EMPOWERING YOUTH:
A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING COMMUNITY-BASED ART EDUCATION

By
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EMPOWERING YOUTH: A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING COMMUNITY-BASED ART EDUCATION

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The notion that community exists within any given school or classroom comes under question as education theorists and practitioners apply the term learning community to educational environments. Currently used as a popular phrase to describe almost any learning situation, learning communities in fact may exhibit myriad distinct characteristics. These range from physically, psychologically, and mentally restrictive, top-down power systems of standardized accountability and prescribed, didactic knowledge bases; to bottom-up, true democratic systems that support self-directed learning and engagement in the wider community for environmental and social change.

My study analyzed research that defines the term learning community. Comparing and contrasting the values, goals, and practices characteristic of the current dominant educational paradigm and those from several emergent holistic approaches, such as Community Youth Development (CYD) and Participatory Action Research (PAR), provides insights into the qualities of a “genuine” learning community. Three inherent
and distinguishing components, present to different degrees, seemed to define learning communities: real world experiences, educational orientations, and decision-making strategies. My study used these three properties to analyze different types of learning communities, drawn primarily from literature related to CYD and PAR models. This enabled me to identify and define six levels (or tiers) of learning communities; and expose as fraudulent any claim that a given school or classroom represents a true learning community, simply by reason of a common location in physical space. The six tiers are organized into a format, which I call for the purpose of my study, *A Framework for Evaluating Learning Communities* (FELC). I applied this framework to models drawn from art education, and found it to be useful and effective in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of such programs.

Community-based Art Education (CBAE), a program that engages youth with their local communities in significant ways, clearly has several characteristics that parallel CYD and PAR components of learning communities. Analyzing this approach by using, FELC however, led me to conclude that (despite their potential) most CBAE programs fell short in terms of youth governance and authentic action research. This suggested that the framework provides a useful tool for continuing analysis and discussion toward developing stronger CBAE models, and toward further cross-disciplinary dialogue among CYD, PAR, and CBAE.
CHAPTER 1
CHANGING THE RULES

Introduction

Twenty years ago, if someone asked me whether I trusted formal education as the established method to provide youth with the understandings they needed to be successful participants in their community, I would have answered, yes. Back then, I was a traditional-education advocate, and champion of the public schools. After all, I and almost everyone I knew had gone through the system, and had graduated high school unscathed. Granted, out of a graduating class of 600, a few individuals withdrew from high school early to join the armed forces in Viet Nam, but they were small in number.

After 2 decades of operating within the system of traditional education, both public and private; as a parent of four children; and later, as an art educator, my trust in this system gradually came under question. Disillusionment started chipping away at my commitment to a schooling agenda that often subversively marginalized those youth who did not subscribe to or “fit” the prescribed mold and who were not being best served by traditional models.

Some may say that I am idealistic to believe that there is hope for a better educational system through critical re-evaluation and transformation of pedagogical practice, through the establishment of more effective and valuable learning communities by altering the lens with which we view our youth, and through refashioning the criteria of authority. Investigation into holistic forms of education has proven that I am not alone in this perspective. This position is considered a radical approach to education by today’s
standards, and often inspires fear and criticism. Drawing on a growing body of scholarship in a wide range of fields that seem to be converging on fundamental and perhaps unconventional change, I, along with many others, now believe that “changing the rules” for engagement in learning communities is essential in nurturing the development of youth self-efficacy and empowerment necessary to meet the challenges of a world in transition.

**Statement of the Problem**

Curriculum designers of present-day American schooling have used methods found in scientific models to achieve pedagogical goals, leading to an increase in restrictive and empirical requirements for accountability and evaluation. While some pedagogical models run counter to this agenda, what continues to dominate education throughout the country are practices that reinforce and perpetuate homogenized curricula and reliance on test scores (Brown 1991).

Gatto (2003b) went as far as to describe the implementation of structured educational goals as ways of controlling the masses by keeping them childlike, docile, and well trained in limited thinking; while supporting conformity, exclusive perspectives, and competition. He also suggested that since Americans have always been schooled in this manner and generally do not experience alternative practices, they continue to perpetuate this pedagogy.

As a teacher, I found myself in this position of conservation and tradition; and unfortunately experienced (as a parent and as an educator) the devastating effects of this current formula on youth self-efficacy and the success of their participation in their communities. Consequently, it became more and more difficult for me to support traditional education without reservation. I began to look to alternative educational
settings for unconventional possibilities that provide the scaffolding for youth self-efficacy, empowerment, and active participation in a community.

My research into this topic strongly suggested several common characteristics of successful alternative learning opportunities, outside the traditional school setting. One of the common themes in determining a true alternative learning environment is the attention to the practice of community. Many pedagogical researchers, theorists, psychologists, and educators, (Clark 1991; Dimitriadis & McCarthy 2001; Miller 1991, 2000b; Pipher 2002) believed that the fracturing of our society today (evidenced in symptoms of youth alienation and countless reform efforts within formal education) stem from a shift in worldview: from a local to a global landscape. They argued that one of education’s central roles in addressing this change of worldview is in establishing identity through community involvement.

Traditionally, public school programs offer very little opportunity for students to experience true community. Instead, school-reform practices continue to focus on strategies that “rely on high stakes testing” (Barbanell 2003, p.1) or instill values and notions correlated to cultural capital possessed by elite classes. (Dimitriadis & McCarthy 2001; Gatto 2003a).

By focusing on knowledge and pedagogies that encourage students to develop identity through the negation of another, public schools marginalize individuals. Binary knowledge created by viewing other cultures as us and them is often the strategy of multicultural education. In reality, this “dominant paradigm of schooling offers us the antithesis of community” (Wolk 1998, p.55).
The gap between what many schools do, and what many theorists insist should be done is where my interests lie. Especially in the field of art education, I saw a large gap between ideas and implementation. In an attempt to help bridge that gap, I have accessed worthwhile information from other established fields that might have a positive impact on art education theory and practice. My study examined the issue of community from several approaches, including the Community Youth Development (CYD) model, Participatory Action Research (PAR), and the emerging field of Youth Participation in Community Evaluation and Research. The movement in alternative education from a youth development and learning perspective as described in *CYD Anthology 2002* (Terry 2002), suggested the importance of “an integrative, value-driven theory of youth, community, and the world” (p.v). Investigation of this movement through theoretical research and articles relaying case studies, and investigation of characteristics of community in successful alternative learning communities, brought to light the interdisciplinary possibilities for Community-based Art Education (CBAE), which focuses on community art for knowledge construction.

**Purpose of the Study**

The resurgence of holistic perspectives in education as well as the evolution of alternative educational learning communities (like those described by CYD, PAR, and other researchers and practitioners) suggest a shift in pedagogical thought and practice, from teacher-centered, adult-prescribed learning to child-centered, self-directed learning. The development of curriculum addressing acquisition of tools needed for students to become masters of their own learning and active community members is indeed an indication of the growing trend in education (albeit, education often found outside traditional settings). The concept of community is particularly significant to many recent
initiatives in alternative education, and serves as a link among holistic approaches, CYD programs, and PAR strategies. Among reformers in art education, too, there is a growing interest in community-based and community-building approaches. Research in the field of alternative education as it applies to learning communities can provide rationale for art educators who wish to investigate, develop, and implement CBAE.

As a relatively underutilized structure in CBAE, youth self-governance is an intriguing and thought-provoking model for consideration, given the current state of education. Therefore, I devoted my study to the inquiry and analysis of the defining characteristics of learning communities, and to the development of *A Framework for Evaluating Learning Communities* (FELC) that situates these characteristics in a hierarchical format. By positioning various traditional and alternative CBAE models within this framework, I developed a tool for evaluating curricular programs. I hope that this tool will stimulate dialogue across disciplines.

**Definition of Terms**

**Learning community:** An abundance of discourse on this topic points to a loose variety of perceptions of community in education, from community as simply a shared space where individuals gather for educational purposes, to a more complex description of community where students themselves define the structure and implementation of their own learning. My review of the literature revealed several characteristics of engagement in community as it related to educational learning environments, which I then organized according to the conditions that both distinguish the individual positions and identify their interrelated and overlapping qualities.

**Holistic education:** The concept of holistic education is not new; in fact, it has emerged from the theories of Jean Jacques Rousseau, Johann Pestalozzi, and Friedrich
Froebel, and from the educational philosophies of Bronson Alcott, Francis W. Parker, Maria Montessori, and Rudolph Steiner (Miller 1991). In essence, holistic education is concerned with the “whole” child in promoting and maintaining intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, and spiritual growth (Miller 1991). Additionally, as Clark (1991) suggested, holistic education as an emerging paradigm is “based on the single assumption that, at some fundamental level, ‘everything is connected to everything else’” and “reflects an attitude, a philosophy, a worldview that challenges the fragmented, reductionist, mechanistic, nationalistic assumptions of mainstream culture and education” (p.55).

**Traditional and alternative education:** For the purpose of this study, traditional education refers to environments of learning and teaching that are institutionally structured on established pedagogy within a standardized setting. These environments are often equated with public schools, and have been criticized for “confusion,” “class position,” “indifference,” “emotional dependence,” “intellectual dependency,” “provisional self-esteem,” and “constant surveillance” (Gatto 2002b, pp.3–11). However, they do not necessarily need to exist within a public school setting. Many traditional forms of education may be found in private schools, after school organizations, and alternative schools for at-risk youth. It is the values, goals and practices of the learning environment that most strongly determine its traditional form.

Alternative education is classified as those teaching and learning environments that nurture choice and diversity, independence and interdependence, self-discovery, and autonomous learning through holistic models outside the traditional framework and restrictions of traditional public school models (Sweeney 1991; Raywid 1994). Quite
often alternative education is linked to those at-risk students who cannot succeed in a traditional program, however, as Sweeney (1991) suggested, true alternative education is not one that promises “the acquisition of basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic” (p. 207). Rather it is the “way of teaching that is alternative,” and not the students who participate (Raywid 1994, p. 1). These may include programs in after school settings, but may also include experimental pedagogies or innovative curricula that exist as independent pockets of energy, hidden within traditional settings.

**True, authentic and genuine:** The terms _true, authentic, and genuine_ are used throughout this study by various researchers, including myself, as adjectives to describe learning, community, and community membership. To dispel the esoteric connotation that often accompany these terms, I briefly demarcated their intended use for my study.

According to Merriam-Webster (2003d), the word _true_ frequently defines something that is “fully realized or fulfilled..., ideal, or essential” (para. 2). Peck (1987) in describing “true community” listed characteristics of transcendental exclusivity, commitment and consensus, realistic limitations and humility, and contemplation as self-examination and for self-awareness. “True membership” in a community, as Plant (1974) suggested, is attained when an individual functions as an integral part of a group, sharing in self-expression, achievement, and reciprocal goals of the group. Gatto (2002a) maintained that “true learning” occurs when students attain deep self-knowledge through various measures including questioning and researching the status quo, pursuing investigations in subjects of their own interest, interacting with family and community, and allowing time for self-contemplation. In all of these instances, true community, true
membership in a community, and true learning are achieved when the essential qualities that characterize them are fully realized or fulfilled as best practices of each.

The terms *authentic* and *genuine* also reflect several qualities of best practice. Both words are often used interchangeably and offer synonymous meanings. Merriam-Webster (2003c) defined genuine as “actually having the reputed or apparent qualities or character… free from hypocrisy or pretense” (para. 1–2). Likewise, the word, authentic, as in “true,” “not false or imitation,” and “genuine” (Merriam-Webster 2003a, para.3) offered sensitivity towards best practice as well.

Miller’s (2000a) approach to “genuine learning” was oriented in self-directed learning with learners engaged in seeking out and selecting their own knowledge base. I used the phrase “genuine community” (pg. 52) as a descriptor that integrated characteristics of several (best practice) ideas from the literature, including the previously mentioned sources.

To draw a conclusion, I would like to argue that the words, true, authentic and genuine, and other words that help define these adjectives must be viewed and analyzed contextually for meaning. In this case, they refer to ideals in theory and practice that are considered the antithesis of the status quo.

**Self-efficacy:** Drawing from Bandura (1994) and Pajares (2000), self-efficacy is used in my study to define students’ beliefs in their ability to move through a series of operations required to complete an activity and/or handle anticipated situations, conditions, or problems. The difference between self-efficacy and self-esteem, according to Pajares (2000) is that “self-efficacy is a judgment of one’s own confidence; self-esteem is a judgment of self-value” (para. 38). Self-esteem is tied to the perception of
self-worth according to cultural and social criteria, whereas self-efficacy is “dependent primarily on the task at hand, independent of its culturally assigned value” (Pajares, para. 38).

The psychological and educational theory of the early 1990s that perpetuated the concept of self-esteem as a fundamental ingredient for success is now under attack (Sullivan 2002). Gatto (2002b) in discussing provisional self-esteem suggested that children who are convinced of self worth by unconditional parental love are hard to “wrestle into line” (p.9). In other words, teachers find it difficult to discipline and manage children who enter schooling with the concept that whatever they do is wonderful.

In order to guide these children towards conformity, students are told what they are worth through report cards, grades, and tests evaluated by certified official strangers, rather than allowing them to be self reflective in evaluating their own ability to succeed (Gatto 2002b). On the other end of the spectrum, Sullivan (2002) maintained that new research had shown that “D” students, delinquents, drunk drivers, and criminally charged politicians exhibit just as high self-esteem as nuns, fire fighters, and Nobel recipients.

The effectiveness of emphasizing self-esteem in education is also seen as one of the causes of grade inflation. Sullivan (2002) in conversing with several professor friends related, “when the kids have been told from Day One that they can do no wrong, when every grade in high school is assessed so as to make the kid feel good rather than to give an accurate measurement of his work, the student can develop self-worth dangerously unrelated to the objective truth” (p.102). Teachers trying to build a student’s self-esteem by giving high grades that do not reflect the student’s understanding of the material can
often backfire. Students (and parents) are often relentless and aggressive towards the one teacher who resists playing the grade inflation game.

These educators frequently either give in to the pressure of hostile students or become burned out from trying to maintain a sense of reality. The ability to address a challenge or recognize a need for improvement, and the belief in one’s ability and responsibility to do so is better served through nurturing the students’ sense of self-efficacy.

**Service learning:** Because it is so complex, I examined service learning in some detail here. Defining service learning is a challenge because the concept is complex and views are varied, however, most researchers maintained that service learning “involves both service to the community and learning tied to academic curriculum” (Billig 2003). At the very heart of service learning is the Deweyan concept of “learning by doing” (Schine 1999, p. 13). However, the emphasis and intensity of the planning, action, reflection, and celebration components vary greatly as does the interrelated conditions in which service learning occurs (Billing 2003). Contributing to the layers of complexity are several variables that affect the quality of service learning (Billig 2003). They are

- variety of accesses for service;
- diverse relationships that hold different levels of shared goals;
- the characteristics of the populations extending service;
- individuals assisting in knowledge production and employment of skills;
- the amount of time devoted to the service.

Several researchers (Billig 2003; Claus & Ogden 1999) maintained that service learning can offer an opportunity for young people to develop identity and leadership skills through engagement in community exploration, needs identification, and positive
action. However, it is important to consider the moral, political, and intellectual features in terms of service learning goals.

Kahne and Westheimer (1999) held that if the goal of service learning is to engage in altruistic experiences, than the moral aspect is one of giving, the political position is one of civic duty, and the intellectual way of knowing is through additive experience (p. 29). On the other hand, if the goal of service learning is social change, then the moral compass is one of caring, the political position is one of social reconstruction, and the intellectual way of knowing becomes a transformative experience (p. 29).

Taken a step further, these three orientations can be described in terms of levels of authenticity and empowerment. The moral goals of service learning establishes levels of relationships between those serving and those being served and can either be a cursory, charitable relationship or a deeper relationship that attempts to “create opportunities for changing our understandings of the other and the context within which he or she lives” (Kahne & Westheimer 1999, p. 29). Two levels of intention occur within the political goals for service learning as well. One is the promotion of democracy and responsive citizenship through altruistic measures that caution against the “dangers of exclusive self-interest” (p.30) by stressing “volunteerism and compassion for the less fortunate” (p.30). The other moves students towards what Barber called (as cited in Kahne & Westheimer, 1999) a “strong democracy” (p.30). This calls for student involvement in learning that “emphasizes critical reflection about social policies and conditions, the acquisition of skills of political participation, and the formation of social bonds” (p.30).

Service learning in the intellectual realm of knowledge construction can be supported with limited goals that engage students in “higher-order thinking in
contextually varied environments” (Kahne & Westheimer 1999, p. 30), a cause and effect orientation, or it can move students towards an altering of perspectives by combining “critical inquiry with action” (p.30). “This process can transform students’ understanding of both disciplinary knowledge and the particular social issues with which they are engaged” (p.30).

Described as “the engine that drives school reform” (Claus & Ogden 1999, p. 13), service learning curricula run the gamut from superficial, charitable volunteerism to acts of true caring, bridge building, and social change. Obviously, the type of service learning that students engage in naturally depends upon the values, goals, and practices imbedded in the service learning curriculum.

**Cooperative and collaborative learning:** Because the terms cooperative and collaborative learning are often used interchangeably to describe the many forms of interactive engagement that are aligned with transformative learning, I believed it important to my study to attempt to describe their differences in some detail as well. The distinctions between the cooperative and collaborative learning become blurred, in part due to the uninformed notion that by simply putting students together in groups, there is cooperation or collaboration happening (Siciliano 2001; Johnson & Johnson 1999). As Johnson and Johnson (1999) stated, “There is nothing magical about working in a group…. Seating people together and calling them a cooperative group does not make them one. Study groups, project groups, lab groups, homerooms, and reading groups are groups, but they are not necessarily cooperative” (p.68).

Another reason why the lines between cooperative and collaborative learning are blurred may be that teachers believe the curricular goals and strategies used in both
learning systems are the same, when in fact, they are not. However, goals and strategies of both may be mixed as educators explore ways to engage students in interdependent activity (Panitz n.d.).

Panitz (n.d.) defined cooperative learning as “a set of processes which help people interact together in order to accomplish a specific goal or develop an end product which is usually content specific” (para. 14). It is a structured step-by-step design that can be “used repeatedly with almost any subject matter, at a wide range of grade levels and at various points in a lesson plan” (para. 15). It is generally teacher-directed as a result and deals with “traditional (canonical) knowledge” (para. 17) that produces a finite solution most often serving a set curricular end.

There is a variety of cooperative learning techniques, all with common components employed to secure the group in cooperative activity (Panitz n.d.). Two common ones are illustrated here. The Think-Pair-Share strategy begins with the individual considering a question, then discussing the question with a partner, and finally sharing the results with the class. This strategy may be used at any time during the class for discussion, problem solving or for creating variety in class presentations (Panitz n.d.). The Jig Saw method is often used in cooperative learning for teaching concepts. In this strategy, “groups subdivide a topic and members work together with those from other groups who have the same topic. Then they return to their original groups and explain their topic” (para.27).

Collaborative learning, on the other hand, is a “personal philosophy, not just a classroom technique” (Panitz n.d., para. 13). The sharing of authority, and responsibility that respects and supports the contributions of individuals’ abilities creates an interactive
forum for the construction of transformative learning that builds on one another’s ideas
(Palincsar & Herrenkohl 2002; Panitz n.d.).

Once the teacher has set the task, the transfer of power goes to the students, making
collaborative learning student-directed (Palincsar & Herrenkohl 2002; Panitz n.d.).
Ideally the task is open ended and “discovery and contextual approaches are used to teach
interpersonal skills” (Panitz n.d., para. 16). Collaborative learning requires all group
members to work on the same aspect of the task at the same time with “student talk
stressed as the means for working things out” (Panitz n.d., para. 16).

In addition, all collaboration contains some forms of cooperation (Palincsar &
Herrenkohl 2002; Panitz n.d.). The following principles underscore the strategies aligned
with collaborative learning (Panitz n.d., para. 38):

• Working together results in a greater understanding than would likely have occurred
  if one had worked independently.

• Spoken and written interactions contribute to this increased understanding.

• Opportunity exists to become aware, through classroom experiences, of relationships
  between social interactions and increased understanding.

• Some elements of this increased understanding are idiosyncratic and unpredictable.

• Participation is voluntary and must be freely entered into.

To recap the distinctions - cooperative and collaborative learning are indeed
similar. Cooperative learning, however, is more structured with strategies often designed
to meet the goal of prescribed knowledge acquisition of learning. It is mostly teacher-
directed, with teacher-formed groups of heterogeneous members. Each member
generally has a specific task he or she is responsible for and completes the task as part of
the whole. Collaborative learning allows more freedom in group formation and
participation. All members share in all aspects of knowledge construction and problem
solving, with dialogue as the key component for building shared understandings. Often
the problem to solve is open ended and outcomes are unpredictable as transformative
learning occurs.

**Importance of the Study**

Disciplines enabling students to explore their inner ecology, cultivate their
attunement to their senses and body rhythms, and thus, develop an embodied
relationship with the natural world – contemplative and therapeutic art, dance,
breathing exercises, yoga, meditation – would become valued features of the
learning process. (Selby 2000, pg. 90)

Prevailing theory and practice, as well as the resulting curricula in traditional art
education supports pedagogy that promotes teacher-directed learning. The theory and
practice of a new holistic paradigm is seen most often in environmental education, which
has been developing for more than 20 years, in Community Youth Development (CYD)
and Participatory Action Research (PAR) models that have also been evolving over the
past two decades, and in homeschooling archetypes of the 1960s that have evolved into
sophisticated models of today. There are several examples of established curricula,
programs, and organizations that support and promote educational approaches centering
on social and environmental issues, democratic youth governance, and awareness,
authentic research, and resolutions by youth. Yet many more exist.

Further exploration of current theory and practices in Community-based Art
Education (CBAE) approaches, using the lenses of CYD and PAR offers the field of art
education an opportunity to grow and develop across disciplines. Through this inquiry, I
hoped to identify another layer of possibilities for creating learning communities within
CBAE, and in doing so provide a foundation for art educators to engage in critical
analysis and restructuring of their own curricula.
Delimitations of the Study

Several scholars have researched the potential of the CYD and PAR models and other models drawn upon environmental education, however, these studies have not been exhaustive and therefore may not cover every area of long term-impact of students’ attitudes, development, or commitment to community strategies. Despite these limitations, I felt that these studies offered support for the conclusion that such models are effective, appropriate, and valuable for students and offer appropriate, applicable, and rich content for my purposes. In addition, I must point out that my objectivity in undertaking this study was circumscribed by my experience as an art educator and parent.

Organization of the Remaining Chapters

The remainder of my study was divided into five additional chapters. A review of literature in Chapter 2 provided the rationale for art teachers to look to alternative educational possibilities through an examination of the defining characteristics of holistic education, CYD, and PAR. A comparison was also made in reference to Community-based Art and Community-based Art Education.

Chapter 3 included a description of my research methods with attention to paradigm analysis and the various resources I used in this analysis. In Chapter 4, I analyzed two different interdisciplinary approaches that offer both theoretical and practical examples of holistic models.

Three essential components of these models were identified in Chapter 5 in the development of a hierarchical framework, which I called A Framework for Evaluating Learning Communities (FELC). These components characterize and distinguish different levels or tiers learning communities.
Finally, I applied the defining qualities of learning communities in Chapter 6 to various Community-based Art Education (CBAE) programs and positioned them within the framework, drawing conclusions about CBAE based on my findings.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

We must return to the reality that the status quo is murderous. If mankind is to survive, the matter of changing the rules is not optional. (M. Scott Peck 1987, p. 18–19)

Defining the Status Quo

Formal education has long been recognized as one of the main sources for imparting the fundamental knowledge necessary to develop a nation—a nation of manageable citizens. This intended outcome of compulsory schooling may be witnessed in the early 20th century development of the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* (Department of the Interior Bureau of Education 1918), a document that may have set the status quo for current American pedagogy (The Memory Hole, n.d.). Gatto (2003b) suggested that compulsory schooling in the United States was originally established by the elite to divide and control the lower class masses by prohibiting uprisings. *The Principles of Secondary Education*, published by Inglis, a member of the educational collaborative team that developed the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* provided fuel for Gatto’s (2003b) rationale. Gatto (2003b) interpreted Inglis’ intentions for schooling as fitting six basic functions (p.37):

- The adjustive or adapted function: “schools are to establish fixed habits of reaction to authority.”

- The integrating function: “to make children as alike as possible” because those who conform are predictable and easier to manipulate.

- The diagnostic and directive function: “to determine each student’s proper social role.”
• The differentiating function: “children are to be sorted by role and trained only so far as their destination in the social machine merits – and not one step further.”

• The selective function: “consciously attempting to improve the breeding stock” by identifying “the unfit – with poor grades, remedial placement, and other punishments – clearly enough that their peers will accept them as inferior and effectively bar them from the reproductive sweepstakes.”

• The propaedeutic function: “a small fraction of students will be quietly taught how to manage (the societal system)” by controlling “a population deliberately dumbed down and declawed in order that the government might proceed unchallenged and corporations might never want for obedient labor.”

While these may or may not have been Inglis’ underlying objective for schooling, they do seem to resonate with the tradition of “modernity” established during the late 19th and early 20th century industrial age. The concept of modernity, emphasizing “rapid progress and growth over tradition and stability, material wealth over spiritual depth, individual success over communal solidarity, and technological mastery over organic process” (Miller 2000b, p.5), was evident in mechanized educational systems that centrally managed and controlled students through the social development of pre-established roles, standards, and homogenization of identity (Miller 2000b; Gatto 1993). Many educators, politicians and businessmen including James Conant, Horace Mann, Henry Barnard, George Peabody, Woodrow Wilson, Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, recognized the importance of “obedience to bureaucratic norms” (Miller, 2000b, p.5) to industrial growth and social progress, and worked toward establishing and perpetuating what today is considered the status quo in education (Miller 2000b; Gatto 2003a).

Since the 1983 publication of A Nation at Risk and with Clinton’s 1994 Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the metaphor of students as “products” of education, who, in the name of “quality control,” must attain certain levels of achievement by certain ages,
has become the hallmark of contemporary educational philosophy and practice (Miller 1997). Citing Wood, Miller (1997) suggested that the modernist worldview of industrial America remains the impetus behind contemporary education: “The legislated excellence movement is primarily concerned with the American economy, not with the lives of our children” (para. 3).

Currently, in the United States, many pedagogical researchers, theorists, psychologists, and educators are scrutinizing these recent, accountability-oriented reform efforts in public education. An increasing number of researchers believe that education is in crisis because many underlying values and beliefs about education are obsolete and antidemocratic (Ellis 2000; Miller 1997, 2000a; Gatto 2002b, 2003a; Greene 1993). What purpose education may have served to prepare workers to meet the demands of an emerging industrial economy in the 1900s is now recognized as “teaching the wrong lessons” (Ellis 2000, p. 1). In a synopsis of the industrial culture that continues to permeate the economic, social, and political philosophies and practices of most modern nations today, Miller (1991, p.1) listed four assumptions basic to an industrial worldview:

- The world operates in an inherently materialistic mode, with lives, success, and achievements valued and measured in objective, quantitative terms of “wealth and possessions, net profit, advanced degrees, public opinion polls, Gross national Product, SAT scores and so forth.”

- The world depends on and honors scientifically rational and analytical methods of gaining knowledge above artistic or spiritual communication in order to create “wealth” from natural resources.

- Human beings are fundamentally driven by the win/lose system of a socially competitive marketplace as well as the economic desires of “comfort, luxury, and status.”

- The separations of groups of people according to religion, language, occupation, gender, race, and nationality “are more real and enduring than our common humanity.”
Contemporary American curriculum designers have, knowingly or not, perpetuated these patterns, using methods found in scientific models to achieve pedagogical goals. This has lead to an increase in restrictive and empirical requirements for accountability and evaluation as witnessed in homogenized curriculums and reliance on test scores (Miller 1991, 2000a; Brown 1991).

The rise of globalization in the past thirty to forty years has raised a new challenge to the fundamental supposition that originally steered the modern industrial society, a society that is now drawing to a close (Miller 1991, 2000b; Greene 1993). Doll (1993) suggested that educational ideas are struggling to keep up with the new sciences marked by open systems, ambiguity, process, and transformations. It seems that the more schools fail in their ability to educate students towards a changing worldview, the more emphasis is placed on concentrated and standardized modes of teaching and learning (Miller 2000a; Lave 1997).

Efforts to change the fundamental make up of education without challenging the outdated world view or status quo is tantamount to “arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic” (Miller 1991, p.2). Evidence of the negative effects of lingering industrial-era mentality is witnessed in the widespread and growing occurrences of exploitation of the ecosystem, homelessness, substance abuse, child abuse, violence and hate crimes, and youth alienation (Miller 1991; Pipher 2002; Astroth et al. 2002; Martin 1992).

Although many educators and social critics began calling for a paradigm shift as early as the 1960s (Miller 2000a), these ideas had gone largely unnoticed until the past decade. Lately, proposals for a radical and comprehensive transformation of educational theory and practice have been erupting in environmental, ecoliteral, and biocentric
education literature (Miller 1991; Elmwood Institute 1993; Orr 1992; Selby 2000; Terry 2002). Much of what is written points to a holistic worldview as the rationale for restructuring education (Clark 2002; Miller 2000b; Orr 1992).

Quantum physics in its understanding and recognition of individual events as the unfolding of a constantly reinvented universe, can be described as an essentially and intuitively holistic paradigm shift where the “basic substance of the universe is energy” and that “every ‘thing’ in the universe is a temporary manifestation of energy in its ‘physical’ form” (Clark 1991, p. 60). Grounded in the proposition that all parts contribute to the unity, restoration, and completion of the whole, this shift suggests a move away from educational practices that segment knowledge, divide people, and fragment society, toward intuitive and holistic practices that recognize human experiences of the world as intuitive and spiritual in nature as well (Clark 1991). Through an educational approach that reflects greater appreciation of more holistic understandings of the universe and human’s place within it, education could have the power to transform and counteract the often subtle yet harmful effects of separatism and fragmentation within human societies.

**Holistic Education**

The roots of holistic education is found among a wide variety of educators and critics such as Pestalozzi, Thoreau, Emerson, Alcott, Parker, Dewey, Montessori, and Steiner all of whom supported the notion that education should be the process of nurturing the development of the whole individual, morally, emotionally, physically, psychologically, and spiritually (Miller 2001).

Holism, a perspective that emerged during the 1970s out of literature in science, philosophy, and cultural history supplied the broad foundation for the evolution of holistic education concepts (Miller 2001). Miller, recognized as one of the “best known
and best informed interpreters of the holistic education movement” (Paths of Learning Resource Center 2004, para. 2), described the holistic worldview in four suppositions that challenge the four previous assumptions about an industrial worldview (1991, p.2):

• Integration of the objective elements of life and the valuing of material wealth as it leads to authentic happiness, and peace with the subjective, non measurable, yet honorable personal and spiritual elements of life valued in beauty, joy, love and compassion is “essentially a reverence for life.”

• The Earth and all who inhabit it are sacred, not to be dominated or controlled. A sense of awe and inspiration comes from the ecological understanding that all living and nonliving things are interconnected.

• Humanity is still evolving morally, culturally, and spiritually in ways we do not fully understand. We have the potential to be a caring society through cooperation and community where there are no “losers.”

• Recognizing that “group rivalries and national competition can lead, in a nuclear age, to total destruction,” this global perspective unifies through the celebration of humanity and welcomed diversity inherent to all cultures.

  Holistic education then, is more than just one technique or simply tampering with a current curriculum (Miller 1991). Rather, it is an effort to find identity, meaning, and purpose in life by making connections between people, the community, nature and the spirit. It centers on the nurturing of the whole individual, and suggests that relationships in community are fundamental. Holistic education is concerned with education for growth, discovery, and the broadening of life experiences, beyond standard curriculum, textbooks, and tests, and makes critical advances towards contextual cultural, environmental, moral, and political meaning. It is not a new concept, yet it is the only one that may be “dynamic, inclusive, and flexible enough” (Miller 1991, p.3) to meet the challenge of a changing worldview (Miller 1991; Clark 1991). However, as Clark suggested, it must be nurtured and encouraged to grow and develop.
These ideas, of course, echo Dewey (1916, 1929a, 1929b, 1933, 1938) who was widely considered “the leading figure in progressive education…” (Wygant 1993, p. 23). The basic tenets of Dewey’s philosophy, summarized by Wygant (1993) suggested that [both] mind and body were psychologically unified in the organic response to the environment. Social experience was essential to human development. Experience was a flux of doing and undergoing, of action and reflection, of impression and expression. Learning was a reconstruction of experience for the society as well as the individual (p.23).

In essence, an integrated curriculum where learners are engaged in experiences of self-interest first and then engaged within the community is learning “not as a preparation for later life but as life itself” (p.23). Any discussion about student engagement in the community, democracy, direct experience and self-directed learning, then, is grounded in Deweyan philosophy. To this extent, a great debt is owed to Dewey as “unquestionably the most important” (Dworkin 1967) individual responsible for contributing to the shaping of American education.

The diversity among proponents of holistic educational pedagogy was recognized by Clark (1991) as a positive and somewhat fundamental ecological construct that stabilizes the holistic education movement. In other words, the interconnectedness of all living and non-living things attributed to a sustainable ecology reinforces holistic theory. As in ecological systems, the distinct and varied characteristics of interconnected conditions in holistic education create an enduring and lasting design. However, the philosophical perspectives found among several leaders in holistic education and research reveal some common characteristics.

Bowers (2001) suggested that we are in danger of destroying our life-sustaining ecosystems and that eco-justice as an educational reform measure should focus on the environment through five concentrations:
• engagement in the eradication of eco-racism caused by undemocratic processes in science and technology,
• alteration of the global economic and political imbalance,
• deconstruction of material culture,
• connection with knowledge and tradition through intergenerational communities,
• addressing our moral obligations on the long-term effects of excessive materialistic misconduct.

Orr (1992) also maintained that educational goals need to attend to the concept of an ecologically sustainable planet. Art educators as well, have been concerned about environmental issues, but not in the same ways.

A systemic restructuring of traditional educational systems with integration of meaningful open-ended questions about how and where students find themselves in relation to society, history, their community, and the ecosystem is central to Clark’s (2002) holistic, learner-centered pedagogy. Gatto (2002a), well documented in holistic education literature, also suggested that true learning is attained by deep self-knowledge achieved through questioning and researching authoritative actions, through investigation of subjects generated by self-interest, through interacting with family and the community, and through time allowed for self-contemplation. Miller (1996) reinforced these concepts of holistic education through the integration of spiritual and scientific views, making connections between linear and intuitive knowledge, academic subjects, individuals and communities, and between the personal and transpersonal self.

In essence, the overarching understandings developed by much of the literature on holistic education can be said to emphasize immersion into real world situations, establishing relationships between ecological, environmental, and social issues and individual identity. Self-generated knowledge obtained from family and community, connections and interactions becomes the foundation for nurturing the intellectual,
physical, and spiritual whole of the individual. While strategies for implementing holistic models may vary, the core characteristics tend to reflect Miller’s (2000b) description:

Holistic education is based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to spiritual values such as compassion and peace. Holistic education aims to call forth from young people an intrinsic reverence for life and a passionate love of learning. This is not done through an academic “curriculum” that condenses the world into instructional packages, but through direct engagement with the environment…. The art of holistic education lies in its responsiveness to the diverse learning styles and needs of evolving human beings. (pp. 206–207)

**Alternative Education**

It is no secret that the general state of education is in need of reconsideration and reconstruction both in theory and practice. Likewise, it should not be surprising to discover the increased visibility and availability of pedagogical models that exist and function outside the established traditional educational structures. Like a parallel universe, alternatives to education theory and practice exist separate from current educational reform that continued to emphasize stringent practices of standardized testing, and homogenized, teacher centered curriculums. However, distinguishing between different types of alternative education is necessary in order to determine which models promise real and innovative restructuring for change.

The evolution of alternative education since the 1960s has manifested two consistent characteristics; a) alternative education is designed for those who are not best served by traditional programs, and b) its theories and practices diverge in a variety of ways from traditional educational programs and environments (Raywid 1994). Raywid (1994) described three types of alternative settings that are seen in most alternative education practices.

- **Type I** are the most popular alternative schools, characteristic of magnet schools, community learning centers, or other schools that are philosophically situated outside
of traditional education. They are marked by innovative and creative curriculum. These educational settings are attended by choice.

- Type II or “Last-Chance Programs” (para. 9) are alternative programs to which students are sent as a last resort before expulsion from traditional school. Often these include in-school suspension or modification programs, and out of school programs that focus on behavior modification with little or no attention to modifying curriculum. No one attends by choice.

- Type III or “Remedial Focus” (para. 11) programs are for those who have been predetermined to need remediation or rehabilitation. These too may be contained within a traditional school or often are after school programs. Upon successfully completing the program, students are returned to the traditional school setting. Students are referred to these programs under the pretense of choice.

Type II and III programs are based on the assumption that the problem lies with the student and that the individual needs to be fixed, or cured. Sweeney (1991) suggested that preventative programs such as those designed for at-risk youth are merely an extension of the failing public school system that preserves a homogenized system by preparing to resocialize “misfit” students back into the regular system. Studies suggest that these programs typically make no difference in drop out rates, suspension, corporal punishment, or expulsion (Raywid (1994).

In one case study, Hamovitch (1996), illustrating a typical Type II or III program explained how the Ordered School Reinforcement Program’s (OSRP) “ideology of hope” is contradictory in nature and detrimental to the students in the program. He suggested that the practices and attitudes of the staff and administration reflect the ideology that the inability of these African-American students and their parents to rise above desperate socio-economic conditions is entirely their own fault, and not the result of social institutions’ policies and practices. Hamovitch (1996) strongly implied that this preventive program, a program, and possibly others like it that are designed to keep anti-social behavior in check through behavior modification methods, are based on the hope
of resocializing these at-risk students into self-control and motivation to achieve higher status within the boundaries of a prescribed middle class ideal.

Indeed, in defining these three types of alternative educational settings, Raywid (1994) suggested that the most encouraging are those that “sustain and generate community within them” (p.4), that engage learners in ways beyond textbook application, and that provide the structural and organizational scaffolding necessary to nourish the first two components. She also maintained that an abundance of these successful alternative schools such as described in Type I are operating as nonprofit organizations in the public sector, and should serve as models for regular school initiatives. However, Raywid questioned whether they will be truly recognized and emulated in the currently challenged traditional educational system. In the next two sections, I examined more closely, “true” alternative schooling as models for community-based reform.

True Alternative Schools

Sweeney (1991) cautioned us to look at the internal workings of alternative educational programs as she described the difference between at-risk or dropout programs and true alternative schools. True alternative schools can be distinguished by

- their attention to educational reform through pluralism;
- diversity and equal education for all students by choice;
- decentralization of formal structure;
- the development of curricula based on individual needs;
- the involvement of parents, teachers, students, and community members in the planning, implementation and assessment of schools;
- the reduction of school violence, vandalism, and disruptive activities.

Sweeney (1991) also suggested that a holistic perspective is key to the operation and organization of a true alternative school where the recognized abilities and potential of individuals are central to the goals and principles of the school.
The Alternative Community School in Ithaca, New York offers a program that Lehman (1991) suggested could be implemented in any secondary school. Describing six options from which students may choose freely, he also described two other important and instrumental factors that differentiate between this school and more conventional public schools: democratic self-governance involving student and parent participation in running the school and hiring staff, and the mutual respect and caring relationship between students and staff.

**Homeschooling**

In addition to the more structured models, the homeschooling movement offers a looser fit for alternative education. The homeschooling phenomenon, according to Ellis (2000) had “developed without leaders, without planning, without design” (p.14). According to the 1999 Parent Survey of the National Household Education Surveys Program (National Center for Educational Statistics 1999) the three main reasons why parents homeschool their children were:

- because they believe they can give their child a better education at home,
- for religious reasons,
- because of poor and inadequate learning environments at school.

**Beginnings of the homeschooling movement**

The first stage in the homeschooling movement emerged during the early 1970s with three major contributors to the field of education: Paul Goodman, Ivan Illich, and John Holt (Ellis 2000; Farenga 1999). Arguing that children were not best served by compulsory schooling, Goodman (cited in Ellis 2000; Farenga 1999), suggested that schools during the 1960s make better use of community facilities and services, and that the community, rather than institutions, was a better source for learning.
Illich, in his 1971 book publication titled *Deschooling Society* argued that universal education through the available models witnessed in traditional settings as well as alternative settings was not possible. His idea of “deschooling society,” meant reversing modern pedagogical thought and practice of creating more educational materials, demanding more teacher responsibility, and filling a child’s life up in the pursuit of prescribed knowledge to accommodate a different style of learning that nurtured opportunities for more holistic learning (Illich 1971).

Holt (cited in Farenga 1999), influenced by Illich’s idea of deschooling, sought ways to circumvent the established system. He wrote about children’s rights in an effort to help children break free of poor schools as well as to help children break free of poor social situations (cited in Farenga 1999). As a result of the work of these researchers and through the collective writings of others, homeschooling began to grow. By 1980, there were approximately 12,000 children being homeschooled in the United States (Ellis 2000).

The second stage in homeschooling developed in the 1980s and 1990s with the networking and exchange of ideas, books, equipment and materials among homeschooling practitioners that resulted in changes in state laws, new journal publications, and the growth of organizations designed to meet the curricular, testing, and other supportive needs of homeschoolers and their parents (Ellis 2000). By 1990, there were approximately 300,000 homeschoolers, with homeschooling becoming legalized in 1993 in all fifty states (Ellis 2000). In 1998, more than one million children were being homeschooled (Farenga 1999; Ellis 2000). “At this rate of growth (20%) one quarter of all children will be homeschooled by the end of another decade” (Ellis 2000, p. 14).
Homeschooling and beyond

Currently, the homeschooling movement has entered another phase in its development: “cooperative community life-long learning centers. (CCL-LLCs)” (Ellis 2000, p. 17). Bearing close ties to a wide variety of alternative schools that are progressing toward child-centered education, CCL-LLCs are a new form of homeschooling; learning institutions that make no claims at being substitutes for K-12 public schools (Ellis 2000). Each word in the unofficial name implies a different concept that exists in direct contrast to the status quo (Ellis 2000).

- Cooperative suggests “all programs, supplies, and facilities are owned and controlled by the member families they serve. The parents together buy and exchange equipment, provide services and make decisions about what they will do together or do separately. Each cooperative makes its own rules, and sets its own standards” (p.17).

- Community suggests two concepts: “what the learners get from the community” and “what the learners give to the community” (p.19). This is viewed in terms of taking advantage of libraries, parks, health clubs, shops, banks, businesses, farms, factories, the streets, and environment for learning as well as providing service to the community and taking part in community activities.

- Life-long learning implies that in this rapidly changing world, no one gets to graduate. Future learning centers “must provide continuing learning opportunities throughout the life span of individuals” (p.19). In addition, learning, is an act of self-discovery, “satisfying one’s own natural curiosity” (p.19) as opposed to teaching, schooling, and educating, which is controlled by some superior authority. Finally, learning is more than “being educated to play a role in the industrial society” (p.19). It replaces consumerism with the love of being, “valuing knowledge more than things” (p.19).

- Centers suggest a main location where services such as counseling, mentoring, testing, laboratories, classes, books, supplies, and equipment are obtained by members of participating families. These centers may simply be a website, a base for a large collection of data on community, national or global learning opportunities, or may extend to include a facility completely furnished with any combination of the previous components. Functioning like a library, centers provide services to participants as needed.
Ellis (2000) believed that this type of learning center may be the wave of the future in education and that traditional educational practices might eventually be replaced by learning center practices.

**Community in Education**

One of the fundamental components existing within all of the alternative education models and practices cited in this literature review is the element of *community* and *community development* both within and outside a more or less structured educational environment. Many (Clark 1991; Dimitriadis & McCarthy 2001; Miller 1991, 2000a; Pipher 2002) believed that the fracturing of our society today, evidenced in symptoms of youth alienation and ultimately unsuccessful traditional education reform, stem from a shift in worldview: from a local to a global landscape. In addition, Pipher (2002) provided various reasons for the fragmentation of communities, attributing it to the emotional distancing of individuals from their community. She maintained that the further we are away from home the less accountability we perceive. The result is witnessed in the breakdown of social structures. Pipher suggested that active engagement in community, as a concept of a shared place, is necessary for global sustainability (2002). “The cure to the cultural colonialism of global shopping malls is loving our hometown” (p. 138). One cannot love their hometown without sharing stories, ideas, and understandings with the diversity of people living in the community.

Clark (1991), Dimitriadis and McCarthy (2001), and Miller (1991, & 2000a) also argued that one of education’s central roles in addressing this change of worldview is in establishing identity through community involvement. Traditionally, most public school programs offer very little opportunity for students to experience true community. Focused on curriculum that secures and sustains binary prescriptions and pedagogies, public
schools marginalize individuals, creating the exact opposite of community. But what is community and how is community developed and cultivated in educational settings?

Compiled from The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2003c), several definitions for community are given:

- society at large; a unified body of individuals;
- a group linked by a common policy;
- the people with common interests living in a particular area;
- a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society;
- a body of persons or nations having a common history or common social, economic, and political interests;
- an interacting population of various kinds of individuals (as species) in a common location.

In referring to social welfare and educational practice, these meanings do not quite measure up. In fact, Peck (1987) suggested that these definitions and those who employ them are using the word falsely. To use the word community meaningfully, “we must restrict it to a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to ‘rejoice together, mourn together,’ and to ‘delight in each other, make others’ conditions our own’” (p. 59). For deeper understanding, Peck (1987) further elaborated by listing several characteristics of “true” community to include transcendent inclusivity, commitment and consensus, realistic limitations and humility, and contemplation as self-examination and for self-awareness.

In addition, Peck (1987, p. 69–74) maintained that once community is achieved, it then

- offers a safe place for healing and transformation, and a “laboratory for personal disarmament,”
- nurtures “a group that can fight gracefully,”
- supports “total decentralization of authority,”
- realizes a “spirit of peace.”
Boiten and Stimson (2003) described the common meaning of community as “the place where we exist for one another and for the well-being of the whole – where we gladly forego the luxuries of life for friendship, companionship, and the wellbeing of others – the place where we belong” (p. 92). Pipher (2002) stated that “communities are about accountability, about what we can and should do for each other” (p. 136). “Community does not mean ‘free of conflict.’ It's inevitable and even healthy to have great differences. Even conflict can lead to closeness. As Dennis Schmitz wrote, ‘Humans wrestle with each other, and sometimes that wrestling turns into embracing’” (p. 38).

Despite the myriad of definitions and characteristics of community, one thing is clear – for those writers and researchers in the social sciences, the idea of community is complex, and more than simply a gathering of people who share something in common. With increased attention to social and environmental accountability in the educational arena, commitment to building community within traditional educational settings is increasingly considered in curricular design, hence the term learning communities. As attention to social and environmental accountability enters the educational critical arena, the reemergence of a commitment to building community within traditional educational settings is often considered in curricular design (Neperud 1995). However, the phrase learning communities coined by many educators and researchers of alternative education, connotes a philosophy different from what is being considered community-building in traditional education (Boiten & Stimson 2003).

Boiten and Stimson (2003) suggested three ways of looking at the term learning communities. The first refers to “communities that learn,” implying that society is in a
constant state of transition, and the wellbeing of each member as well as the evolution of our community is uniformly dependent on the learning growth of all. “Communities that provide learning opportunities” are communities that provide lifelong learning experiences for knowledge and skill development to people of all ages. Learners are not sequestered in schools away from family, community, society, and nature, but rather, are active participants in evolving community matters. The third description, “and perhaps the most meaningful” (p. 94) is “communities of learners.” This type of community engages members in interactions beyond companionship and needs for “belonging.” Communities of learners are the “foundation on which the larger community and society can be built… through learning about others as well as learning with others” (p.95).

These models of learning communities were characterized by Miller (2000) as possessing three common elements:

- Each individual is multifaceted in their experiences, knowledge, feelings, and purpose and should not be type cast into a single role.
- Individuals as unique and whole are not in competition, but serve to enhance the greater whole or larger community of family, society, culture, the planet and beyond.
- Each individual should be dynamically engaged with the community in mutual problem solving, bringing together people of diverse backgrounds in democratic participation.

It is important at this point to go one step further in describing learning communities. The above discourse focuses on the relational dynamics of members in a learning community, however attention to the ways that learning occurs is also significant.

**Categories of Learning**

R. Miller (2000b) provided a synopsis of three educational orientations described by researcher J. Miller (1996) that broadly classifies the extent to which engagement in
community is a part of learning, adding a fourth orientation of his own. Most contemporary traditional education pedagogy is founded in the transmission approach where young people are taught established predetermined values, beliefs, and accepted knowledge through absorption, memorization, and mastery of material. In this orientation, knowledge is seen as stable and relatively unchanging, is disseminated through rigid authority, and evaluated through high stakes, compulsory tests.

The transaction approach is more receptive to learning through meaningful activities, experiments, and adventures, and between people through conversation and discussion. This orientation is generally principled upon encouraging democracy as only democratic communities solicit dialogue. The teacher is not necessarily an authority, but plays an important role in students’ learning through participating in conversation and guidance or modeling of operations. Promoted by Dewey and Piaget, this form of education is often called “humanism.”

A more radical approach that Miller (2000b) considered holistic education is transformation. This is a social, cultural, ecological, and spiritual orientation going beyond the transmission of knowledge and the engagement of learners in a communicative action as in transaction. It encourages learners to seek deeper meaning behind their lives – in relationship with others both locally and globally, and with the earth. A transformation occurs when individuals are able to move beyond their own “cultural conditioning” (p. 203) and egos and become aware of and appreciate the interconnectedness of all living and nonliving things. Steiner, Montessori, and Emerson were a few proponents of this approach.
The fourth approach that Miller (2002) appended to J. Miller’s orientations is self-direction. Self-direction engages learners in naturally seeking out and selecting their own knowledge base. Teachers are viewed as resources, never acting as authorities or rarely mentors unless by request. Most or all of the structures of traditional education including grades, lesson plans, age grouping, and teaching strategies are considered irrelevant. Self-direction is concerned with genuine learning and “has little or no interest in education as a specific profession” (p.204).

One solid example of how a community of learners can build a foundational environment for learning about others as well as with others is through engagement with activist art. As an often-overlooked component in community-building, art for social and environmental change makes valuable contributions that seek to deconstruct community issues, and then reconstruct alternative possibilities. Creating learning communities grounded in art for environmental and social change can be very empowering to all involved. The next section discusses the contributions of activist art and artists to learning communities both in and out of traditional educational settings.

Community of Learners in Art

Art for environmental and social change (social reconstructionism) is an important contemporary movement that promotes cultural democracy, providing a venue for communicative exchange. Socially informed activist artists offer an alternative view and challenge current constructions of society by bridging age, gender, income, and ethnic differences, enabling individual regeneration, and developing a sense of community.

One example of an artist working in this way is Judy Baca, a Mexican-American muralist who collaborated in 1988–89 with hundreds of residents in the rural town of Guadalupe, California in designing and painting the Guadalupe Mural (Congdon 2004).
Located in a park where teens tagged graffiti and drank beer, the mural, developed through a series of panels, “told the history of a farming community and its dreams for the future” (pg. 4). Congdon (2004), in elaborating on Baca’s perspective of the project maintained that the mural “allows for a dialogue about issues related to race, ethnicity, class, and gender” (p. 4), creating an educational opportunity based on “collaborative artistic practices, aesthetics, and community content” (p. 4).

Visual images created intentionally to stir debate, dialogue, and community conversation is another example of art as a catalyst for social reconstruction. In 1988, artists Elizabeth Sisco, Louis Hock, and David Avalos created a silkscreen photomontage called *Welcome to America’s Finest Tourist Plantation* and placed the image on the back of several buses in San Diego, California (Congdon, 2004). Designed to “draw attention to the plight of illegal immigrants in the San Diego area” (p. 4), the artwork also drew controversy, generating immediate and intense debate throughout the community. This dialogue was significant enough that “media coverage from the event was collected and turned into a gallery exhibition” and “editorials, newscasts, interviews and informal conversations became a recognized part of the artwork” (p. 5).

“Well formed communities are grounded in identifiable beliefs and practices” (Congdon 2004, pg. 2) and members often celebrate and expose those beliefs and practices through art. Art then, becomes a transformative vehicle by assisting “community members in thinking through issues needed to sustain a viable and healthy community. The work of artists and others involved with the arts often generates individual and collective action” (p. 2). In this way, communities as evolving systems,
can be challenged to change through social reconstructionism based on art created by, with, and for the local community (Congdon 2004).

**Role of Community-based Art in Community-Building**

“Community-based art is increasingly being created and recognized in the academic art world” (Congdon 2004, p. 3). Gablik brought attention to this growing trend in her 1991 publication, *The Reenchantment of Art*. Many social, political, and environmental artworks such as Kryzysztof Wodiczko’s homelessness projects, Lynne Hull’s environmental reconstructive art, Fred Wilson’s confrontation of power and racial inequality, Suzanne Lacy’s interactively orchestrated performances on gender roles, and Mierle Ukeles’ ritualistic acts of healing and sensitivity towards marginalized sanitation workers, have moved the art world forward in advancing social and environmental reconstruction. Grounded in community awareness, collaboration, and contextual dialogue (Gablik 2002; Congdon 2004; Anderson & Milbrandt 2005), community-based art reflects research into social values, mores, institutions, and practices, surveys attitudes and perspectives of community members, and solicits community interaction for change.

This is a distinct move away from modernistic thinking that the individual artist, as a “talented and unusual” (Congdon 2004, p. 2) creative genius can only create in solitude, isolated from the rest of the world (Congdon 2004; Anderson & Milbrandt 2005). Formal qualities based on the elements of art and principles of design, often only understood by the “academically educated” (Congdon 2004, p. 2) and used as the sole criteria for defining, evaluating, and understanding art are giving way to content-based and contextual communication of ideas through dialogue (Congdon 2004; Anderson & Milbrandt 2005). “In this way, the power of the group, not the individual is again at the center” (Anderson & Milbrandt 2005, p. 6).
Current social and environmental theories centering on holistic attitudes and practices are made visible in community-based art. However, artwork that is based in social and environmental awareness and criticism, and confrontation of the disequilibrium between artificial façades and underlying realities, can only make an impact on a community when it stimulates members to share in democratic discussion and dialogue. Artwork that involves collaboration with all members of a society, including marginalized groups, can only be truly successful when all participating individuals’ ideas and inherent knowledge are recognized as vital in building the kind of community necessary for change.

**Role of Community-Based Art Education in Community-Building**

The world is increasingly organized through the visually commercial (television, movies, computers, the internet, advertising, clothing, cars, mass media, etc.) and individuals are increasingly reliant on visual forms for personal and cultural meaning (Anderson & Milbrandt 2005). Often these forms of visual culture support and promote stereotypical gender roles, racial and cultural biases, isolation and marginalization of groups and individuals, and social and environmental consumerism. In other words, visual culture often seems to reflect and maintain the status quo rather than challenge it.

**Influences of visual culture**

Anderson and Milbrandt (2005) in referencing John Berger, maintained that social reality is constructed out of what we see: “Years ago, John Berger held what we see is determined by what we believe, and, even more profoundly, that vision is reciprocal. That is, if we see we can also be seen. Seeing is reflexive. It makes us who we are” (p. 50). Anderson and Milbrandt (2005) further expanded on art-making as a reflexive function of a culture.
The images we make are an extension of our reflexivity. Every image, photograph, painting, or advertisement embodies a way of seeing. There is no such thing as a neutral image. Every image embodies the point of view and values of its maker. Further, every image maker is part of a culture and is influenced by it. Deliberately or not, the maker’s values, mores, and cultural sensibility will be reflected in the image. Art and design are cultural artifacts and performances; they are visual culture and they reflect their society. (p. 50)

Consider some of these points in relation to one aspect of visual culture (i.e.), advertising, and children:

• At six months, just as babies begin to mouth simple sounds like “da da” they are also forming mental images of corporate logos (Schmidt 2003, para. 5).

• One in four children utters a brand name as their first recognizable word (Schmidt 2003, para. 7).

• Nearly 40% of children aged one to four have a television set in their bedroom. Television and video viewing time increased from 11 hours a week at age one to 18 hours a week at age four (Schmidt 2003, para. 10).

• American children sit through about 3 hours of television commercials a week – 20,000 ads a year, 360,000 by the time they graduate from secondary school. (Johnson & Gannon 2004, para. 1).

• Mike Searles, President of Kids ‘R’ Us says “If you own this child at an early age, you can own this child for years to come” (Johnson & Gannon 2004, para. 4).

• The habit of consumption is not the only effect of television which children internalize and incorporate into their daily lives. Children’s world views are often developed through the persuasive power of television's ‘perfect world’ that can become the most dominant force in their early socialization process. (Johnson & Gannon 2004, para. 7).

• Young children experience difficulty distinguishing perceptually between programs and commercials. (Johnson & Gannon 2004, para. 11).

• A substantial proportion of children, particularly those below the age of 8, express little or no comprehension of the persuasive intent of commercials (Johnson & Gannon 2004, para. 11).

• Younger children who are unaware of the persuasive intent of television advertising tend to express greater belief in commercials and a higher frequency of purchase requests (Johnson & Gannon 2004, para. 11).

• In the Art/Essay Contest "What Do Kids Really Want That Money Can't Buy?" sponsored by the Center for a New American Dream, the most common answers were
"love," "happiness," "peace on earth," and "friends." Significant numbers of children also wanted time with family, a clean environment, a world where people treat each other with respect, a chance to see lost loved ones, help for suffering people, health, and time to play (University of Florida 2002, p.3).

“Taken as a whole, the collective body of advertising sells a vision of the world, a way of life” (Jacobson & Mazur 1995, p. 25). Because children are likely to spend more time in front of the television rather than with friends, family, and teachers (Johnson & Gannon 2004), the opportunity for constructing meaning through interaction with real people is minimal. In the short time that children actually do spend in school, Community-based Art Education programs offer one way to provide opportunities for children to construct alternatives to those perspectives visualized in the media.

**Why community-based art education?**

Community-based Art Education (CBAE) has emerged over the past decade or so as a social-reconstructivist approach to art curriculum. Educational theory suggests that students need to learn how to become viable members of their communities as active participants and contributing citizens (Congdon 2004). Teachers, then, need to guide students in becoming “individuals who can effectively deal with the many challenges facing our society today, as well as people who can recognize and build on the positive characteristics of a given community” (Congdon 2004, p. 6). In this regard, proponents of CBAE urge art teachers and students to “step outside” (London 1994) and engage with their local communities in significant ways, gaining both inspiration from the communities in which they live, as well as a sense of community participation by visually responding to local issues (Anderson & Milbrandt 2005; Congdon 2004; London 1994).

Community-based Art Education, then, as a reflexive action that seeks to confront, understand, and/or produce change, can play a significant role for youth as they negotiate
identity and place in the local and global contexts of adulthood. Investigating the world around them not only serves to help emancipate youth from the narrow agendas of advertising, but also serves to help youth uncover local and global community resources, understand and appreciate the interculturality and interconnectedness of all things, and engage in community actions for environmental and social change.

As Congdon (2004) suggested, “while art education theory has not yet fully addressed community-based art education practices, there has been a great deal of theory-building behind it” (p. 3). Yet, a CBAE orientation is visible to varying degrees in models inspired by and illustrative of more holistic communities. It moves from text and teacher-experts to physical and intellectual activities outside of the classroom culture into the community. Both CBAE theory and practice address social and environmental biodiversity as well as community action for change. However, while CBAE strategies are employed in geographical pockets around the country, it is not a widely practiced model in traditional art education. A look at the dominant pedagogical models in art education is necessary for a comparative overview.

**Status Quo in Art Education**

Environmental education models (Elmwood Institute 1993; Hungerford et al. 2003), and alternative education models (Astroth et al. 2002; James 2003) recognize a shift in pedagogy from a community of teachers as providers of prescribed knowledge (Tiers 1, 2, and 3) to a community of students empowered as collaborative engineers of their own learning (Tiers 4, 5 and 6). However, most traditional art education continues to practice limited modes of community based on teacher-directed learning, especially in discipline-centered approaches (Neperud 1995). An overview of two widely used
Disciplined-based Art Education (DBAE), established in the 1980s for elementary level art education is a model that continues to be a school-centered program. This program elevates the European sensibilities of elitism by examining the four disciplines of art (production, art criticism, art history, and aesthetics) through the elements and principles of design. Based on the idea that students should learn how to replicate professional practices of artists, critics, historians and aestheticians in the art field, DBAE solicits academic proficiency separate from “human feeling, sensation and imagination” (Wieder 1990, pg. 29).

Trained as an art educator in DBAE during the mid 1980s, I incorporated the DBAE model in my curriculum as a way to discipline young people’s minds in thinking about, talking about, and producing art through an established set of criteria, rules, and standards. Systematic and sequentially structured instruction is at the heart of DBAE.

Certainly, the art print market has found its place within DBAE. A myriad of manufacturers of art prints, slides, games, and supplemental resources have made available to art teachers a wealth of material that makes it easy and desirable to stay within the four walls of the classroom. The occasional field trip, though, can offer enrichment and reinforcement of what students are viewing in class.

Additionally, most of the available visual images focus on Eurocentric, male-generated, art reproductions that have been designated “high art” throughout history. Images of cultural crafts are less often available as the art print industry begins to catch up with multiculturalism. However, few of the images collections available today show
evidence of contemporary artists such as Baca, Hull, or Wodiczko working with community-based projects.

In 1990, Wieder, criticizing DBAE wrote, “DBAE advocates… are most emphatic in their disassociation with the Lowenfeldian, child-centered art education legacy” (p. 27). He further maintained that

This structure is, by and large, unconcerned with students’ aptitudes, values, etc. Emphasis is on instructional output within the context of a fixed, standardized curriculum in which students uniformly acquire subject-matter content more or less incrementally (pg. 28).

Wieder (1990) also suggested that DBAE’s concentration on content rather than students’ needs or interests most likely stems from the notion that young people really “do not know what is good for them, and even if they did, would not act accordingly” (pg. 29). Teachers as experts, or rather artists, critic, historians, and aestheticians working in the art field as experts makes student autonomy impossible. Teacher autonomy is limited as well since following the disciplinary dictates is essential to DBAE.

This “essentialist approach” (Wieder 1990, pg. 28) also denies student meaning-making through emphasis on knowledge (prescribed) and skill acquisition in a transmission orientation. Through my training, I learned that being able to evaluate student art knowledge and skill through standardized testing is a component that DBAE embraces in part, as evidence for art education advocacy. It may be assumed that teachers who practice the DBAE model adhere to these dictates in varying degrees. Some may not completely support content-based curriculums, yet may choose to maintain a teacher-based focus while incorporating student self-expressive components.

Currently, DBAE theory has evolved into the so-called Comprehensive Art Education (CAE), which attempts to include more diverse perspectives such as
multicultural and communal aspects of the art world. To this extent, DBAE/CAE curricula do support viewing images from other communities and cultures, and encourage questioning strategies for group discussion and self-discovery as well as cooperative work involving, to a small extent, community members (ArtsEdge 2004 and ArtsEdNet 2004 offer examples of this).

Another example of a popular, widely practiced art educational curriculum is found in Advanced Placement (AP) high school art programs. This school-based learning most often operates under the restrictions of inflexible hours, compulsory attendance, and management rules. While the College Board suggested allowing extended class time and flexible opportunities for research and out-of-school experiences (College Board 2004), most AP art programs, including the ones that I observed as a high school teacher, continue to exist and operate within traditional school formats.

Students may, by their own initiative, choose to take an AP art course; however, this choice is restricted to those who have proven academic success in art during previous years and naturally are willing to invest the time and energy necessary to be successful in this rigorous program (College Board 2004). In some instances, such as in the high school where I taught, teacher recommendation was also needed to accompany the course schedule request. This can perpetuate competition and segregation within a learning environment.

AP art education uses the transmission approach to learning where knowledge is stable and enforced through rigid authority, criteria, and expectations—all based on the formalistic elements of art and principles of design. Teachers are viewed as masters of this traditional and elite knowledge with students as apprentices.
In AP Art Studio, the College Board criteria for Drawing, 2-D design, and 3-D design, centers around the use of elements and principles in the Quality, and Breadth sections. Cautioning against a solution to a series of teacher-directed class projects, the Concentration section encourages an in-depth investigation into something of personal interest (College Board 2004). However, my observations have led me to discover that teacher-directed class projects tend to be the focus for assignments in the AP art studio program. Indeed, my conversation with a university art education student who had gone through an AP art studio program in high school revealed that, at least in her experience, this was the case. Student-directed action research into comprehensive studies of environmental or social issues in the community are not listed as viable Concentration options, although they could be, depending on the direction the student wishes to explore and more importantly, the teacher’s ability to guide the student in this endeavor.

The AP program is an opportunity intended to enable high school students earn advanced credit towards freshman level college or university art studio courses. To this end, AP art programs may sometimes invite participation or input from college faculty and professional members of the discipline in determining equitable course descriptions and requirements, standards settings, and evaluation of student responses at the Reading (College Board 2004). However, the committees that have the power to decide upon and regulate the criteria for passing do not include high school students. Indirect student input may be acquired through faculty involved in the program; however, this was not evident in the College Board course description publication.

In comparing DBAE and AP art practices to CBAE, we can see that they offer very little opportunity for students to engage in what can be described as best practices for
communities of learners. Yet, the emerging and merging interdisciplinary theories behind “changing the rules” have gained momentum as practitioners test and document them in practical models. These models solicit additional theoretical inquiry, which petitions more practice. The result is an increasingly sustainable universe existing parallel to the status quo. There is little doubt that a new paradigm in education is upon us and may soon be in serious competition with the old, outdated one.

The attention being paid to learning communities seems particularly promising, especially for art education, because of contemporary artists’ practices, and the unique potential of art education to allow for construction of community through classroom collaboration. The art class, with an inherent quality that allows students an opportunity to engage in interaction with one another, provides fertile ground for collaborative activities that “require [students] to arrive at a position that the whole group can live with” (Anderson & Milbrandt 2005, p. 27). Indeed, Anderson and Milbrandt (2005) maintained that “increasingly, collaborative strategies are being considered and applied in art education…” (p.31).

In talking about learning communities, however, art educators may not be aware of the larger discourse and in fact, there seems to be little agreement within the discourse about the meaning of this term. How do we recognize successful programs that meet best practices for empowering students through community? In the next chapter, I described the process I undertook to define criteria for successful educational efforts in building community, and to develop the resulting framework for evaluating such programs.
CHAPTER 3
METHOD OF RESEARCH

Paradigm Analysis

While the past era of industrialization continues to influence and control much of education’s intellectual, moral, and cultural climate, new ways of knowing that reflect a changing worldview are beginning to occupy an elevated position in pedagogical theory and practice. In surveying the literature, I have positioned two conflicting views of education, specifically the concepts and operations that delineate ways of knowing, into parallel systems. One is the “status quo” an outdated modernist/industrialist view that dominates educational theory and practice. The other is an alternative view that is grounded in holistic theory and practice and manifests itself in various disciplines in a variety of ways.

In a postmodern world of uncertainty and open-ended meaning, multiple views coexist, and when each have “specific cognitive ‘interests’ with distinct goals and values” (Pearse 1992, p. 244) “embedded in its actions and documents” (Carroll 1997, p. 171), they are considered paradigms. Carroll (1997) specifically defined a paradigm as “a body of beliefs and values, laws, and practices which govern a community of practitioners. A paradigm is analogous to world view” (p. 171). Thus, the research on alternative educational views suggested the emergence of a new paradigm illustrated, within holistic models such as homeschooling and Community-based Art Education (CBAE).

My review of the literature compared and contrasted these several paradigms with the current dominating “zeitgeist” (Pearse 1992, p. 249). This is the first step in
paradigm research and analysis (Carroll 1997). “Paradigm analysis, as it provides a structure for research requires determination of the character and structure of a professional community as well as an analysis of the substance of the paradigm” (Carroll 1997, p. 171). The second step reflects a method of paradigm research that anticipates “the convergence of ideas and points of entry for dialogue” (p. 188) by identifying existing ideas in different fields and merging them in a way that solicits “discourse and intercommunity dialogue” (p. 188).

I took this next step by identifying several holistic models from Community Youth Development (CYD) and Participatory Action Research (PAR). Through examination of these models, I have determined that they not only offer important educational concepts and strategies for building true community, but that the potential exists for interdisciplinary dialogue with (CBAE).

Pursuing this possibility, I developed a framework for describing levels of learning communities that merge the theories and practices of the studied paradigms. I then positioned various CBAE models within the framework, proposing a point of entry for further analysis and cross-disciplinary dialogue among CYD, PAR, and CBAE initiatives, and suggesting a convergence of paradigmatic ideas that reflect similar values, goals, laws, and practices. This, I believe, offers all fields involved, positive ways of moving forward in developing and blending pedagogical strategies that can provide youth with ways of knowing, and empowerment, important to a changing worldview.

**Sources of Research**

In preparation for this study, I conducted a survey of 22 at-risk adolescents in Gainesville, Florida during Fall 2003, to find out what they might think about community based art education and personal empowerment. The personal insights they revealed
convinced me that these youth are desperate for a voice in their education and that their teachers understand little about what they are interested in learning. Prescriptive art curriculums based on adult assumptions do not allow students opportunities to explore their own interests nor does it engage youth in learning activities for empowerment. In addition, the responses about personal identity within a social context indicated a negative disequilibrium between how these youth view themselves and how they perceive the adult world views them. These preliminary findings set the tone for further inquiry.

After defining my focus I continued an investigation by incorporating multiple data collecting strategies. The major strategies for the study included:

- Enrolling in a graduate methodology course at the University of Florida called *Youth and Community Issues*, in which CYD and PAR strategies were modeled and involvement in an action research project was the culminating activity.
- Document analysis of several CYD and PAR workbooks that I obtained from both the methodology course and also purchased through a PAR website. These action research workbooks included *Investigating and Evaluating Environmental Issues and Actions* (Hungerford et al. 2003), *Teaching Middle School Students to be Active Researchers* (Zorfass & Copel 1998), *Organics: A Wasted Resource?* (Culen et al. 2001), and *Participatory Action Research Curriculum for Empowering Youth* (Sydlo et al. 2000).
- Analysis of student artwork viewed on the HOT Schools website (Connecticut Commission on the Arts 2003a, b, and c), and in two print publications including *The Reenchantment of Art* (Gablik 2002) and *Art for Life* (Anderson & Milbrandt 2005). I also obtained several youth created publications from Youth Communication in Atlanta, Georgia to review first hand the artwork that was being produced in these newspapers and zines.
- Examination and analysis of the dominating paradigm in education. Much of the critical information about dominating curricular theory and practice was found in print publications since this well-established pedagogy has been the status quo for almost a century.
• Examination and analysis of characteristics of holistic theory and practice from several different types of resources. Because CYD and PAR are emerging practices, some of this literature was found in current journal and anthology publications such as *CYD Anthology 2000* (Terry 2002) and *CYD Journal* (Goodyear & Checkoway 2003) as well as on organizational websites. Most information on holistic theory, though, was obtained in print publications.

• Analysis of CBAE theory from the most current and innovative art education book publications, purchased at the National Art Education Association Conferences in 2003 and 2004, and the Florida Art Education Association Conference in 2003. The publications, *Step Outside* (London 1994), *Community Art in Action* (Congdon 2004), and *Art for Life* (Anderson & Milbrandt 2005) suggest that CBAE is becoming a viable art education model.

• Policy analysis of CBAE programs as stated on organizational websites. These are relatively new programs (10 to 20 years in the making) that, without the advances of computer technology, would not be visibly accessible to the public.

  It should be noted that in my analysis of traditional and alternative CBAE programs, I focused on stated policies and not necessarily individual teaching practices, because time did not allow me to physically visit each site. I do hope to visit these sites in the future though to further my investigation of learning communities and to further the development of my framework.

  In the next chapter, I described the holistic models I examined with descriptions of specific pragmatic examples and the criteria they suggest. Using this information to create a framework for evaluating different levels of student empowerment in learning communities, I positioned several CBAE models in relation to the framework and then evaluated my findings.
CHAPTER 4
PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF THE EMERGING PARADIGM

Youth are seen as a collection of problems to be fixed, rather than as future parents, neighbors, voters, political leaders, and workers who might benefit from maximum adult involvement, participatory learning, and the encouragement to grow and become productive, contributing adults. (Astroth et al. 2002, p. 13)

Community Youth Development

Because strong models exist for building community in other fields, my first step in creating a framework for evaluating CBAE was to analyze the characteristics of those existing models. The models I examined in this chapter include Community Youth Development (CYD) and Participatory Action Research (PAR).

Through the collective and continued research on adolescent development, the focus of the community youth movement has evolved from the 1970s issues of youth resiliency and the ability to succeed “despite overwhelming odds in their lives” (Perkins et al. 2003, p. 3–4). In deficit models of youth development, quite often substance abuse, teen pregnancy, youth crime and violence, and drop out rates are viewed as causes of youth alienation from society. An estimated 9.2 million to 15.8 million children are considered "at-risk" in this country (National Governors Association 2000). Astroth et al. (2002) suggested that increased teen pregnancies, increased use of drugs and/or alcohol, a propensity for dropping out of school, unemployment, engagement in violence, and an increased likelihood of experiencing a host of mental health problems are actually symptoms of youth alienation, caused by routine exclusion from social institutions, employment and other cultural spheres.
Preventative measures that focus on eliminating individual risk conditions and behavioral problems rarely effectively prepare youth to meet their current challenges or those they will continue to face (Astroth et al. 2002; Perkins, et al. 2003). Shifting from a focus on problems to a focus on strengths, abilities and engagement in self-development and community development, the Community Youth Development (CYD) movement goes beyond youth resiliency (in creating opportunities for positive development) to youth engagement in their own development. It does this by “promoting factors that provide all youth with the critical elements needed for successful development and engagement in their communities, regardless of their level of risk” (Perkins et al. 2003, p. 5).

These factors define CYD as an integration of youth development and community development (Perkins et al, 2003):

- Youth have the natural capacity to shape their own development by pursuing their interest and interpretations.
- Commitment from the community and youth participation is essential in enabling youth to reach their potential.
- Building on strengths rather than deficits, youth development programs existing specifically to promote youth development are inclusive, enduring, and engage students in activities that build skills, nurture supportive relationships between youth and adults, and offer opportunities for youth to take on responsible roles; entrusted to collaboration and teamwork.
- Youth have the responsibility as full partners in their community to act as agents of change for the betterment of their communities.

Combining holistic philosophies with community connections and child-centered perspectives of homeschooling, CYD alternative education research and practices are frequently administered outside of traditional education environments. This is necessary because of the inflexible and prescriptive teacher-centered pedagogy designed for an
industrial nation (Ogden 2002). After school CYD programs that empower youth as collaborative engineers of their own projects and nurture self-efficacy and community are witnessed in cases like Montana’s Red Lodge Youth Council (RLYC) (Astroth et al. 2002).

The RLYC, consisted of 12 youth in grades 8 through 12, and seven adults from representative schools, the justice system, the Boys and Girls club, city government, and the community at large (Astroth et al. 2002). Led by 14-year-old Angela Schilz, RLYC included activities such as researching, evaluating, and developing long range plans concerning local youth issues, coordinating and leading community forums, presentations, planning sessions, and youth events and activities, securing youth positions on the local school board, hosting leadership retreats, and planning and supervising a local skateboard park construction.

Cautioning against youth development efforts built around program or organizational needs rather than on youth needs, Astroth et al. (2002) pointed out that all too often adults design programs with adult agendas in order to “help” youth, resulting in short lived programs. In order for youth development to be intentionally youth empowering, adults must change their perspectives, leave their agendas at the door, and change the rules of authority and control. This may be handled through alternative roles suggested by Astroth et al. (2002, pp. 16–17):

• Shift the typical practitioner’s focus from pre-chosen outcomes to process.
• Overcome preconceptions that can hinder quality work between youth and adults (“fixing” youth, adult control, youth aren’t capable of handling decisions).
• Act as an environmental governor – monitoring and helping participants manage and rightfully distribute power.
• Serve as a skill broker – help youth identify skills needed and provide opportunities to learn those skills in order to accomplish an objective.

• Function as the group’s lackey – buying donuts, and making sure there are materials and supplies for meetings, etc is a far cry from developing lesson plans with learning outcomes.

In essence, it is about adults trusting in the power of youth and getting out of their way. That is the challenge and goal of CYD.

One example of how this can work is the *Investigating and Evaluating Environmental Issues and Actions* (IEEIA) curriculum implemented in a middle school class in Molokai, Hawaii. The IEEIA model originated in 1972 with a collaboration between a middle school science teacher, Ralph Litherland and Harold Hungerford, a science education professor in an effort to “involve students in…investigations of community problems and issues” (Marcinkowski n.d., para. 23). Together, they developed several structured modules that helped students of various abilities gain the skills necessary to become autonomous learners through investigations into environmental issues (Marcinkowski n.d., para 24).

These modules consisted of reviewing environmental issues, researching these issues using secondary sources, developing surveys, questionnaires and opinionnaires for further investigation, analyzing and interpreting the data, and then designing a plan that would culminate in a voluntary action towards resolving the environmental issue (Marcinkowski, n.d.). This structure has evolved into various models, offering curricular workbooks and resources (Culen 2001; Hungerford et al. 2003; Project WILD 1995; Zorfass & Copel 1998) that guide students and teachers through the process. In addition, teacher workshops and follow-up support provide important teacher preparation for the implementation and success of the programs (Marcinkowski, n.d.).
The IEEIA program, in particular was implemented during the 2000–2001 school year in a large fifth-sixth grade class, team-taught by two teachers in the Kualapu’u Elementary School on the island of Molokai, Hawaii (Cheak, Volk, & Hungerford 2002). It was evaluated in May 2001 by a five-member research team, using both quantitative and qualitative measures (Cheak, Volk, & Hungerford 2002). A summary of some of the team’s findings, which did “exceed our expectations of what we would find from the testing and interviews” (p. 61) concluded that students who participated in the program

- improved their critical thinking and problem-solving skills as well as knowledge of ecology and familiarity with environmental issues;
- improved their ability to analyze issues, identify appropriate actions for issues resolution, and became more actively involved in environmental citizenship;
- used a wider range and more difficult reading material, improved their writing and public speaking skills, and gained an ability to contribute to the community as members;
- gained more poise, self-esteem and leadership skills than their peers and were more autonomous and mature than their peers;
- were enthusiastic about academic challenges and were motivated to school success;
- made a positive impact on the island in aspects of community awareness and resolution in environmental issues (pp. 61–62).

Other findings indicated that the program supported effective teaching strategies and the teachers found this “community of learners to be a “liberating experience” (Cheak, Volk, & Hungerford 2002, p. 62). Parents were proud of their children and supported the program, and students became resident experts that local authorities often turned to for authentic information developed from the real-world problem-solving practices of the community youth (p. 62). IEEIA also reflects the strategies of yet another similar type of alternative learning model called Participatory Action Research.
Participatory Action Research

Youth-centered Participatory Action Research, or PAR, is a method of engaging young people in research in order to create positive social change. It has been defined as "collective, self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order improve the rationality and justice of their own social...practices." (The Freechild Project 2003, para.1)

Many community institutions and organizations including The Youth Action Research Institute (YARI), The Youth Action Research Group (YARG), and the Youth Strategy Project of the DataCenter (The Freechild Project 2003) center their research, programs, and publications around youth-produced information concerning issues that affect young people and their resolutions. YARI (The Institute for Community Research 2003), formed in 1996, promotes peer training in ethnographic, interactive group action research for advocacy and social problem solving, involves youth in the development and dissemination of new action research curricula, materials and research instruments, and trains educators, youth workers, social science interns, and others in the action research methodology and for their classrooms and programs.

In 1998, YARG (Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching, and Service 2003) was formed by neighboring communities in Washington, DC when several DC public schools were ordered to close because of failure in making vital repairs to the schools. A group of high school students “began working closely with community organizers to develop a peaceful and strategic response to their plight” (Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching, and Service 2003, para. 1). The collaborative efforts concluded in a candlelight vigil and a march by students, teachers, and neighbors on busy 16th Street NW. Bell Multicultural High School was reopened the next day.

Continued work by the high school activists and community organizers then focused on problems surrounding education and housing in the diverse community of
Mount Pleasant and Columbia Heights. After meeting monthly for after school trainings and community forums focusing on neighborhood issues, the Georgetown University Volunteer and Public Service Center (VPS Center) began to support the efforts of the group and provided training for the students in participatory action research methods as well as funded a community based research project in the students’ neighborhoods.

Providing “strategic research, consultation, and training for social, economic and environmental justice organizations” (DataCenter 2001, para. 1), The Youth Strategy Project partners with technical assistance groups as a primary source for youth organizations who are doing action research throughout the U.S. It also conducts research, analysis, designs campaign strategies, and develops trainings for community-based youth organizations.

While there may appear to be little difference between the work of CYD and PAR, there is perhaps one significant point to be made. Community Youth Development is grounded in the process of youth leadership development while Participatory Action Research is concerned with the production of legitimate information generated by youth (London 2002). The coupling of both these powerful developments, however, suggests an even more dynamic movement towards valuing youth and their potential in sustaining the global community.

**Youth as Community Partners**

“Some people would say that the next great liberation movement is the liberation of children and youth, and that we are in the midst of it” (Terry & Woonteiler 2002).

*Youth Participation in Community Evaluation and Research*, an emerging field of study and practice, is not well documented or communicated. However, born out of the previously established fields of Community Youth Development (CYD) and
Participatory Action Research (PAR), it builds on the foundation of youth development, program evaluation, and community development through both process and production (Goodyear & Checkoway 2003; Checkoway et al. 2003). Grounded on the premise that young people’s full participation in community research, evaluation, and action benefits all members, this new field promotes radically different and holistic alternatives to traditional education theory and practice. These alternatives vary from youth acquisition of new skills, active participation in a community, and an understanding of social responsibility, to becoming channels for social justice (Goodyear & Checkoway 2003; James 2003; Goodyear 2003).

In the 2002 collaborative Wingspread Symposium of “youth leaders and adult allies” (Checkoway et al. 2003, p. 7), a meeting was held to form specific strategies for strengthening youth participation in research and evaluation and for promoting this new field of study. Seven principles emerged from this meeting (p. 11):

• Youth participation in community research and evaluation transforms its participants…in ways of knowing, the strategies we devise, the methods we employ, and our program of work.

• Youth participation promotes youth empowerment…recognizing the experience and expertise of all young people, and respects their leadership capabilities and potential contributions.

• Youth participation builds mutually liberatory partnerships…values the assets of all ages, and fosters supportive and respectful youth/youth and youth/adult working relationships.

• Youth participation equalizes power relationships between youth and adults…establishes a level playing field…structures environments that respect the involvement of young people, and train adults in supporting genuine youth decision-making and leadership development.

• Youth participation is an inclusive process that recognizes all forms of democratic leadership…involves diverse populations and perspectives, especially those who are traditionally underserved and underrepresented.
• Youth participation involves young people in meaningful ways…in all stages of the process, from defining the problem, to gathering and analyzing information, to making decisions and taking actions.

• Youth participation is an ongoing process, not a one-time event…continuously clarify and reflect upon its purpose and content… research and evaluation are viewed as an integral part of knowledge development, program planning, and community improvement.

While the Youth Participation in Community Evaluation and Research field may currently be underdeveloped in terms of strategies, organization, and advancement, the work being done across the nation by youth engaging in community research and evaluation is plentiful and exciting to say the least. Youth Voice, Serving Our Youth and Communities (SOYAC), and Youth IMPACT, are but a few specific programs actively developing youth-engaged communities. Other organizations such as Youth on Board, Youth Activism, At the Table, The Freechild Project, and Youth as Resources (YAR) provide resources, strategies, programs, and even funding for those interested in creating youth-engaged communities. A closer look at Youth Voice, SOYAC, and Youth IMPACT gives the uninitiated a clearer picture of how youth engaged as expert researchers relying on local knowledge about issues that affect them, can become important agents for social and environmental change in their communities (Brown et al. 2003).

**Youth Engagement Programs: A Closer Look**

“At-risk” youth participants in Youth Voice, a program at a Buffalo, New York community center recently completed the research, evaluation, and action phases of a mapping project that located the assets and deficits of their community from the perspective of youth (Mead 2003). These youth, ranging in ages from 13–16 took to their neighborhood streets with cameras in hand to visually survey what was working and not
working in their community. After developing the photographs, the youth “mapped” out the assets and deficits into these two categories. Continued mapping led to two more subcategories that outlined the assets into “People” and “Places” and the deficits into “Things we can do something about” and “Things that we can’t do anything about.” Two important projects of action resulted from this research and evaluation activity: the cleanup of a riverfront park, and the collaboration with a local architect to improve the playground at the community center. As Mead (2003) observed, once the mapping was complete, the youth became excited about their potential for making a difference with the things they could do something about.

SOYAC promoted the “first youth-led community needs assessment of San Francisco south of Market district” (Zimmerman & London 2003, p.21) through Oasis, a nonprofit organization for the empowerment of girls and young women. These youth created a written report, video, and website about their research findings generated from self-designed surveys that they administered and analyzed. In addition, they presented their report to city authorities, planners, supervisors, advocates, and activists with a request for increased attention to finding solutions for growing problems of drugs, violence, unemployment, inadequate housing, and health care (Zimmerman & London 2003).

Supported by trained staff, 12 high school aged youth of Youth IMPACT visited 40 San Francisco community-based organizations (CBO), to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of these organizations. Over a year-long process, the teens were initially trained in team building, leadership development, critical thinking, and evaluation design. Next, they decided on two overarching survey questions: How well are the CBOs in San
Francisco serving children and youth? What makes a CBO feel trustworthy to youth?

From this work came multiple research questions that addressed health and wellness programs, academic support, youth employment, and enrichment programs. After selecting and developing their research instruments—observations, a questionnaire, and focus groups, the team conducted their study and published a report in 2001.

These strategies and actions, which paralleled the IEEIA program on Molokai, Hawaii, served as a basis for funding, program development, and technical assistance activities by the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families. Youth-led investigations, evaluations, and reports such as these mark the essential need for organizations who serve youth to have their stakeholders (youth) engage in the evaluation process (Zimmerman & London 2003; What Kids Can Do 2003). Lily, a former team member and now board member of Youth in Focus claimed “Who knows what youth need better than youth?” (What Kids Can Do 2003, paragraph 10).

“Historically, any group that has been shut out of the decision-making process has been forced to advocate for itself before its status in society has improved” (James 2003, p. 34). Youth empowerment, as a genuine advancement towards youth liberation, “must begin with an analysis of the ways power is collectively organized, followed by the development of strategies for these relationships to be collectively transformed” (James p. 34). The shift towards alternative educational practices that are grounded in holistic, community-based learning provides the development of important critical thinking skills not necessarily gained in traditional education (Boiten & Stimson 2003). As James (2003) suggested, the goal of youth empowerment is to support youth in identifying their own problems and solutions by giving new form to the environments and institutions in
which they are a part. Taking “common knowledge” found within communities and
transforming it into legitimate knowledge through authentic research, evaluation, and
action is a central component for youth empowerment and self-efficacy (James 2003).

Got Art?

Quite often, environmental and social science educators employ various types of
social action research in ways that integrate language arts, science and computer
technology into their curricula. In none of the existing models with which I am
acquainted, however, is visual art promoted as a viable strategy in conducting, presenting,
or responding to research on community issues. Rather visual art seems to be used as a
superficial means to an end in communicating the issues at hand.

For example, students participating in the Investigating and Evaluating
Environmental Issues and Actions (IEEIA) model on Molokai, Hawaii used visual tools
such as videos, digital cameras, slide presentations, PowerPoint presentations, Imovie,
and web site development to convey information about environmental issues. However,
these elements of visual culture were not necessarily viewed as transformative strategies
that would themselves initiate change, but merely as supplemental ways to stress a point.
The after-school Youth Voice program in New York used photography to “map” or
determine the assets and deficits in their community, but never employed their
photographic work to communicate awareness to the public.

Since community and learning have so many different manifestations and
definitions, I thought it might be important to organize a conceptual structure that would
help to distinguish them from each other, while recognizing the links between them.
From my close examination of these models, I identified several components that seem to
characterize strong learning communities: a) real world experiences, b) educational orientations, and c) decision-making strategies.

In the next chapter, Chapter 5, I put all these pieces together to develop A Framework for Evaluating Learning Communities (FELC). This framework is intended for use in analyzing and identifying the type of community specifically constructed in traditional and alternative Community-based Art Education practices, but could also be used in other fields where the term “learning community” is bandied about.
CHAPTER 5
FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING LEARNING COMMUNITIES

School today, with its top-down structure, competitive belief system, rating, ranking, labeling, and segregation of children, is not about promoting or practicing community, and in many ways it advocates the exact opposite, fostering qualities that tear people apart rather than bring them together. It’s easy to call a school or classroom a community, but if we were to hold those environments to a realistic vision of the idea, it would be extremely difficult to locate community anywhere inside a traditional school, except perhaps in the lunchroom or playground. (Wolk 1998, p. 55)

The above quote comments upon the ease with which educators loosely apply the term “community” to classroom environments. However, in Chapters 2 and 4, the review of qualities attributed to learning communities, as well as the abundance of literature on the related holistic and alternative approaches to education, suggested several qualities inherent to genuine, democratic community. In this chapter, I examined these and other qualities of learning communities more closely and proposed that these can be used to distinguish between different levels of a hierarchical framework, one that ultimately suggests the accuracy of Wolk’s (1998) criticism.

Decision-Making Processes within a Community

Real world experiences defined by student interests and engagement in decision-making processes are critical for student involvement in learning, knowledge construction, and self-efficacy. Participation in a learning community, within and beyond an established setting, can be examined in terms of both decision-making and self-directed experiences. I have discussed self-directed learning that involves interaction with the wider community extensively in an earlier chapter; however, before turning to
my framework of learning communities, a brief review of literature about decision-making processes is important in providing a complete contextual background for the framework.

Reflecting on the process of community building, the power structure, and level of engagement and participation that occurs, often corresponds to how decisions are made within a group. Kansas State University (2001) produced a Fact Sheet that outlines three ways that individuals and groups reach decisions. These included:

- **Dominance/Submission (Win/Lose).** One person dominates the situation and others give in as a decision is made (para. 6).
- **Conversion (sometimes Win/Win, sometimes Lose/Lose).** Additional facts are presented so that one person persuades the others to his or her view, or gives up something to get something (para. 7).
- **Integration (Win/Win).** A blending of ideas develops when everyone can agree and support. The group discusses the alternatives, states individual views, and makes a decision based on the needs of everyone (para. 8).

Taking these three processes of decision-making further into the realm of community building, Plant (1974) suggested that the positions individuals hold in relation to other individuals of a group fall within the standings of *subject* or *servant*, *exile*, *rebel*, *vagrant*, or *member* (pp. 48–49). *Servant or subject* implies repression and oppression of identity where the individual is controlled by and conforms to the values of the group. Individuals can also choose to leave the group in *exile* with feelings of alienation after discovering that the social interaction and discourse of the group is foreign and/or meaningless to his/her sensibilities. The less extreme position of *rebel* places an individual at odds within the group, acting out with anger and opposition in constant disagreement (unhealthy criticism) with group values, and living with the consequence of rejection. A *vagrant* represents a marginalized person in a group, drifting about as an
apathetic individual who finds the values of the group meaningless and irrelevant. True membership is attained when the individual is functioning as an integral part of the group, energized with self-expression, achievement, and shared goals reflecting reciprocity in meeting the needs of all members.

The characteristics of membership then, resemble Clark’s (1999) description of the characteristics inherent to “genuine community”; all other groupings that are often considered community can actually be perceived as collectivism. Referencing Buber’s 1965 publication I and Thou, Clark (1999) defined “the collective” or “collectivism” as a group of people who have lost their “personal identity, voice, efficacy, and responsibility” as a result of “surrendering self in order to become an accepted part of a larger group” (p. 6).

Applying Plant’s (1974) characteristics of individual positions in relation to the power structure and level of engagement within groups, one can easily see how the decision-making process informs these positions. Servitude, exile, rebellion, and vagrancy exhibit features that can be associated with the dominance/submission and conversion practices of decision-making. Integration parallels membership.

Confusion often surrounds misapplication and misunderstanding of the similar words “collective” and “community.” This confusion tends to interfere and prohibit the establishment of true and meaningful communities in education. Quite often communal activities are equated with loss of identity. Fear of losing individual control and power, and thereby displacing the culturally revered “individual” as the center of educational efforts, creates opposition to community-based learning. (Bucci 2003). Indeed, this resistance is not unfounded, as group work can sometimes subsume individualism, but
this situation is reflective of how decisions are made within a group and in understanding
the decision-making process. In addition, misappropriated use of control and power can
disenfranchise individuals in their efforts to create an authentically democratic
community.

With genuine community, shared insights, knowledge, and expertise of the
individual ideally become empowering forces essential to the work of the group. A
democratic learning community cannot exist without respect for multiple perspectives.

**Defining the Framework**

The framework described below classifies educational learning communities into
specific categories. These categories organized into tiers, suggest a movement from
superficial practices to authentic practices of learning communities. Three key concepts
drawn from holistic, Community Youth Development (CYD), Participatory Action
Research (PAR), and alternative school literature provide a working strategy for
analyzing and classifying their characteristics in relative positions.

- **Real world experience**: This concept addresses the *where* and *when* of learning, and
  is situated in authentic access and experiences beyond the classroom. It considers the
  physical setting and the timeframe in which learning takes place, the utilization of
  external sources, and the interactive/communicative skills required.

- **Educational orientation**: This concept addresses a) *what* is being taught and learned,
  including an assortment of pedagogies that range from the solicitation of prescribed
  knowledge to open-ended inquiry, b) *why* information and understandings are
  presented, and c) *how* knowledge is constructed.

- **Decision-making**: This concept is informed by the democratic process, directing
  attention to *who* is distributing power and authority, as well as equity of power,
  rewards and consequences, and the resulting dynamics created by the relationship of
  individual group members to each other.

  In the following suggested framework, I used these essential concepts to analyze
  and distinguish between six levels or tiers of learning communities as practiced by
educators. These concepts draw attention to how students engage in community and how their knowledge and self-efficacy are informed, determined, and constructed at each level (Table 1). It provides just one possible way to draw distinctions between different ways that educators define community.

**Tier 1: Enforcement**

Schools may call themselves communities, but actually represent forced compulsory attendance in a facility under centralized control.

**Defining characteristics**

**Real world experience:** As Lippard (1997) maintained, “a peopled place is not always a community” (p. 24). Referring to the dictionary definition of community in Chapter 2, this first tier can be associated with “an interacting population of various kinds of individuals in a common location”… “linked by a common policy” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary 2003b). The physical facility as well as the institutional management define and drive the amount of student and teacher engagement in the practice of community at this level. Gatto (1990) informed us that

Our form of compulsory schooling is an invention of the state of Massachusetts around 1850. It was resisted - sometimes with guns - by an estimated eighty per cent of the Massachusetts population, the last outpost in Barnstable on Cape Cod not surrendering its children until the 1880's when the area was seized by militia and children marched to school under guard. (para. 5)

The increased attention to attendance and keeping track of students, executed in a number of ways, tends to bury the human side of students under a pile of facts and figures (Gatto 1991). Management of the masses is the essential qualification of success in this level. The learning community is firmly equated with a school-based community, defined only by attendance in the same institution.
In addition, there are a number of established resources available in the community that offer watchdog benefits to learning communities by providing truancy services as well as onsite supervision. Truancy officers are employed by the school, or by the local juvenile justice system, to round up truant students or to secure the physical facility. While their ultimate mission is to help youth, they nevertheless act as a control mechanism for corraling youth, making sure each child is where he or she is “supposed” to be. Often, adults in the larger community view as suspect children who are not in school during the widely accepted school hours.

**Educational orientation:** The transmission approach to learning, where young people are taught established values, beliefs, and accepted knowledge through absorption, memorization, and mastery of material is a goal not necessarily met at this level. Record keeping and numerical management and accountability of students and even teachers are the focus at this level.

Understanding that teachers in general are caring, hard working individuals, it is the institution of education itself that “overwhelms their individual contributions …” (Gatto 1990, para. 4). Teachers as figures of authority are required to keep constant surveillance of their students both physically and mentally as taskmasters, overseers, evaluators, and judges of student self-containment and discipline, student self worth, classroom involvement, prescribed knowledge construction, and hierarchical place (Gatto 1991). Teachers too are kept under surveillance at this level. The role of the conscientious teacher is then often at odds with the institutional sine qua non, creating frustration, disillusionment, and sometimes apathy or resistance.¹

¹ My own experience as a student teacher ten years ago found me questioning the importance of keeping track of students with school mandated color-coded slips of paper. I was to record students who were
**Decision-making:** At this level, mandates flow from the top down, dictating teacher practice and student behaviors. State and local administrators determine and apply their authority onto principals and teachers, who must then enforce these practices on students. Teachers have no voice in decision-making (concretely seen in states with no teachers’ union) and students have no voice in the way policy is coercively ordained. As Smyth (1987) suggested, the relationship between administrators and supervisors, and the resulting educational practices and “processes of inspection, domination, and quality control” continue to be grounded in the outdated “industrial-managerial model” established in the early 20th century (p. 570).

Imposed membership in a community through teaching assignment rather than choice affects teachers’ commitment to this level of learning community. Imposed membership takes two forms: assignments to grade levels or courses that the teacher is ill prepared for, and/or assignments to schools that are unfamiliar, physically distant, or culturally different.

In many counties across the nation, teachers are challenged for various reasons to teach subjects or grade levels for which they are not qualified. Non-acceptance of this charge could cost a teacher his/her job, so many acquiesce by sticking to what they do know: rules, regulations, and dictated information. Fear and lack of knowledge tend to create a sterile environment for community-building in this level. One Texas school

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unexcused tardy on pink paper, excused tardy on blue paper, unexcused absence on pink paper, and excused absence on yellow paper. Those who needed a pass to the office had to carry another color paper, while those who wanted to go to the guidance office, yet another color. I was always confused and felt that too much time was spent during class trying to figure out the appropriate color scheme. When I returned to that same school a year later as an interim teacher, I ignored the accounting system completely, in resistance to what I considered an unnecessary and complicated distraction.
district teacher survey, the Texas School Performance Review, published in 2001, reiterated these notions through written quotes made by teachers:

Too many teachers are forced to teach in areas outside their certification, thereby providing a substandard education to students. (para. 32)

I have been teaching without a curriculum guide all year in a content area I was not trained for (not to mention two grade levels). I rely on the help of two teachers but I never know what I'm going to teach one or two weeks from now. (para. 33)

Other school officials around the country agree that forced situation caused by teacher shortages and poor administration has led to hiring teachers for classes outside their field or discipline. A Detroit newspaper listed the consequences of this condition for the Detroit Public Schools (Harmon 2000 para. 25):

- The limited availability of teachers armed with education degrees has forced Detroit Public Schools to staff hundreds of classrooms with uncertified teachers. Many teachers are also teaching subjects outside of their expertise.

- School board member Glenda Price and others believe student performance suffers because of the shortage. Price anticipates that the nationwide dilemma will get worse before it gets better. She said there is nothing to indicate an increase in the number of college graduates trained to teach.

Employment of unprepared and/or non-certified teachers is just one example of measures taken by administrators to control unmanageable situations caused by teacher shortages. Teacher isolation is another example that exists in various circumstances.

Teachers who need to travel distances beyond their own social community to work due to a lack of teaching positions, often feel alienated from the community in which they

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2 As the art teacher at a new charter school established for the arts in North Carolina, I was told halfway through the year that I had to teach reading to a group of students from various grade levels and various reading levels because these students had been identified as needing remedial help. There was no Chapter 1 program in place, nor did the administration intend for there to be one, at least for the remainder of that year. Consequently, my art program was cut back in order to allow time for me to teach reading. In addition, and more importantly, I had no clue how to teach reading to various reading levels, and since I was given no training, or even help from any other teacher, I simply read books to the children and had them draw stories. I was at a total loss, which was a disservice to the students as well as a source of anger and frustration for me.
teach as well as from their own community. In speaking about recruiting teachers to rural schools, Simurda (2003) suggested that isolation is a factor for new teachers. Michael Hill, the director for Policy Studies in Rural Education at the National Association of State Boards of Education stated, “Trying to recruit new teachers out of school to rural areas is pretty tough unless they’re from that area. I once lost a guy who felt that driving 20 miles to a McDonald’s was just too far” (Simurda p. 23).

Lack of professional support in rural areas creates professional isolation as well, which can often be more damaging than geographic isolation (Simurda 2003). Time constraints from travel as well as a sense of detachment from the local social community, makes it difficult for teachers to interact effectively with their colleagues, students, and parents of students. This especially applies to those, such as art teachers, who may be the one person in their field at any given school.

In moving from teacher issues to student issues, the concept of students as “empty vessels to be filled,” requiring constant adult direction and intervention is another characteristic embedded in this tier. Accepting the daily system of being sequestered away from the real world, students, perceived as an ignorant and primitive mass, must endure a lack of privacy and continual supervision that extends to after school hours (Gatto 1991). This creates a body of students dependent on “the casual judgment of strangers” (para. 14) for knowledge construction, appropriate self-discipline, and ultimately the true meaning of their lives. As Gatto (1991) cynically suggested:

It is no exaggeration to say that our entire economy depends upon this lesson being learned. Think of what would fall apart if kids weren't trained in the dependency lesson: The social-service businesses could hardly survive, including the fast-growing counseling industry; commercial entertainment of all sorts, along with television, would wither if people remembered how to make their own fun; the food services, restaurants and prepared-food warehouses would shrink if people
returned to making their own meals rather than depending on strangers to cook for them. Much of modern law, medicine, and engineering would go too—the clothing business as well—unless a guaranteed supply of helpless people poured out of our schools each year. (para. 13)

In their critique of *Assertive Discipline*, a disciplinary model adopted by thousands of educators across the country, Render, Padilla, and Krank (1989) noted the use of the terms “good” and “bad” to describe appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. “It is implicit that when students do what a teacher wants [appropriate behaviors] they are ‘good’ and when they do not do what a teacher wants [inappropriate behaviors] they are ‘bad.’ This is a strong message for young people to be sure” (p. 609). In this particular model, rules and consequences are defined and dictated by an authoritarian figure and children are told they do have a choice – to choose good or bad behavior (Render, Padilla, & Krank 1989). Render, Padilla, and Krank (1989) also pointed out, “The notion of choice in such a situation is a myth when one considers that students do not have a choice to be in school” (p. 617).

Good students surrender their own estimation of self worth and knowledge to official evaluation (Gatto 1991). Those who do not surrender are labeled as poor (or bad) students, carrying this stigma through the remainder of their academic life as “problem” students. Additionally, many secondary schools have an unwritten policy of “pushing” these problem students out of school through suggested voluntary withdrawal.

Orel (2003), a former teacher in a Birmingham, Alabama adult high school program, maintained that 522 students in his school district were withdrawn or “push-out” mid-year, shortly after per-student funding (school funding based on student numbers) was granted to the school. The reason given by the superintendent for all 522 student withdrawals was “lack of interest” (p. 8). While writing a research paper about
this issue for a graduate course, Orel discovered that this was not the reason. He then volunteered to teach his adult education class, which consisted of mostly withdrawn high school students, to a number of enthusiastic students during the summer without pay. His research paper found its way into the hands of the school board, who determined that it was written without authorization. Orel’s adult education program was closed down. When he proposed a “massive volunteer literacy project to work one-on-one with the withdrawn students,” (p. 8) Orel was fired from his job. His students were “dispersed to the streets” (p.8) with no afterthought or concern for their welfare (Orel 2003).

Summary

On this rudimentary level, physical place, as well as the established mode of operations via rules and regulations, are the most significant components of community. A group of people who gather at a school for the purpose of education does not necessarily mean that real engagement in a learning community will occur. In fact, community in the best sense can actually be undermined or sacrificed when stakeholders’ powers are usurped by a controlling few. Teachers and students who gather at a location and engage in community that replays set policies of enforcement often do so out of fear, indifference, and/or ignorance. Characterized by dominance and submission in a win/lose decision-making structure, servitude, exile, rebellion, and vagrancy are positions that stakeholders experience, often in rotation. It may be suggested that individuals experience anger, temporarily idealistic enthusiasm, or an emotional willingness somewhere in between.
Tier 2: Entrenchment

Fixed firmly and securely within the physical and intellectual trough of prescribed agendas and curricula, stakeholders are embedded in a system that is dictated by standards that perpetuate and maintain finite knowledge construction.

Defining characteristics

Real world experience: Moving beyond the first tier of engagement in community, this second level can be described as an educational location that allows some limited choice in schools and/or course electives as well as an option to join extracurricular clubs, sports, or other shared community activities. This setting continues to be defined as a school-based community, since the best place for knowledge acquisition is considered to be and maintained within the confines of a physical structure segregated away from the rest of society. Inflexible hours impose constraints on where and when learning can take place. Illustrated by Alameda County, California, teachers listed time as one prohibitive factor in scheduling trips outside the school setting (Community Resources for Science 2000). In addition, classes structured and timed by a bell signaling the end of discussions, thought, and interaction, frequently prevent or cut short meaningful opportunities for community. Meier (1993) argued this point:

No other institution we know of, even the army or prison, is organized so mindlessly. In no other institution do we change supervisors and peer groups every forty-five minutes, or engage in a totally different activity every time the bell rings, without any particular sequential order. (p. 656)

Educational orientation: The orientation known as transmission is most common at this level, reinforcing knowledge as stable and best disseminated through rigid authority. Knowledge is assessed through high stakes compulsory testing. The use of these tests for school accountability can cause a school to become a system driven by the
politics of accreditation and funding rather than by classroom instruction and student learning (Sloane & Kelly 2003; Abrams, Padulla, & Madaus 2003).

In addition, students are put under increased stress, anxiety, and fatigue caused by the one high stakes test that can make or break them (Abrams, Padulla, & Madaus 2003). This is repeatedly witnessed in those high school seniors who have attained passing grades in course work, but who cannot graduate because they have not passed the required standardized exam. Empirical studies indicate that mandated state testing increases high school student drop out rates as well (Abrams, Padulla, & Madaus 2003).

A Florida high school student’s online response to an article about the FCAT, Florida’s high school exit exam, echoed much of same sentiments as those highlighted by Abrams, Padulla, and Madaus (2003):

I agree with the student who says that passing the FCAT Reading or Math shouldn't be a determining factor in graduating. There are people who are just not good test takers but are extremely bright. You have people with test anxiety or someone like me who just doesn't do well on timed tests. Testing as the only indicator of whether or not someone has achieved the highest level of academic excellence has never been a 'good' idea. Many students work very hard in school to get the most out of it. They should not be penalized for missing the FCAT Reading by ten points. I wonder what this students ACT or SAT scores are like. Aside from that, I have read many articles lately stating that as FCAT scores increase, the scores on ACT and SAT have gone down. Maybe that's because to much time is spent learning the FCAT and not enough spent on learning the basics. (Rosenthal 2003, para. 26)

High stakes testing affect teachers as well. By spending more time in the classroom on preparing students for the test, teachers across the country feel they are under unnecessary pressure to increase student performance (Abrams, Padulla, & Madaus

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3 In my experience as a high school art teacher, I had witnessed seniors in my class reacting in highly agitated and frustrated ways because they had not passed their final effort at the high school exit exam and would not be receiving a high school diploma, even though they had passed all of their courses. Some actually cried during class. I felt helpless as to advising, helping, or even comforting them in this situation. The topic of passing the state exam was a constant undercurrent in my class with both low and high performing students, and I felt that attention to learning was undercut by the tension.
Research indicates that placing an emphasis on test preparation decreases morale and can lead to the de-professionalization of teachers as they are forced to narrow their teaching skills to test instruction (Abram, Padulla, & Madaus 2003).

In this regard, teachers, as presumed masters of knowledge at this level, engage in knowledge construction through didactic measures of lecturing, rote memorization, and repeated practice. Although it can be assumed that novices learn from experts, teachers as experts rarely get an opportunity to practice their knowledge (Meier 1993). “Young people go to schools in which adults are allowed no time to act as serious mentors” (Meier 1993, p. 656).

Schools whose practices situate them at this level of learning community also have “an obsession with time” (Welsh 1986, p. 112). “Time on task” is an objective for those pedagogues who equate the number of minutes students spend on learning an assignment with how well they learn it (Welsh 1986). The required time in school (6 hours a day) as well as segmented time throughout the day to teach and learn the material become the most important aspects of the functioning of this learning community.

This of course does not take in to consideration two things: a) some students require more time to learn an assignment, and b) meaningful learning is cut short when time is up. As one high school art student related, “You have ten minutes to set up, thirty minutes to do your work, and ten to clean up” (Welsh 1986, p. 120). Another student’s comment suggested not only frustration, but also the issue of disconnection that occurs when work is limited and then interrupted by enforced time restrictions:

You have to go to the art room and “work” there. I usually just get started when the bell kills it. There’s no time to polish – to keep working until you know it’s finished. I usually end up taking it home. (Welsh 1986, p. 120)
Another issue at this level is the concept of adults as omniscient authorities of student ability and potential. Students enter into this level of community as apprentices where teachers model a required skill, and students follow. They are not encouraged to question the authority of the teacher or the information presented to them. All students, regardless of their learning style or interests are expected to adapt to fit the prescribed mold. This may be summed up best in a quote from a high school student “There is no feeling [at school] that more than physical presence is required” (Welsh 1986, p. 112). Those who do not fit the mold, or question and critique the learning they receive are negatively labeled throughout their school experience.

**Decision-making:** Engagement in community is based on a hierarchy of power, with federal, state, and local administrators dictating standards, and course requirements.

This structure is complex and sometimes all consuming. Gatto (2003b) stated:

> At the heart of the durability of mass schooling is a brilliantly designed power fragmentation system which distributes decision-making so widely among so many warring interests that large-scale change is impossible without a guidebook. Few insiders even understand how to steer the ship, and those favored few may be losing the will and focus to do so. (pg. xxi)

Teachers are often “subject to the flavor of the month reforms advocated by politicians, administrators, and public policy” (Alcock 2004, p.10A). Although experienced teachers learn to recognize students needs, to address those needs would go against current mandate, perhaps costing teachers their jobs. Unfortunately, many teachers have become hardened to the realities of their precarious position. The backlash effect can be seen in teacher frustration, demoralization, and lack of respect for the teaching profession, both community wide and within teachers themselves.⁴

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⁴ I recall one student in particular in my high school art class who wanted nothing more than to create comics although I felt at the time that comics did not fit into the class assignments. Trained as an educator
Many students believe that they have a real choice in selecting their courses; however, limitations are often set forth according to teacher-determined abilities, test-evaluated competencies, and/or prescribed coursework for graduation requirements. Tracking, not only situates students in predefined courses, but also reinforces the advancement of competitive and segregated groups within the school setting. Traditionally established “truths” about abilities and achievement (or intelligence) infused with “cultural politics,” keep administrators, educators, and parents from supporting efforts to eliminate tracking (Oakes et al. 1997, p. 483). In more direct terms, tracking is one factor that maintains the status quo, keeping white students separate from minority students (Oakes et al. 1997).

In addition, many students, having little interest in many of the elective courses offered in their middle or high schools, are resigned to being placed in these courses anyway, as there often are no alternatives. What students actually are interested in learning is typically not surveyed or given consideration, although elective courses are presented under the presumptuous auspice of choice. In his comment on what he perceives as the “stylized game of school,” Welsh (1986) suggested that students “tolerate hours of boredom and trivial routine almost as a favor to us” (p. 113). In a few geographical areas, alternative courses are offered to high school students from local community colleges or universities for high school and college credit, but here again, there is very little choice, as most of these are not considered electives.

to teach the formal qualities of “fine” art and following the prescribed objectives for art education in my state as well as my school, I did not allow this student to explore this genre of art that held some meaning for him. I was fearful of a confrontation with the head of the art department in terms of allowing this student to continue with comic production, and instead continued to force my agenda onto this student. Eventually the student stopped coming to class.
The only real choice for many students lies in extra-curricular activities; however, these too can be wrought with dominating characteristics. Teachers who also coach or sponsor extra-curricular activities continue to position themselves in the role of master, disseminating knowledge through premeditated strategies, repetitive training, and expected outcomes. Coaches and sponsors may find their relationship with students in this position more rewarding, especially with winning teams and clubs, and enjoy a high level of activity and student participation; however, the role of “master” continues to be played out, validated, and preserved. In speculating the differences between high-school sports now and when most parents of current high-school athletes were in school, Smith (2004) suggested that

Athletes were less inclined to "specialize" in one sport and instead played two or three. These days, many coaches often urge an athlete to pick one sport in junior high and do it exclusively. Part of their pitch is that “this will improve your chance for a scholarship.” What it really improves is the coach's odds of a winning season (para. 15).

When questioned, Maine students maintained that interfering parents, favoritism in coaching, and a “win-at-all-cost” philosophy at their schools and in their communities were harmful aspects of school sports (Weber 2004, para. 10).

This is not to say that the coach or sponsor as a positive role model is not important, as indeed he or she can be, or that sports and clubs do not serve a valuable function in learning communities. However, another underlying component that sometimes serves as an obstacle to extra-curricular public school activities at this level is that now some schools require students to pay a fee in order to participate. In terms of school sports 30 years ago and now, Smith (2004) related, “athletes didn't have to ‘pay to play’ a school sport. That's still the case in most school districts, but an increasing number have instituted a fee to play a sport” (para. 12).
Another concern with coaching as a component of a learning community is the issue of teacher certification. In Maine, almost 70% of middle and high school level coaching staff were not teachers (Weber 2004).

We were noticing that more and more of the high school coaches were not teachers and so had no role in the educational programs,” said Robert Cobb, the dean of the University of Maine College of Education and Human Development. “The percentage was even higher in the middle schools, which clearly affects what a school is trying to accomplish with sports and academics.” (Weber 2004 para. 3)

**Summary**

Even in this level of community built upon shared interests it can be suggested that there is no adventure in learning. Teachers see students only in relation to subject during an inflexible day that is built around 40–50 minute class periods. Passive learning is the norm for knowledge construction, with “70%–90% teacher talk” (Neumann 2003, p. 228) as the mode of operation. Norm-referenced assessment and evaluation for punitive, screening, and labeling purposes create competitive roles through tracking and ability grouping.

Students are often bored or sometimes considered behavioral problems. Teachers as authoritative disseminators of knowledge are pressed to provide state and local authorities with proof of their abilities as teachers through student success via testing.

At this tier, community continues to be characterized largely by dominance and submission in a win/lose decision-making structure. Teachers as both employed servants of administrative masters and masters of indentured students often engage in this level of learning community with an initial hopeful and enthusiastic attitude that turns to apathy, anger, and frustration. Students engage in this physical and intellectual community with many of the same emotions that often result in acts of exile, rebellion, and vagrancy.
Tier 3: Enrichment

Embellishment of curricula such as project-based components, field trips, and discussion act as supplements or add-ons to existing practices rather than integrated elements.

Defining characteristics

Real world experience: Within this tier, connections to the world beyond the classroom are often experienced through trips to other locations or through outside community guests visiting the classroom. Museums and other public institutions provide educational programs and opportunities for school groups. They offer extensions of the community through supplemental material, through representatives who vicariously bring the program to the classroom, or through authentic on-site participation.

Teachers, whose schools offer very little financial support for special events or field trips, can sometimes find local museums that will send docents to the classroom to share a bit of cultural community with students. For schools located a great distance from cultural centers, many museums, such as the National Gallery of Art (2004) provide resource materials that can be borrowed in the form of slides, tapes, and curricula. Some even have websites designed for children. Indeed the role of museums, cultural institutions, and public works become important in this level.

Outside adventures such as field trips, although a component in this level, are often not as readily available or as meaningful as they ought to be. Liabilities and logistics constrict the number of field trips a teacher can plan, and limit the ability of teachers to take advantage of learning opportunities that arise during the year.

The Alameda County teacher survey, referenced in the previous tier, also reports that besides the time factor, cost, availability of transportation, and inconvenience of
transportation create logistical blocks in allowing outside adventures (Community Resources for Science 2000).

A controversial trend regarding “educational” field trips speaks to the difficulties of securing learning experiences in the community. With shrinking school budgets, commercial businesses such as Toys R Us, The Sports Authority, Pearle Vision, and PetSmart have taken up the task of providing field trip opportunities complete with transportation to educators across the country (Alfano 2004). Field trips apparently have become big business for commercial companies over the past ten years who are “happy to step in to get customers for the future” (Alfano 2004, para. 14). Lack of content and meaning in field trips unfortunately is common at this level because of many logistics, including time, money, and school policy.

Magnet schools as well as schools that offer electives and extra curricular activities, find a place at this level of learning community. Parents who view school choice as an opportunity for their children to receive better public school education find magnet schools a convenient and satisfactory option. Certainly, many strong learning

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5 Taking a bus driving training class in order to guarantee a bus and driver for any field trips I wished to take with my high school art class was a suggestion made to me during a frustrated conversation with another art teacher at my school. In this way, I could drive the bus myself and reduce the financial as well as the logistical burden of securing a driver. While I did not know of any other teacher that held a bus driver certificate, I actually did begin a bus driver training class. I soon realized, however, that the requirements were more than I could manage at the time, and dropped out.

6 While serving as an intern in an elementary school, I participated in a fifth grade field trip to a local college art gallery. The art teacher proudly told me that every year she takes the entire fifth grade to this gallery at the same time every year. She also mentioned that the fifth graders look forward to it because this is the only trip they take in art during their elementary years. There was no curricular preparation for the trip as far as relating to curricular content, as the focus of the exhibit was to view the Scholastic Art Scholarship winners. During this trip, the 100 students were shuffled single file through the museum in record time. There was no opportunity to discuss the artwork as we were on a strict time schedule, and opportunities for discussion were not taken upon return to the classroom.
communities develop within magnet programs. However, school choice through magnet schools is sometimes infused with problems.

Henig (1995) in a report about Maryland magnet schools suggested, “The direction in which school choice points may exacerbate rather than ameliorate racial segregation” (p. 729). In addition, many parents (situated along with their children as consumers of schools) are often not capable of choosing the best option for their child, allowing arbitrary qualities such as school uniforms dictate selection (Gintis 1995).

**Educational orientation:** Lab work, and hands-on experiences as well as the verbal exchange of ideas finds a place here in this level as project-based activities. The *transaction* orientation of learning through activities and projects, experiments, some outside adventures, and in-class attempts at conversation and discussion begins to appear as pedagogical strategies. However, the transmission approach to learning continues to define much of the pedagogy in this learning community.

Project-based activities enter the curricular scene at this level; however, projects are often confused with unit plans. Wolk (1998) described units as “finite, predetermined, externally created, and ‘taught’” (p. 97). Learning through unit activities are “highly teacher-, textbook-, and official-curriculum-directed” (p. 97). They are also preplanned in groups of lessons with a prescribed final product or test and with little social interaction. Unit-based curriculum finds its place in Tier 3.

Project-based activities, on the other hand are “open, long term, integrative inquiries done in a social setting that are created and/or developed with much student input and ownership” (Wolk 1998, p. 96). Within project-based learning, there fall two curricular categories: those that are teacher-created, and those that are teacher-guided, but
student-created. Teacher-created projects are either obtained from the official curriculum, or deviate only in degrees from the mandated curriculum (Wolk 1998). Teacher-guided, but student-created projects are initiated with the teacher presenting options and issues, and students choosing the direction they wish to take (Wolk 1998). Of course, this is simplistic as there are always characteristics that fall in between, but these distinctions will serve as distinguishing traits for clarity in this framework.

In this level, teacher-directed projects, derived from official curricular mandates with expected outcomes as described in the first category, are more often the practice. Rarely are students truly allowed to choose a project based on their own interests or with unpredictable results in this level. Quite often, choice is disguised in the form of a preformulated list from which students select.

Discussion is generally principled upon encouraging democracy, although teachers tend to shy away from controversial issues that may solicit conflicting ideas. In her book, *Moral Questions in the Classroom*, Simon (2001) suggested that teachers often refrain from engaging students in discussions of issues that are of intense importance to them and to society out of fear of controversy and pressure to teach required information.

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7 The last position I had as an elementary school art educator found me in a traditional but private school setting. On my first day there, the directors of the school proudly conveyed to me that they and their staff were open to the arts, and that I would find a supportive environment for my art program. To this end, I was informed that there were several bulletin boards strictly reserved for my use, and I was to be sure and utilize these boards to display students’ artwork, which could be rotated on a weekly basis. My program was mostly project-based and process-oriented with art activities and art production spanning several weeks to complete. After a few weeks had gone by, the directors began questioning me as to why no artwork was up on the boards. I of course explained that my students had not completed their projects yet. When the artwork did go up, the directors as well as other staff members were reserved to say the least in their comments about the work, as much of it was not necessarily “pretty.” As I understood it, the previous art teacher did “quickie” lessons every week and was able to rotate new artwork on a weekly basis. She also perpetuated public opinion that art has to look beautiful in order for it to be good by using fool-proof art production techniques that allowed for very little experimentation or unpredictable outcomes.
**Decision-making:** The teacher continues to be considered an authoritarian figure, but begins to play an important role in students’ learning through guiding class conversations and discussions. However, the teacher does present material in the form of teacher-directed research and discussion and can either lead controversial discussions towards student awareness or manipulate discussions towards prescribed knowledge or a teaching agenda. Hess (2004) offered another related perspective with four approaches that describe how teachers respond to the idea of introducing controversial issues in their classroom:

- **Denial:** A teacher believing that a topic is not controversial, will teach it so that students will acquire that *right* answer.

- **Privilege:** A teacher, believing that a topic is controversial, but has only one right answer to the problem, attempts to persuade students to accept that answer as truth.

- **Avoidance:** A teacher believing that his/her views are so strong that a controversial topic cannot be presented fairly, chooses not to address the issue at all.

- **Balance:** A teacher strives to balance a fair discussion by promoting consideration of all sides and positions of a controversial issue.

Teachers at this level of learning community will most often adopt the avoidance approach in classroom discussion, but in some instances may even adopt the one-sided persuasive approaches as authorities of knowledge. Rarely will balance in controversy be promoted here.

Teachers who experiment with giving students the opportunity to establish their own set of class rules also find themselves at this level. The techniques of conflict resolution may be used as a “way to reduce fights and other conflicts so that students can just get on with education” (Kivel 2000, para. 5). However, in this respect it is often viewed as a classroom management tool and not as a way for students and teachers to engage in developing “cooperative classroom practices that break down the competition
and individualism of traditional education” (para. 8). In addition, this type of classroom management takes time away from the still present high-stakes testing mandates and teachers are often reluctant to use these strategies in their classroom communities.

**Summary**

This level of learning community continues to be mostly a school-based community with all operations stemming from the classroom. Mandates, inflexible schedules, and limited class periods tend to dictate access to opportunities and interests beyond the classroom. Field trips, a potentially viable community experience beyond the classroom are characterized at this point as a break from the confinements of the classroom by both teachers and students, rather than as meaningful connections to a curriculum.

Although this level may appear more interactive with teacher-directed discussions and research, many of the characteristics from Tiers 1 and 2 continue to dominate and produce learning communities based on traditional, industrial pedagogies. In other words:

The education system (school) comes complete with production goals (desired end states); objectives (precise intermediate end states); raw material (children); a physical plant (school building); a 13-stage assembly line (grades K-12); directives for each stage (instruction); managers for each stage (teachers); plant supervisors (principals); trouble shooters (consultants, diagnosticians); quality control mechanisms (discipline, rules, lock-step progress through stages, conformity); interchangeability of parts (teacher-proof curriculum, 25 students per processing unit, equality or treatment); uniform criteria for all (standardized testing interpreted on the normal curve); and basic product available in several lines of trim (academic, vocational, business, general). Is this reminiscent of Fords, Apples, and Big Macs? (Sawada et al 1985, p.15)

Stakeholders at this level of learning community continue to experience mostly dominance and submission in a win/lose decision-making structure. However, engagement in the positions of servitude, exile, rebellion, and/or vagrancy is observed
less often as curricular practices attempt to add activities beyond rote learning. Individuals enter into this physical and mental community with slightly less resignation, apathy, and/or anger. Idealistic enthusiasm continues to permeate the community as members participate in more “hopeful” curricular activities; that is activities that seem to allow more autonomy for both teacher and student.

**Tier 4: Experiment**

Tentative attempts at integrating student governance components, democratic discussion, and physical connections with the wider community as well as integrating strategies designed to meet the needs of individual students are tested within controlled environments.

**Defining characteristics**

**Real world experience:** School-to-work or work-study programs and vocational training programs are integral components of this level. However, still defined as mainly a location-based community, these experiences outside the traditional school setting are often supported as potential cures for deficit-based assumptions about those students who do not follow the traditional college track or are considered at-risk. “Risk-reduction strategies fail to adequately prepare young people to assume productive roles as adults” (Astroth et al. 2002).

School-to-work and work-study programs provide students with an opportunity to attend school part time, in order to earn the required credits for graduation, and work part time, in order to experience the hopefully empowering aspects of earning a wage and learning life skills. Vocational training programs incorporate course requirement work with job training in marketable skills, and are often offered to students who do not plan to attend college after high school. Although these opportunities have value, they
nevertheless are superficial with regard to their impact on the evolution of the wider community.

Having students make cursory connections between their own lives and the community of which they will eventually be a part of is a philosophical stance recognized by educators as well as administrators here. This perspective segregates young people from the larger community as individuals who are not yet prepared to face the contradictions of society and are unable to make viable contributions to the wider community (Magnuson, Hudson, & Baldwin 2003). In essence, adults in this learning community, marginalize students as non-members of the wider world.

In addition to program choices that move students beyond the classroom, this tier also finds a movement toward greater school choice. Frequently, charter schools advertise some alternatives to traditional educational practices with a mission of more innovative curricula that extend beyond the classroom walls. However, not all charter schools are created equal. In Michigan, the debate over expanding the number of charter schools in the state points to the lack of an accountability system. This allows charter schools to flourish in most states, but also permits these schools to continue without regard to educational effectiveness (Michigan Union 2004).  

**Educational orientation:** At this level, the transaction approach to learning dominates the pedagogical design. Varied attempts at learning strategies through

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8 Initially, I thought that the charter school where I taught and sent one of my children to was a great opportunity to bring the two divergent populations in the small conservative town where I lived together in community. After all, the school was supposedly established to do this. In addition, it was understood to be grounded in the arts and integration of all subjects. As it turned out, there was a hidden agenda that slowly became apparent with secret board meetings, and coercive strategies for choosing and retaining students and teachers. In addition, the administration and management of the school was so disruptive that eventually a for-profit private management company was hired to try and straighten out the ineffective and offensive situation.
meaningful activities, experiments, and adventures, and between people through
conversation and discussion help learners become more receptive to other possibilities.
Also sometimes noted is the transformation of knowledge that encourages learners to
seek deeper meaning behind their lives through the learning that can happen in
interactions between people. Discussions that introduce controversial ideas emerge
through a more democratic process balanced by the teacher as guide in modeling of
operations that example appropriate courtesies and interactions.

Though usually teacher-created from unofficial curriculum, project-based activities
may offer some student input and decision-making. Group work, as seen in cooperative
learning strategies defined in Chapter 1, functions in various capacities and effectiveness.
Peer learning and teaching begin to materialize as more developed cooperative strategies
are established. Integration of subjects and disciplines are attempted at cursory levels.

Service learning becomes an important component in this level. It is estimated that
service learning as a widespread practice in education is carried out as a pedagogical
strategy in almost one-third of all public K-12 schools, in one-half of all high schools,
and in up to 88% of private schools (Billig 2003). However, not all service-learning
experiences are equivalent in meaningful learning opportunities. They vary widely in
purpose, outcomes, and levels of student engagement.

In referring to the definition of service learning in Chapter 1, the type of service
learning seen here could best be described in terms of altruism and self-interest, giving
through charity, and weak transformative experiences. In addition, a prescribed numbers
of hours of completed service for graduation requirements mandated in an increasing
number of state initiatives, along with superficial or even non-existing reflective
components that go along with these initiatives, create a diminished form of service learning (Kahne & Westheimer 1999). Still, these beginning efforts to traverse isolated learning experiences are worthy of recognition.

**Decision-making:** Efforts to extend learning experiences to more meaningful interactions are seen with decision-making strategies. At this juncture, the teacher is not necessarily an authority, but plays an important role in students’ learning by facilitating conversation and discussion, and by modeling appropriate strategies for communicative intercourse. An exchange between people becomes an important part of the curriculum and some integration of ideas occurs as a result.

Distinctions between conversation, discussion, and dialogue should be made at this point, because their distinguishing characteristics punctuate the degree to which democratic interaction and integration of ideas develop through written and verbal exchange. Examining several researchers’ and philosophers’ views, Brookfield and Preskill (1999) offered a description of each, but maintained that researchers often use the terms interchangeably:

- **Conversation:** an informal structure seeking “an exchange of thoughts and feelings in which genial cooperation prevails” (pg. 4). Individuals take turns speaking and listening, but the discourse aims towards a kind of stability where little or no movement towards diversity of ideas occurs.

- **Discussion:** more seriously controlled than conversation. Individuals seek to settle an issue or adjust opinions by conferring and reaching a group consensus.

- **Dialogue:** exploration or inquiry into issues through collaborative questioning. Communication is directed towards “disequilibrium” (pg. 5) where disagreements evoke controversies that push individuals towards understandings and issue resolution.

These distinctions are to direct attention to various levels of democratic discourse throughout the rest of the framework. In this fourth tier, both conversation and
discussion suggest acquiescence and compromise of community participants as well as
the maintenance of original perspectives. Students who feel they are simply complying
with group consensus without having their voice recognized as important to the
discussion or resolution may respond with apathy, drifting through the learning
community as a marginalized member or vagrant.

Moving beyond conflict resolution as a classroom management tool, learning
communities at this level support strategies that strive to address violence by reducing
“racial, gender, and class divisions, …teacher disrespect, abuse, and harassment of
students, …basic values of competition, individualism, self-interest, and hierarchy”
(Kivel 2000, para. 6). Initiating conflict resolution strategies, however, can help provide
the scaffolding for more democratic, effective, empowering, and holistic learning

Conflict resolution can become the basis for students and teachers coming together
to decide what kind of community they want to be a part of. Issues of safety,
inclusion, and fairness can be incorporated into the curriculum, into class meetings,
into use of the playground, into all aspects of campus life. Teachers as well as
students can participate in and be accountable for their behavior within community
set standards. The curriculum can be focused on issues of inclusion, alternatives to
violence, and social justice. Then students can become adept at identifying bias,
stereotypes, misinformation, exploitation, and violence, and develop skills for
intervention and activism. (para. 8)

Student advisory panels offer another opportunity for students to engage in this
type of school wide conversation and governance. Depending on the receptiveness of the
administration, either these student advisory panels can represent a disembodied voice of
students with little or no influence, or they can serve as genuine, principled partners in
some of the decision-making concerning school policy.
Summary

The focus of this level is on the recognition that students learn best through hands-on experiences, interactions with peers, and limited, yet meaningful connections to the wider community. However, some retain the philosophy that students are not yet viable members of the community beyond the classroom and need to be trained towards that membership, which can eventually be attained after their education is complete.

Teachers who are willing to admit that they are not omniscient, relinquish some aspects of control, allowing for conversation, open-ended discussions, interactions, and less often, dialogue that may unearth conflicting ideas. As facilitators of more meaningful discussions and integration of ideas, teachers at this level try to guide students in democratic strategies and allow them to take a small part in classroom community ownership. Administrators may begin to acknowledge teachers as individuals who best understand the needs of their students, and allow teachers to take ownership of their classroom as well.

Characterized by mostly conversion strategies of governance, often one person, generally an adult authority persuades the others (students) to his or her view, or students sometimes give up one thing on order to get something else. Participants find themselves in a win/win or lose/lose decision-making structure depending upon the school (administrative) or classroom (teacher) agenda. Servitude, exile, rebellion, and vagrancy continue to be stakeholders’ experiences, but in less concentration. Individuals enter this learning community with more enthusiasm and willingness to participate, however, disillusionment may occur when ideal expectations are replaced with reality.
Tier 5: Engagement

Student involvement in authentic governance, curriculum design and authentic experiences beyond the classroom, induce energetic participation in learning and influence continued encounters with meaningful opportunities.

Defining characteristics

**Real world experience:** With at least a 50/50 school-based and community-based agenda, this level works to provide meaningful connections to students’ lives through real life opportunities that involve intergenerational as well as political, social, and professional links. Contacts with resident experts in the wider community are also sought for appropriate applications to learning. Service learning at this level becomes a learning opportunity that promotes caring, citizenship, and strong democracy, as well as high-order thinking.

Fieldwork and internships are also examples of learning experiences that involve a larger amount of student participation in the wider community. Fieldwork may be described as extended engagement in work or experiential learning in the community. This may involve ongoing investigations and studies such as specific environmental or ecological site work. Working with a commercial printing company may be classified as an internship in printing, a marketable skill. Best practices in service learning then incorporates both fieldwork and internships in various capacities. For example, working with Habitat for Humanity can be service learning coupled with fieldwork, as could an internship in carpentry.

**Educational orientation:** At this level, similarities can be drawn to holistic pedagogy which involves diverse perspectives from social, cultural, ecological, and
spiritual orientations, moving beyond cultural conditioning and individualism (ego) to an awareness and appreciation of the interconnectedness of all living and nonliving things.

Transformation of knowledge occurs when learners seek deeper meaning behind their lives – in relationship with others both locally and globally, and with the earth. Some self-directed learning happens when students are encouraged to pursue their own knowledge base. Students are encouraged to examine and deconstruct present knowledge and real life situations that often involve issues of importance to them through guided conflict and dialogue. Dialogue and discussion take precedence over lecturing and memorization as teachers step back and act as guides, modeling strategies supportive of open discourse, and encouraging issue investigation.

Project-based activities at this level derive from youth input and lead to a “negotiated” curriculum, as described by Boomer (1992). In a negotiated curriculum, both teacher and students “plan the unit, the activities, the goals, the assignments, and the negotiable options” (p. 9) that surround particular curriculum content. “The teacher’s main role… is to give information and teach only when it is needed” (p.12).

A more profound curricular orientation that may originate here is the idea of the “emergent curriculum.” Schwartz (1992) defined “emergent curriculum” as collaborative learning where students’ interests define, develop, and shape the curriculum, and where teachers as well as students “collectively pursue lines of inquiry” (p. 23). Making a connection to Deweyan philosophy, Schwartz stated:

One of the assumptions about learning that underlie this view of children, learning and curriculum is that people are by nature active seekers after meaning. In any classroom of young people (or adults), I assume that each person is trying to make sense of the various experiences that the group offers. In doing so, individuals relate experiences in class to their wider worlds of experience, which is another
way of saying that children’s’ lives provide a context for their school experiences. (p. 23)

Collaboration encourages peer teaching and learning as well as the role of teacher as learner. Authentic research also plays a role in an emergent curriculum. Instead of transmission of prescribed answers, seeking understanding and meaning in this approach to learning depends upon the act of inquiry that leads to critical research, analysis, and evaluation of issues. When students pursue learning in this way, the boundaries constructed between subjects and disciplines become more fluid and integrated.

**Decision-making:** At this level, the process for making decisions within the learning community is mostly democratic, as students partner with adults to determine and facilitate classroom and school-wide rules, curricula, strategies for working together and accountability. Since only democratic practices solicit dialogue, dialogue becomes an important tool in working with groups. Youth at this level, sometimes serve on local school boards, although occasionally this is met with administrative and board member reluctance.

**Summary**

This tier is grounded in the idea that students should be active participants in their own knowledge construction and that the classroom community serves as a revolving door to real life experiences and connections in the wider community. Equally important is the acknowledgement of students as developing members of the wider community. Opportunities are created to transition students from the school community to the wider community through democratic practices of self-governance, self-assessment, and accountability.
Teachers are positioned as learners as well as facilitators of learning, encouraging intergenerational and intercultural partnerships. Open-ended inquiry, discussion, and dialogue are reflective of the instability of knowledge and the natural evolution of conflict necessary for true community to exist.

Students experience full membership in the classroom community, although not yet as full members of the wider community. Integration of ideas often creates win/win situations. Servitude, exile, rebellion, and vagrancy are not generally characteristic of stakeholders’ experiences. It may be suggested that individuals enter into this physical and mental community with enthusiasm to explore the diversity of others, ideas, and alternative possibilities, as well as an emotional willingness to be a part of a community that suggests the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

**Tier 6: Empowerment**

Youth self-actualization and self-efficacy attained through acquisition of tools necessary for sustaining a healthy planet, promotes an investment of full membership in the wider community.

**Defining characteristics**

**Real world experience:** The larger community becomes the basis for learning experiences at this level. Most learning is connected to community involvement through investigating, evaluating, and problem solving with other members of the wider community. Youth are recognized and supported as contributing members of the wider community.

**Educational orientation:** In the *self-directed* approach promoted here, learners seek out and select their own knowledge base. Youth as action researchers investigate and take initiatives on issues that affect them. As self-regulated learners, members of this
level of learning community plan and implement the direction of their studies. In self-regulated learning, youth develop life skills by learning to monitor “their behavior in terms of their goals and self-reflect on their increasing effectiveness” (Zimmerman 2002, p. 66). Historically, self-regulated practice was viewed as “inherently boring, repetitive, and mind numbing with catchy phrases such as ‘drill and kill’” (p. 66). However, in this level, self-regulated learning is seen as fundamental to a self-directed orientation, as Zimmerman (2002) suggested:

> Self-regulation is not a mental ability or an academic performance skill; rather it is the self-directive process by which learners transform their mental abilities into academic skills. Learning is viewed as an activity that students do for themselves in a proactive way rather than as a covert event that happens to them in reaction to teaching. Self-regulation refers to self-generated thoughts, feeling, and behaviors that are oriented to attaining goals. (pg. 65)

Zimmerman continued to state that in social cognitive research, “students who set specific and proximal goals for themselves displayed superior achievement and perceptions of personal efficacy” (p.65).

At this level, teachers act as resources for tool and skill acquisition. Grades, lesson plans, age grouping, and teaching strategies become irrelevant. However, chaos cannot exist nor can youth simply be free to do whatever they want because of safety and respect of themselves and others. Teacher-partners provide the tools necessary for youth to

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As a parent of four children, I had often volunteered my time in their classrooms as an aid. Since I was a professional artist, I sought to help in the art classrooms. At one point I volunteered as an aid in my son’s middle school art class which consisted of mostly low achieving, at-risk youth. From the very first time I walked into the classroom, I was overwhelmed with chaos and mayhem. Not only were the art materials and artwork scattered all over the room, they were also mostly destroyed through neglect. In addition, the students were literally running around throwing paint all over themselves and the artwork that was left out. The teacher's altruistic response to my horrified reaction was that she was providing a therapeutic atmosphere by allowing these needy students to expressive themselves in any way they saw fit. Consequently, parents often complained when their child came home dripping in paint. More importantly, though, as I attempted to talk to students about their artwork, most were frustrated and soured by the fact that their work was lost somewhere in the room or that it had been destroyed. Unfortunately, this teacher had no understanding of how to guide youth in self-directed and self-regulated learning, and, as an aside, was completely inappropriate in her untrained attempts in art therapy.
acquire skills that align with strong democratic practices, self-direction, action research, meaningful community development, and self-efficacy.

**Decision-making:** This learning community is fully democratic, viewing healthy conflict as necessary to the process of community interaction, integration of ideas, and problem solving. The relationship between youth and adults in partnership address governance, assessment, and accountability. The term *student* is replaced by the term *youth*, underscoring and acknowledging that all age groups are “students” of life and should be on equal footing concerning respect and participation in community.

Youth positioned as researchers, evaluators, and activists are key in this level as well. In this regard, youth become viable members of the wider community in democratic partnership with adults that include parents, teachers, administrators, and business owners. Referring to this partnership, Goodyear (2003) stated:

> Adults and youth can influence communities not just by participating together in the evaluation or research process, gathering data, and generating findings. They also can use this process to enhance understanding on multiple levels, educating the community about

- The subject of the research and evaluation project;
- Options and possibilities for presentation of findings;
- The capabilities of young people;
- The partnerships that generated this understanding;
- Evaluation as a support for social and community change. (p. 54)

Recognizing and supporting youth as capable community members goes beyond service learning with “research and evaluation done *for* and *with* the people instead of *on* or *about* the people” (Goodyear 2003, p. 55). This contributes to overall knowledge and understanding in the field and encourages those being researched to reflect and understand their issues on a deeper level (Goodyear 2003).
It is important to note here, however, that in order for youth-adult partnerships to be successful, all stakeholders need to understand the dynamics of putting social and/or environmental development before personal development and must be willing to reconcile the partnership accordingly (Hogan 2002). This is not any easy task, yet this concept has been successful in many Community Youth Development (CYD) and Participatory Action Research (PAR) programs and remains a goal for those striving to reach this level.

**Summary**

Youth in this tier are active participants in learning and problem solving in the wider community. Teachers serve as guides to support skill acquisition, but then relinquish that role as youths master the tools needed to become active researchers and full members in the wider community. As Kielburger stated, “By helping youth to develop the necessary skills to bring to the table, adults are giving them an opportunity to have a voice and to be leaders of today among their peers and great leaders of tomorrow” (Terry & Woonteiler 2002, p.170). Youth are often sought by adults as knowledgeable participants in problem-solving issues, bringing their expertise to the table in an intergenerational partnership.

The lines between real world experiences, educational orientation, and decision-making become blurred. Integration is the democratic model with a win/win situation perceived as the most effective solution. At this level, youth are full members of the learning community as it exists inside and beyond the classroom. All individuals are enthusiastic and energized to be a part of this environment.
Workings of the Framework

Holistic, CYD, and PAR perspectives suggest that in terms of youth empowerment, self-efficacy and knowledge acquisition, the characteristics described in Tier 6 would be the most desirable for learning. Often the characteristics of levels three through six become fluid and overlapping, with some learning communities exhibiting or offering components reflective of several tiers.

Some may ask whether it is possible to leap ahead to Tier 6 without first working up through the other five, but the logistics of doing this are not under consideration in my current study. Open dialogue is certainly welcome in furthering the framework. It can be suggested that components of cooperation and collaboration as well as characteristics from other tiers exist within Tier 6. Perhaps many of the qualities emerging in Tiers 4 and 5 are simply more developed and evolved in Tier 6.

Considering the present operations of public schooling, I would suggest that only Tier 3 and even less often, Tier 4 could be achieved within a traditional setting. Acknowledging that there are some excellent alternative as well as traditional learning communities modeling many of the characteristics in Tiers 5 and 6, the radical notions implied in these levels are not often encouraged by administrators and even educators themselves. “Today’s insistence on standards and national testing reflects the current support, from Washington to local PTAs, for a ‘get tough’ approach to curriculum and student achievement and for strict accountability” (Claus & Ogden 1999, p. 11).

Many proponents of standardized testing and accountability also maintain that content such as social skill development, multicultural education, and community action weaken the purpose of schools. There is an assortment of reasons for this assumption, many of which were identified in previous chapters. Yet pedagogical researchers,
theorists, and educators (Claus & Ogden 1999; Miller 1991, 2000b; Odgen 2002) repeatedly call for the total overhaul of instructional programs. This overhaul includes strategies that connect students to the real world, democratic values expressed through learning communities as democratic in curriculum, staff development, classroom process, and governance, and civic participation.

These very strategies are again viewed as necessary for developing the kind of learning communities essential in empowering students to meet the challenges of a changing worldview. Educational reform must move beyond simply adding “one more project” (Selby 2000, p. 91) and move towards a paradigm shift, a “changing of the rules,” initiated by educators, from the bottom up.

Having described in detail my hierarchical framework for evaluating learning communities, I applied this framework to Community-based Art Education (CBAE) practices in the final chapter. The analysis was described and based on my findings and conclusions were drawn with implications for CBAE.
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<tr>
<th>Level Descriptions</th>
<th>Real World Experience</th>
<th>Educational Orientation</th>
<th>Decision-Making</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tier 1:</strong> Enforcement</td>
<td>School-based community Compulsory schooling Attendance management</td>
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<td>Imposed membership Mandates from the top-down Dominance and Submission-win/lose</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tier 2:</strong> Entrenchment</td>
<td>School-based community Some choice in courses Extra-curricular activities Inflexible hours</td>
<td>Teachers as masters, students as apprentices Transmission approach Knowledge is stable High stakes testing No adventure in learning</td>
<td>Requirements dictated from top-down Teacher accountability Student tracking Dominance and submission – win/lose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tier 3:</strong> Enrichment</td>
<td>School-based community Hands-on/Project-based Superficial field trips Magnet schools</td>
<td>Transmission approach Discussion, experiments Some outside adventures Minimal conflict</td>
<td>Administrators/teachers set requirements Mostly dominance and submission – win/lose Some conversion - win/win, lose/lose</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tier 4:</strong> Experiment</td>
<td>School-based community Meaningful field trips School-to-work Vocational programs Charter schools Superficial service learning</td>
<td>Transaction approach Learning between people Some guided conflict Cooperative learning</td>
<td>Democracy encouraged Teacher not authority Student advisory panels Some integration of idea Mostly conversion – win/win, lose/lose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tier 5:</strong> Engagement</td>
<td>50/50 school-based and community-based Field work/Internships Meaningful service learning Intergenerational</td>
<td>Transformation approach Appreciation of all interconnectedness Guided conflict encouraged Collaborative learning</td>
<td>Mostly democratic Youth participants on local school boards Mostly integration of ideas Often win/win situations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tier 6:</strong> Empowerment</td>
<td>Mostly community-based Interaction with the wider community Intergenerational Intercultural Students as contributing community members</td>
<td>Self-directed approach Teachers as resources Grades, lesson plans, grouping, teaching strategies irrelevant Action research Healthy conflict necessary</td>
<td>Fully democratic Full integration of ideas Youth-adult partnerships Youth governance model Always win/win</td>
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CHAPTER 6
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I put the Framework for Evaluating Learning Communities (FELC) to the test and applied it to the analysis of several models in both traditional and alternative art education practices that seem to manifest varying degrees of CBAE strategies. In this analysis, I did not revisit the Disciplined-based Art Education (DBAE) and advanced placement programs which represent the status quo in art education, as described in Chapter 2. Both of these models, however, could be located in the lower two tiers of practice, based upon their stated and implied policies and the implementation I have observed in typical circumstances. I did instead examine models that exhibit higher level practices and strategies found in Tiers 3-6 that align more firmly with holistic perspective.

To this extent, I would like to note that my analysis was based upon stated policies, not necessarily individual teacher practices and not through direct observation or experience. Although I would like to apply FELC to observed classroom practices, the current analysis is based upon written program policies stated in chapter 3. The models chosen were selected because of high visibility, extensive and widespread program engagement, claims of student success, and/or recognition from major funders. While many more exist, these models serve to show the workings of the framework in terms of the relationship between Community-based Art Education and holistic, CYD, and PAR strategies.
Positioning Community-based Art Education within the Framework of Learning Communities (FELC)

The framework developed in Chapter 5 was intended as a tool for analyzing and positioning so-called learning communities in relation to the traits they exhibit through real world experiences, educational orientation, and decision-making. In this section I utilized these concepts in FELC to examine various models of CBAE to determine the strength of their commitment to youth empowerment in learning communities, and to assess the viability of as an analytical tool.

In the application of the framework, I examined six CBAE programs by analyzing and describing their defining features in terms of physical settings (real world experiences), pedagogical strategies (educational orientations), and distribution of power (decision-making concepts), which together cover the who, what, when, where, why, and how of each program. This enabled me to situate each program in the tier that best fit their described characteristics.

Positioning Traditional CBAE within the Framework

The cyclical, inconsistent nature of art education promotion and expansion in American public schools has been accompanied by a variety of reform initiatives that are typically institutionally structured on established pedagogy within a standardized setting. Art education programs initiated by entire states, school districts, or individual teachers engage students in an assortment of philosophies, pedagogies, and practices. Many art programs apply community-based principles in a number of different capacities, ranging from partnerships with artists, arts integration with other subjects, and exploration of identity through community involvement. The following selected public school art programs fall somewhere within this range. They were examined in terms of the
characteristics established in FELC. Perhaps this information can serve as guideposts for those involved in other programs in determining the level of community engagement reflected by their own initiatives.

**Studio in a School**

Studio in a School is a program that was established over 26 years ago to enhance art education practices in New York City schools. Drawing, printmaking, painting, and sculpture provide the media through which professional resident artists offer four-to eighteen-year-olds an opportunity for creative expression (Studio in a School 2001a).

“Following an artist's way of working, students learn to experiment and then make informed choices about materials and techniques, to give thoughtful reflection to what they have created, and to feel pride in sharing their creations with others” (Studio in a School 2001c, para. 2).

Several programs influence the Studio in a School in similar ways. Special Programs offers two 14-week workshops that culminate in a final student exhibition, as well as parent/child workshops that encourages art making at home with a take home packet of art supplies (Studio in a School 2001c). The Professional Development Program helps teachers develop an arts integrated curriculum in collaboration with trained artists in short term residencies (Studio in a School 2001c). For three to seven year olds, the Early Childhood Program offers preschool teachers an opportunity to collaborate with professional artists who have been trained to work with preschoolers in developing child-centered learning centers (Studio in a School 2001c).

The Art Partnership Initiative (API) works with Pratt Institute in certifying artists in art education while they simultaneously work in public schools while receiving graduate credit (Studio in a School 2001c). The Long Term Program, which is not accessed as
often as the others, requires a five-year commitment from professional artists and teachers in establishing art as an integral part of students’ everyday instruction (Studio in a School 2001c). Through direct instruction with students, and workshops with teachers and parents, this program’s goal is to ease both teacher and parent into full responsibility for continuing arts integration (Studio in a School 2001b). I will investigate how this program works within the context of the FELC by analyzing stated Studio in a School policies in terms of real world experiences, educational orientation, and decision-making characteristics (Table 6-1).

**Real world experience**: Studio in a School is a school-centered learning community that brings professional artists from the wider community into the classroom. There is no evidence from the website source that indicates any other connection to the wider community other than parent/family involvement. Field trips to art museums are not mentioned as part of the experience. Periodic exhibitions offer the only way for students to connect their work to the wider community. A structured 14-week workshop most often sets the pace for learning.

**Educational orientation**: Although touted as a child-centered program, all Studio in a School programs offer sequential, teacher/artist-developed curricula. Artists in residence appear to act as authority for apprentice-students and apprentice-teachers, until teachers assume responsibility as authority. The transmission approach to learning seems to be the main orientation; however, some transaction may occur because of having professional artists working directly with students in a studio type setting. Creative self-expression is a key component to all programs. Collaborative strategies exist only between artists and administrators and between artists and teachers.
**Decision-making:** Resident artists who are trained in helping teachers integrate art into their classrooms are the initial authority in student knowledge acquisition. A sequential structure of art education suggests a prescribed curriculum that has been established from other resources. There is no evidence that students themselves have a voice in developing the curriculum. There is also no evidence that teachers are given an opportunity to choose the artist in which they will be working with for an extended time. I believe that the evidence provided in the following breakdown, suggests that this program would fall in Tier 3 of FELC.

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<th>Table 6-1. Positioning Studio in a School within FELC</th>
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**HOT Schools**

HOT Schools (Higher Order Thinking Schools), a program implemented in 1994 by the Connecticut Commission on the Arts is designed to provide “effective strategies for transformative learning” (Connecticut Commission on the Arts 2003a, para. 1) through the arts. Currently, the HOT Schools program includes 24 elementary schools, 5000 students and 500 educators across the state of Connecticut (Connecticut Commission on the Arts 2003a).
Each HOT School is provided with up to five resident artists per year, curriculum development grants, technical assistance, and a series of professional development opportunities including workshops, Principals' Retreats, peer sessions, and an annual six day Summer Institute (Connecticut Commission on the Arts 2003c). According to the website, “HOT Schools is philosophically grounded in the work of Dewey, Bloom, Gardner, and Renzulli” (Connecticut Commission on the Arts 2003c, para. 1). In addition, HOT Schools “philosophy and strategies have attracted attention throughout the United States as a powerful and effective model for educational transformation, generating a movement of schools exploring the creation of child-centered learning communities” (para. 4). Further examination of specific strategies attributed to HOT Schools through the defining characteristics of real world experience, educational orientation and decision- making will determine the program’s position within FELC (Table 6-2).

**Real world experience:** HOT Schools appear to be totally school based, with resident artists coming to the schools for extended times, rather than students venturing out into the wider art community. Even the “Town Meetings” established as a forum for celebrating student achievement is showcased within the school (Connecticut Commission on the Arts 2003c). However, there is an indication that adherence to strict schedules is not necessarily the bottom line for management goals. “In a HOT School, teaching for understanding assumes more importance than schedules, educators welcome parents into the school, and teachers flex the curriculum to meet the learner's needs” (Connecticut Commission on the Arts 2003c, para. 1).
**Educational orientation:** Boasting a child-centered orientation, HOT Schools implements several strategies that they claim are central to transformative learning. The Magical Mailbox, considered the “heart” of the HOT Schools program serves as a repository for student writings, drawings, paintings, and ideas, which are then shared with the school community, or sent to national competitions (Connecticut Commission on the Arts 2003b). Students’ work is celebrated and validated through the Town Meeting and student “clubs” called ECHOES (Enhanced Curricular HOT Opportunities) “provide structured educational opportunities tied to the ongoing curriculum” (Connecticut Commission on the Arts 2003c, para. 2). Clear-cut evidence is lacking concerning the level of student engagement in a curriculum focusing on student self-interests. However, it may be assumed that there is some degree of this as the HOT program is designed in part around Deweyan philosophy. Additionally, an “arts-infused” curriculum (para. 6) indicates an integration of subjects through the arts.

**Decision-making:** Another strategy HOT Schools employ is student empowerment through a “strong student government” (para. 6). The student government’s role, however, focuses on the rules and regulations of student management and behavior and does not lend itself to the concerns of student voice in curricular decisions (Connecticut Commission on the Arts 2003c). Student editorial boards are established to review work deposited in the Magical Mailbox under the guidance of faculty supervisors (Connecticut Commission on the Arts 2003c). Parents are also welcomed and encouraged to participate in the classroom, assist with ECHO clubs, and attend professional development workshops with teachers.
Transformative learning as stated in Chapter 3 is a social, cultural, ecological, and spiritual orientation going beyond the transmission of knowledge, encouraging learners to seek deeper meaning behind their lives – in relationship with others both locally and globally, and in appreciation of the interconnectedness of all living and non-living things. In this program, there is no evidence that transformative learning is taking place, and the highlighted strategies for HOT Schools do not necessarily mean that this is so. The artwork that has been published on the HOT Schools website does not indicate transformation of learning; rather it indicates some integration of subject matter, and mostly a prescribed curriculum with hints of DBAE components. Overall, I positioned HOT Schools precariously on the border of Tier 4 of FELC.

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**Tim Rollins and KOS**

Tim Rollins and K.O.S. (Kids of Survival) began in 1982 with a collaboration between art teacher, Tim Rollins and a group of South Bronx inner city teenagers who were classified as emotionally handicapped and learning disabled (Gablik 2002). While reading classic books like Frankenstein, Amerika, and The Scarlet Letter to his students,
Rollins had them draw visual images that communicated a connection between the story and issues that were relevant in their own lives (Gablik 2002). This became the “inspirational trigger” (p. 107) for on going collaborative paintings and murals between Rollins and his students.

Using individual pages of an entire book as a background for the artwork, the artists paint over the pages with a repeated image or symbol that represents the essential meaning of a book (Gablik 2002). Rollins also provides many images from art history, during the process, allowing students to develop interests that will help guide their research for the murals (Anderson & Milbrandt 2005). KOS has developed a national reputation for their work and has moved beyond their own community, traveling considerably to other school communities in order to share their empowering experiences through demonstration of concepts and methods (Gablik 2002).

What began as a school-based program, KOS has now taken on characteristics of a non-traditional or alternative program. In a quoted statement (cited in Gablik 2002, p. 109), Rollins acknowledged the ambiguities and controversy created by the work of KOS:

We drive people crazy because they can’t figure out what it is. Is it social work? Is it a school? Is it an art project? Is it a fraud? Is it socialism? Is it rehabilitation for juvenile delinquents?... I think many people find the work we do threatening. On the simplest level, we take the conventional notion of the white male alone in his garret making masterpieces and throw it out of the window.

Perhaps the best way to describe KOS is as a learning community based on collaborative artistic work that both expresses and exposes stereotypes, inequality, and marginalization of its members while engaging those members through participation in the program. The type of learning community KOS aspires to may be determined through the characteristics defined in FELC (Table 6-3).
Real world experience: Reaching beyond the classroom walls, members of KOS interact with their community in creating dialogue about the content of their murals, which are displayed in various public places. Working with other students and teachers in the wider community for social change and educational reform on a continual basis defines KOS as a program where the wider community, largely becomes the classroom.

Educational orientation: Anderson and Milbrandt (2005) suggested that Rollins is concerned with helping students become more in control of their own learning through self-directed strategies. Rollins’ comment (Gablik 2002) “We don’t just want to paint ourselves and our communities. We want to find out something about the world” (p. 108) displayed an orientation towards a student-adult partnership as well as. However, evidence of collaborative and/or cooperative strategies in mural making with KOS members as well as members of other school communities is ambiguous here. While understanding that the terms cooperation and collaboration are often defined similarly and used interchangeably, the extent to which these strategies are employed is not readily apparent. In fact, there are a couple of issues that become questionable in considering collaboration among participants and the decision-making process.

Decision-making: Upon examining a specific collaborative effort between KOS and a South Bronx elementary school, a concern about decision-making comes to the forefront. A collaborative mural called Amerika – For the People of Bathgate was created between the two organizations based on the classic Amerika in 1988 (Anderson & Milbrandt 2005). This particular mural, of which there are thirteen different versions (Gablik 2002), highly resembles the 1986 Amerika II version (done by KOS) in painting techniques and visual style. With this observation, the question arises as to what role did
the elementary school students play in creating the mural and to what extent were collaborative strategies employed? I would assume that when genuine collaboration occurs, the result should communicate a solution that represents the input of all participants. Certainly, the elementary students would have a different visual style than KOS simply because of obvious developmental differences. In this case, at least, it appears that some important aspects of the decision-making process were controlled by members of KOS and even Rollins himself.

There is yet another question that arises concerning Rollins and KOS. Apparently, KOS as a group is rewarded financially for some of their work. Gablik (2002) stated that Rollins’ goal “is to use some of their [KOS] profits to start his own multicultural art school in the South Bronx” (p. 108). Is this what KOS members have decided is the best use of their money? Have they agreed to this? Were they allowed a voice in the decision? Or has Rollins exploited his position of authority and extended his own motives over the group, usurping the power of KOS members to achieve his own personal vision? Unfortunately, these inconsistencies that are apparent in some important decision-making strategies situate Tim Rollins and KOS on the border of Tier 5.

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Positioning Alternative CBAE within the Framework

As traditional art education programs in formal public school settings are being scrutinized because of educational reforms, non-formal alternative art education programs in community settings are increasingly being established to try to answer the need that public school art education is not meeting.

Many traditional art education programs in public schools have seemingly settled into complacency, beginning and ending with prescribed methods of teacher-directed teaching and learning. Art production for self-expression continues to be the focus in public schools, with some multiculturalism and art history thrown in for good measure.

Art education in public schools is often highly structured and not necessarily sequential. Student learning is not usually derived from an inquiry process and much of what is produced is not authentic or original, in that each student’s personal response often mimics another culture, artist, or peer. Connections to students’ own lives are not being made and an elite hegemony is perpetuated through continued studies of art criticism, art history, and aesthetics through a Eurocentric lens as seen in Disciplined-base Art Education (DBAE). A sense of community struggles to develop in the art classroom as most art educators consistently focus on the individual as hero/heroine.

Behind the perpetuation of this model of art education in the public schools are several reasons for much of why this type of art education continues to exist or persist. The fact that art teachers do not inform themselves of current pedagogy and are not actively engaged in professional development suggests that they are teaching the same curriculum they started out with twenty years ago. Although some educators do pursue professional development, and strive to incorporate new strategies and philosophies into their curriculum, the gap between theory and practice remains a relevant concern.
Another factor is that art educators, in fear of losing their already tenuous positions, do not want to “rock the boat” with new ideas that deviate too far from the prescription. Examples of practical applications for more innovative art curriculums that work towards holistic approaches may be found in alternative art education communities. The following positions some of these alternative models within the context of learning communities.

**Mill Street Loft**

The Mill Street Loft, specifically through one of its programs called ProjectABLE offers a youth employment-training program for economically disadvantaged youth ages 14-21 in Poughkeepsie, New York (Mill Street Loft 2004). ProjectABLE, established as an after-school and year round program in 1994, claims to serve multiple purposes. It “helps at-risk youth who face multiple barriers to employment,” “expands problem solving and decision making skills, increases cultural understanding and provides different approaches to learning” (Mill Street Loft 2004, para. 2). Analysis of these characteristics determined the extent to which ProjectABLE offers youth an opportunity to engage in community, innovative learning, and empowerment strategies (Table 6-4).

**Real world experience**: ProjectABLE attempts to engage youth with various aspects of the wider community through a number of avenues. Projects involve constructing environmentally safe products, youth training in marketable skills, renovation of community sites, and revitalizing public spaces through the creation of murals, sculptures, benches, planters, and mosaic sidewalks. This points to real world experiences directly connected to and requiring participation with community issues existing outside the classroom (Mill Street Loft 2004).
Educational orientation: In many of these aspects, apprenticeship models are used as students work with artists and carpenters in learning the skills necessary to create various artworks and products, some of which are sold in their gift shop. There is no evidence from the website that indicates that cooperative and/or collaborative learning occurs, however, it can be assumed that in designing and creating art for public places, some form of these learning strategies must be employed as youth work with teachers, community members and each other. Additionally, it can be assumed that this program most likely moves between the transmission, transaction, and less often, transformation approaches to learning, as youth learn the skills and then apply them to various forms of creation.

One aspect that seems problematic, however, is ProjectABLE’s goal of increased youth intercultural understanding. While youth are engaged in renovating and revitalizing community property, this in itself does not necessarily lead to intercultural understanding. Some questions that arise concerning this aspect are:

- What role does the community’s cultural climate (including the community of youth in the program) play in considering the design for the public artworks?
- Do the designs address or bring awareness to any cultural or environmental issues/subjects, or are they created to simply address community aesthetics?
- Does the artwork incite community dialogue in some way that addresses a community issue?

If the public works created do not solicit positive answers to at least one of these questions, then there is no evidence for intercultural understanding. If youth learning about each other from each other is key to intercultural learning (Fennes & Hapgood 1997), then where is that in fact taking place?
**Decision-making:** It is not clear who determines the projects to be done, whether it is the instructors, youth, or other community members. Without this information and without answers to the three previous questions, it is difficult to determine the role youth play in decision-making. It is also difficult to determine whether the community may view these youth as viable members. Considering the amount of real world experience through community projects and training in marketable skills, and the employment of an apprenticeship model for learning strategies, I placed the Mill Street Loft in Tier 4.

Table 6-4. Positioning Mill Street Loft within FELC

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**Artists for Humanity**

Artists for Humanity (AFH), another nonprofit organization established in 1992 in Boston, Massachusetts functions as a venue in providing opportunities for youth to engage in an entrepreneurship program. This program offers positive learning experiences during after school and summer hours while earning an income and developing marketable job skills.

In 1990, Susan Rodgerson, an artist who helped Boston’s Martin Luther King (MLK) Middle School students create a mural at their school, found herself guiding six
MLK students in the act of creating and discussing art in her studio during the summer of that year. “They came every day all summer, they were sitting on the step when I arrived, and I was driving them home at night” (Smyth 2000, pg. 2).

By the end of the summer, Rodgerson announced that she was broke and solicited these young artists to come up with a way to make money in order to support their art interests. The youth decided to create art that was marketable in their neighborhood in the form of painting and selling personalized airbrushed t-shirt designs on location.

Eventually this “guerrilla marketing” (Smyth 2000, pg. 2) strategy was put to wider use, and a substantial amount of money was generated when MIT’s Sloan School of Management invited the group to create on site t-shirts for their students. When the youth decided that the money should go towards reinvesting in more and better supplies, “the idea of creating a more formal organization was born, an organization that would ‘join the creativity and street smarts of urban young people with the spirit of the entrepreneur’” (pg. 3).

Currently AFH is located in its own 23,500 square foot revolutionary and advanced energy autonomous “green” facility called the EpiCenter (Artists for Humanity 2004a; Boston Business Journal 2003; Northern Power 2003). It boasts a “first class gallery to house a nationally unparalleled exhibition space for youth-created and inspired art” (Artists for Humanity 2004b, para.1). In addition, the gallery offers a rented space suited to host and provide catering benefits for corporate meetings and events serving up to 500 people. A retail store, featuring youth-produced items, and flexible spaces designed to accommodate an expanding entrepreneurship program is also included in the design (Artists for Humanity 2004a) (Table 6-5).
**Real world experience:** Initially, AFH employed what they called “guerilla” tactics in selling the youth artwork. This involved setting up shop in the youth’s own neighborhoods and collaborating with community members as clients in designing t-shirts. Later, various locations in the community were also used as venues for exhibits and sales of youth produced artwork (Smyth 2000). Today, youth create their artwork mostly within the confines of the Epicenter’s studio facilities and the artwork is exhibited in the EpiCenter gallery and sold in the City Teens Design Company onsite store (Artists for Humanity 2004a). However, some of the artwork produced such as community murals and corporate banners are commissioned by local businesses, providing some opportunity for youth to engage in art making contextual to the wider community (Artists for Humanity 2004a). Based on a small business model rather than a social service model (Smyth 2000), real world experience in the training and employment of youth in the production, marketing, and promotion of their art through salaries or commissions continues to play an important role for youth.

**Educational orientation:** As an apprenticeship/leadership model (Artists for Humanity 2004c), AFH places professional and local artist mentors with youth participants to produce artworks in painting, graphics, silk-screening, photography, and crafts (Artists for Humanity 2004c; Smyth 2000). Youth-produced works based on personal identity, community issues, commissioned requests, and general aesthetic orientations blend various levels of transmission of skill acquisition, transaction of meaningful activities, and transformative aspects that characterize the success of urban youth beyond their own cultural conditioning (Artists for Humanity 2004a).
Reference to appreciation of the interconnectedness of all life is not necessarily a strong component, although youth involvement in the planning of the “green” facility may indicate a cursory attempt at examining environmental issues surrounding the EpiCenter construction. As the website suggested, “A building like this could indeed teach children about nature and help them see the beauty of nature in our everyday world” (Artists for Humanity 2004d).

AFH also maintained that self-directed learning is a hallmark of their programs as youth engage in entrepreneurial and management activities (Artists for Humanity 2004c). Action research towards community change as described by CYD and PAR models, however, is not evident here.

**Decision-making:** AFH prides itself on youth participation in decision-making and governance. “AFH has a fourteen-member Board of Directors comprised of people from Boston's art, business, and legal communities, as well as two founders, a parent representative and a teen participant” (Artists for Humanity 2004c, pg. 5). The extent to which the single teen board member is genuinely involved with decision-making is unknown. Craig Kielburger, a youth activist and founder of Free the Children, however, related his experience as a youth involved with organizations: “I have had the chance to work with organizations that say they involve youth in decision making, but unfortunately there is always too great an imbalance of power. The truth is that usually all of the knowledge, skills, and power lie in the hands of adults” (cited in Terry & Woonteleier 2002, p. 172).

In the case of AFH governance, one teen to 13 adults does seem a bit unbalanced. Additionally, the question does arise as to what type of training, if any is employed to
help the teens in developing the skills necessary for effective participation in governing roles. This is a crucial component to Community Youth Development (Terry et al. 2002; Hoover et al. 2002).

Considering the characteristics that AFH has been credited with, I place this learning community model within the confines of Tier 5 of FELC. Participatory action research is one missing quality, and the questionable nature of authentic youth governance prevents AFH from operating beyond this level.

Table 6-5. Positioning Artists for Humanity within FELC

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<th>Level Descriptions</th>
<th>Real World Experience</th>
<th>Educational Orientation</th>
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<td>Tier 6: Empowerment</td>
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VOX

VOX “is a youth driven newspaper that covers pressing community problems and provides exciting opportunities for young people to become meaningful partners in civic life and to speak out on issues that concern them” (Lakes & Weiss 2002, pg. 126). VOX (meaning “voice” in Latin), the main program of Atlanta, Georgia’s Youth Communication (YC) organization, is recognized as an important alternative, uncensored and free newspaper, created by and for teens (Youth Communication 2003b).
Incorporated in 1993 by 13 teens and 10 adults, YC was established as “a non-profit organization whose mission is to raise youth voice,” employing “peer-to-peer communication to involve teenagers in the metro-Atlanta community” (Youth Communication 2003c, para. 1). In an effort to involve youth and discover what teens wanted in a citywide teen newspaper, YC teen participants surveyed 500 of their peers in the metro-Atlanta area to find out. VOX was created in response “to the sense of powerlessness that youth, especially minority and disadvantaged youth, feel every day” (Youth Communication 2003b, para. 3).

VOX now offers a widely used resource for teens about peer information, self-expression, and training (Youth Communication 2002b, para. 4). Utilizing about 60 teen writers and artists and publishing over 28,000 copies a month (Lakes & Weiss 2002), VOX also serves as a resource for adults in understanding youth perspectives and critical issues that affect them, and for teachers in over 225 high schools to engage students in expressing and understanding community issues (Youth Communication 2003b). Positioning VOX within the framework of my established criteria distinguishes this integral component of CY as an innovative and exciting CBAE model (Table 6-6).

**Real world experience:** VOX, as an after-school learning community invite youth to examine issues in the wider community as journalists, photographers, and artists, providing awareness to the public, and social transformation through the publication (Youth Communication 2002). The community itself becomes the source of investigation. “VOX and other Youth Communication programs include news, discussion of issues, and provide local resources for self-help” (Youth Communication 2003b,
para.). Additionally, VOX offers a place for people who are traditionally isolated to come together and learn from one another.

**Educational orientation:** Youth Communication (YC) of which VOX is a significant part provides programs conducted by teenagers, with support from trained adults, after school and on Saturdays. Peer teaching, learning, and communicating is the backbone of VOX, which has set the precedence for YC’s “youth-directed nature” (Youth Communication 2003b, para. 3). Providing a “forum for teenagers to experience the arts of writing, photography, design, editing, and teamwork among a diverse volunteer ‘staff’” (para. 6), VOX is grounded in self-directed learning, youth-adult partnerships, and integration of disciplines. In addition, the website maintains that VOX features “honest, well-researched, and carefully written articles … as well as fresh artwork” (Youth Communication 2003a, para. 1). This suggests that youth are engaged in action research, providing the community with authentic, responsible, and credible information as “active builders of a stronger community” (Youth Communication 2002, para. 1).

**Decision-making:** “The [YC] organization is governed by a board of directors comprised of business and civic leaders, and teenagers” and “involves teenagers as active citizens in the Atlanta community by circulating their ideas and voices” (Youth Communication 2003b, para. 3 - 4). “Every aspect of running YC -- from strategic planning to financial management-- starts with and involves teens” (Youth Communication 2002, para. 4). VOX has become a recognized way for youths’ voices to be heard and a way for youth to participate in our community as valued and valuable citizens (Youth Communication 2002, para. 3).
Anticipating protest that VOX is not a viable CBAE model, I argue that the graphic design skills needed for newspaper layout, and typesetting as well as the artwork and photography contained within the newspaper are components of interdisciplinary design, making VOX an authentic CBAE exemplar. Looking at the artwork on the cover of each of the monthly issues over the past several years, it is easy to identify the visual images as sophisticated photographic work. Obviously, the youth who are involved with creating the visuals for the newspaper have developed skills not only in photography and in the graphic manipulation of images through Photoshop, but in conceptual design as well. In addition, the illustrations, photography, and layout, including choice of type and theme throughout each edition demonstrates a high level of attention to research and detail. The visual arts certainly play an important role in the creation of VOX as an equal contributor to this multidisciplinary program.

Overall, the characteristics attributed to VOX solicit many holistic, CYD, and PAR strategies essential to youth empowerment, self-efficacy, and full participation as community members. This learning community certainly would position itself solidly within Tier 6 of the framework.

Table 6-6. Positioning VOX within FELC

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Conclusion

I found the framework useful and easy to apply to CBAE programs, at least to policy, but hope to test it on field observations in the future. Meanwhile, I hope others will also find it useful and supportive of ongoing dialogue about characteristics of learning communities and cross-disciplinary strategies for developing them.

In defining the characteristics of learning communities, I have provided just one perspective that incorporates and blends the emerging paradigms of holistic, CYD, and PAR strategies and pedagogies. By examining a small sampling of Community-based Art Education as it exists in both traditional and alternative art education practices through the lens of FELC, I have provided a point of reference for CBAE theory and practice in terms of developing strategies for creating genuine learning communities. This also serves as a guide for CBAE models in determining their positions in relation to the defining characteristics of holistic and education, CYD, and PAR.

As suggested earlier, CBAE theory is reciprocal and dependent on practical models, many of which fall within traditional educational settings. In my search for traditional CBAE programs to use as samples, I could not identify a single model that fell within Tier 6. This is not to say that one does not exist; perhaps they are not yet well established or have not been made visible through publications.

However, I examined three that represented characteristics of many practical models I was able to find. These fell within the framework in varying degrees between Tiers 3 and 5. This indicated that CBAE found within a traditional school setting tends to be deficient in any number of characteristics including authentic democratic youth
governance, transformation of learning, self-directed orientations, community dialogue, and action research for community change.

Quite often, though, programs in alternative settings offer innovative and advanced strategies on which traditional practices can build. AFH and KOS represented much of what I discovered to exist in alternative CBAE models, falling somewhere between Tiers 4 and 5. Authentic democratic youth governance, community dialogue, and/or action research for community change tend to be the characteristics most underdeveloped in these models. VOX was the only alternative model I encountered that truly employed most of the characteristics of genuine learning communities found in Tier 6.

Programs such as VOX exhibited much of what I consider strong strategies towards an ideal program and serve as models to others. A quintessential model would evidence these characteristics:

• Youth engagement in work that originates from their own interests and issues of concern.

• The opportunity for youth to develop tools necessary for self-directed learning and peer teaching and learning.

• Collaboration with peers as well as intergenerational members of the wider community.

• Equal and appropriate integration of interdisciplinary subjects in a natural and inherent way.

• Engagement in the community as the source for learning what truly is important to sustain a global community.

• Youth recognized and promoted as vital members of the community through their engagement in producing and generating valuable information as well as through authentic participation in community governance.

• Youth empowered as contributors to environmental and social change.
I would like to suggest that CBAE found in many alternative settings offer traditional, school-based CBAE models the strategies and practices needed to bring them closer to community youth engagement as viable members. In addition, both in- and out-of-school models (traditional and alternative) might look to CYD and PAR models as well.

However, my goal throughout the process of analyzing paradigms, developing a framework for thinking about learning communities, and positioning various art education models within the framework, was to propose a point of entry for discourse and cross-disciplinary dialogue with CYD, PAR, and CBAE. I believe this would offer all fields involved, positive ways of moving forward in developing and blending pedagogical strategies, creating a multi-layered richness that can provide youth the tools needed for a changing worldview.

In my study, I reviewed and correlated several pedagogies that appeared to be merging and directing us to a new paradigm in educational theory and practice. Holistic developments recognized in alternative, homeschooling, CYD, and PAR programs suggested that a transformation has already begun. The winds of change do not consist of just theoretical rhetoric, but include practical applications of these emerging theories. One fuels the other in a reciprocal relationship similar to Dewey’s (1929) description of theory and practice. Theory, he said, “…enlarges, releases and gives significance to the latter; while practice supplies theory with its material and with the test and check which keeps it sincere and vital” (Dewey 1929, pg. 179). Believing that any real change begins from the bottom-up, my next step is to put my ideals into practice within my own classroom.
LIST OF REFERENCES


Bucci, D. (2003, October 24). Standardized tests tell us what we need to know. Gainesville Sun, p. 9A.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Pam Forrestel began her life as an artist at 3 years of age, working alongside her mother, who loved to paint. Throughout her life, Forrestel was given many opportunities to pursue her passion and eventually received her BFA in 1979 from Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia, PA. Relinquishing this first career as a graphic designer to raise a family, Forrestel made a decision to combine teaching with her enthusiasm for art. This led to an art education teaching certificate at Kutztown University, Kutztown, PA, in 1995. In August 2004, Forrestel received her MAE in art education from the University of Florida, in Gainesville.