# Over the River & Through the 'Hood: Re-Viewing 'Place' as Focus of Pedagogy

# An Introduction

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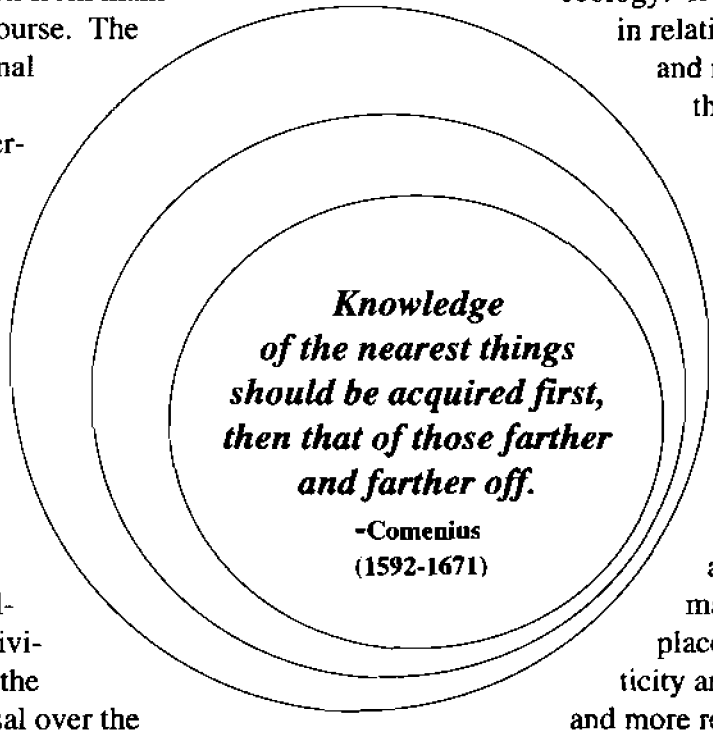
Teachers have used the immediate environment of the school grounds and the community as learning laboratories since there have been schools. No one thought to name it place-based pedagogy. Throughout history this practice has been described using a variety of labels and has received limited attention from mainstream educational discourse. The location of the educational enterprise has generally been a marginal consideration. It simply hasn't been given a lot of thought for the most part.

This history of marginalization has been considered by some to reflect a dominant (perhaps modernist and/or masculinist) perception of what counts as knowledge. This paradigm privileges the generalizable, the abstract, and the universal over the immediate, personal and local. It has ignored, for example, the extent to which most Americans are displaced/disconnected from their own sources of food, water, livelihood, recreation, or sacred inspiration, and the increasingly abstract nature of the realities most of us deal with, day in and day out (Hiss, 1990: Orr, 1992; Shepard, 1982).




Place-based pedagogies, in contrast, explicitly root the learning experience in the location of the learner—the home, the backyard, the school grounds, the community, the bioregion—the place the learner inhabits. A place-based pedagogy approaches the individual as part of a cultural, political, social and biological context—an ecology. It positions the individual in relationship with the human and non-human elements of the life-world—at a place that is welcoming of educational experience and a knowledge base from which to construct a more ecologically sustainable culture.

Despite this history of marginalization, there have always been those educators, philosophers, and others who have maintained that location or place is critical to the authenticity and relevance of education and more recently to the sustainability of the earth itself. John Dewey, American philosopher, social critic and educational theorist, argued as early as 1897 that place could be a significant education tool for the development of practical and manual skills, good thinking, and the development of the whole person.

More than 100 years ago, Chief Seattle warned U.S. government officials, "What befalls the earth, befalls the children of the earth." Seattle under-

stood what Commoner would teach us one hundred years later, that "everything is connected to everything else" (Commoner, 1971, p. 22). What happens in one place ultimately affects every other place.

David Orr, author and chair of environmental studies at Oberlin College, declares that the integration of place into education is important because it requires the combination of intellect with experience, it requires a reconceptualizing of the purposes of education to promote diversity of thought and a wider understanding of interrelatedness, and it reeducates people in the art of living well where they are—and is therefore critical to ecological sustainability (Orr, 1992).

**What Does a Pedagogy of Place Look Like?**

Fourth-grade students at Brookside School in the Ross Valley School District in California studied the basic ecology of an endangered species, the California freshwater shrimp, which is native to their place. Then, they persuaded local farmers to help restore the shrimp habitat. This cooperation required that the farmers use different pesticides, not build within 30 feet of the creek, create wildlife corridors, and save young native oaks. Students launched a variety of public relations campaigns to educate the community about the issue and to engage support. They attended community meetings, wrote to public officials, videotaped the project and applied for a grant to self-publish a book about the California freshwater shrimp (Elmwood Institute, 1993). This is place-based pedagogy.

In the Fatick region of Senegal, doctoral candidate Serigne Diene, conducted a participatory research study to design, implement and evaluate a sustainable community-based nutrition education delivery system. Paradoxically, this country whose main industry is agriculture, also grows children who suffer from severe malnutrition. Diene established a multi-dimensional education/self-help program in collaboration with the knowledge and capabilities of the people served (Diene, 1995). This is place-based pedagogy.

Students at Oberlin College in Ohio worked with faculty and community members to design an environmental technology center. This center serves as a model of sustainable building techniques and technologies that focus on fundamental human needs of energy and food production, and is designed to be considerate of the nature and culture of the region (Orr, 1998). This is place-based pedagogy.

In February of 1999, I participated in an experience organized as part of the North American Popular and Adult Education (NAPAE) Conference. Eighteen conference attendees traveled from Tucson, Arizona to Nogales, Mexico to learn about life in the borderlands. We visited and talked with local women and children who lived in resident-governed housing projects. We toured a *maquila* (factory) and talked with the workers and managers. We shopped at a local market to learn how much basic foods cost and to calculate how much food the average factory worker's salary would provide. We then ate supper in the *colonias* (slums)—a meal prepared by and shared with some of the families that make that place home. This is place-based pedagogy.

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**Why Pedagogy for Ecological and Cultural Sustainability?**

The questions of how we educate for cultural and ecological sustainability are bringing people to the table from many places—from all races, all socio-economic levels and all disciplines (Gaard & Murphy, 1998; MacDonald, 1998; Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, Wangari, 1996). The questions are not much different from those that some of us were asking at the first Earth Day celebration. There are more people on the planet today and some different problems. The questions are the same. And, some loom more critical today than ever before.

The most critical question today is not: Is there an environmental quality problem? The question is: How long can the earth's biosphere support life as we know it (Bowers, 1995; Brown, Flaven & Postel, 1996; Carson, 1962; Commoner, 1971; Ehrlich, 1968; Gore, 1993; Orr, 1992; Postel, 1996; Suzuki, 1997)? Related to this, we must also ask:

How do we reconstruct learning environments so that the idea of cultural and ecological sustainability becomes the foundation for conceptual development?

How do we socialize this generation and the next to take responsibility for resolving ecological issues?

How do we teach a democratic political process which most of us have rarely participated in at a meaningful level?

How do we engage students in these considerations when the "learn to earn" ethic of most schools and universities reinforces the modernist paradigm with a profit motive at the epicenter?

How do we do this?

We begin where we are. We use what we have. And, we do what we can. Then we'll be in a new place to begin again. This is the power and the promise of place-based pedagogy.

**How Can We Re-View Place as Focus of Pedagogy**

This issue of *Thresholds* re-views that power and promise. We have collected and connected articles that demonstrate local efforts to address these and other related questions. This collection represents some original work and some reprints of previously published work. We stepped outside of general editorial policy that excludes reprints because we wanted you to know more of what is out there related to this theme.

***Place as a focus of pedagogy is not just a left-over romantic or progressive utopian ideal.***

Cliff Knapp begins this re-viewing process with "Teaching the Three R's Through the 3 C's: Connecting Curriculum and Community." Knapp discusses an approach that is based on two other placed-based programs and which has helped teachers in Northern Illinois take their first steps in integrating community resources into the curriculum. To complement this article, some of his past students submitted examples of their efforts. These articles are diverse in format, location, and focus. Their power lies in their clarity and applicability—any classroom teacher could take these examples and adapt them to his or her content and context. Begin where you are...use what you have...and do what you can.

Following these practical applications of the approach, Knapp and I team up to scan the historical and philosophical landscape of place-based pedagogy from the perspective of outdoor education. This article, originally appearing as an ERIC Digest, surveys place-based curriculum and instruction projects.

The following three articles, developed by a different group of educators, exemplify local, regional, and national efforts. Randy Haluza-DeLay explores the city as a place to re-awaken the sense of wonder—relating micro-environments to larger social and ecological phenomena. David Sobel expands his quest for a sense of place to a regional adventure that can be explored in a school context or with family or other social units. These treasure hunts, Sobel claims, lead to discoveries that strengthen collaboration between school and community and build a foundation for children's future engagement in civic life. Marilyn Harper discusses how the National Park Service is using historic places as learning sites in the social studies curriculum. Harper explains a project that provides materials and training to develop understanding about how broad currents of history affect communities.

Several of the articles in this issue demonstrate how some state and national curriculum standards can be met through the learning experiences described. Because the standards movement has become a tension for many educational systems and the communities they represent, we round out this re-view with a thoughtful consideration of the question, "World Class Standards and Local Pedagogies: Can We do Both?" Tom Gibbs and Aimee Howley reveal the tensions between these two movements. Then, they blur the boundaries of an either-or mindset to consider how the two movements might interface. Two programs that use place as a focus of pedagogy and are aligned with mandated standards are described.

As discussed throughout this issue, these are really not new themes nor new questions. We also declare that place as a focus of pedagogy is not just a leftover romantic or progressive utopian ideal. The events of the last several months have so painfully brought to the foreground, the slogan, "Think globally, act locally" and that mandate is being impressed into a diversity of formats. However we gauge them, these themes and questions are with us and will be defining the direction and dynamic of the educational enterprise—over the river and through the 'hood—in rural, suburban and urban places well into this century.

*We are inescapably place-centric creatures shaped in important ways by the localities of our birth and upbringing. We learn first those things in our immediate surroundings, and these we soak in consciously and subconsciously through sight, smell, feel, sound, taste, and perhaps other senses we do not yet understand. Our preferences, phobias, and behaviors begin in the experience of a place. If those places are ugly and violent, the behavior of many raised in them will also be ugly and violent. Children raised in ecologically barren settings, however affluent, are deprived of the sensory stimuli and the kind of imaginative experience that can only come from biological richness. Our preferences for landscapes are often shaped by what was familiar to us early on. There is, in other words, an inescapable correspondence between*

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*landscape and "mindscape" and between the quality of our places and the quality of the lives lived in them. In short, we need stable, safe, interesting, settings, both rural and urban, in which to flourish as fully human creatures.*

—Orr, 1994, p.161

**Acknowledgments**

We wish to thank each of our writers and their agents for contributing to this issue. It has been a priviledge to work with such a distinguished collective of wisdom and talent. I hope we can do it again sometime.

Special thanks is extended to Phyllis Markovitch, a student in the Summer, 1999, Chicago Cohort for the first part of this issue's title, "Over the River and Through the Hood."

We also wish to thank Neil Colwell, NIU Media Services, for his cover design, the *Thresholds* Board for the sustaining belief in the project, and Assistant Editor Betty Lahti for her "eagle eye." It is she who reviews this issue more than anyone else, and it is her patient and competent effort that results in a quality presentation.

Finally, we thank you, the reader, for taking the time to take a look. We hope that this creative unfolding of possibilities will stimulate you to review your place as a focus for pedagogy. We invite your comments and your stories about those efforts. ❖

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# I Am Where I've Been

By Clifford E. Knapp

The places I've been forged furrows in my brow,
And carved wrinkles 'round my smile.
They've worn patterns on my palms,
My elbows etched where I've paused to ponder.
Both knees carry imprints of where I've knelt,
The land created calluses on my feet.

I've been changed by the places I've been.
Mountains, valleys, deserts, forests, beaches, and meadows,
Their earthy seals now affixed to my body.
I wear them as my life's passport.
Like Whitman's child who went forth, they are part of me.
I am where I've been.

Special people are part of my lifescape too.
They grounded my journey along the way.
When I put down roots, they nourished me.
Easterners taught me suburban and urban ways,
And Midwesterners shared small-town wisdom.
Human connections cultivated deep understandings.

Now I linger longer listening to hidden forest singers.
I see more clearly where I gazed blindly before.
I gently touch the soil to siphon its strength.
I smell the flowers instead of flattening them.
I taste the fruits of life with renewed appetite.
My senses honed by the rough stones along the way.

The places I've been pose as prophets,
Teaching me how to live and why.
They are embodied in my soul,
Creating character and focusing the future.
The places I've been are within me.
I am where I've been.

# Teaching the 3 R's Through the 3 C's: Connecting Curriculum & Community

Clifford E. Knapp, Professor Emeritus
Northern Illinois University

The exploration of the educational potential of communities through direct experiences is not a new idea. In 1912 naturalist, John Burroughs, wrote: ". . . The way of knowledge of Nature is the way of love and enjoyment, and is more surely found in the open air than in the schoolroom or the laboratory" (Burroughs, In Finch & Elder, 1990, p. 275). In 1915 educator and philosopher, John Dewey, re-published some earlier speeches in his book, *The School and Society*. He wrote: "We cannot overlook the importance for educational purposes of the close and intimate acquaintance got with nature at first hand, with real things and materials, with the actual processes of their manipulation, and the knowledge of their social necessities and uses" (p. 11). Why has it taken so long for educators to expand their concept of classrooms to include community outdoor laboratories?

**Why has it taken so long for educators to expand their concept of classrooms to include community outdoor laboratories?**

Today, many innovative educators are venturing into the community to energize and reform the instructional program and their own teaching lives. Why are they doing this? Evidence from current cognitive research has shown that the human brain has two primary memory systems. First, the spatial system allows for "locale" or natural memory of past experiences in three-dimensional space and is enriched over time as humans increase their categories for storing information. Second, the "taxon" memory system is used for rote learning of isolated facts and skills and requires more practice and rehearsal for retention. Outdoor learning usually capitalizes upon the personal worlds of learners by engaging their locale memory systems through direct experiences within a nearby context. Humans understand and remember best when facts and skills are embedded in this memory system (Caine & Caine, 1994, pp. 41-46).

Howard Gardner, a psychologist, author, and educator, has identified eight human intelligences that have been used by some schools to plan balanced student learning experiences. Recently, he described the naturalist intelligence that meets eight stringent criteria, including an identified location in the brain and documented experimental data gathered by cognitive psychologists (Roth, 1998, pp. 9-11). The naturalist intelligence accounts for how people recognize patterns in nature and culture, classify objects, and understand relationships in their environment. It is ". . . the human ability to discriminate among living things . . . as well as [demonstrate a] sensitivity to other features of the natural world" (Roth, 1998, p. 7). Trips to local areas outside the school can develop this intelligence and result in long-term knowledge acquisition and retention.

Current educational reform efforts include providing students with authentic experiences and assessments. Educational authenticity simply means creating more realistic learning situations

that mirror what others are doing in the community. Some educators also advocate a philosophical approach called constructivism—instructional strategies based on research about how people learn. This involves students actively learning and explaining their reasoning behind how they arrive at answers to questions of importance. Constructivism incorporates the support of groups of learners engaged in problem solving, reflecting, and connecting the lessons to prior knowledge and past experience.

Another educational trend relates to bioregional education or place-based pedagogy (Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000). As urbanization and information technologies increase, the innate, genetically programmed human need to relate to natural places has emerged from our ancient past. The scientist, E. O. Wilson, named this human affinity for nature "biophilia." Some educators believe that without a sense of place, students cannot fully know who they are and how they fit into the community. Most suburban and urban students and teachers don't understand where their drinking water originates, can't identify many native trees or birds, don't know whether the moon is waxing or waning, or have never seen the stars over the city. How can people feel whole without an awareness of their bioregion's natural cycles and processes? Many youth are growing up with little firsthand knowledge of where they live and, therefore, don't know their ecological addresses or understand how their ecological footprints relate to their consumptive lifestyles. The only field trips many urban and suburban youth take are via the software programs chosen for their computers. Learning, conducted in the context of the community, helps students to better comprehend the relationship of the school curriculum to more of life's pleasures and problems.

Another educationally relevant field has been labeled, "ecopsychology" or "conservation psychology"—the combination of ecology or conservation with psychology. One principle advanced by ecopsychologists is that humans need natural spaces to relieve the modern-day stresses of crowded and fast-paced living. Breathing clean air, viewing green plants, and caring for and observing animals can improve mental health and reduce some forms of stress and depression. Educators have only begun to understand the importance of direct contacts with the green islands located within steel and concrete dwelling places.

One of the most promising new outdoor education studies resulted from a twleve-state research project funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and conducted by Gerald Lieberman and Linda Hoody. The study described the common features of instructional "best practices" and the factors leading to student learning in forty K-12 schools across the United States. These schools were selected because their teachers used natural and socio-cultural environments as integrating contexts (EIC) for learning.

> Evidence gathered from this study . . . indicates that students learn more effectively within an environment-based context than within a traditional educational framework. . . EIC appears to significantly improve student performance in reading, writing, math, science and social studies, and enriches

***Many youth are growing up with little firsthand knowledge of where they live and therefore, don't know their ecological addresses or understand how their ecological footprints relate to their consumptive lifestyles.***

the overall school experience.
(Lieberman & Hoody, 1998, p. 2).

Although more research is always needed, this study provides some support for teachers who believe that the community can be the best laboratory for learning and applying certain educational goals, standards, and benchmarks.

For at least two decades, Northern Illinois University's faculty of Outdoor Teacher Education has been offering a graduate course, "Integrating Community Resources into Curriculum and Instruction." This course asks teachers to identify places, processes and/or people in the community that can be sites for learning. They locate these resources and, using a format predetermined by the group, describe the attributes of that resource. In the seven years I have been teaching that course, we have used two community-based educational models to guide our learning. We chose the Foxfire Program (The Foxfire Fund, 1990), a nationally recognized, student-centered approach, and Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (Campbell, Liebowitz, Mednick, & Rugen, 1998), a program initially funded by the New American Schools Development Corporation in 1992. Both of these programs are currently operating successfully in schools across the country and have shown that a wide range of students can learn important objectives and become motivated and actively engaged in the process. Each of these programs employs several guiding principles and practices that reflect sound experiential learning philosophies. These project-based models place high priority on student decision-making, critical and creative thinking, and problem-solving in the context of the community and local issues.

The following seven articles are examples resulting from the "Integrating Community Resouces" course. They represent a variety of formats, locations, and content areas. They demonstrate how classroom teachers can begin to develop school curricula that are reality-based and immersed in local contexts—a practice which is becoming more accepted by school boards, parent groups, and educational leaders around the country. In fact, several states and school districts, including the Chicago Public Schools, have required service-learning programs designed to connect students to the wider community and teach civic and character values. The following writers demonstrate this approach to education in hopes that their work will inspire learning adventures in local areas, including school sites, businesses, industries, nature centers, museums, parks, historical sites, and natural areas. ❖

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# Meeting Illinois Learning Standards by Visiting a One-Room Schoolhouse

**Terrence R. Karner, Jr.**
**8th Grade Social Studies Teacher**
**Spring Wood Middle School, Hanover Park, Illinois**

**Karner demonstrates some of the lessons that can be learned through the living history students experience in a one-room school. His model also shows how this experience can help meet Illinois state learning goals.**

*Imagine... a crisp November morning in 1918...Adolf was awakened by the sound of a rooster call. He quickly arose and threw on his pants and sweater and rushed out of the house. He was in a hurry because his father was waiting in the barn for help with the feeding and milking of the cows. When he reached the barn, he could tell that his father was not pleased. Adolf apologized for being late and began to milk his favorite cow, Gerta.*

*After Adolf finished with Gerta, his dad told him to wake up his sisters and head for school. So Adolf, an eighth grader, woke up his twin, third-grade sisters, Elsie and Emily and helped them prepare for school. After a quick breakfast and a kiss from Mom, Adolf and his sisters started their walk down Church Road to Hoosier Grove School. As they passed Bartlett Road, they were joined by their neighbor Ralph, who was in fifth grade, and his sister Violet, a first grader. As all five kids neared the school, they could hear Schoolmaster Oltendorf ringing the bell to signal the beginning of another day.*

*Within minutes the twenty-four school desks in the one-room schoolhouse were filled with students from grades one through eight. Schoolmaster Oltendorf began the day with a history lesson. Little did he know that on this day, the 11th of November, history would be made in Europe with the end of the Great War.*

History comes alive for students when they visit the Hoosier Grove Schoolhouse Museum in Streamwood, Illinois. The Streamwood Park District operates this award-winning community museum with assistance from the Streamwood Historical Society. Hoosier Grove was used as a one-room schoolhouse from 1904 to 1954. The school served children from the thriving, mostly German-American, agricultural Hanover Township.

A phone call to Streamwood Park District Museum Manager, Nancy Gher, is the place to start for any teacher wishing to bring history alive in the schoolhouse. Nancy holds a bachelor's degree in Community Education from the University of Wisconsin, as well as two master's degrees. One master's is from Western Kentucky University in Folklore and Museum Studies and the other is from Northern Illinois University in Adult Education. Provide Nancy with your student goals and objectives, and she will aide you in designing your field trip.

Upon entering the schoolhouse, students will be greeted by interpretive exhibits featuring photos, maps, and schoolhouse-related artifacts. Students will even get the opportunity to hang their coats on old-fashioned hooks just as the students of Hoosier Grove did many years ago. Be sure to take notice of the life-sized photo of two of Hoosier Grove's first students standing near the entrance.

***When some of the learning is taken outside the classroom, the experience can be much more meaningful for the student, and the results often show on the ISAT test.***

Inside, there are many more wonderful teaching possibilities. Students will be able to sit in turn-of-the-century school desks and write their

lessons in fancy script on slates with slate pencils. A reading lesson can be re-enacted with help from reproductions of McGuffey readers. These values-based readers taught virtues such as honesty, courage, charity, and good manners. One of Nancy Gher's favorite lessons involves the use of primary-source photographs of Hoosier Grove alumni. In this lesson, students are placed in the role of investigators and must explore the lives of the past students. The most entertaining moment is usually when a few students are chosen to dress in old clothes like those worn by Hoosier Grove children early in the twentieth century.

The basement of the museum is an ever-changing historical gallery. According to Nancy Gher, "This gallery gives people and students a reason to come back year after year." These exhibits may also add to the learning experiences of students. Themes have included: "Let's Play: Pastimes from the Past." "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," "Streamwood Town of Tomorrow," and, "Barn Building: Settlement to Retrofit."

Weather permitting, the learning can continue outside with students playing old, recess games such as marbles, hoops, jacks, and "Anntie, Anntie Over".

## The state learning goals that a Hoosier Grove experience can meet include:

| State Goal | Sample Activity |
|---|---|
| #1: Read with understanding and fluency. | Reading interpretive signs in the dairy barn. |
| #2: Read and understand literature representative of various societies, eras and ideas. | Reading from McGuffey Readers. |
| #3: Write to communicate for a variety of purposes. | Journalizing in fancy script using slates and slate pencils. |
| #16; Understand events, trends, individuals, and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States and other nations. | Using primary-source photographs to investigate and explore lives of past students. |
| #17: Understand world geography and the effects of geography on the society with an emphasis on the United States. | Creating a map showing the movement of pioneers into Hoosier Grove. |
| #19: Acquire movement skills and understanding concepts needed to engage in health-enhancing physical activity. | Participating in school-yard recess games. |
| #21: Develop team-building skills by working with others through physical activity. | Participating in school-yard recess games. |
| #26: Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced. | Preparing a skit showing what a day at school was like for a turn-of-the-century student. |

The school is also a site for community education and celebration. Special events and activities are held at the museum throughout the year on week-nights and week-ends. During the park district's Pumpkin Festival, the school's spelling bee competition is held. This competition is open to first through eighth graders. During "Christmas at the Country School," those attending have the chance to make holiday ornaments, sample holiday treats, and enjoy the schoolhouse Christmas tree. Local music teacher, Karen Rajterowski, adds to the ambience by playing traditional tunes on the piano.

Hoosier Grove has a lot to offer school groups. Barb Lloyd, first grade teacher at Hanover Countryside School who has brought her students to the museum, says this about the schoolhouse, "This facility is a wonderful local tool for learning." Many of these learning opportunities can help students meet and exceed the state learning goals. When some of the learning is taken outside the classroom, the experience can be much more meaningful for the student, and the results often show on the ISAT test.

Hoosier Grove School was originally located at the corner of what is now Barrington and Old Church Roads. It has now has been moved to Hoosier Grove Park at 700 West Irving Park Road on the north side of Irving Park Road between Route 59 and Bartlett Road. The museum is open to the public on Friday through Sunday from 1:00-4:00 p.m. School groups can visit the museum during the week by calling museum curator, Nancy Gher, at 630-213-9706.

Hoosier Grove Park also includes a renovated 1888 dairy barn. This award-winning barn provides an additional educational experience. Inside, along with its rustic interior, are interpretive displays that highlight Native Americans, pioneers, early farm life, and the German-American community. This 19.5-acre park also includes a gazebo, playground, bike path, lighted softball field, and two soccer fields. ❖

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Note: Streamwood, Illinois, USA is a part of the Chicago Metropolitan Area.

*Terry Karner currently teaches 8th grade social studies at Spring Wood Middle School in Hanover Park, Illinois. He formerly worked as a docent at the Hoosier Grove Schoolhouse Museum.*

# On Your Mark, Get Set, Go Learn! Using a Track Meet As An Outdoor Learning Opportunity

**R. Larry Simmert**
**Lincoln Middle School**
**Rockford, Illinois**

**Simmert captializes on his coaching experience to enrich his classroom teaching. In this discussion he outlines the lessons that can emerge from an ordinary track meet.**

Track meets provide environments rich in experiential learning, whether you are a competitor, a spectator, an official, a helper, or a reporter for the local news agency. Instructional units covering math, science, language arts, reading, or social science objectives are possible. A creative teacher could build a thematic unit from any combination of these disciplines. Why not tap into this resource for a field trip experience?

The East Relays track meet is held annually at Swanson Stadium in Rockford, Illinois for elite high school boys' teams from Illinois and Wisconsin. To prepare students for a field trip to East Relays, contests like those found in the Activities

The school is also a site for community education and celebration. Special events and activities are held at the museum throughout the year on week-nights and week-ends. During the park district's Pumpkin Festival, the school's spelling bee competition is held. This competition is open to first through eighth graders. During "Christmas at the Country School," those attending have the chance to make holiday ornaments, sample holiday treats, and enjoy the schoolhouse Christmas tree. Local music teacher, Karen Rajterowski, adds to the ambience by playing traditional tunes on the piano.

Hoosier Grove has a lot to offer school groups. Barb Lloyd, first grade teacher at Hanover Countryside School who has brought her students to the museum, says this about the schoolhouse, "This facility is a wonderful local tool for learning." Many of these learning opportunities can help students meet and exceed the state learning goals. When some of the learning is taken outside the classroom, the experience can be much more meaningful for the student, and the results often show on the ISAT test.

Hoosier Grove School was originally located at the corner of what is now Barrington and Old Church Roads. It has now has been moved to Hoosier Grove Park at 700 West Irving Park Road on the north side of Irving Park Road between Route 59 and Bartlett Road. The museum is open to the public on Friday through Sunday from 1:00-4:00 p.m. School groups can visit the museum during the week by calling museum curator, Nancy Gher, at 630-213-9706.

Hoosier Grove Park also includes a renovated 1888 dairy barn. This award-winning barn provides an additional educational experience. Inside, along with its rustic interior, are interpretive displays that highlight Native Americans, pioneers, early farm life, and the German-American community. This 19.5-acre park also includes a gazebo, playground, bike path, lighted softball field, and two soccer fields. ❖

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Note: Streamwood, Illinois, USA is a part of the Chicago Metropolitan Area.

*Terry Karner currently teaches 8th grade social studies at Spring Wood Middle School in Hanover Park, Illinois. He formerly worked as a docent at the Hoosier Grove Schoolhouse Museum.*

# On Your Mark, Get Set, Go Learn! Using a Track Meet As An Outdoor Learning Opportunity

**R. Larry Simmert**
**Lincoln Middle School**
**Rockford, Illinois**

**Simmert captializes on his coaching experience to enrich his classroom teaching. In this discussion he outlines the lessons that can emerge from an ordinary track meet.**

Track meets provide environments rich in experiential learning, whether you are a competitor, a spectator, an official, a helper, or a reporter for the local news agency. Instructional units covering math, science, language arts, reading, or social science objectives are possible. A creative teacher could build a thematic unit from any combination of these disciplines. Why not tap into this resource for a field trip experience?

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Integrating Math and Science (AIMS) "Mini-Metric Olympics" can be organized. The history of organized track meets can be researched, starting with ancient Greek athletics. It is strongly suggested that students be given the opportunity to read and research the actual events that most interest them. The individual events have a history that students could research.

Track and field can be divided into sprints, longer distances, throws, and jumps. Sprints include the 100-, 200-, 400-, and 110-meter high hurdles, 300- or 400-meter intermediate hurdles, and the sprint relays. Longer distances include the 800-, 1600-, and 3200-meter and distance relays. Field events are Shot Put, Discus, Javelin, Long Jump, Triple Jump, High Jump, and Pole Vault. Races are timed to the tenths or hundredths of a second, while field event distances are measured to the nearest quarter-inch or centimeter.

***To prepare students for this field trip, a hands-on activity is recommended, such as the "Mini-Metric Olympics" found in the Activities Integrating Math and Science (AIMS) program.***

**Preparation**

A good visual aid might be a video on the early Olympics, such as a clip from "Chariots of Fire" or "Athens, 1896: The First Olympics." After a general orientation to track and field events, teachers need to decide whether they would like the students to participate as spectators or as workers for the individual events. Following are guidelines for student participation as workers.

Either way, to prepare students for this field trip, a hands-on activity is recommended, such as the "Mini-Metric Olympics" found in the Activities Integrating Math and Science (AIMS) program. A thematic unit involving language arts, social sciences, physical development and health, mathematics, and science can be developed. Specific objectives the teacher wishes to emphasize should be previewed with students before their departure for the experience. As an example, students may be asked to relate some of their own experiences in running, jumping, or throwing. The history of track and field lends itself easily to the writing of research reports. Writing biographies might also stimulate their interest if done properly. A project involving so many disciplines might have the work divided and performed by cooperative groups or as team-building activities.

**On-site Activities**

If you choose the students-as-helpers option, they need stop watches, programs for the contests, measuring tapes and writing tools such as clipboards, pencils, and paper. Students should also be coached to dress for the weather as there is usually little protection from the elements at a track event.

All students will be required to listen and follow the directions of event officials, the meet starter, the meet manager, or other designated officials. Students can be assigned the following tasks and sent to the appropriate areas at the meet site. For example, Rockford East Relays uses the following students-as-helpers:

**Shot Put** - 5 students to either measure or mark and record efforts
**Discus** - 5 students to either measure or mark and record efforts
**Long Jump** – 4 students to help rake the sand or measure the jumps
**Triple Jump** – 4 students to help rake the sand or measure the jumps
**Pole Vault** – 6 students to move crossbars, standards, catch poles, and to record
**High Jump** – 3 students to assist with the crossbar, standards, and to record
**Running Events** – Between 8 and 16 students to either time or pick places
**Hurdles** – 20 students to place and remove hurdles from the track
**Meet Assistants** – 2 students to transport contest results to the meet scorer's table
**Curve/Exchange Zone Judges** – 8 students to watch the relay exchanges at zones.

**Follow-up & Reflection**

Regardless of how students participate in the track meet, reflecting on their experience back in the classroom is essential to promoting meaningful learning. These follow-up activities should stimulate the reader to create content-specific or interdisciplinary learning and reflecting experiences.

—Predict the top three places in each contest. Record the actual place winners and their times or distances. Data gathered might be useful at a future date for statistical purposes. (Mathematics, Science, English)

—Get a meet program to read as a resource for a future report on a person, school, team, event or athlete. Predict the top three places in each contest. Record the actual place winners and their times or distances. Data gathered might be useful at a future date for statistical purposes. (Mathematics, Science, English)

—Write letters of appreciation to someone you met or were impressed with at the meet. (English)

—Write persuasively to get someone to join you, either as a spectator, a competitor, or a helper. (English)

—Use a program guide from the meet as a resource to begin a report on a particular school, team, event, or athlete. (English)

—Write a research report on related topics using news articles from the papers, magazines, TV broadcasts, or other media sources. (English)

—Research the history of track in general or a specific aspect of this competive sport such as the Olympics. Create a time-line of your findings. (Social Science)

—Write the biography of a local athlete. (English)

— Research the story of a country that is prominent in the sport of track and field. Why did that sport become popular in that place? (Social Science/Geography)

—Study the relationship between the sports and the political agendas for a particular country and/or the international dynamics of Olympic politics. The Munich Massacre, the 1980 Olympic boycott by the U.S., the 1984 Olympic boycott by the USSR, and the Olympic ban on South African participation in the games are examples of the interconnections here. (Social Science)

—Join a health club. Log your exercise, your improvement, feelings, thoughts, and struggles. (English, Physical Development)

—Make a scale model of the track facilities, including lanes, throwing vectors, pits for landing, and infield area. (Mathematics)

—Make a graphic display, such as a Venn diagram, to show the similarities and differences between two or more events you observed. Are any skills specifically unique to that event?

—Discuss:

- Are there any creatures other than humans that exhibit competitive behavior? If so, how are human competitions and competitions between other species similar and how are they different from what you observed?
- How might competition be a good thing for humans? Could competition be bad? Explain your answer.
- How does the athletic facility impact the natural community surrounding it?

As you can see from all of the ideas emerging from just one teacher's exploration and reflection on a track meet as a site of learning, this very "common" and accessible place can be a rich laboratory for curriculum enrichment and design. And, besides extending the learning beyond the classroom, student participation supports school events, a sense of community, and exposure to fresh air and physical activity. Everybody wins, not just the athletes! ❖

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*Larry Simmert is currently teaching sixth graders at Lincoln Middle School in Rockford, Illinois. He also coaches boys' track and cross country at Rockford East High School. He has over 20 years of teaching and coaching experiences at the elementary, intermediate, and upper grades in both rural and urban, private and public school settings.*

# An Engineering Wonder to Explore

**Pam Carlson**
**Office of Accountibility**
**Chicago Public Schools**

**Carlson gets beyond the obvious with an exploration of local water supply systems—a resource that most of us take for granted. This examination of the historical, economic and community development and security issues related to the Chicago water supply system provides a framework for consideration of our cultural and ecological dependency on this resource—wherever our place might be.**

You and your students can explore Chicago's water system to learn first hand about one of the greatest engineering wonders of the United States and perhaps even the world. During your exploration, Chicago history comes to life while students ponder real-world questions such as, Where does the water come from that flows from our faucets and drinking fountains? Is tap water clean and safe to drink? How does water get cleaned? What chemicals are added to the water I drink? What happens after water flows down the drains in my house? What occurs behind the scenes every time I flush the toilet?

I have organized this article using three basic elements:
*1) The history of the Chicago water system which I have researched and suggest as a starting point.* (Note: Depending on the age of students, the preliminary research for this learning experience could be carried out by the students, also. They could put together the history and then launch other activities from that base. Or, one age group could put together a history which another teacher and class could use as a springboard from which to develop activities.)
*2) Questions to guide exploration and reflection.* I have offered questions to guide inquiry. However, I suggest that teachers remain open to developing lessons around the questions students generate; they can be the best of all!
*3) Suggestions for actions to explore and reflect upon.* Multidisciplinary activities are suggested. These can be adapted to various age levels and contexts. Throughout this investigation, students should spend some time in guided reflection of their experience. This could be accomplished through journaling and could become the assessment of their learning.

As a set-up activity, I highly recommend introducing students to Langston Hughes' powerful poem, "I've Known Rivers." This poem conveys the human connection to rivers in a poignant and beautiful way that transcends time and geography.

## That was then...Where does my water come from?

When we study the history of humankind, we learn that once people made the shift from hunting and gathering to farming, they joined together to make permanent homes. These first homes usually were situated near bodies of water because everyone needed water to irrigate crops, cook, clean, drink, and fish.

The early non-native inhabitants of our geographical area settled along the banks of the Chicago River approximately 160 years ago. As more settlers arrived, the river gradually became polluted. It was then that people began to use Lake Michigan as their water source. They continued to use the river for dumping wastes, and they carried water from the lake for drinking.

*Questions: How would you feel if you lived downstream from people who threw their waste and garbage into the river? What would you do? Why is throwing waste in the river or lake an unwise solution for getting rid of garbage and waste?*

The following activity is highly interactive and sure to involve students in problem- solving

around the issue of water quality. Participation will stimulate student's thinking about the big picture and pique interest in finding out the rest of the story.

Organize the class into cooperative groups to explore the issues from different perspectives. Each group identifies the problem as seen by their faction. They determine their needs and propose a solution with a rationale to support their proposal. For example, one group could represent the town located upstream. Another could provide the perspective of the creatures living in the water. Other voices might include the group living downstream and future generations not yet born. Encourage students to initiate more ideas.

To conclude, each group shares in an open discussion/debate. The class could develop a very useful and practical understanding of compromise by coming to an agreement on water-quality management.

Even students with the most elementary understanding of germs as a cause of disease can draw some important conclusions. They may find it interesting to research the early cholera epidemic that took the lives of 5.5% of the city's population between 1849 and 1855, the worst death rate from any cause since Chicago began keeping health statistics. Involve students in locating the personal stories and accounts of those who lived during the epidemic. Primary sources would help students identify with people who did not have the benefit of knowing the germ theory of disease.

*Questions: What are examples of things we do today that we know are not good for us? Why do we do these things? How, in this way, are we alike or different from the early settlers?*

Students can address these questions and demonstrate their understanding through journaling, small or whole group discussions, or by writing an essay.

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By the time Chicago grew to become a city in 1837, carrying water from the lake became impractical and water peddlers could not meet the demand. In 1842, the city's first water system (privately built for $24,000) pumped Lake Michigan water into an elevated wooden tank. From there it flowed downward (thanks to gravity) through wooden pipes placed under the streets.

That system only worked for about 10 years when again, more water was needed. A steam-driven pump was built by the city to deliver 8 million gallons of water each day through new cast-iron pipes. The pump was called "Old Sally" and it began operating on Chicago Avenue in 1854. The city was then providing adequate fresh water.

*Question: What was happening with all the waste created each day?*

***In 1885, a tremendous storm pushed the refuse into the river and far out into the lake, past the water-intake cribs. Cholera, typhoid and other waterborne diseases reappeared, killing 12% of Chicago's population.***

As discoveries in science helped cities realize the dangers of drinking from the river and unsanitary wells, the city built its first sewers in 1856 to handle the growing amount of waste generated each day. The sewers carried their discharge into the Chicago River, which then carried the waste out into Lake Michigan. In 1867, a two-mile long tunnel was built extending into the lake to bring water back to the city, and by 1870 the people were no longer dying of cholera. The city continued to develop systems for providing safe water. One of the landmarks of this effort remains today—the old Water Tower, one of the few structures to survive the Chicago Fire of 1871.

Forgetting history and only thinking of convenience, people and industry quickly rebuilt along the shores of

the Chicago River. The city's waste continued to be dumped into the river. Most people weren't worried that the river was contaminated because they got their drinking water from the lake.

*Questions: Was anything wrong with this thinking? What might result from this thinking?*

Most people did not know that the lake was being affected by the polluted river. As a result, they continued to suffer and die from typhoid fever and dysentery.

In 1885, a tremendous storm pushed the refuse into the river and far out into the lake, past the water-intake cribs. Cholera, typhoid, and other waterborne diseases reappeared, killing 12% of Chicago's population. This tragedy could not be ignored by the lawmakers. They realized something had to be done to protect Lake Michigan, the major source of drinking water for Chicago. The Illinois Legislature created a government agency in 1889 to protect the water quality of Lake Michigan. They passed an act to establish the Sanitary District of Chicago (renamed the Metropolitan Water District in 1955). Their primary responsibility was to keep sewage pollution out of Lake Michigan.

***In 1955 the American Society of Civil Engineers selected the water system of Chicago as one of the seven engineering wonders of the United States.***

*Questions: What would you do to stop the flow of sewage into Lake Michigan? Would you consider it possible to reverse a strong river's flow? Can water be redirected into the Des Plaines and Illinois rivers and then on to the Mississippi? Who might not like this plan? Where, specifically, do these people live? Can laws help these people?*

Students can use a map to identify towns and cities along this new river path. They have already explored this scenario; now they can begin to see that laws are often written to solve problems. Writing a law to address a current issue is a very worthwhile activity.

Work began in 1892 without the benefit of modern technology. A work force of 8,500 men used wheelbarrows, mule-drawn plows, steam shovels, drag scrapers, drills, dynamite and their bare hands to dig the Sanitary and Ship Canal.

*Questions: Who were the people who did this kind of work? Why?*

The work of immigrant laborers built the 28-mile canal from the south branch of the river through the low summit and down to Lockport, Illinois. It was completed in 1900. During the next 22 years, 56 more miles of canals were built to divert water from Lake Michigan into the Des Plaines and Calumet rivers. These projects also had to comply with the 1919 ordinance requiring the construction and operation of sewage treatment plants. By 1922, three artificial rivers were created in the Chicago area.

*Questions: What new problems might these canals create? Who would be affected? Are these new problems serious?*

With direction, students could figure out how lowering the lake's water level could result in serious problems. They could determine which states would be concerned and assess the validity of those concerns.

*Questions: What can be the impact of lowering the water level in a lake? What will be the impact on human habitation? What will be the impact on organisms that live in the lake water? What could be done, if anything, to remedy this situation? Whose problem is this?*

The Sanitary District's solution of building a canal and installing locks (at certain lakefront intake points

and in Lockport) controlled the rate of diversion. Lock chambers enable river traffic to move safely from one pool level to the next. The lock chamber is essentially a concrete box fixed into the riverbed with two matching gates at each end. The gates close at an angle directed upstream against the river flow and open or close only when the water level is the same on both sides. One set of gates opens to let the water-craft into the lock. The water is raised or lowered, depending on the direction of travel. Another set of gates then opens to let the boat leave. This raising or lowering from one pool level to the next is called a "lift".

*Question: Exactly how do lock chambers fill and empty?*

Students will probably be very impressed with the solution and would benefit greatly from a tour of the locks.

The Metropolitan Sanitary District of Greater Chicago that covered 185 square miles in 1889 now covers 858 square miles including nearly all of Cook County. This includes 71 miles of canals, channels, and rivers.

In 1955 the American Society of Civil Engineers selected the water system of Chicago as one of the seven engineering wonders of the United States. Many consider reversing the flow of the Chicago River to divert polluted water from Lake Michigan as one of the engineering wonders of the world. What a tremendous learning resource and source of pride located right in our community!

**Follow-up Fieldtrip (See p. 30: "WOW: Making it Happen")**

Plan a trip to the Chicago Water Tower that includes the pleasant walk to the Hancock Building. During or after a visit to the Hancock Building's spectacular aerial view of the city, invite students to consider the time it took to create the city.

Walk south from the Water Tower to see the Centennial Fountain's 80-foot water arch stretch across the river every ten minutes. To celebrate 100 years of protecting our water environment, Centennial Fountain was built on the north bank of the Chicago River at McClurg Court by the Metropolitan Sanitary District of Chicago.

While watching the fountain or walking a part of the district's 26-mile Centennial Trail that weaves along the waterways, students can consider the future water needs of Chicago.

*Questions: What most impresses you about our city? What developments would you still like to see? How long would it take to make your ideas a reality?*

*Have you any concerns about our environment? Does everyone share your concerns? How do you know? What might happen if your concern is ignored?*

*Who is in charge of keeping our water safe? How do they do that work? What do they have to know to do that work? What responsibility do we have as students and/or citizens to keep our water safe?*

**Conclusion**

The true challenge in this learning opportunity is to help students grasp the fact that Chicago's history is not an unrelated ancient story, but rather a story of people like us. It is a story of people and problems, places and processes that are connected to and contribute to the life they live today. Students should learn to appreciate the efforts of those who brought us this far—mistakes and all.

We all hope the manner in which national and global problems are addressed does not result in new problems because we failed to learn from past mistakes. We may prevent this by helping the problem-solvers of the next generation understand the past. In this sense, knowing history can brighten the future. ❖

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# Lawndale: Two Communities in One

**Marquiette R. Criswell**
**Herzl Elementary School**
**North Lawndale, Illinois**

**Criswell outlines the basic history and sociology of her community of Lawndale. She looks at both the old and new structures that define that place. Suggestions for field trips and for working with local agencies can be adapted to any region.**

Lawndale is a large community located on Chicago's Westside between the Stevenson and Eisenhower Expressways. Lawndale is divided into two distinct areas, North Lawndale and South Lawndale, separated by Cermak Road. Through the years, many ethnic groups have settled in the Lawndale community. Today, in North Lawndale, African-Americans have settled into what was once a Jewish community. In South Lawndale Mexican-Americans have put down roots in what was once a predominantly Bohemian community.

## North Lawndale

As one strolls through North Lawndale, the history of its inhabitants is reflected in the architecture. One sees what were once Jewish synagogues, schools, and other institutions. Today, Baptist, Apostolic, and other Christian denominations inhabit these structures which still display stained-glass windows depicting menorahs, the Star of David, or Hebrew inscriptions.

Through the center of North Lawndale runs Douglas Boulevard. Stone structures, two-story and three-flat buildings, grand court-way buildings, and huge churches line the street. Many of the buildings show signs of years of neglect, while others have maintained their dignity. On the eastside of the boulevard sits Douglas Park. As the Douglas Boulevard moves west, it becomes Independence Boulevard and turns north to Garfield Park. Both parks have wonderful gardens and lagoons.

North Lawndale is inhabited primarily by African-Americans, many of whom have lived in the area since the 1950s. African-Americans moved into the community as the Jewish population moved to other locations. The area has undergone many transitions. The riots of 1968, following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., devastated what was once a great community, leaving North Lawndale stricken by poverty, crime, and neglect. Though many businesses were destroyed and others relocated to different areas, some African-American, Jewish, and Chinese establishments stayed.

Fortunately, North Lawndale is beginning to look progressively better, due in large part, to new construction. Part of the rebuilding of the area can be attributed to land donated by Sears Roebuck & Company. The one-half mile of land, which once housed Sears, was given to the city for the construction of homes. Other significant developments include a shopping plaza which houses the first movie theater located in the area in decades, and a major grocery chain, Dominick's. The opening of these establishments was big news in the community and beyond. African-American movie stars attended the opening of the cinema. The mayor of Chicago and other dignitaries were at Dominick's ribbon-cutting ceremony flanked by news reporters. First Chicago Bank laid roots in the community and played a huge role in the revitalization.

***The riots of 1968, following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, devastated what was once a great community, leaving North Lawndale stricken by poverty, crime, and neglect.***

While new construction is well underway, older structures are in the process of being restored as are parks and boulevards. Flowers and grass have been planted where weeds once flourished. Glass and rock-filled vacant lots are becoming beautiful gardens. Even the twenty-acre, illegal, dump site on Roosevelt Road has been cleared and will become the location of the Black Family Television Network. A former North Lawndale resident, Don Jackson, heads its parent company, Central City Productions.

North Lawndale's residents are beginning to take pride in their community as they help to give it a new look. What was once a neighborhood to move away from is now attracting newcomers who are financially able to live elsewhere but choose to become a part of Lawndale. As the residents and business owners in the area invest their time, money, and labor in North Lawndale, it will surely thrive and become a community to be proud of.

***The twenty-acre, illegal, dump site on Roosevelt Road has been cleared and will become the location of the Black Family Television Network.***

**South Lawndale**

As one crosses Cermak Road, exiting North Lawndale and entering South Lawndale, it becomes quite apparent that a different territory is underfoot. The sights, sounds, and smells are truly different from that of its neighbor. Here the majority of the inhabitants speak Spanish. To further distinguish South from North Lawndale, the residents identify their community as "Little Village," a title that was chosen after the riots of 1968 which devastated its neighbors and added a stigma to the name "Lawndale." Signs in the Spanish language identify dance clubs, stores, and restaurants. Houses with southwestern-style exteriors and music with a Latin-American rhythm stimulate the senses.

The majority of Little Village's residents are of Mexican descent, although there are African-American and Cuban residents as well. South Lawndale is bustling with activity. Business seems to be booming, especially on the weekends. What was once a bowling alley, now functions as a Latin dance club. The old Marshall Square Theater that showed the latest American movies during my youth, is now the Apollo Theater presenting live shows and movies in Spanish. Stores, travel agencies, medical centers, and a variety of other establishments are very visible in South Lawndale.

South Lawndale has maintained a steady community through the transition from one ethnic group to another. Some businesses that have been rooted in the community for more than a half-century remain among newer ones. While there are many large chain stores in the area, the small family-run businesses seem to have found their niche and are holding their own.

The various structures found in Little Village reveal something of its history and the people who once resided there. Some of the homes in South Lawndale are as beautiful as those that line North Lawndale. Hidden in South Lawndale are elaborate structures, many of which have been well-kept. Driving down Marshall Boulevard, one sees lovely stone-front homes and huge institutions that have stood for most of the century, the largest being the Cook County Jail and Criminal Courthouse.

**Exploring Lawndale**

The Lawndale area has many field trip possibilities. Interdisciplinary experiences can be planned which meet the goals outlined by the Chicago Academic Standards and the Illinois State Goals. Just a few of these possibilities follow.

Douglas Park has a huge lagoon that is stocked with catfish annually. The lagoon can be used to

study life forms found in the water. It can also be used to determine how clean the water in the area is. Also, within the park lies a garden by the gazebo. Students can study the different types of plants located there, fulfill a part of their community service by assisting in the maintenance of it, and write about it.

There are three libraries located in Lawndale— one in North Lawndale and two in South Lawndale. The libraries are excellent resources for projects in many areas of the curriculum. The librarians will work with teachers to construct plans of action to meet the academic goals of the curriculum. They will align stories and movies with the state goals that the teacher is working on. The libraries frequently host story readings for students, and distinguished authors sometimes present their work. Traveling displays and exhibitions are also available as sites for learning. Teachers must give at least one week's notice when planning a trip to the library.

Likewise, if one is working on a unit about occupations or safety, the local fire department at Ogden and Avers can be a valuable community resource. Not only can the children visit the station but the fire department also arranges school visits by fire fighters. Students can learn fire safety habits and become familiar with the duties of a fire fighter.

When studying modes of transportation, what better place is there than Chicago? The CTA (Chicago Transit Authority) operates an inter-city train system nicknamed the "L," which runs through Lawndale linking it to the rest of the city and surrounding suburbs. Students can use the elevated trains and subway system to explore the diverse neighborhoods of Chicago. The "L" can expose the city to many inner-city youth, thereby broadening their horizons. The trains connect the Westside to O'Hare Airport—which connects Chicago to the world.

A little-used community resource in the Lawndale area is the grocery store. Dominick's will give students a tour, explaining the functions of the different departments within the store. Children can observe the baker in the bakery shop and the butcher behind the meat counter. Also, they can discover the rationale for keeping foods in the different sections. While there, the pharmacist can explain his role and occupation.

Students can visit a branch of First Chicago Bank located within Dominick's. First Chicago's partnership with many of Chicago's schools encourages bankers to come into the classrooms and provide students with the opportunity to open savings accounts. This program helps students become financially responsible as it teaches them money management skills and exposes them to new career options.

If a picture paints a thousand words, the Lawndale Cineplex is the place to be! Through cinema, students can visit places that would otherwise be out of reach. They can learn about different cultures, places, and times. The cinema can bring history alive and be a wonderful springboard for writing activities. Best of all, it allows one to travel the world for less than five dollars!

There are many resources available in the Lawndale. Most of the resources are free and only require a little forethought and planning. Many community institutions are taken for granted but are invaluable tools for enriching education and for creatively meeting the goals outlined by the city and state. Rather than just read about modes of transportation, students can read, ride, and write about them. In addition to reading about fire prevention, students can visit the fire station and meet the people who dedicate their lives to saving ours. Students can learn about diverse cultures by tracing the history of their own community. Find the many ways that the exploration of Lawndale can be aligned with the State Goals and the Chicago Academic Standards and set out on your own exploration! ❖

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# Are Gangs Banging in Your 'Hood?

**Marie Arroz**
**Third Grade Teacher**
**Chicago, Illinois**

**People are part of place. This contribution examines how one classroom teacher used a classroom experience to learn and to teach about the dynamics of "gang" organizations. These lessons emerging from place, demonstrate how the entire school system—the personnel, the curriculum, and the facility—can be strengthened.**

One day as I was teaching, I was interrupted by a student who said, "Mrs. Arroz, he's making gang signs." I turned to look, but had no idea what to look for or why it was wrong. Later when I was teaching a lesson on sign language, the class started saying, "Ooooh" or "Uh-oh." My frustration motivated me to educate myself about gangs in order to inform other educators about them. This article can be a guide for conducting a gang awareness workshop for educators and parents.

*The choice today is no longer between violence and nonviolence. It's either nonviolence or nonexistence.*

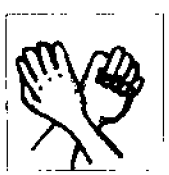
-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

First of all, you need to know what a gang is. A gang is defined as a group of three or more involved in criminal activity. They are comprised of "could- be's" (youngsters), "wannabes" (11-13), "members" (14-17), and "hard-core members" (early to mid 20-year-olds).

Why would anybody want to join a gang? The answers could be the need for power, prestige, friendship, protection, easy money, or a sense of belonging. Recruitment starts at a young age, but the majority are drawn from high school. Gang members like to lure future members into gangs by applying peer pressure or intimidation or by promising new friends, lots of money or a social life. A person is initiated into a gang in several ways. They may be required to do a "drive by" shooting, commit a crime, or play Russian Roulette. They may also "beat in"—this is when gang members literally beat the life out of you for a given amount of time.

There are two main alliances in Chicago: the Folk Nation and People Nation. Under these two alliances are many groups of gangs. In the Folk Nation, some gangs include Black Gangster Disciples, Maniac Latin Disciples, Black Disciples, Simon City Royals, and Cobras. In the People Nation, some include the Black Peace Stone Nation, Latin Kings, Vicelords, and Latin Counts. The five largest gangs in Chicago are the Black Gangster Disciples, Vicelords, Latin Kings, Maniac Latin Disciples, and Black Peace Stone Nation. In the next section we'll discuss these five gangs.

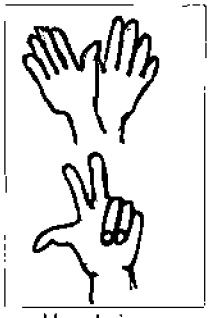
Gangs are territorial. Black Gangster Disciples control the following areas: Southside: 31st and Western to city limits and into South Suburbs, Stateway Gardens building (35th and 39th from State to Federal), Ida B. Wells, Wentworth Gardens Housing Development, (37th and 39th from Wentworth to Princeton), Robert Taylor Homes except for three units, Harold Ickes Homes, Altgeld Gardens, Wentworth Housing, Lawndale Gardens, Rockwell Gardens, Abla Housing Development, Henry Horner, and Cabrini Green Housing Development. The schools targeted for recruitment are Senn High School, Lincoln High School, Near North Magnet High School, Jenner School, Manierre School, and Sojourner Truth School. Their symbols include BGD, six-pointed star, and a raised pitchfork. Their colors are black and blue.



Hand sign of Black Gangster Disciples

The Vicelords control an area west of the Loop, North Grand/

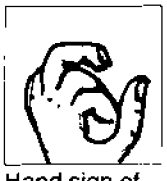
Central, and the Southwest Side, west of Western—encompassing the housing developments of Altgeld Gardens, Eden Green, Golden Gate, and the Wicker Park area. They focus on Crane, Orr, and Marshall High Schools. Clothing include Louis Vitton caps, UNLV, Chicago Bulls, and Chicago Blackhawks (for their colors). Black and red represents this group. Other indicators include the five-pointed star, top hat and cane, rabbit head, pyramid, crescent moon, and VL. The members wear items on the left (earrings, gloves, and tilted hats).



Hand signs of Vicelords

The Latin Kings' "turf" includes: South Chicago and Humboldt Park. They recruit from Clemente, Roosevelt, Schurz, Senn, and Orr High Schools. Their colors are black/gold or black/yellow. Their symbols are LK, ALKN, LKN, ALCN, lion, sun, diamond, cross, king's head, five-pointed castle, five-pointed crown, and the #5. They also wear items on their left side such as earrings, gloves, or tilted hats.

The fourth largest gang is the Maniac Latin Disciples. Their locations include Humboldt Park and Belmont and Western Avenues. The Minnesota Twins and Michigan teams represent them. Their symbols include a heart with horns and a devil's tail, a pitchfork, a six-pointed star, LD, and MLD.



Hand sign of Maniac Latin Disciples

The Black Peace Stone Nation rounds out the top five. They are predominately in the following areas: Cabrini Green Housing Development, Robert Taylor Homes, 51st and Ashland, 87th— 91st and Halsted, and 131st and Cottage Grove. They like to wear Chicago Bulls and Phoenix Suns jerseys. Their symbols are the five-pointed star, pyramid, eye, crescents, and BPS.

In the workshop, you may want to discuss the idea of whether or not gangs exist in that neighborhood. Here are some things to look for: graffiti, petty home thefts, auto thefts, vandalism, senseless crimes, fights, youth loitering, or drug trafficking.

For parents, there are some warning signs that indicate that their children may be in a gang. In school, the child's grades will drop and there may be unexplained absences. At home, check to see if new friends have entered the child's life all of a sudden. They may also have large sums of cash in their possession and own expensive items of unexplained origin. Exhibiting negative behavior such as becoming defiant is another clue. They may become involved in drug or alcohol experimentation as well.

Tell-tale signs that a child is definitely in a gang includes gang graffiti on personal items, wearing gang uniforms or colors, displaying gang tattoos, or flashing gang signs.

Before this situation goes too far, there are some things parents can do. First of all, communicate! It is very important to do so in order to know what the child is going through. Secondly, be involved in other ways. Spend time with them by doing what they like to do. Thirdly, know the child's friends. They influence the child in many ways. Encourage an anti-gang attitude by teaching children the pitfalls of being involved in a gang. Moreover, know where they are at all times; set clear rules such as curfews. Take their worries and concerns seriously and teach safe,

***Chicago Public Schools offer a curriculum guide that includes discussion topics and activities on character education.***

alternative ways to deal with anger and conflict. Parents can also be involved at their child's school by volunteering or becoming a part of the local school council. Lastly, allow them to be involved in extracurricular activities.

Not only are families affected, schools are impacted also. Students may have a sense of fear or intimidation coming to and from school. School grounds may be places where recruitment for gangs occur. Students may also have a hard time concentrating on their schoolwork. As educators or support staff, we must deal with students who have feelings of powerlessness and low self-esteem. The following are some ways to help them:

- Evaluate school safety and continually look for improvements. Make sure your school has clearly articulated and effective disciplinary policies. Be knowledgeable about drug prevention, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and learn how to recognize trouble signs in violent students. Permit students to talk about their worries. Take threats seriously.
- As teachers, implement a curriculum in which morals and character are discussed. Chicago Public Schools offer a curriculum guide that includes discussion topics and activities on character education. For fifth and sixth graders, there is a program called D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education). A D.A.R.E. police officer can come to the school once a week and offer programs covering topics such as peer pressure, stress, drugs, conflict resolution, and gangs.
- Invite an ex-gang member to speak to your class. Sandra Davis is the founder of M.A.G.W. (Mothers Against Gang Wars). M.A.G.W. was formed after her son, who was also a gang banger, was gunned down. When violence hit home, she decided to make a difference in positive ways. Sandra does presentations on how organizations, schools, or communities can deal with gangs. To contact M.A.G.W. and Sandra Davis call (209) 464-6607.

This information will not provide cure-alls to preventing kids from joining gangs, but it is a start. We need to stop ignoring the gang problem and take action or they will literally take our youth from us. For further assistance in your fight against gangs, here are some phone numbers for seeking help and suggestions.

Chicago Crime Commission
(312) 372-0101
Gang Crimes Hot Line-Chicago Police Dept.
(312) 744-4264
Cook County Sheriff Gang Crime Narcotics Unit
(708) 865-4745 ❖

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# Adding Style to the Classroom: Learning at the Local Beauty Salon

Claudia Geocaris
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**In this article, Geocaris shows how a series of place-based investigations emerged from a seemingly ordinary trip to the beauty salon. Student-generated questions drive this approach. The focus can be discipline-specific or interdisciplinary. Investigations can be adapted to a spectrum of grade levels.**

Sitting in the stylist's chair at my local beauty salon watching my once-straight hair emerge full of curl from the perm rollers, I realized what a passive participant I had been in the process. My eyes began to scan the shop. There were dryers, lights, solutions, tools, adjustable chairs and so many more items I had hardly ever noticed before. The next thought that came to mind was that I had just found a gold mine of undiscovered knowledge in an ordinary beauty salon.

The presence of the beauty salon, barber shop and hair stylists is an accepted part of our culture. The services offered at these locations can be as simple as a shampoo and haircut. But today the services can also include permanent waves, manicures, hair removal, nail sculptures, skin care and hair coloring. Any service the customer chooses involves some type of process using some type of equipment—all of which must be managed through the scientific and artistic knowledge of a trained stylist. Learning about this community service, which has evolved over the years, offers opportunities for inquiry and discovery.

A simple look at the yellow pages of your local phone directory or a drive around the area will help locate a number of beauty salons or stylist shops. Begin with a few phone calls. Usually, a privately-owned shop is better than a national chain. The owner takes much pride in her/his own shop and is delighted to share knowledge with you and your students. Most shops are closed on Mondays. If you can find an agreeable owner, this might be a perfect day for a field trip.

If you are an elementary teacher, you could use this as an opportunity to divide your class into investigative teams. Teams might pursue the following topics: services offered, career opportunities, science of hair styling, equipment needed, and the economics of owning a business. Teams should decide the best way to present their findings to the class.

***The process of creating a "permanent wave" is a perfect way to apply the concepts of chemical bonding, polymerization, and hydrogen bonding.***

Science teachers have a wide variety of possibilities in this place. What tools are used? How do they work? What chemistry is involved? Curling, straightening, and coloring hair are all chemical processes. For example, the process of creating a "permanent wave" is a perfect way to apply the concepts of chemical bonding, polymerization, and hydrogen bonding. Or, where do the dyes come from that are used to color hair? Why is "timing" involved to get just the right color? What makes hair spray and mousse work? Other processes also have a scientific basis such as electrolysis and the glues used in nail sculpturing.

The psychology of "looking your best" plays right into the hands of any health teacher. Good self-image begins with a good appearance. How can a stylist help? Many stylists can offer tips on

hair and skin care.

The salon uses color and style in hair and nail care. The fine arts teacher might want to pursue how color, shape, and style work together to provide the customer with a finished effect that is pleasing.

What about the design of the shop itself? What makes it a pleasant place to be for the customer?

The language arts teacher could assign essays or short stories on themes such as "A new look... A new life". The experience could be used as an opportunity to learn how to organize, tape, transcribe and edit an interview. Perhaps several workers in the shop could be interviewed to provide a broader story about what occurs there.

Students could be challenged to find as many uses of math as possible. Uses might include making change, forming a budget, computing supply costs, charging for services, paying salaries, and operating expenses. The class might attempt to construct a workable budget.

Social studies students might pursue the history of the barbershop or beauty salon. Is this a concept peculiar to our culture or is it found in others as well? Why does our culture value beauty to such an extent that we have created a business to attain it? How have the media perpetuated this idea? How did this all begin?

Finally, what new technologies are at work in the neighborhood stylist shop? How does this owner use advances in tools, lighting, and energy sources to provide the best for the client? What kind of training is required to use these technologies? How does the stylist find out about new developments? Are there any processes or tools that haven't changed over the last 50 years? 100 years?

**More Sample Investigative Questions**

What types of services do you offer?
How much does it cost to operate this business?
How many employees work here?
How do you know how much to charge for your services?
What are your hours?
How much money can a good stylist make?
Where do you get all the supplies?
How do you know a certain hair style or color will look good on a person?
What is healthy hair?
What is the best way to keep your hair healthy?
What makes a permanent wave work? Will it ruin your hair? Why do some need a new perm every three months or so?
How many kinds of scissors do you have? What are their uses?
Why do you have so many kinds of combs and brushes?
How do you straighten curly hair?
Is it easier to straighten curly hair or to curl straight hair?
Why don't you use rollers any more? Why are curling irons used?
How is nail sculpturing done? Does it hurt the natural nail?
How does your chair work? What makes it go up and down?
What do you like best about this business?
How are the infrared lights used?
What is a diffuser and how is it used?
What is "waxing"? Does it hurt? How is it done?
What is electrolysis?
What do you do if a customer asks you to do something that you think will look REALLY awful? ❖

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# National Manufacturing Company: Hardware Building Better Schools

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Dillon School
Rock Falls, Illinois

**Interviews with owners of a local manufacturing company help construct the foundations for an investigation about the contribution this enterprise makes to the community. From that foundation, Roth-Longe outlines learnings that help students understand this place where some of their families have worked for generations and which fulfill many Illinois State Goals for Education.**

The National Manufacturing Company was originally called the Sterling Wagon Company. Founded in 1901, the company originally produced wagons and tools used on farms. Because of the founders' experience in hardware, the company later changed its focus to hardware.

In 1902, National patented the "Big Four" barn door hanger, named after the four founders: L.A. Bittorf, H.V. Bittorf, W. P. Benson and Ben Washburn, all men above six feet tall in height (Sullivan, 1999). The company's catalogue grew to include corner irons, drawer pulls, hinges, hangers and rails. "As National continued to expand its line over the years, it also laid the foundation for its responsible commitment to community and nation." This dedication reached its pinnacle during World War II, when National manufactured hinges and hasps for military ammunition boxes (Oltmans, 1994).

National's product line growth was matched by the company's physical growth. Property along Wallace Street in Sterling was bought to allow for the company's expansion. Production sites were built in Sterling's twin city, Rock Falls, to help the company meet its production demands.

National's growth and success has been credited to their firm belief in quality products and exceptional service to its customers. The company now produces nearly 4,500 products, and it employs around 700 workers at the Sterling and Rock Falls factories.

Although National plays an important role in the Sterling and Rock Falls communities, the scope of the company is international. National of Canada, a sister company located in Saskatchewan, extends National's retail services and hardware and fastener production across the Canadian border. The growing network of representatives is introducing the National line of hardware to the world market.

Starting out as a small 50' by 70' building for constructing wagons, National Manufacturing has grown to be one of the nation's leading producers in home, farm and builder's hardware. National's commitment to inventiveness is promising to take the company into a successful new millennium.

***Starting out as a small 50' by 70' building for constructing wagons, National Manufacturing has grown to be one of the nation's leading producers in home, farm and builder's hardware.***

### National as a Resource for Area Schools

National plays an important educational role in the local community. A large percentage of parents work for National and share their job experience with their children. As Joseph L. Bittorf, Vice President of Engineering explains,

National is a company "committed to maintaining a working dialogue between itself and area schools." One example of this is National's partnership with Whiteside County Vocational Center's job shadowing program. Eligible high school students apply for worksite experience in which they are mentored by a National employee in different areas of the company. This is one way the company insures that mentored students are knowledgeable in a specific area of National,

***Activities and discussions can teach students how the laws of supply and demand impact National's production and distribution patterns.***

preparing them for possible future employment with the company (Joseph L. Bittorf, 1999).

For students in the lower grades, National also has plenty of resources to offer. By visiting National's web page <http://www.natman.com/outsidetheusframe.html>, students are able to take a closer look at the production and distribution of National's products. The page titled, "Start to Finish Accountability," shows several photographs of the production process. A brief explanation is also given of the steps necessary for employees to start with raw material and form it into a finished product ready for distribution <http://www.natman.com/starttofinishframe.html>.

The distribution of National's products is based on the ordering process called "Vendor Managed Inventory." Orders are placed through high-speed "salesforce" computers that are networked into National's distribution site computers. Orders are quickly turned around and shipped to vendors in three days <http://www.natman.com/distributionframe.html>.

With over 4,500 National products, students may be interested in finding lists of available hardware. There is a "Product Finder" page that offers a look at the many different categories of hardware including; Connection, Construct-It, Gates, Hangar and Rails, Hinges, Home, Organizing, Repairs, Security, Solid Brass, and Storm and Screen Doors. Students will be surprised at how common these items are around their own homes <http://www.natman.com/profinder01.html>.

A new product line that is very important to children is National's Child Safety Products. Students can learn about the products available to keep them safe like outlet covers, range knob covers, cabinet locks, and window cord wind-ups. Classes could discuss how the products work and why they are needed in homes with children.

After visiting National's web sites, teachers may be interested in inviting a guest speaker from National to present a topic to a class. Possible subjects for presentations include science, mathematics, business and engineering (Bittorf, 1999).

**Meeting State Goals**

Meeting the goals of the Illinois State Education Standards can be accomplished by tapping into community resources. The National Manufacturing Company is a Sterling-Rock Falls resource that can meet the goals of English and Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Guest speakers can visit classrooms to explain the design and making of home, farm, and building hardware. Sample products can be shown to help the students better understand how National's products improve their day-to-day living. By using a local resource, students will gain a better appreciation of their community.

*English and Language Arts*

The 4th Illinois State Goal states that students are to "listen effectively in formal and informal situations". Inviting a guest speaker into a classroom to present information is one way a teacher can meet this goal

"Apply acquired information, concepts, and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats" is the 5th Illinois State Goal. After a presentation,

students must be able to apply the information learned in a chosen format to meet this goal.

*Mathematics*

The 10th Illinois State Goal is for students to "formulate questions, design data-collecting methods, gather and analyze data and communicate findings." To meet this goal, students could investigate a chosen National product and demonstrate the percentage of sales that product was responsible for netting.

*Science*

The 11th Illinois State Goal is to "know and apply the concepts, principles and process of technological design." Students will meet this goal when they demonstrate what they have learned about the technological design processes that National uses in their production of hardware.

"Know and apply concepts that describe properties of matter and energy and the interactions between them" is the 12th Illinois State Goal. Students can learn about the production of National's hardware. The process includes stamping and die casting the product before it is plated, painted or galvanized. This method demonstrates how matter is changed, meeting the requirements of this goal.

The 13th Illinois State Goal states that students must "know and apply concepts that describe the interactions between science, technology and society." Students can meet this goal by learning how National Manufacturing uses technology to operate its high-speed distribution system.

*Social Science*

"Understand how different economic systems operate in the exchange, production, distribution and consumption of goods and services" is the 15th Illinois State Goal. Activities and discussions can teach students how the laws of supply and demand impact National's production and distribution patterns. Also, students can compare and contrast the international patterns of National's sales and distribution networks.

In conclusion, maybe all community industries are not as cooperative as National is, but many are. Schools can tap the tremendous educational potentials of local businesses by connecting to leaders who want to make a difference. Teachers can be the catalysts to make this link possible. ❖

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# *WOW*: Making It Happen

By Pam Carlson

***Taking students on field trips can be an intimidating proposal for teachers and administrators who haven't had the experience. Most schools have trip policies and procedures. Find out what these are and discuss the plan with appropriate administrators well in advance of the trip. Here are a few tips and words of wisdom (WOW) if planning fieldtrips is a new experience:***

1. Select tentative dates and coordinate them with the school calendar. ***WOW***: Set up your lesson plans so that you will have at least one day before to prepare and one day after to evaluate.

2. Contact each place you plan to visit as much in advance as possible. Making these contacts during the summer prior to school beginning is a good idea. You will feel less busy then and will be more likely to reserve the dates you want if you start early. ***WOW***: Clarify the accessibility accommodations for persons with disabilities.

3. Determine transportation needs, costs and options. If your district requires teachers to select a transportation service from an approved list, try to use a company your school deals with regularly. When you phone to reserve the bus, find out the cost and the acceptable method for payment, as well as the number of people the bus can safely accommodate. ***WOW***: Request a written agreement that stipulates all terms.

4. Determine the cost of the trip to students. Include fees for chaperones and instructional staff in your calculations. Divide the total costs among the fewest number of students you expect to attend. This will help you cover shortfalls, and any extra money can be used for a future trip. Check to see if your school has budgeted money for trips. If not, suggest it. ***WOW***: Funds may also be available from partners or groups that support your school; ask your principal about these resources.

5. Complete all required paper work at least a few days before the submission deadline. Fill out the information and submit it to the designated personnel. ***WOW***: Make a copy of everything you submit and ask for a copy of the request with the signatures of approval.

6. With your school administrators, clarify the procedures for securing parental permission for field trips. Fill in the basic information and include any details (example: lunch accommodations or special clothing) before making copies for students. Determine a due date for returning the completed forms. Teach responsibility by discussing with students the importance of meeting such deadlines. Remind students that they must have written permission from their parent or legal guardian to attend. ***WOW***: Since field trips are not a reward but an expansion of your classroom, do everything possible to include everyone, but never be tempted to take a child without a signed permission slip.

7. Find out your school's directives regarding the collection of money and closely follow them. Use a class list to check off students' names as soon as they pay. ***WOW***: Be considerate of the school clerk—do not wait until the days' end to submit money. Turn it in daily, count money carefully, organize it by facing the bills all the same way.

8. Find chaperones. Many adults enjoy the learning and fun associated with field trips. Let students help you with the task of identifying adults who might act as chaperones. Other mature students (high school or college) may also be possibilities. ***WOW***: Explain to chaperones what is expected of them and don't assume anything.

9. Leave the permission slips and a list of trip participants in the school office during the trip; include telephone numbers of the places you will visit, bus license plate or ID numbers, and appropriate cell phone numbers. This is a legal requirement in some areas. ***WOW:*** Also, be sure you have appropriate emergency or contact phone numbers with you.

10. Organize all information and documentation in a folder. After the trip, save the folder to help you plan your next visit. Include lessons you've developed and assessment samples. Include your evaluation of the trip. ***WOW***: Make a list of things you want to remember for your next trip.

11: Send thank you notes to all people who helped make this educational experience possible. ***WOW***: Include school personnel (administrators and especially support staff).

# Place-Based Curriculum and Instruction: Outdoor and Environmental Education Approaches

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Place-based education is a relatively new term, appearing only recently in the education literature. However, progressive educators have promoted the concept for more than 100 years. For example, in *The School and Society*, John Dewey advocated an experiential approach to student learning in the local environment: "Experience [outside the school] has its geographical aspect, its artistic and its literary, its scientific and its historical sides. All studies arise from aspects of the one earth and the one life lived upon it" (1915, p. 91). Place-based education usually includes conventional outdoor education methodologies as advocated by John Dewey to help students connect with their particular corners of the world. Proponents of place-based education often envision a role for it in achieving local ecological and cultural sustainability.[1] This [article] reviews place-based curriculum and instruction, especially as it relates to outdoor and environmental education, and provides examples of K-12 resources and programs.

***Place-based educators believe that education should prepare people to live and work to sustain the cultural and ecological integrity of the places they inhabit.***

**Outdoor Education, Environmental Education and Place-Based Education: How Are They Connected?**

The main purpose of outdoor education is to provide meaningful contextual experiences—in both natural and constructed environments—that complement and expand classroom instruction which tends to be dominated by print and electronic media (Knapp, 1996, p. ix). It is a broader term than environmental education, which can be described as instruction directed toward developing a citizenry prepared to live well in a place without destroying it (Orr, 1994, p. 14). Environmental education can occur both inside and outside the classroom.

Understanding the relationships among place-based education, outdoor education, and environmental education is worthwhile because each concept has been developed somewhat separately by educators who have produced curriculum materials and instructional practices that could be useful within the other concept areas. Further complicating this potential exchange is the variety of labels that have been applied to each of these approaches. For example, as the field of outdoor education matured, it was labeled school camping, camping education, and eventually, outdoor education. Likewise, place-based education has been referred to as community-oriented schooling, ecological education, and bioregional education.

Paul Theobald refers to place-conscious elementary and secondary classrooms in his book, *Teaching The Commons* (1997, pp. 132-159). He

advocates using the immediate locale as "the lens for disciplinary engagement in all schools across the country" (p. 137). In a later article, Theobald and Curtiss (2000) describe the field as community-oriented schooling.

Smith and Williams (1999) describe this approach as ecological education. They write, "The practice of ecological education requires viewing human beings as one part of the natural world and human cultures as an outgrowth of interactions between species and particular places" (p. 3). The authors outline seven principles, two of which directly reflect outdoor education: (1) practical experiences outdoors through the application of an ethic of care, and (2) grounding learning in a sense of place through investigation of surrounding natural and human communities.

Traina and Darley-Hill (1995) extend "locale" to include bioregional education, encouraging students and teachers to know their place and to consider the impact of lifestyles on the resources of that bioregion. Similarly, Orr's (1994) call for ecoliteracy presents principles for rethinking education that clearly relate place-based education to outdoor education: (1) students should understand the effects of this knowledge on real people and their communities; and (2) learning though direct experiences outside the classroom is as important as the content of particular courses.

Thomashow (1995) writes about the goal of achieving ecological identity through the examination of four basic questions: What do I know about the place where I live? Where do things come from? How do I connect to the earth? What is my purpose as a human being? He integrates these questions into activities by incorporating reflective learning in the school, home, community, and the workplace (p. xvii). These questions focus curriculum and instruction on understanding and appreciating students' immediate surroundings.

Haymes (1995) speaks directly to a pedagogy of place and addresses issues of race and class as they are made manifest in the construction of urban environments and in the power and politics that emerge from those constructs. His work takes a cultural studies perspective and contributes a much-needed complement to more conventional outdoor/environmental curriculum and instruction.

***The practice of ecological education requires viewing human beings as one part of the natural world and human cultures as an outgrowth of interactions between species and particular places.***

**What Are the Essential Characteristics of Place-Based Education?**

A survey of the literature on place-based education reveals characteristic patterns to this still-evolving approach that make it distinctive.

- It emerges from the particular attributes of a place. The content is specific to the geography, ecology, sociology, politics, and other dynamics of that place. This fundamental characteristic establishes the foundation of the concept.
- It is inherently multidisciplinary.
- It is inherently experiential. In many programs this includes a participatory action or service-learning component; in fact, some advocates insist that action must be a component if ecological and cultural sustainability are to result.
- It is reflective of an educational philosophy that is broader than "learn to earn." Economics of place can be an area of study as a curriculum explores local industry and sustainability; however, all curricula and programs are designed for broader objectives.
- It connects place with self and community. Because of the ecological lens through which place-based curricula are envisioned, these con-

nections are pervasive. These curricula include multigenerational and multicultural dimensions as they interface with community resources.

### Why Is Place-Based Education Important?

Some critics of place-based education believe that the primary goal of schooling should be to prepare students to work and function in a highly technological and consumer-oriented society. In contrast, place-based educators believe that education should prepare people to live and work to sustain the cultural and ecological integrity of the places they inhabit. To do this, people must have knowledge of ecological patterns, systems of causation, and the long-term effects of human actions on those patterns (Orr, 1994). One of the most compelling reasons to adopt place-based education is to provide students with the knowledge and experiences needed to actively participate in the democratic process.

### What Are Some Sources of Place-Based Curriculum?

Space limitations in this [article] preclude extensive lists and descriptions of place-based programs. (See "Selected Place-Based Curriculum Programs" on page 56). However, the references below will direct the reader to many of them.

#### *Periodicals*

***For descriptions of exemplary curricula, see the resources and reviews sections of back and future issues of:***

*The Active Learner: A Foxfire Journal for Teachers.* The Foxfire Fund, Inc., P. O. Box 541, Mountain City, GA 30562-0541. 706-746-5828.

*Clearing: Environmental Education in the Pacific Northwest.* Creative Educational Networks/EE Project, P. O. Box 82954, Portland, OR 97282. 503-657-6958 x 2638.

*Green Teacher: Education For Planet Earth.* 95 Robert Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 2K5. 416-960-1244.

*Orion Afield: Working for Nature and Community.* The Orion Society, 195 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230. 413-528-4422. (Especially "In Pursuit of a Bioregional Curriculum," Spring, 1999, Vol. 3, No. 2).

*Taproot: A Publication of The Coalition for Education in the Outdoors.* P. O. Box 2000, Park Center, Cortland, NY 13045. 605-753-4971.

#### *Books*

***In addition to books included in the reference list, see the following:***

Bowers, C. A. (1995). *Educating for an ecologically sustainable culture.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. Describes three curriculum models of community and environmental renewal and profiles the Foxfire Curriculum, the Common Roots Program, and the Ecoliteracy Project. Bowers notes that the three programs represent very different approaches, but they all share the common characteristic of having evolved outside schools of education (p. 184).

Cajete, G. (1994). *Look to the mountain: An ecology of indigenous education.* Durango, CO: Kivaki Press. Describes indigenous teaching and learning tied to place. Written by a Tewa Indian specializing in environmental education and multicultural curriculum and program development in science, social science, and the arts. These concepts and principles are equally adaptable to mainstream institutions.

Haas, T., & Nachtigal, P. (1998). *Place value: An educator's guide to good literature on rural lifeways, environments, and purposes of education.* Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. Chapter subtitles describe the book's scope: education for living well ecologically, politically, economically, spiritually, and in community. Extensive annotated bibliographies for each aspect of place-based education are included.

Hart, R. A. (1999). *Children's participation: The theory and practice of including young citizens in community development and environmental care.* London: Earthscan Publications Ltd. Outlines a theory and practice leading to sustainable "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own

needs" (p. 5). Hart's examples of place-based curricula are provided through several case studies from all over the world.

Kriesberg, D. A. (1999). *A sense of place: Teaching children about the environment with picture books*. Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas Press. Highlights integration of the arts with place, providing teachers with picture book resources and activities for place-based teaching.

Smith, G. A., & Williams, D. R. (Eds.) (1999). *Ecological education in action: On weaving education, culture, and the environment*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. Kiefer and Demple describe a strategy for building an ecologically sustainable way of learning in the program, "Common Roots." They conclude, "in creating a context for local curriculum, we have seen the power of unifying the curriculum through the unique story of each community" (p. 43).

Sobel, D. (1993). *Children's special places: Exploring the role of forts, dens, and bush houses in middle childhood*. Tucson, AZ: Zephyr Press. Offers several case studies in Chapter 5: "Making a Place in The Curriculum" and demonstrates the importance of childhood experiences around the home and community.

The Orion Society (1998). *Stories in the land: A place-based environmental education anthology*. Great Barrington, MA: The Orion Society. John Elder describes four fundamental themes illustrated by the programs described: attentiveness to students' home landscapes, the convergence of natural sciences and the arts, time spent outdoors, and exploring cultural aspects of the community (pp. 13-14). The authors of this anthology provide examples of place-based curricula.

## Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Directions

Place-based education represents a recent trend in the broad field of outdoor education. It recaptures the ancient idea of "listening to the land" and living and learning in harmony with the earth and with each other. As society becomes increasingly urbanized and technologized, educators must continue to adopt and adapt more of the goals, theory, and practice of place-based education. ❖

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*Notes:*

(1) "Sustainability" connotes economic and social practices that use, preserve, and restore ecosystems while providing for the basic needs of diverse human populations.


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# Remystifying The City: Reawakening The Sense Of Wonder In Our Own Backyards.

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A couple of summers ago, a colleague and I, along with eight teenagers, left Edmonton and ventured into the Alberta mountains on a twelve-day hiking and canoeing trip. During the trip we had ample opportunity and inspiration to talk about the natural world, the state of the environment and minimum impact camping. When we met afterwards to discuss how the experience had influenced the teens now that they were back home, it was not surprising that no one's life had been dramatically changed by our twelve days in that wild, pristine setting. But it was intriguing—and unsettling—to learn that none of these young people had carried home a strong sense of environmental concern. For them, nature was "out there" in the wild mountains and raging rivers, a place unexplored and undisturbed, with few or no people, and without human-made things. Nature was not back here where they lived; "here" was already wrecked and too familiar. Even their language reflected the dichotomy they perceived between "Nature" and "Civilization." And because in these teens' minds there was no nature at home, they regarded environmental action at home as irrelevant. As one student put it, "I recycle here, but to me it's a lost cause. Picking up garbage will make it look nice, but it can't help the plants to grow."

***As long as the natural world is a remote place out there and not to be found in the familiar settings where we live, protection of the earth's environment is unlikely.***

In North America, land use has always been an either/ or proposition: either total preservation or total development. And now that most of us live in towns and cities, the "Nature" that young people know is often a mythical abstraction. This has important implications for educators, because the way we think about the natural world and our place in it is the crucial terrain of environmental education. As long as the natural world is a remote place out there and not to be found in the familiar settings where we live, protection of the earth's environment is unlikely. Our challenge is therefore twofold: to combine direct experience of nature with a cognitive understanding of our daily reliance on the natural world. If we wish young people to care for the environment in the places they live, we must help them to recognize that the natural world exists not only in the wild, unexplored out there but also in the familiar here. This is not to suggest that we must demystify the wilderness, but rather that we must remystify the city.

To remystify the city is to reawaken a sense of wonder and to alert ourselves to the marvels in familiar things. It is to blur the mental boundaries between Nature and Civilization so that we have

an understanding of ourselves and our human-built environments as part of the natural world. It is to understand that human activities are founded upon the earth's systems, that cities are not isolated islands where these processes are not in operation. It is to instill a compassionate sense of place that consciously links care of self and the broader world, both human and non-human. Remystifying the city and connecting to the place we live is a beginning in learning to live with the land.

**Explore Nature Close to Home**

To remystify the city we need first to break the association of nature with majestic mountains or pristine forests. The natural world does exist in the everyday lives of city dwellers, and wild nature close to home begs to be explored. Grass and wildflowers spring through sidewalk cracks; birds abound in city trees; and even bigger species have adapted well to living in human-dominated environments. There are more rabbits in the Edmonton city limits, a biologist tells me, than in the area immediately outside. Peregrine falcons nest on the ledges of city skyscrapers. Rodent and avian mooches lunch with us at parks and roadside stops. Raccoons make their dens under our porches.

The first step in remystifying the city is simply to look around. Schoolyards have a wealth of unappreciated biomass, and one teacher related the fascination of his kids as they explored their school grounds and found mini-wetlands, evidence of many mammal species, and animal homes of all types. Study the urban forest, starting with the trees that line the streets, and include the humans that live around them. Explore parks and graveyards. Take a canoe trip within the city limits. On such a trip, one of my students expressed shock that "there was this much nature so close to my house!"

In this global age, when nightly television informs our sense of reality more clearly than direct encounter, and Internet hopping to far-flung sites is becoming routine, youth probably know more about Antarctic penguins and the African savannah than about the natural history of their own area. Learning that nature exists in the city and recognizing some of the signs and details of its presence is the first step in remystifying the city.

**Explore the Small Wonders**

Part of the challenge in remystifying the city is to make the familiar sufficiently unfamiliar to invoke the sense of curiosity that we all had as children. Create mystery by seeking the tiny wonders often missed in the rush to look at the big picture. When we begin to look closely, we often begin to notice what was hitherto taken for granted.

For this, magnifying glasses are a marvelous tool. They are an antidote to seeing insects as homogeneous and can make leaves, cement sidewalks and dirt come alive, literally. A camera is another worthwhile tool. Learning about composition, angles and other techniques can make common things appear much less common and more interesting.

I often start exploration sessions with a quote from Lew Welch: "Step out on to the planet. Draw a circle a hundred feet round. Inside the circle are three hundred things nobody understands, and, maybe nobody's ever really seen. How many can you find?" [1] Then we venture off on a diminutive scavenger hunt. Items on our list include shapes, colours and patterns, as well as specific items related to the current subject of study. All finds need to be smaller than an inch. In another exploration of small wonders, we take one-metre microhikes along pieces of string cast on the ground. I tell the students that they are trail guides and must find five scenic sights to share with a partner or the class. Giant grass forests or grazing herds are popular sightings. In "A Metre of My Own" each person picks a patch of ground and observes it once a week over the course of a term. We use journals to take field notes, recording measurements and observing changes. Then we relate the micro-environment to the bigger processes of the natural world hydrologic cycles, biodiversity,

seasonal variation and so on.

In these ways I hope to alert students to the beauty they may overlook: dandelions sprinkling boring green lawns with lascivious colour, the wondrous intricacy of the inner parts of a flower, even the common robin which is really a spectacularly coloured bird. Exploring these mysteries of the natural world where we live can help blur the boundaries of Nature and Civilization and make the familiar become unfamiliar again.

**Address the Nature vs. Civilization Dichotomy**

As part of the process of remystifying the city, I encourage students to discuss their views of how humans and the rest of the natural world relate to each other. One activity that starts this process is called Forced Choice. Everyone stands on a line. I designate each side of the line as "Yes" or "No" and read a series of statements: Are humans part of nature? Is the natural world just for human use? Should all mosquitoes be exterminated? Is there value in a vacant lot? Everyone has to decide which way to move. Occasionally I ask folks to justify their decision. Rethinking our view of the world is tough!

Analysis of how advertisements portray nature allows young people to consider societal representations of the human role on the planet. After examining human-centred ideas, give the class readings that address a different view of nature. *Earth Prayers (1991)* is a good source and Chief Seattle's speech is a classic. Students can then prepare a response to share with the class.

Debates and role-plays are other effective techniques. A role play we do is called "The Manor." After the youth have been at the outdoor centre for a day, we tell them that the Board of Directors is considering selling the land to develop a seniors' retirement village. Individuals or partners draw stakeholder roles. Roles such as builder, senior, county tax assessor, outdoor education teacher, parent and others are written on cards in red; roles such as aspen, child at camp, skunk, and osprey are written in blue. After presentations of their points of view, everyone gets to vote. Usually the development project fails, and invariably someone scathingly says, "In the real world skunks can't vote." And so we have a second vote, but this time the blue cards cannot cast ballots. The sale always goes through. Since powerful feelings are provoked, discussing the situation is always important. Upon reflection, one group decided to build the village in an ecologically sustainable way and to attempt to live with the land by integrating the human-built and natural environments. Role-plays such as this help students to step back from our human-centred values, to reconsider the notions of 'progress' and 'development' and to redefine our role in the natural world. In the process, the gap between Nature and Civilization begins to narrow.

***Exploring how the city is situated in the broader landscape helps not only to remystify where we live, but also to develop a sense of place.***

**Explore Connections of the City to the Land**

Exploring how the city is situated in the broader landscape helps not only to remystify where we live, but also to develop a sense of place. The aim is for students to realize that cities and the human activities within them are founded upon the earth's systems. Focus on exploring how humans have adjusted to the natural features of the place. Can you trace the water cycle within the city? What are the patterns of air movement? How is the community affected by the natural world right now by floods, wind between buildings,

localized microclimates? Government agencies from all levels can be tapped for the resources to answer these questions.

One class project involved study of land use and management at three points in the community's history. Small groups took different topics: the loss of farmland, the expansion of the town's street grid, and the change in air clarity. They researched the changes over time by studying city maps and photographs and by interviewing older residents in a local nursing home. After looking at the oldest map, one group asked, "What happened to the creeks?" To find out, they did some urban spelunking through the modern culvert system! Such projects in environmental history help to remystify the city by revealing how humans have adapted to the place and adapted the place to themselves.

**Explore the Feeling of Nature**

Natural settings often invoke relaxation, reflection, and a sense of freedom and peace, especially when contrasted with human-dominated environments. This feeling can be restorative and a source of personal growth. Helping young people to find this feeling at a place near home may be one of the most important steps in remystifying the city.

Any outdoor activity that gives time for quiet reflection and close observation can enhance students' sense of attachment to the natural world. Starting activities with readings, the more evocative the better, often helps participants open up to possibilities. Try deep breathing exercises to expand awareness—of the bird singing in yonder tree, the breeze against the skin, the smell of automobile traffic, the oxygen in your lungs. Solo sits, even on concrete playgrounds for ten minutes, give students a chance to slow down and think, or just be.

Part of our challenge is to open people to the possibility that not everyone in the city has the same experience of the natural world. One wilderness program used to take youth groups downtown. After a session in a soup kitchen and a good briefing on safety measures, the participants were sent out on the streets in pairs or trios. The experience was powerful in creating an awareness of how social and economic privilege help to determine who experiences the outdoors and in what manner. For some city dwellers, the outdoors is a wooded ravine or a riverside lot; for others it is getting through the winter huddled on a hot air grate without a jacket.

After any of these activities, make sure to talk about the experience. An experience shared publicly is often more concrete and lasting than one kept to oneself. Make sure also to build an accepting, open environment which will help to counter the tendency in our culture for powerful emotions to be denied or smirked at.[2] I have had success simply by asking young people how they felt after an experience in the natural world. We invariably get into discussion about why we have a busier, less peaceful feeling in the city, and how we can recapture at home the feelings we associate with the natural world. The students usually decide that taking care of natural places near where people live is important for a sense of wholeness, and they are more motivated to do so.

***Natural settings often invoke relaxation, reflection, and a sense of freedom and peace, especially when contrasted with human-dominated environments....Helping young people to find this feeling at a place near home may be one of the most important steps in remystifying the city.***

**Make Creative Change**

Values should influence action. And yet the alienation of our day is a sense of well-informed futility, a billion voices wondering what one voice can do. In the effort to remystify the city, it is important to discuss barriers to creating change, to practise action strategies and to focus on signs of hope -- think of the peregrines! Take action as a group. Reclaim the schoolyard or adopt a local park. Do a lifestyle audit, make a couple (not too many) resolutions and chart progress regularly.

Activities that ask young people to envision the type of world they want to live in are also important. Making radio advertisements to convince others of their visions, creating maps of their ideal world, songwriting, guided meditation and a host of other activities can help capture the motivation for change that remystifying the city may promote.

There is something to be said for encountering the splendour of the natural world through wilderness experiences. There is also something deeper to behold: care for the environment in the daily here-and-now— to feel a part of, and care for, the places of the trodden cement of the sidewalk, the fat worms in the garden, the wind whistling through concrete canyons, the dandelion emerging from battle with herbicides in the front lawn. The city needs to be remystified, for people take care of what they respect and know. It is here that care of the earth must begin, right where we live. ❖

**Notes**

(1) Lew Welch, [Untitled], in Earth Prayers, Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon, eds. (New York: Harper Collins, 1991). This book is a great source for different views on the natural world and the human place.

(2) See the two-part article by Louis A. Iozzi, What Research Says to the Educator: Environmental Education and the Affective Domain, Journal of Environmental Education, 1989, Volume 20 (3 and 4).

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# Valley Quest: Strengthening Community Through Educational Treasure Hunts

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A raven-haired young woman and her golden retriever gaze out from Port Townsend's North Beach over the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Puffy cumulus clouds, squeezed of moisture in the rainshadow of the Olympics, catch the first rays of sun on their underbellies. She ponders the meaning of the lines from the story: "Once upon a time, times were so unlike our time that the Waters carried stone on their backs and elephants wore fur coats. In those days the Waters were a pretty hard bunch, sticking together through thick and thin. Eldest Water, a daughter Water, had itchy feet and wanted to wander. Her feet were itchy and very, very big."

***Valley Quest is a project of Vital Communities of the Upper Valley, an organization committed to revitalizing the sense of community in the individual towns and region of the Upper Connecticut River valley of Vermont and New Hampshire.***

She notices, up beneath the bluff, a large glacial erratic nestled in the sand. Drawing near, she realizes she has found her prey—a two-foot-long, bronze dragon track attached to the sea-washed stone surface. She takes a rubbing of the track and folds it into her rain-stained journal. Three thousand miles east, the late morning sky is porcelain blue and the maples are doing a pretty good imitation of Dennis Rodman. The fourth graders from the Lyme, New Hampshire, Elementary School are bounding like puppies up the trail to Pinnacle Hill. At the top, they congregate around a sentinel chimney, the only remains of a lonely hilltop cabin, and gaze out upon Smarts Mountain, the Dartmouth Skiway, and the Vermont peaks on the far side of the Connecticut River valley. They read the last clue:

> Facing the chimney's right front edge,
> Walk fifty-eight steps to the west,
> But take care not to fall off the ledge.
> The hiding place is.... Have you guessed?

Then, gazing at their compasses, they pace away through meadow grass and sumac saplings. A voice rings out, "I found it! I found it! and parents, teachers, and the kids all stampede to the hollow birch tree, the hiding place of this Valley Quest box.

Vault that intervening ocean, east another 3,000 miles. A salt-and-pepper bearded elderly gentleman wearing wellies, a rain slicker, and a hand-knit woolen cap carefully searches through the clutter on the slopes beneath the rocky promontory of Fox Tor. With a puzzled look on his face, he examines a dog-eared manuscript that cryptically indicates:

684451 Tree on hill 320 degrees.

Gap between rocks on highest visible point 156 degrees.

Box under gorse-covered rock.

He examines his Dartmoor map, takes two compass bearings, and grimaces as the mid-afternoon drizzle resumes. He moves upslope picking his way around gray-lichened stones. Then, while bending over, his arm disappears into a dark hole and re-emerges clutching a battered, WWII vintage, ammunition box. He stands and stretches his stiff back while a satisfied smile warms his damp face.

**What's Happened Here?**

These seekers are all engaged in complex regional treasure hunts where the prize is solving the puzzle and gaining an appreciation of local heritage rather than gold doubloons. Tracking the Dragon is an environmental game and watershed tour created by Wild Olympic Salmon, a community organization dedicated to healthy watersheds for wild salmon and their chums (pun intended). The originator of the game, Mall Peek, joined up with hydrologists, calligraphers, and a host of poets, cartographers, and visual artists to create a series of hunts throughout east Jefferson County on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. Hidden in diverse watershed locations, each elegantly cast, dragon-track highlights a different step on the water cycle and the bioregional flora and fauna that depend on healthy ecosystems.

Valley Quest is a project of Vital Communities of the Upper Valley, an organization committed to revitalizing the sense of community in the individual towns and region of the Upper Connecticut River valley of Vermont and New Hampshire. They meet this goal through conducting town-wide problem-solving forums, identifying and monitoring indicators of economic, social, and environmental health in the region, and through fomenting Valley Quest. "Adventures for the Playful, ages 3-93" proclaims the cover of their Quest Guide.

Valley Quest was created by Vital Communities Director Delia Clark, Valley Quest Coordinators Maggie Stier and Linny Levin, and a host of local school principals and teachers. Garnering their inspiration from Dartmoor Letterboxing (if you're thinking, "What's that," just hold your horses), they created an intertown treasure hunt in which teachers and schoolchildren create maps of special places in their towns to exchange with children in other Upper Valley communities. For many teachers and their students, it's a year-long integrated curriculum which involves researching local history, learning mapping skills, interviewing community elders, writing poetry, and discovering new terrain in their own backyards. The quests lead to hidden treasure boxes in special corners of the community. Underneath all the fun are the serious objectives of strengthening collaboration between school and townsfolk and building a foundation for children's future engagement in civic life. Delia Clark explains, "Children who have gone on quests are more likely to turn into adults who vote, volunteer on town committees, and work to preserve the unique character of their communities."

***Hidden in diverse watershed locations, each elegantly cast, dragon-track highlights a different step on the water cycle, and the bioregional flora and fauna that depend on healthy ecosystems.***

The grandmother of regional treasure hunts is Dartmoor Letterboxing. Dartmoor, of Hounds of the Baskervilles fame, is high, boggy and rocky, treeless terrain in Devon, England. Covering hundreds of square miles, these unpopulated hills are mostly designated as national park. It's always been a popular destination for "trampers" (we know them as walkers or hikers) and somewhere in the middle of the last century a curious tradition emerged. Letterboxes (mailboxes) were

established at two or three of the most inaccessible spots on the moor, such as Cranmere Pool. By leaving your letter here, you could get it postal stamped from this esoteric location. This tradition persisted for a century or more until some Devonshire folks decided that it would be fun to expand the idea. People hid old weatherproof ammunition boxes, identified their locations with ordinance survey coordinates (similar to longitude and latitude), and gave some additional directions. Inside each box was a handmade stamp, an inkpad, and a guest book to show who'd been there. The locations of all these boxes were collected, put into a clandestine catalogue, and lo and behold, a recreational pastime flourished.

After a few years, there were about a hundred boxes spread about. By the time I was in Devon in 1987, the catalogue contained about a thousand boxes. Due to concerns about ecological damage to the moor, dissension flared between the national park authorities and the troops of boot-clad letterboxers. So the development of a letterboxing code (i.e.: Fasten all gates. Safeguard water supplies. Avoid damaging fences, hedges, and walls.) educated boxers to the ethic of "Moor Care and Less Wear" and a truce was reached. The most recent estimate is that there are 3,000 boxes hidden in, on, and around Dartmoor. Hundreds can be found in pubs and other shops. Some letterboxes travel with their creators, only appearing when the right password is spoken. There are sets of boxes that lead searchers to prehistoric tin mines, another set on bridges, another at good birding sites. To find these, you might have to do a bit of research in the classic Crossing's Guide to Dartmoor and soon you find that you've learned a lot of British history without sitting through any dull lectures. And it's all sustained by the individual box creators who write the poetry, carve the stamps, and maintain the locations. Thanks to our Devonshire brethren for this model of non-hierarchical, low cost, family recreation.

It was this families-having-fun-together aspect that intrigued those of us who met to design the educational component of the Vital Communities program in 1995. We wanted something that would help create the strong democracy that makes communities vital, something like the soccer clubs and choral societies that Robert Putnam says provide the fabric of community cohesion. We were familiar with the statistics Richard Louv pulled together for his book, *Childhood's Future*—a decrease in family leisure time between 1973 and 1987 from 26 hours to 16 hours per week, parents spending 40 percent less time with their families than 25 years ago, a 14 percent decrease in family vacations from 1983 to 1990, and we were painfully aware of the gradual shift from free-ranging outdoor play to structured indoor recreation. Capture the Flag and Kick the Can were falling prey to the Mario Brothers and all kinds of Nintendo shoot-em-up games. Similarly, organized soccer and hockey meant there wasn't much free time left to build forts and find new fishing spots. We needed an activity that would encourage the exploratory bonding-with-the-earth experiences that are critical in middle childhood—an activity that would, in the words of Linny Levin, allow children "to learn about places that are right under their noses."

We also knew that we didn't just want this project to be created for children. We wanted

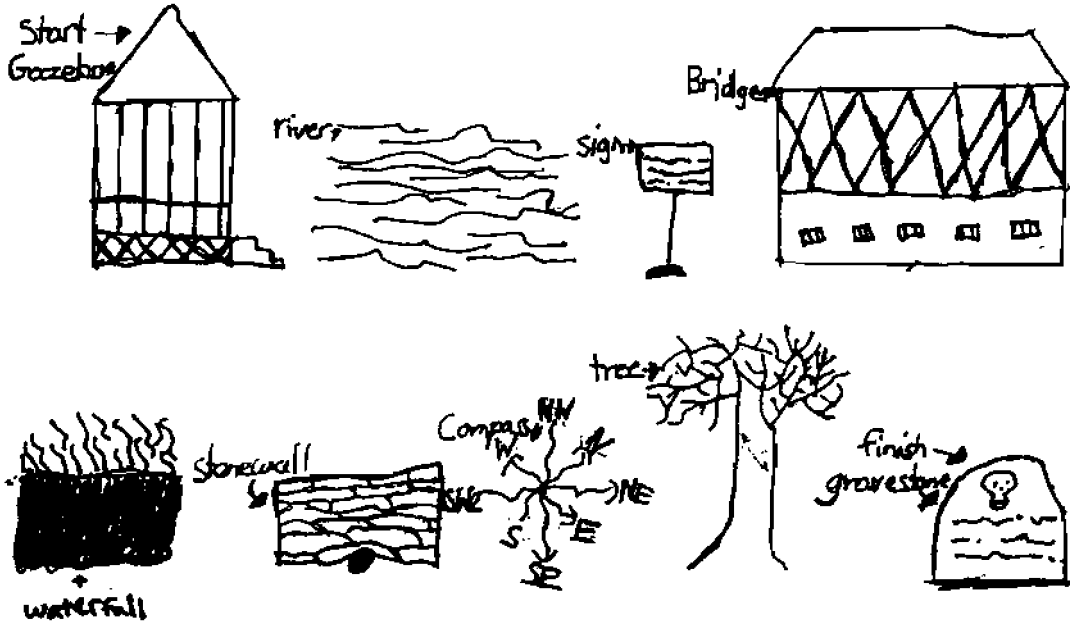
***We're all compelled to follow the faint tracks to the hidden grail of meaningful engagement with land and community.***

them to participate in shaping it and, therefore, feel some ownership of it. So we took the Letterboxing idea and brought it into the classroom, asking teachers and students to work together in choosing sites and creating quests. The result is now more than 50 quests spread over 12 Vermont and New Hampshire towns.

Here's how it plays out on the ground. Teachers who make it a year-long project start by taking their class on already existing quests. That's what Lynn Bischoof's fourth-grade class was doing on Pinnacle Hill. During these first forays, students get a taste of the integrated curriculum that the project offers. In order to complete the quest, they have to follow maps, decode rhymed clues, use compasses, and apply math skills. For example, after walking 58 steps west from the chimney, one of Bischoof's fourth grade girls looked back and noted, "Three steps is about four feet. Hmmm. Fifty-eight divided by four." She paused. "I could lie down a bunch of times in a row because I'm four feet." From Lyme, this class could go across the river and try the exciting Palisades Quest in Fairlee, or explore the old abandoned village of Quintown during the flat rock Quest in Oxford, just to the north. Through walking and breathing their own history, these children are becoming repositories of local culture.

Back indoors, fourth grade teacher John Souter in Woodstock, Vermont, engaged his students in learning about maps as the first step in the integrated, problem-solving challenge of creating a quest. They looked at panoramic view maps, tourist maps, and street maps of the village. They drew aerial views of classroom objects, made classroom maps, and built models from architectural plans. On the schoolgrounds they made hide-a-penny treasure maps, created treasure maps for their families, and then practiced making small quests for each other in the classroom. Writing rhymed couplets for the clues was a wonderful way to teach poetry in context for use in the real world.

> Go over the brook and follow the trail,
> past tennis courts to the hip roof at Vail.
> Keep on going, curve, curve, curve,
> white brick building tremendous swerve.




**Old Quechee Cemetery Quest created by Amy Kinder's fifth graders in Hartford, Vermont.**

Cathy Ely's fifth grade class at Ottaquechee Elementary School jumped into the project by focusing on the entire Upper Valley, looking at maps and local geography, calling the local chamber of commerce, and trying to figure out what actually determines the boundaries of this loosely defined region. Each student then interviewed townspeople, picked a potential hiding site for their treasure box, and made a presentation to the whole class trying to sell their site as the one best suited for a quest. Students had to organize notes from research and interviews and create photos, maps, or model displays of their site.

***We've been able to rekindle our sense of wonder— spend some good times with our families and friends exploring this wonderland in which we live.***

After a site is chosen, the students create the box. Sometimes Tupperware, other times handcrafted, the box is hidden but not buried. It contains a handmade stamp that expresses the significance of the site, an inkpad, a log book, and a bit of history or stories about the place devised from the children's research.

All the quests are revised and completed by April, when they are assembled in the Valley Quest guide and the season officially opens. Everyone and their grandmother goes questing. Cub Scout groups and family reunion parties go questing. Historical societies and conservation commissions bring their memberships on quests. Summer "quest fests" encourage vacationing honeymooners to join in the fun. During the summer of 1998, Cheryl Taggart, Mark Mullins, their two children, and German shepherd became the first family to complete all 39 of the existing quests in about two months.

After the logbooks have been in place for a season, they provide testimony to the creator's success. One quester commented,

> *It is a holistic experience—using mind, experiencing the weather....[Children] have to observe and think. It involves the head, heart and hands. I really appreciate that. It is something for children to do that is magical, not materialistic. The experience is what you take away, not a thing.*

It's clear that Valley Quest strikes a far-ranging nerve. After hearing Vital Communities Director Delia Clark describe Valley Quest, a Vermont writer decided to write an article about Dartmoor Letterboxing and its New England cousin. The resulting April, 1998, Smithsonian article spawned a Letterboxing USA movement that has spread across the country like the Melissa virus. At their website, http://www.pclink.com/elf/letbox.htm, you find maps and clues to hunts in more than 20 states from Alaska to Florida.

Dick Norton, a retired physician and Appalachian Mountain Club member, came upon the Upper Valley Quests and decided to create some in his own home town. South Shore Quests now invites explorers to hidden corners on Wompatuck State Park and other conservation land in the Hingham, Massachusetts, area. And the National Park Service's River and Trails Program created a link between Valley Quest and the Southern Rhode Island Green Trail Initiative. A coalition including the Charlestown Chamber of Commerce, the National Wildlife Refuges of Rhode Island, the South Kingston Land Trust, and the Cross Mills Public Library are working to create quests along the Green Trail that will educate the public about the wonders of the area.

The magic of Valley Quest and all these other regional treasure hunts has an infectious appeal. We're all compelled to follow the faint tracks to the hidden grail of meaningful engagement with

land and community. We feel emboldened when we throw off the shackles of electronic media. As a Tracking the Dragon sleuth said,

> *What I have enjoyed most about Tracking the Dragon is the opportunity to become, not childish, but childlike, once again. For a brief period of time, the distinction between adults and children has blurred, and we're all, the eight of us, childlike friends pursuing a year-long gigantic scavenger hunt. We've been able to rekindle our sense of wonder, spend some good times with our families and friends exploring this wonderland in which we live, and we've all had a tapestry of rich experiences in the process.*

Won't you come too? ❖

**QUEST COORDINATES**

**Valley Quest**
Vital Communities of the Upper Valley
104 Railroad Row
White River Junction, VT 05001
802/291-9100
uv.2001@valley.net
www.valley.net/uv2001

**Tracking the Dragon**
Wild Olympic Salmon
P.O. Box 585
Chimacum, WA 98325
wos@olympus.net
www.olympus.net/edu/wos

**Dartmoor Letterboxing**
Tony Moore
25 Sanderspool Cross
South Brent, Devon,
TQ9 7NU, England
www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Gorge/7370/

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# Including Historic Places in the Social Studies Curriculum

Marilyn Harper
National Register of Historic Places

Places have powerful stories to tell. They speak through relationships to their settings, their plan and design, their building materials, their atmosphere and ambience, their furniture, and other objects they contain. They can evoke the ghosts of the people who once lived and worked there. These places provide physical evidence of how broad currents of history affect even small communities. Supplemented with primary or secondary written and visual materials, they also teach such skills as observation, working with maps, interpreting visual evidence, evaluating bias, analysis, comparison and contrast, and problem-solving.

***Teaching with Historic Places, a program administered by the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places, offers a variety of ways to share this "power of place" with students across the nation.***

Teaching with Historic Places, a program administered by the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places, offers a variety of ways to share this "power of place" with students across the nation. At the heart of the program is a series of more than 50 classroom-ready lesson plans based on historic places listed in the National Register. These lessons allow teachers to use historic places to bring the new standards in geography, history, and social studies into their classrooms.

## Project Background

During the 1980s and early 1990s, many people interested in saving historic places came to see what was usually called "heritage education" as a way to: (1) use places as lively and challenging resources to enrich teaching and learning for students, (2) help teachers, preservationists, and others to work together in their communities and, ultimately, (3) encourage and strengthen public commitment to preserving these places. A survey conducted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1990 identified more than 600 heritage education programs.

In 1991 and 1992 the National Register, which contains files on over 67,000 historic places, and the National Trust called together leading educators, preservationists, and interpreters to provide advice on creating a heritage education program. The Teaching with Historic Places project that grew out of these meetings follows their recommendation to focus on two principal activities: (1) creating classroom-ready educational materials that are based on properties listed in the National Register and that meet the needs of the education reform movement, and (2) providing professional development to train educators, preservationists, and others in using places as teaching tools.

## Publications and Training Activities

Teaching with Historic Places educational materials currently include 55 published lesson plans and another 43 in development for publication. The National Register properties on which these lesson plans are based range from well-known landmarks like Gettysburg and Manassas

to the eccentric roadside architecture stimulated by America's love affair with the car, and from the archeological remains of Mandan and Hidatsa villages in the Knife River valley of North Dakota to the "Black Metropolis" of southside Chicago. Each lesson plan includes maps, readings, photographs, and other primary and secondary documents, providing most of what students will need whether or not they can visit the place. Questions and activities help students practice skills of fact-finding, synthesis, and analysis. Each lesson also leads students into their communities to look for historic properties that relate to the theme of the lesson. The published lesson plans are available for purchase from Jackdaw Publications, P. O. Box 503, Amawalk, NY 10501; (800) 789-0022.

Teaching with Historic Places professional development activities include both training programs and publications. Programs range from three-credit graduate courses to week-long workshops to short sessions at professional association meetings. Published materials include *A Curriculum Framework for Professional Training and Development* and *How to Teach with Historic Places: A Technical Assistance Sourcebook*. Both publications are available from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 588-6286.

**Teaching with Historic Places lesson plans and historic places in general are well-suited to meet the new national standards in geography and history.**

### Teaching with Historic Places and Curriculum Standards

Teaching with Historic Places lesson plans and historic places in general are well-suited to meet the new national standards in geography and history. Student understanding of the relationship between people, places, and the environment and mastery of geographic skills are two of the four outcomes that the geography standards seek to accomplish. Historic places provide concrete examples of how proximity to transportation corridors, important sources of minerals and other raw materials, or other physical features affect human settlement patterns (Standard 15). Places also show how human activities modify their physical environment (Standard 14). Using maps helps students practice the skills of acquiring, processing, and reporting spatial information (Standard 1). Places that are parts of larger production and distribution systems dramatize the patterns and networks that tie distant places together in a web of economic interdependence (Standard 11).

By making connections between specific places and broad and generally recognized patterns of history, Teaching with Historic Places lessons also help meet the standards for history and the curriculum materials based on those standards. Standard 4, Historical Research Capabilities, specifically identifies historic sites as one type of historical data source. In addition, lesson plans often provide students with historical photos, journals, eyewitness accounts, and other primary sources of historical data identified in Standard 4. Exercises relating to these sources encourage students to practice careful observation, investigation, analysis, interpretation, comparison, and evaluation of bias (Standard 3, Historical Analysis and Interpretation). Integrative activities that encourage students to go beyond the data they have gathered to make comparisons, identify causal connections, draw conclusions, and evaluate alternative courses of action respond directly to Standard 3 and also address Standard 5, Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making. Each lesson includes at least one activity leading students to look for places in their own community that relate to the theme of the lesson. In this way, the lessons also respond to Item 13 in the list of criteria for development of

the Standards: "Standards ... should utilize regional and local history ... to enhance the broader patterns of U.S. and world history" (1996, 44).

Using historic places in teaching also helps teachers develop curriculum based on the *Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* developed by the National Council for the Social Studies. Teaching with Historic Places, by its very nature, integrates teaching and learning across the curriculum, one of the principles that underlies all of the social studies curriculum standards. All historic places teach about history and geography; many also strengthen language arts and may involve the fine arts, science, and even math. "People, Places, and Environment" (Theme II) is one of the ten themes around which the standards are organized. Because places are often the most characteristic representation of cultures poorly documented in written records, educational materials based on place can be particularly effective in helping students understand and appreciate those cultures (Theme I). Many activities included in Teaching with Historic Places lessons require community involvement, whether it be in the form of encouraging environmentally responsible individual behavior or identifying and working to protect historic resources. These activities respond to Theme X by encouraging civic ideals and practices.

Finally, working with real places where real history occurred, whether or not they can be visited, takes history off the pages of the textbook, recreating some of the excitement of historical research and contributing to an empathetic understanding of the past. This lively, experiential learning that is both substantive and challenging is the ultimate goal of all of the standards and of good teachers everywhere.

**References and ERIC Resources**

The following list of resources includes references used to prepare this [article]. The items followed by an ED number are available in microfiche and/or paper copies from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). For information about prices, contact EDRS, 7420 Fullerton Road, Suite 110, Springfield, Virginia 22153-2852; telephone numbers are (703) 440-1400 and (800) 443-3742. Entries followed by an EJ number, annotated monthly in *Current Index to Journals* (CIJE), are not available through EDRS. However, they can be located in the journal section of most larger libraries by using the bibliographic information provided, requested through Interlibrary Loan, or ordered from commercial reprint services.

***Many activities included in Teaching with Historic Places lessons require community involvement, whether it be in the form of encouraging environmentally responsible individual behavior or identifying and working to protect historic resources.***

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# "World-Class Standards" and Local Pedagogies: Can We Do Both?

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A growing movement to ground school curriculum and instruction in local geography, ecology, culture, economy, and history—often referred to as place-based education—is capturing the attention of many rural educators across the country. Some see this approach as a way to address the decline of many rural communities, including the out-migration of young people, by preparing students to live productive and fully engaged lives in their home communities. However, this view of education seems to put its proponents in conflict with the national movement to adopt academic standards and accountability measures. This [article] compares and contrasts the underlying commitments and practical implications of standards-based versus place-based education reform.

***State standards aim to represent the common core of knowledge that all citizens ought to possess... With increasing support from local community members, however, some educators question the value of precisely defined standards.***

## The Accountability Movement

Over the past ten years, nearly every state in the United States has introduced a set of accountability standards, often accompanied by mandatory tests of student achievement. State standards aim to represent the common core of knowledge that all citizens ought to possess. The legislators who put forward the standards maintain that these lists of valued educational outcomes enable the public to monitor how well schools perform.

With increasing support from local community members, however, some educators question the value of precisely defined standards. These educators worry that state standards erode local control over education, thereby limiting the important connection between communities and their schools (Rural Challenge, 1999). Moreover, they argue that state standards require schools to adopt curricula and teaching methods that construe learning too narrowly, severing crucial linkages between students' lived experiences and rigorous academic content (see e.g., Eisner, 1995). For these commentators, education is all about making meaning, which necessarily involves intellectual processes of greater sophistication than those typically assessed by state-mandated tests.

Despite these assertions, many policymakers continue to maintain that all public schools need to prepare students to become workers in an increasingly complicated global economy. Schools, according to this view, have an obligation to

assure that all students master the skills necessary to perform the high-level tasks required in the twenty-first century workplace. From the vantage of these policymakers, state-level standards assure that schools—no matter where they are located—produce graduates who can compete in national and even global markets. Attentiveness to the global marketplace is, in fact, the reason why policymakers heighten the rhetoric about state standards by referring to them as "world-class."

Place-based pedagogy, "world-class" standards—are they mutually exclusive? Or is it possible to balance the requirements of a curriculum focused on global economic competitiveness with educational values rooted in local commitments and practices?

**Pedagogy for a Global Economy**

During the period following World War II, advances in the technologies of communication and transportation worked together to make the nations of the world more interdependent. Following the breakup of once powerful colonial empires, new countries established governments favorable to international trade (Kniep, 1986). As a result, various nongovernment groups (e.g., manufacturing and media corporations and volunteer organizations) began to assume some of the diplomatic functions previously reserved for governments. In powerful countries like the United States, the imperatives of the global marketplace increasingly came to influence thinking about how to prepare the nation and its citizens for the complex demands of an interdependent, yet increasingly competitive economy (Rosenau, 1983). As had been the case in the past, policymakers saw schools as the logical vehicle for purveying this national agenda.

Among the first to respond to this agenda were organizations representing the concerns of professional educators. As early as 1979 the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) introduced revised curricular guidelines directed toward preparing students for jobs in a global economy. Efforts along these lines intensified as reports such as *A Nation At Risk* brought questions about the quality of the nation's schools to the headlines of popular news media. In response to charges that schools were not adequately preparing competitive workers, states began to enact accountability legislation.

Although states acted independently, their approach followed a common pattern. Committees of legislators, business people, and educators convened to discuss what students, upon graduation from high school, ought to know and be able to do. Using graduation standards as the new benchmarks, these committees developed education outcomes for children at all developmental levels. With outcomes in place, state education agencies then developed or adopted, and ultimately mandated, competency tests measuring students' knowledge and skills. These tests provided the basis for gauging the success of school districts, local schools, classroom teachers, and individual students.

The effect of accountability legislation has been to create—through the mechanisms of common educational standards and competency-based testing—uniformity in the school programs that students experience (Ohanian, 1999). In an effort to comply with accountability legislation, schools and districts align their curricula with state-adopted standards or with the published objectives of competency tests. Some observers have found that curriculum alignment tends to narrow the focus of academic programs and to reinforce traditional methods of direct instruction, particularly in low-income districts (Firestone, Camilli, Yurecko, Monfils, & Mayrowetz, 2000).

**Pedagogy for Local Citizenship**

Although advocates of place-based pedagogy sometimes challenge tightly focused education standards, they do not oppose a chief aim of the standards movement: providing a high quality education for all students. Arguing that education ought to be responsive to local needs, these educators typically argue that one set of standards cannot be used universally to guide education

practice. This position is succinctly expressed in the policy statement of the Rural School and Community Trust:

> . . . strong local communities are the best habitat for excellence in education. From our perspective, every community is a richly detailed place able to provide a laboratory for learning, children are young citizens whose work in school should serve to improve their community, and education is the responsibility of the whole community, not only of professional educators. (2000, p. 1)

According to advocates of place-based pedagogy, local schools should be free to design and offer curricula that reflect and enhance the lifeways of the children they serve. By connecting academic content to the real-world experiences of students, schools increase the chances that all children will derive meaning from their studies. The goal is not to limit students to a small core of knowledge, but instead to root a broadly focused curriculum in the day-to-day lives of a community's children.

Construed in this way, place-based pedagogy draws upon a progressive tradition in American education that emphasizes authentic learning, integrated curriculum, and practical problem solving. And supporters of this view are among the most vocal critics of standards-based reform (see e.g., Apple, 1996; Giroux, 1999; Ohanian, 1999).

**Easing the Tension Between World-Class Standards and Local Pedagogies**

Advocates of place-based education differ markedly from advocates of "world-class" standards in the ways they construe the purposes and methods of education. The chart below shows some of the major differences between the two positions.

Despite important differences between the two approaches, practical circumstances often require educators to bridge the gap. In many states, for example, schools and districts are penalized for failing to comply with standards-based reform (Rural School and Community Trust, 1999). Defenders of local pedagogies often find it necessary to justify their approach by showing how well their curricula match the standards mandated by the state (Null, 2000). Moreover, some educators have demonstrated that, when local communities define education standards for themselves, they develop valued outcomes similar to those specified in state standards (Hoffman & Swidler, 2000).

Even when place-based pedagogies do not explicitly attend to the requirements of adopted standards, they can offer students meaningful and rigorous engagement with academic content. Two model programs illustrate the potential academic

| | Aims of Education | Educational Governance | Curriculum |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Place-Based Education** | Preparing citizens, promoting community interests | Local control | Integrated, practical, broad in scope but restricted in coverage |
| **Standards-Based Education** | Preparing workers, promoting national interests | State control | Discipline-based, abstract, narrow in scope but comprehensive in coverage |

focus of locally responsive curricula.

Perhaps the best known approach to place-based education, the Foxfire program, had its origins in Rabun County, Georgia, in the early 1970s. Broadly emphasizing the humanities, Foxfire projects engaged students in the work of cultural journalism: interviewing community members to reconstruct history; gathering information about traditional cultural practices; and sharing knowledge about local lifeways through the publication of articles, journals, and books.

***In an environment in which school aims are strictly tied to instrumental purposes, such as improving worker productivity or increasing global competitiveness, place-based pedagogy, like other progressive approaches, may not fare well.***

More recent elaborations of the Foxfire approach combine integrated academic instruction with service learning. The Alabama-based Program for the Academic and Cultural Enhancement of Rural Schools (PACERS), for example, sponsors a variety of curriculum projects focused on community needs: agriculture projects that incorporate science content, school improvement projects that teach concepts in electronics, and journalism projects that promote communication in small, rural enclaves (Starnes, 2000).

The Rural School and Community Trust also sponsors programs that build challenging academic work into locally responsive curricula. One example is the Yampa Valley Legacy Education Initiative, which supports a variety of curriculum projects within a five-district region of Colorado. Interestingly, many of these curriculum projects establish credibility by demonstrating their alignment with Colorado's content standards.

High school students from Yampa Valley were recently involved in a community planning project to assist the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the State Wildlife Commission in determining the best use of a new 400-acre site near the Yampa River. As the basis for their plan, students collected field data and used Global Positioning System software to create area maps. Their investigation involved a study of riverbed erosion, wildlife management, and river ecology.

As these examples suggest, place-based pedagogy can establish a practical alliance with mandated standards. But some observers question whether such linkages truly enhance the educational value of local projects. Local educators simply may be doing what is necessary to explain innovative curriculum work to responsible state authorities. In an environment in which school aims are strictly tied to instrumental purposes, such as improving worker productivity or increasing global competitiveness, place-based pedagogy, like other progressive approaches, may not fare well. Where education is construed broadly, however, as a means to connect students to larger purposes—personal development, ethical decision making, committed participation in civic life—progressive approaches such as place-based pedagogy are better able to flourish.

Hopefully ways can be found to meet both compelling needs: to hold schools accountable for providing a high quality education to all students and to find locally sensible ways to provide an education that is supportive of community environmental, economic, and civic needs. ❖

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