regarded as a historian.

Later that summer, Cindy was enrolled in course in web page design. "Creating that story was a lot of work," Cindy recalled. "So rather than just put it in a drawer, I decided to take the script and make a sample web-based unit out of it for my course. A few of my students have helped me. I am cross-referencing it with sites that are age-appropriate for middle schoolers." Her sample unit is called "Vermont Boundaries and the Land Grant Charters" and will eventually appear on the web. To create it, Cindy combined paperwork that came out of a social studies summer institute for fifth and sixth grade teachers, along with Vermont social studies standards, and her own work on the Land Grant Charters. The site will include a list of books that tie in to history units, and includes a brainstormed list of best practices for social studies that emerged from work at the institute.

Like the story the students helped write and produce, Cindy's Web-based unit reinforces that history isn't just a collection of dry dates in a textbook. It can be discovered and explored by students in town maps and documents, by talking to local and regional experts, and through their own reading and on-line research. We look forward to the new views of history that our future student historians discover and produce with the help and guidance of teachers like Cindy Daly. □

Branching Out

by Carolyn Shapiro

In April 1998, three parent/educators met with a group of approximately 20 parents whose teenagers wanted to be home schooled or go to a private school because their educational needs were not being met in public high school. Many of the parents were concerned because they did not have the time or money to provide either of these options for their children. As a result of meetings with parents and teenagers, we, as parents and educators, began to develop Branching Out. The program has just completed its fifth year.

Working within the framework of the public school, Branching Out offers students in grades 9 through 12 an opportunity to design a course of study based on their individual learning styles under the guidance and encouragement of community mentors, licensed teachers and experienced advisors. Branching Out is a model program of how community and school form a cooperative educational program and how choice, based on Vermont Standards, is offered within the public school.

The first semester of our pilot year, we had 7 students from 11th and 12th grade. During our succeeding years, the program has had between 17 to 24 students who are a diverse group, some high achievers and some not doing well in the traditional classroom, some very articulate and some painfully shy. Most of these students have not had the opportunity to initiate and manage their own learning. A few are students who would consider dropping out if Branching Out were not an option.

Working with the Vermont Standards, students select approximately three standards from the Vital Results and Fields of Knowledge that their learning plan addresses. Students discuss these with their mentors and Branching Out Advisors. Students evaluate themselves by the standards they choose and the rubrics they construct around these standards. They explain these to their mentors and include them in their final presentation. As one student said, "Writing my plan for Branching Out was the hardest part of the whole thing because you just have to write it in an academic way for all the requirements and for all the credits you want to get. But that was really good. It helped me to narrow down my study to where I really wanted it to be."

Students practice presenting their studies during seminars where other students ask questions and give helpful feedback. Because of the diversity in students, Branching Out considers the seminars an important aspect of the program, in that students who would not ordinarily meet can gather to share their learning experiences and appreciate each other's individual learning styles. It is exciting to see a group of students who would not ordinarily be together supporting each other and being genuinely interested in each other's studies.

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PROGRAM EXEMPLAR

Branching Out collaborates with a Faculty Advisor Committee, which accepts the students' learning plans, participates in the students' final presentation, and grants credit. This Committee represents administration and faculty, who have been involved from the beginning stages of developing the program. We are strongly committed to working together and to modeling a democratic process. The fact that students initiate and direct their own learning creates an atmosphere of democratic participation. Students, parents, faculty and community members are involved in the practice and assessment of the program.



Branching Out student EmilyKate playing her sitar.

EmilyKate wanted to learn more about the culture of India and especially how to play the sitar. Branching Out was able to find a sitar instructor who, although living in Maine, was willing to teach Emily as they took turns traveling to each other's homes. The next obstacle was finding a sitar for her to play! One was located, sitting in disrepair from a time in the 70s when its owner had hoped to learn how to play. The sitar was offered to EmilyKate for the duration of her study. This extraordinary study actually brought people with similar passions together, regardless of the miles, and created support for realizing a dream. The owner of the sitar had his sitar repaired and is now taking lessons. EmilyKate has her own sitar and is thoroughly engrossed in her playing. The mentor, through his generous willingness to teach even at such a distance, has helped to create an extended community of lifelong learners of the sitar.

Branching Out sees the mentor/student relationship as a key element in the Program. Students are not the only ones who learn—mentors have commented on how much they learn from students. This reciprocal inspiration helps learning move from a school building to the community, and in the process everyone becomes rekindled in their enthusiasm for learning.

Vickie is a student who did a major turnaround in her life and in her studies. She decided to become more engaged in school and came to Branching Out wanting to know about fabric, fashion and sewing. At first Vickie was timid about meeting her mentor; it was a new situation with a new person. But her mentor greeted her with such positive talk about what they could do together that Vickie understood the wonderful potential that awaited her. Her mentor continually assured her that she could do what she wanted to do and that she should pursue her dreams. At first a bit afraid of the sewing machine, Vickie eventually became comfortable

working with it as she culminated her study in sewing her prom dress. Her mentor stood beside Vickie the whole time, meeting for extra hours to help with the last touches on the dress. The experience has changed all involved. Vickie is much more self-assured. Her mentor is the recipient of much affection and gratitude from Vickie, who helped her realize one of her objectives for the year—to give to a young person. Vickie's advisor is invigorated by a situation where everyone grows through appreciation, sharing, and learning.

Tim was not doing well in school. His preference was to stay home and read. When he first talked about the possibility of pursuing a Branching Out study he wasn't even clear about what he wanted to do. A Branching Out advisor started talking with him about the books he was drawn to. He said his favorite character in the series was a blacksmith. "Blacksmithing! That's it. Why not try the real thing?" Tim started to sparkle. When he and his advisor first arrived at Lucien Avery's blacksmith shop, they were cautiously optimistic that this mentoring connection would work. By the time the session was over and Tim had created a hook by himself, he was hooked on blacksmithing. Tim is now considering applying to a college that offers blacksmithing. It was clear in Tim's final presentation that he had connected with his heart's calling.

Chelsea came to Branching Out with the aspiration to become a better writer. Our high school does not offer any course work in creative writing, so this was an opportunity to work with a published writer in the community, Ann Giroux. The student and the writer together experienced a powerful synergy. Ann felt a renewed energy in her own work through spending time with Chelsea. In the beginning of the study, it seemed close to impossible to narrow it to something manageable in one year's time. As Chelsea and her advisor worked on the study plan, they kept defining and narrowing the goal. This process served Chelsea well, and she feels she now has a tool for the rest of her life in setting realistic goals.

Branching Out has given faculty a chance to see what students are capable of doing once they are given the chance to initiate their own studies and work with a mentor. Thanks to the generous participation of mentors, we are redefining the ways in which learning takes place. We see each other as participating members of a community of people rich with experiences and knowledge that we can share with one another. □

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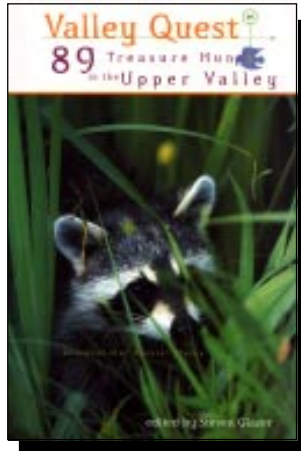
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Discover Our Special Places Valley Quest : 89 Treasure Hunts in the Upper Valley

Edited by Steven Glazer

There's treasure out there! Strewn across thirty-one towns in the Upper Valley region of Vermont and New Hampshire are TREASURES: historic one-room schoolhouses, gushing waterfalls, covered bridges, old cemeteries and cellar holes, bogs, hollow maples, ancient ceremonial sites and towering, stately oaks. Valley Quest's unique and FUN collection of 89 treasure hunts will introduce these hidden, special places to YOU.



Valley Quest clues and maps lead to the favorite places of children and adults from across the Upper Valley—places like Velvet Rocks, Glen Falls, Dunbar Hill Cemetery, and the Jonathan Wyman Saw Mill. At the end of each Quest—perhaps secreted in a stone wall or hollow tree—is a treasure box containing a sign-in guest book and a handmade rubber stamp.

"A beautiful way to learn about history, nature and our responsibility to both."

Trina Scharf Hyman, illustrator of *A Child's Calendar*

Valley Quest was born out of a 150-year-old tradition in the region surrounding Dartmoor National Park in southwest England. In this region, people—from toddlers and teens to parents and "pensioners"—don their boots, and following maps and rhyming riddles, traipse the moors in search of hidden boxes. "Letterboxing," as this tradition is called, has become a hugely popular pastime, with over 2,000 boxes hidden in both natural and cultural locations.

Vital Communities built upon this tradition on this side of the Atlantic by developing the Valley Quest program. Their eighty-nine treasure hunts, or Quests, as they prefer to call them, are the outcomes of an educational program whose goal is to foster place-based education and stewardship. The Quests contained in the book

ValleyQuest, *cont'd on back page*

Publishing with Students A Comprehensive Guide

by Chris Weber, Atkinson School—Oregon

What motivates students to do their best writing? Getting published and having a real audience are great incentives. So, how can you help your students publish their writing? How do you get your students involved and then prepared to take charge of the publishing process? What are the secrets of successful student publications and how can you and your students achieve successful results?

Chris Weber answers these questions and more in his collection of essays by inspired and inspiring writing teachers around the world who have helped students publish. In the process of conferring with these teachers and conducting his own student writing projects, Weber has amassed an impressive collection of student samples that show you what is possible.

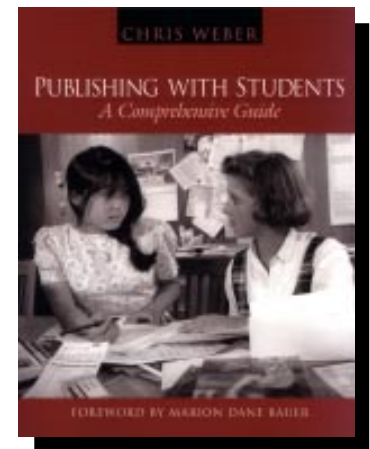
In *Publishing with Students*, you'll learn how to:

- produce traditional forms of student publications, including newspapers, magazines, and books;
- create websites to display student writing and art on the Internet;
- implement e-mail publication projects, both local and global;
- make a difference in the world through publishing;
- discover why and how other teachers publish, and how you can, too.

Filled with activities to encourage and disseminate students' writing, wise and practical advice from experienced and talented teachers,

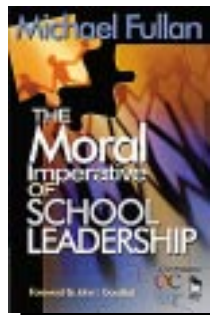
and engaging case studies, *Publishing with Students* is, in the words of one of our best authorities on writing, Donald Graves, "an important book to use."

Information on *Publishing with Students* and related resources can be found at: www.publishingstudents.com



KIDS As Planners

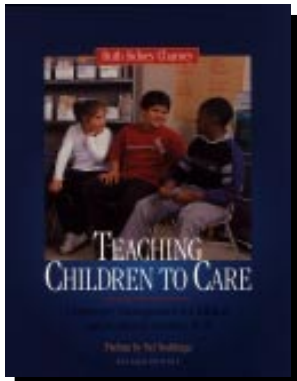
is a comprehensive guidebook that provides teachers, school administrators, students and community partners with a step-by-step process for designing, implementing and evaluating a quality KIDS service-learning project. For more information on this publication and other resources visit www.kidsconsortium.org



The Moral Imperative of School Leadership

The role of the principal is pivotal to systemic school change. This is the fundamental message in Michael Fullan's new book, *The Moral Imperative of School Leadership*, which extends the discussion that began in his earlier publication, *What's Worth Fighting for in the Principalship?* The author examines the moral purpose of school leadership and its critical role in "changing the context" in which the role is embedded. Fullan calls for principals to become agents as well as beneficiaries of the processes of school change. www.michaelfullan.com

REVIEWS



Teaching Children to Care

by Dr. Belinda Gimbert

Teacher Educator,
Penn State University

Approaching issues of classroom management and discipline is much more than what teachers do when children break rules and misbehave. Rather than simply reacting to problems, we need to establish an ongoing social curriculum, we need to encourage children

to participate in community, we need to teach self-control, and most importantly, we need to accept the potential of children to learn these things and the potential of teachers to teach them.

Helping children learn to take better care of themselves, of each other, and of their classroom is not a waste of instructional time. It's the most enduring task that teachers do and Ruth Charney's book, *Teaching Children to Care* (revised June, 2002) establishes the educational practice and the classroom routines that help teachers accomplish this task with intention.

From Section I, Chapter 1: "The word DISCIPLINE is derived from the Latin root *disciplina*, meaning learning. It needs to be associated positively with acts and feats of learning rather than negatively with punishing. Teaching discipline requires two fundamental elements: empathy and structure. Empathy helps us 'know' the child, to perceive his/her needs, to hear what s/he is trying to say. Structure allows us to set guidelines and provide necessary limits. Effective, caring discipline requires both empathy and structure.

There are two basic goals in teaching discipline:

- Creation of self-control
- Creation of community

Creation of Self-control

We need to strive for the creation of self-control in children. It is the first purpose of classroom management. This purpose is summed up by a quote from John Dewey in his pamphlet *Experience and Education*, first published in 1938. Dewey writes, "The ideal aim of education is creation of the power of self-control" (Dewey, 1963, p. 64).

Charney (2002) identifies "power" as the key word in Dewey's quote. Power, says Dewey, is the ability to "frame purposes, to judge wisely..." (Dewey, 1963, p. 64). The power of self-control is the power to assert oneself in a positive way. It involves the capacities to regulate oneself, to anticipate consequences, and to give up an immediate gratification to realize a long-term goal. It includes the ability to make and carry out a plan, to solve a problem, to think of a good idea and act on it, to sift alternatives, to make decisions. For children, it is the ability to enter a new group and say hello, to make new friends, to choose activities, and to

hold fast to inner thoughts and beliefs. It isn't innate power, says Dewey, but one that is "created."

Creation of Community

In today's world, it is particularly urgent that we extend beyond the domain of self and the lessons of self-control. We need to find connections to others and to feel ourselves members of many groups—intimate groups, community groups, and a world group. These connections and responsibilities need to be taught as well. We need to teach children to care as well as to receive care. We must help them learn to contribute, and want to contribute.

Belonging to a group means being needed as well as to need, and believing that you have something vital to contribute. Every child can contribute care for others in many ways—by listening with attention and responding with relevance, by showing concern for the feelings and viewpoints of others, by developing a capacity for empathy.

We all have an inherent need to be useful and helpful to others. But because it is inherent doesn't mean that it automatically flourishes or is tapped. In our society, there are people who suffer from a lack of meaningful work. Children, too, can suffer from a partnership of neglect and indulgence that results in a lack of meaningful responsibilities. These children are not expected to demonstrate care, not accustomed to taking care of others. Creating community means giving children the power to care.

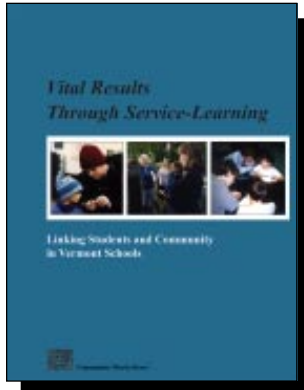
Consequently, the best methods, the most carefully planned programs, the most intriguing classroom centers, and the most exciting and delicious materials are useless without discipline and management. The children can hurl the Legos and crash the blocks, or they can build fine bridges. The critical difference is the approach to discipline and managing the classroom. (Charney, 2002, 17-25)

In my years of working as a classroom teacher and a teacher educator, I have found the Responsive Classroom approach to teaching particularly helpful in managing just such a classroom. It offers teachers tool and techniques for creating a learning community that is nurturing, respectful, and full of learning.

"Responsive Classroom" practice was developed by the Northeast Foundation for Children of which Charney is a co-founder. There are seven guiding principals underlying the approach and six practical teaching strategies. Included among the guiding principles: the social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum; how children learn is as important as what they learn; the greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction; and lasting change begins with the adult community. Resultant practices range from morning meeting to family communication strategies.

Teaching cont'd on back cover

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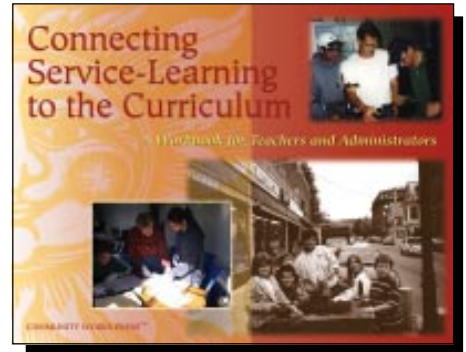
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Teaching *cont'd from p. 26*

As a teacher educator, I certainly have found *Teaching Children to Care* to articulate and to build on these principal and strategies. I find it most useful for classroom teachers in its intentionality and its detail. Charney gives us the specific classroom details we should expect to see in a classroom that teaches children self-control and helps them to feel connected to others through community.

Charney tells us that children do not come to school knowing how to do all these things we expect. They must be consciously taught, step-by-step. For example, Charney emphasizes reinforcing expected behaviors by commenting on what children do right, reminding children of expected behaviors before things go wrong, and redirecting children when they have gone off track – “The Three R’s” for teaching self-control.

Charney meticulously describes a process for nourishing social participation and caring behavior, liberally lacing her text with anecdotes from her own and other teachers’ classrooms. For example, Charney exemplifies how children, given time and attention, demonstrate the power of self-control daily. She describes five-year-olds during their first week of school trying to sit still in a circle, a clutch of wiggles, wagging hands, and babbling voices. Six weeks later, there is a real semblance of order. They are working on “being the boss” of their own bodies, staying “parked” in their spot, keeping their hands only on themselves, listening. Maggie’s hand starts to go up while Mikey is telling a story about his bike. When she sees a slight shake of her teacher’s head, she remembers, and her hand goes down. She will wait until Mikey is done talking to tell about her bike, “cause the same thing happened” to her on her bike. Self-control allows listening and waiting.

The practical wisdom from these stories helps persuade the reader that it is possible to create a classroom that is enlivened by

caring and respect, and that such a classroom atmosphere is a critical foundation for learning. When we teach students to be self-disciplined and caring, and we do so with courage and authenticity, we are using instructional time well. Most importantly, we are building essential habits of self-control and care through the very routine of our classrooms.

For more information on the Responsive Classroom and the Northeast Foundation for Children and for information concerning Teaching Children to Care and other Responsive Classroom materials log on to <http://www.responsiveclassroom.org>

ValleyQuest *cont'd from p. 25*

were created between 1996 and 2000. More than 1,000 children, adults, families, scouts, students, and historical society members contributed to the creation of these Quests.

"These are some of the finest wild goose chases I've ever seen." Bill McKibben, author of *Hope, Human and Wild*.

Valley Quest: 89 Treasure Hunts in the Upper Valley is available at bookstores across northern New England (\$14.95), or may be ordered from Vital Communities. For more information, please contact: Steven Glazer, Valley Quest Coordinator, at 802-201-9100 or via e-mail at: vital.communities@valley.net. Their Web site is www.vitalcommunities.org



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