

**USER SATISFACTION OF THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM AS  
PERCEIVED BY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE NORTH EAST  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT IN  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

A Dissertation

by

TWAIN OWENS THARP

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2007

Major Subject: Educational Administration

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Approved by:

Co-Chairs of Committee, Stephen L. Stark  
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## ABSTRACT

User Satisfaction of the Community Education Program as Perceived by Stakeholders in  
the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas. (May 2007)

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Co-Chairs of Advisory Committee: Dr. Stephen L. Stark  
Dr. Virginia Collier

The primary purpose of this study was to determine user satisfaction of the community education program as perceived by stakeholders in North East Independent School District. A secondary purpose of this study was to examine the impact of community education support of a bond vote affecting the regular K-12 school program.

Participants for the investigation were 522 stakeholders attending community education classes in North East Independent School District. Stakeholders responded to a questionnaire that provided data for this research.

Research findings of this study:

1. Stakeholders participating in community education programs were found to be well satisfied with the classes they attended.
2. No difference existed in the perception of attitudes between adults 18 to 54 and those 55 and older who were taking community education classes.
3. Participation in community education classes does affect the stakeholders' attitudes toward the regular K-12 school program.

Recommendations for future study:

1. Studies of this type should be conducted for adults who are not participating in community education programs within North East Independent School District to determine their educational, recreational, and vocational training needs.
2. Program staff, including administrative and instructional personnel, should receive training regarding the importance and benefits of creating learning communities.
3. A longitudinal study of stakeholders extending over several years should be undertaken to evaluate the long-term impact of community education programs.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Bonnie and Joe Tharp, and to my wife, Francene Jo Lesser Tharp. My parents believed that the only way out of poverty was to get an education. They made sure that each of their children had the opportunity to achieve that goal. My father was a dreamer and my mother was an angel. Because of them, I am an incurable sentimentalist, romantic, optimist, and dreamer. If my parents were alive, they would find so much joy in my success.

In one lifetime to find someone who loves you regardless of all your faults, who stands beside you through all things, and who finds joy in your accomplishments is truly what marriage is all about. My partner in all things is my wife. This journey would not have been possible without her support and encouragement.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, my thanks go to Dr. Stephen Stark, who never stopped believing in me and never stopped encouraging me. Without him, I would have never reached this goal. Frank Manley, the father of Community Education, may have been his mentor and hero, but he is mine. Dr. Stark has placed great trust in everyone that he has mentored through the doctoral program. He is an expert at basking in reflected glory. He built many community education leaders who I know personally. He helped them hone their leadership ability, and he gave them a dream to pursue for their communities. One of his geniuses is that he is unselfish. He cares about people and he derives personal joy from their success and accomplishments. He has never cared who gets the credit as long as the job is getting done. He would remind us that if you need a leadership badge, you are not a leader. I am sure he has taken some ‘licks’ over my long journey to this destination, and I am sure that he had to single-handedly pull several magic tricks out of his bag to keep me in the program.

I will be forever indebted to Joyce Nelson and Bill Ashworth, Jr., for their constant support. I would have never been able to jump through the many University hoops that are required of a doctoral student without them. They both guided me flawlessly through the maze of technology, rules, regulations, and systems that create barriers for working students. I will be forever grateful and thankful for their encouragement, help, and guidance.

This endeavor could not have been completed without the support and assistance of many people who helped me along the way. I am indebted to all of them in very special ways.

Dr. Walter Stenning was always supportive. He understood the issues faced by the working practitioner and the tribulations that complicate the lives of those who are employed full-time, go to school, and have families. He explained statistics to me in a practical way that made sense and supported the mechanical means of completing my project. He likes adult students, and he is a community educator at heart. I have a special kind of admiration for him.

Dr. Julian Trevino is an American success story. He is a legend in his community. He is an example to everyone that hard work and determination are the keys to success. His endorsement of my ability to write and support of my professional potential have influenced my ideals and goals for the future.

Dr. Virginia Collier was elevated to the co-chair status of my committee when my chairperson retired. I worked for her many years before when she was the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum in my school district. I loved her stories of growing up in the oil field community. She recognized my creative ability, and I gained confidence in my abilities under her leadership. She has the reputation as a “champion” for her doctoral students. She is an angel for stepping in to support my final project.

I am so very appreciative of the support and encouragement of Dr. Mary Jo McLaughlin and Dr. Sharon Skrobarcek, both who were in my doctoral cohort and who

finished the program considerably before me. Whenever I needed encouragement, they were both always available and willing.

Finally, I wish to thank all those who have guided and mentored me in my pursuit of lifelong education. Many who have helped me become the person I am today are gone. My love for education began in the first grade, and so I would like to acknowledge my first grade teacher, Miss Louise Giddings. We read together (she read) all the Raggedy Ann and Andy books. Those happy stories with happy endings have been a part of me for all my life.

My third grade teacher, Miss Thusnelda Hueske, was a taskmaster. With hair pulled back in a tight bun, which had to cause her to have regular headaches, and with old maid black lace-up shoes, I learned discipline and persistence.

My fourth grade teacher taught me all the things I did not want to be as a teacher and after 35 years as a public school teacher and administrator, that is a lesson I should acknowledge.

I fell in love with my sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Krause. To me, she was a scientist, and I learned inquiry and developed a sense of longing for the truth. She made me think I was smart, and I thought the two of us would probably get married some day. The person I did eventually marry made me believe the same thing about myself.

My high school days were awash in a sea of various teachers, each one unique and all teaching for different reasons. The one who helped me find my voice was Mrs. Lola Kulhanek. She was my speech and debate coach. She loved us all, and we loved



her. These teachers are all gone. I lost them all, except Mrs. Kulhanek, before I could acknowledge or put into words what they had meant to me.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background of the Study**

Community education is a way for people to enhance their lives and communities through learning and collaboration. Community education can best be described as a school serving children, youth, and adults of all ages. Members of the community are given the opportunity to plan together using all available human and physical resources to develop their full potential (Decker, 1972). Community education is a practical philosophy that enables communities to identify problems and resources and create their own future in order to serve the needs of the public (Romney, 1996). Community education curriculum and activities evolve from the basic wants and needs of the people served (Murk, 1997). Community education programs provide opportunities for people to pursue academic, social, physical, recreational, cultural, health, and vocational educational programs (Whetten, 1996).

As a practice, modern community education had a simple beginning in Flint, Michigan, in the 1930's (Krajewski, 1997). As a philosophy, community education had its roots in Dewey's (1907) *The School and Society*, which viewed schools as having a broader role than just educating children. That role was one of social responsibility to improve the community.

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The style and format for this dissertation follow that of *The Journal of Educational Research*.



Although community education has evolved over the years to address increasingly serious problems, the work of today's community organizers is deeply rooted in past theories: school buildings belong to the people and they should be utilized seven days a week to serve identified community needs. Traditional school hours leave plenty of time for other uses and facilities should be used year round. If the entire community is to become self-reliant and part of an educative society, local leaders must be responsible for developing an agenda to meet all citizens' needs. In order to achieve self-reliance, community education encourages stakeholders to work together in order to create environments that allow everyone to benefit. This requires public school facilities to be open after hours, on weekends, and during the summer months (Tirozzi, 1999).

Community members must be involved in designing a community education program that meets a large variety of needs, by providing diverse educational services, by promoting interagency cooperation and public-private partnerships, and by providing community improvement and citizen involvement (Decker & Boo, 1995). School-Community relations directors, in order to promote positive relationships between communities and schools, must find ways to communicate with an increasingly diverse audience (Wanat & Kliminiski, 1993). Diverse cultures should be encouraged to participate in lifelong learning through community education. Today's public schools must rediscover the importance of integrating the entire community with the formal education process and lifelong learning (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1992).

Drake (1996) reports that in order to enhance participation in community education programs, one must remove barriers to participation, provide appropriate program content, and enhance community awareness of opportunities afforded through community education. Whetten and Ferrier in 1993 found non-threatening ways to bring parents into schools, to get them involved in the education of their children, and to encourage them to take community education classes themselves. Community education is a way for participants to collaboratively and collectively work together to assess the wants and needs of the public (Edwards, 1996).

In order to determine the effectiveness of a program like community education, some form of evaluation should be conducted (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Community education leaders and program designers need to determine if stakeholders are satisfied with the services that are provided or offered. Focus groups can be beneficial in order to determine consumers and provide perceptions of a community education program (Drake, 1993). Community education leaders should use evaluations to make decisions regarding the value of existing programs or services (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). School district leaders need to know that community education programs have value and that district patrons are utilizing facilities appropriately. School officials should improve accountability, enhance credibility, and augment patron support of the K-12 program through program evaluation (Minzey & LeTarte, 1994). Program evaluation can target areas that need to be addressed, improved, or eliminated. Existing resources should be redirected to support the newly targeted initiatives. Stakeholder's support of the K-12 education program can be improved and

enhanced by requesting feedback regarding the effectiveness of the program (Heck & Dillon, 1991).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Educational observers are worried about why they see a growing gulf between the American public and its schools (Decker & Decker, 2000). A series of societal crises has raised troubling questions about whether our schools are equal to the challenges that face our society at the beginning of the new century. Many traditional family-community-school partnerships are not working (Kilbourne, Decker, & Romney, 1994). Many adults are unenthusiastic about supporting public education. The schoolhouse, no longer the heart of the community, has lost its place in the hearts of community residents (Decker & Boo, 1996). The full potential of community education can be fulfilled only when we solicit the many different views and opinions of those persons using the program (Richardson, 1996). Knowledge of how the program is doing enhances our awareness and we can learn about the perceptions of our stakeholders by investigating the essential parts that compose the community education program. Improvement in the delivery of services and determining the worth of an educational program can occur only when we know what is and what is not working (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of this study was to determine user satisfaction of the community education program as perceived by stakeholders in the North East Independent School District. A secondary purpose of this study was to examine the impact of community education on selected variables affecting the regular K-12 school

program. Findings from this study could provide useful data to aid future decisions concerning the services offered by community education as well as information that can be used in improving support of the K-12 school program.

### **Research Questions**

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the user satisfaction of selected community education programs as identified by stakeholders in North East Independent School District?
2. Does a difference exist in perception between stakeholders' and older adults' attitudes toward community education programs offered in North East Independent School District?
3. Does participation in community education programs affect attitudes and support of the regular K-12 school program as identified by stakeholders in North East Independent School District?

### **Definition of Terms**

*Adult:* Those persons 18 or over in age but not yet 55 who are enrolled in community education classes in North East Independent School District.

*Attitude:* The feeling, manner, or behavior of a person toward a situation or course.

*Community education:* A concept that allows people to enhance their lives and communities through learning and collaboration. It provides opportunities for community members, schools, and other organizations to become partners in addressing educational and community concerns. It encourages members of the

community to plan together and use all available human and physical resources to develop their full potential.

*Community education programs:* Courses, activities, and services offered to adults through community education.

*Community schools:* Schools that serve persons of all ages (children, youth, and adults).

Community schools have extended hours and are open at night and on weekends.

*Demographic variables:* Descriptors such as age, gender, ethnicity, annual income, and level of education.

*Influence:* Factors identified with community education classes attended by stakeholders, such as cost, location, curriculum, instructor, length, and materials.

*North East Independent School District:* A school district that lies in the north central and northeast sectors of Bexar County, Texas, with the majority of the district being within the boundaries of the City of San Antonio.

*Stakeholders:* Those persons 18 or older surveyed in the study of community education classes in North East Independent School District.

*User satisfaction:* Approval of consumer services such as those found in community education.

## **Assumptions and Limitations**

### *Assumptions*

1. The researcher was impartial in collecting and analyzing the questionnaire data.

2. The instrumentation used in this study accurately measured the existing perceptions of stakeholders in community education classes and activities in North East Independent School District.
3. The respondents surveyed answered the questions posed to them objectively and honestly.
4. The interpretation of the data collected accurately reflected that which was intended.

#### *Limitations*

1. The scope of this study was limited to stakeholders who took community education classes in North East Independent School District.
2. The study was limited to subjective information obtained from responses on completed surveys.
3. Findings from this study may not be generalized to any group other than the stakeholders in this study.

#### **Significance of the Study**

For the community education philosophy to flourish and for its desired results to occur, solid leadership and a method of accountability are required. Community education participants are in the best position to identify community needs and wants (Decker & Decker, 2000). People are best served when their opinions are encouraged. Community education programs can flourish and be improved and strengthened when input is encouraged from those served. Participant involvement in assessment strengthens the solutions by bringing a variety of perspectives to each issue. Surveying

participants allows them to express input regarding how current programs are viewed or can be made more responsive. School districts cannot tell if the public believes they are successful or if their needs are being met without asking them. Requesting participants' input promotes a sense of ownership by them. North East Independent School District's community education program will be able to adjust the program to better meet the needs of those they serve. After reviewing and analyzing the survey, the local community education program can develop new classes and programs that the community would like and support. The survey can be shared with district leaders as well as the Board of Trustees in order to make them aware of the wants and needs of the community. This will enhance the value of the local community education program as well as provide excellent feedback regarding services by community education.

### **Contents of the Dissertation**

The dissertation is divided into five major units or chapters. Chapter I contains and introduction, a statement of the problem, a need for the study, specific objectives, limitations and assumptions, and a definition of terms. Chapter II contains a review of the literature. The methodology and procedures are found in Chapter III. Chapter IV contains the analysis and comparison of the data collected in the study. Chapter V contains the researcher's summary, conclusions, and implications.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

“Let us become the change we seek in the World”

– Ghandi

A review of the literature about the importance of adult and community education is a journey about bold men and women – educational pioneers with ideas about learning communities and the efforts of others who would lead and serve during the formative years of community education. It is a journey that culminates with the expectation that new ideas and leaders will emerge and blaze new trails for others to follow. The literature will illustrate that a true learning community is made up of everyone and not just the staff of an individual school but all members of the community. In order to explain the underlying speculative and investigative basis that gave direction to this study, four strands of relevant literature were reviewed. These strands, according to topic, were: (a) organizations and leaders (b) community education, (c) adult education and (d) learning communities – a transformation.

#### **Organizations and Leaders**

School districts attempting to become learning communities will be organized around relationships with all members of the community. A vibrant school district will evolve when it opens its doors to the members of the community and is part of improving their opportunity to succeed whether they are students or adults. Leaders that understand the power of community involvement build relationships and support with the community they serve. They build social and political capital when they join hands



with members of the community in an effort to improve the community. This journey will include the story of blue collars and scholars doing what they can to improve the quality of life in a community. It is a story of hope and understanding where the ‘movers and shakers’ of the public become selfless servants to the wants and needs of the community.

Forget your tired old ideas of leadership and organizations. The historic concept of the leader knowing all and being all has been over for some time. Unfortunately, many organizations just do not know it! It is no longer possible for an organization to excel with only the ‘omnipotent’ leader barking out the orders and demanding that everyone follow lockstep on the beaten path. Wesson and Grady (1994) noted that until the 1980’s, the prevailing form of educational and business leadership was hierarchical control and command. Apps (1994) suggests that the Industrial Revolution management style, in use today in most schools, is characterized by a tall hierarchy with written policies, procedures, and job descriptions; a limited span of control; and each employee having one boss. Little wonder that this type of management style does not easily accommodate the new emphasis on transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> century could be characterized as an emphasis on “collaboration, common good, global concerns, diversity and pluralism in structure and participation, client orientation, civic virtues, freedom of expression in all organizations, critical dialogue...substantive justice and consensus-oriented policy-making process” (Rost, 1991, p. 181). Wesson and Grady (1994) believe that the educational reform movement will require school leaders to shift to a more flexible and

inclusive organizational structure that “values leadership over management and emphasizes collaboration, consensus-building, and empowerment” (p. 413). The industrial model died decades ago but many businesses and especially school districts either have ignored it or simply do not know it! School districts are no longer made up of several small schools that are truly governed by the community. They are complex organizations, generally made up of multiple schools, and governed more by federal and state politicians than local school boards.

Today’s school boards still approve budgets, buildings, and policies, but most of it is controlled by the federal and state legal mandates and requirements. Districts no longer decide about student testing, minimum graduation requirements, or even how to capture revenue. It is all force fed by bureaucrats and politicians with little if any real control or impact from local governing boards. School board members have no choice but to spend their meeting time adopting legal policies and presiding over grievances and expulsions. They attend school events and are generally bright, intelligent, and caring people, attempting to make a difference in an otherwise lockstep march toward public school oblivion (voucher system).

The ability to learn and grow faster than the proponents that would dismantle and destroy public education will be the only effective weapon against this enemy of quality education for everyone. Only a few school districts will survive. Those that do will become learning organizations. They will not only give lip service but full service to the idea of community education. They will support as well as individually become involved in lifelong learning. The leaders will not manage a learning community. They will lead a

learning community. Businesses have already recognized this issue and those that are succeeding have already embraced the challenge. The world is an interconnect place where traditional methods of service, leadership, and education will not protect or garner any market shares. How to achieve educational excellence as well as how it is measured have changed. This is not your mother's PTA (Parent Teachers Association)!

Today's school districts will have to become learning organizations. That will require a paradigm shift. It is just not possible to continue to attempt to figure it out from the top. Arie de Geus (1988), head of planning for the Royal Dutch/Shell business, said in the 1990's, "The ability to learn faster than your competitors may be the only sustainable competitive advantage" (p. 70). It is no longer sufficient to have one-person lead. In order to excel in the future, school district CEOs must harness the capacity to involve and include leaders at all levels of the organization and community. Like pearls being cast before swine, district leaders have had the opportunity to embrace, follow, direct, encourage, and support the concept of community education since the 1960's. In order to get the voters to approve the school bond, school leaders provided the necessary 'lip-service idea' of including everyone in the community. As suddenly as their interest in inclusiveness occurred, it was nowhere to be found at the conclusion of the voting. Everything went back to the way it was before the community vote and the excited oratory of creating a comprehensive learning community. The status quo is not working for most large districts.

Some critics suggest that one of the primary reasons for school failure is that schools are using a 20<sup>th</sup> century type of administration (industrial revolution management style) that is not compatible with the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Attempts at improving student academic achievement through improving teaching strategies or methods for handling student conflict or celebrating cultural diversity are doomed to limited success because they are affected by this 20<sup>th</sup> century type of organizational structure. (Rost, 1991, p. 181)

Districts that are thriving are generally not poor, urban, or minority based. The school districts that will ultimately survive and flourish in the future will discover how to engage and tap the human potential that surrounds them. They will be the ones that figure out how to capture the commitment of their patrons, employees, and public at large. These districts will build capacity by including rather than excluding members of the community. They will create an inclusive organization.

The interest in collaboration, the common good, and diversity comes at a time when some educators are experimenting not only with transformational leadership instead of the classical organizational model, but also with the concept of full service schools (changing both administration and organization). In addition to providing schooling experiences for children, these schools also join with community organizations, businesses, and government agencies to provide other services to the community on the schools site or nearby. (MacKenzie & Rogers, 1997, pp. 9-11)

Organizations are made up of people; they are “social units (or human groupings) deliberately constructed and reconstructed to seek specific goals” (Etzioni, 1964, p. 3), and it is “this concept of coordinated, purposeful activity [that] distinguishes organizations from other kinds of collective behavior” (Duncan & Weiss, 1979, p. 80). Civilizations and organizations are not new inventions. History is replete with cultures using organizations to accomplish their goals and purposes. Early man, pharaohs, kings, queens, emperors, and chiefs all had organizations to fulfill their survival and dreams. In her 1992 book, *Leadership and the New Science*, Margaret Wheatley suggests that most organizations today are still structured based on seventeenth century physics, or

Newtonian mechanics. Newtonian organizations manage by separating things into parts; planning is forced and based on the world being predictable and constant.

Today, scientists are no longer satisfied with explaining how the world works using the machine model created by Sir Issac Newton during the seventeenth century. The machine model focuses on things (parts) rather than relationships. It assumes that by understanding the working of each individual piece, the whole can be understood. In this way of thinking, we analyze everything. We report everything in charts, graphs, and ratings. We create roles, job descriptions, boundaries, and level of authority. No one is allowed to go beyond his or her level of authority. Everyone is relegated to his or her function and role. Information is everything, and we focus all of our energy on gathering extensive numerical data and making decisions based on sophisticated mathematical ratios. This model reduces and describes everything according to cause and effect.

It is time to throw out everything we know about organizational management and leadership. The industrial and machine models have been used to create rigid, controlling hierarchies that have kept the public, patrons, and employees out of information and participation loops. Generations of managers have failed to understand the true nature of organizations. Public education will embrace the new concept of learning communities, or it will accelerate the death spiral toward which it is already plummeting. Public school leadership will either give birth to a new theory and organizational practice, or it will bury itself along with its business counterparts that have already collapsed. The organization is no longer a clock where when everything works, the clock keeps time. It

is not a machine model where the whole of the organization is thought to be the sum of its parts.

Wheatley (1992) asserts that today the new science research is about quantum physics or the world of relationships. “In the quantum world, relationships are not just interesting; to many physicists, they are all there is to reality” (Wheatley, 1992, p. 32). The quantum world does not separate the person from the organization. One does not exist without the other. What is critical is the relationship between the two. This will always be different, and it will always depend on the people and the moment.

Today’s focus in education and business must be on capacity building. The entire system as well as those who it serves and those who only contribute revenue must be involved and engaged in order for it to survive. Those who will support the role of public education require an understanding of not just a part but also the relationship between the parts. Educational leaders have spent too much time and energy articulating the vision of re-inventing public education while in reality perpetuating the machine model. The idea that school superintendents want a new reality is nothing more than lip service. They are part of the perpetuation of a system that is nothing more than keeping the clock ticking. The public has allowed that pretense because they do not like change. No one seems to like it. It makes us uncomfortable, uneasy, and is unpredictable. The beaten path is the easy path, but it seldom leads to new horizons. Those that would espouse change are touted as ‘thinkers and creative types’ as long as it does not upset the existing organizational cart. Management will tolerate a little change; it is just not all right to transform what we are used to or comfortable with.

Those who would overthrow the system are soon dispelled as ‘evil and mean spirited.’ They cannot last in a traditional educational environment. They become the leper in the colony and are shunned and outcast. The traditional educational tribe allows those thinkers to massage the edges, but they are not allowed to go to the heart of the system. If they did, they would be silenced by exclusion and relegated to meaningless work wrapped in exciting metaphors and robes of many colors in order to present the presence of acceptance. Transforming the organization might make those at the top of the organizational chart uncomfortable. They will not embrace any dramatic change they did not create or is out of their span of control. Any transformational organizational change might reduce their power and affect their income and influence. Unfortunately, this is the nature of the organizational beast. Whether their fear is imaginary or legitimate, their lack of centeredness prevents them from embracing anything more than isolated organizational transformations. Additionally, large organizations have too many barriers that prevent even a good idea from being successful and therefore, the effort by the barrier erectors proves them right when the concept fails.

Are the movers and shakers of the organization even aware they are doing this? No, it is at a subconscious level that their head-nodding occurs; and while the head is going up and down, the brain is saying, stay the course, accept just enough to not be considered a dinosaur, smile, and be pleasant. Act like a pioneer, but do not create new pathways. A few narrow trails are okay but nothing that will accept a wagon. Keep in mind one may have to explain a wagon trail but never a path. No one is ready for the invention of a new system. They could burn you at the stake. At the subconscious level,

it is all about 'me.' The leaders want to be seen as contemporary but not as a heretic. They are unaware of their industrial mindset, filters, and biases they bring to the table. They want most to be the hero, but they do not want to take the risk required to be one. They receive enough adulation to maintain their ego and, therefore, are unwilling to risk any emotional capital in order to bring about a new way of things. Their staffs have told them so often they are right, they fail to recognize the 'smoke' and begin to conclude that they actually are the omnipotent leader.

School boards hire superintendents they think will be change agents, but reality and history have proven those who really upset the cart generally have their contracts bought out or they are non-renewed. What school boards think they want in a leader is in actuality what they do not want. A little 'trimming of the tree' is all they or the community will tolerate. No wonder, we are still a 'deficit model' educational system. The only schools that a community will tolerate being different are magnet or alternative schools. This is because they did not attend them and have no predisposed idea or premonition about how they are to look or operate.

"As we leave behind our machine models and look more deeply into the dynamics of living systems, we begin to glimpse an entirely new way of understanding fluctuations, disorder, and change" (Wheatley, 1992, pp. 10-11). In fact, organizations today are moving toward a more fluid model with a self-renewing capacity; they are becoming learning organizations. A learning organization is one in which "people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and



expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together” (Senge, 1990, p. 3).

Managers want things to be easily compartmentalized, to be broken down into boxes, diagrams, units, and systems. “Because power is energy, it needs to flow through an organizations; it cannot be confined to functions or levels” (Wheatley, 1992, p. 39).

We have seen the positive results of this flowing organizational energy in our experiences with participative management and self-managed teams. What gives power its charge, positive or negative, is the quality of relationships. Those who relate through coercion, or from a disregard for the other person, create negative energy. Those who are open to others and who see others in their fullness create positive energy. Love in organizations, then, is the most potent source of power we have available. And all because we inhabit a quantum universe that knows nothing of itself, independent of its relationships. (Wheatley, 1992, p. 39)

It is important for the leader of a school or school district to look carefully at how a workplace organizes its relationships. To ask the question, “Is the workplace organized in a way that encourages relationships and do we have in place the structure, understanding, and capacity to nurture and form relationships?” certainly, this is a difficult process for large organizations, especially for large bureaucratic organizations like many giant school districts. They are no more successful at doing this than is big government because they are not willing to shift the organizational paradigm. If things do not go well, they attempt to find a scapegoat and blame it on them and then continue in the same way as before. The rut bureaucracies are in a comfortable and predictable rut. The worker ants are bored and at the same time, they are content. A structured system with clear boundaries and limits provides a certain degree of comfort that typically prevents an organization from embracing the potential for greater individual autonomy

that is possible when you are open to a different way of thinking and organizing. A school district that focuses on relationships while creating learning communities has the potential to respond quickly to new opportunities because it is not locked into the rigid boundaries of pre-established outcomes or end products. “In organizations, we are at the edge of this new world of relationships, hoping the new charts are true, still fearing if we follow them, that we will fall off into nothing” (Wheatley, 1992, p. 33).

School districts need to be extremely sensitive to their environments and communities, remaining wide-open to new opportunities and ventures. Wheatley (1992) indicates that companies that do this, develop the capacity to shape the environment and create new markets where none existed before. Prahalad and Hamel (1990) believe that companies that focus on core competencies (portfolio of skills rather than portfolio of business units) develop the capacity to shape the environment and create new markets where none existed before. These companies are able to “invent new markets, quickly enter emerging markets, and dramatically shift patterns of customer choice in established markets” (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990, p. 80).

Some educational leaders would argue at this point that they are not a business. They would contend that they cannot be a business and protect their identity and purpose to serve all children. These same educational leaders are losing their market shares as charter schools, private schools, and voucher schools garner part of the market that does not want what the public school has to offer. The reality is that school leaders cannot decide they are a business when it suits them and then flip-flop when it does not. You simply cannot have your cake and eat it too. School districts struggle against the

demands of the environment attempting to maintain the status quo. They see the demands of a changing public as a disruption to their purpose and orderly arrangement of instructional units. They struggle against the environment instead of welcoming it and adapting to it.

We tend to insulate ourselves from it as long as possible in an effort to preserve the precious stability we have acquired. Even though we know we must become responsive to forces and demands beyond the boundaries of our organizations, we still focus our efforts on maintaining the strongest defensive structure possible. (Wheatley 1992, p. 90)

Wheatley (1992) believes that self-renewing structures are capable of maintaining their identity while still changing their form. These organizations have the internal capacity to create structures that fit the moment. “Neither form nor function alone dictates how the system is constructed. Instead, form and function engage in a fluid process where the system may maintain itself in its present form or evolve to a new order” (Wheatley, 1992, pp. 90-91).

The most adaptable organizations are those that develop the capacity to respond with great flexibility to external and internal changes. These organizations avoid rigid and inflexible operational models. “Expertise, tasks, teams, and projects emerge in response to a need. When the need changes, so does the organizational structure” (Wheatley, 1992, p. 91). Unfortunately, most public schools do not have this type of organizational structure. They allow just a few programs or persons the necessary autonomy to respond to the demands of the public but only when they cannot control the public outcry or when it suits those at the highest level of the organization. Very little autonomy is allowed at the campus or program level. These same high-level leaders

cannot understand why they have to 'fix' the problem at their level and yet they are the very same people who placed the preventive barriers up in the first place. "We are beginning to see organizations that tap into this property of self-organizing or self-renewing system. Some theorists have termed these 'adaptive organizations,' where the task determines the organizational form" (Dumaine, as cited by Wheatley, 1992, p. 91).

On occasion, school districts will unknowingly actually act like an adaptive organization. They will determine that something needs to be done, and they will assign it to the person or program that can best accomplish the task rather than the unit on the organizational chart that was designed to handle the project. This is a sign of an adaptive organization. These moments, if they occur at all, are the exception rather than the rule.

Interestingly, school districts want to be a business when it is easy and convenient. When it is more difficult, requires thought and effort, they have little time or interest to dedicate to the issue. Most school districts today have after-school programs typically run by the community education program. They provide the space but charge the program for everything from school custodial services to squares of toilet paper used by program participants. These self-funded programs can make a profit charging students for after-school programs. They can underwrite the cost for poor schools and students who cannot afford the service and still be in the black. The school district 'bean counters' tell the school leaders that this is a 'cash cow' program, and they provide lip service to the importance of the actual program and the benefit that it provides the community as well as the academic support with homework and enrichment that it provides the local school.

The district confiscates the fund balance of these programs for school district use or weaves a web of support by requiring them to obtain a mortgage on a building that is selected by the district and that they desire for the district to have. The community education staff is assigned to the building and allowed to use the space for programming when not being used by the district. This is an interesting arrangement. The community education staff typically is housed in a rundown district-owned facility; and, therefore, the employees are excited about the possibility of having a nice office, but they are neither allowed to pick the location nor building as this is decided by others more powerful. These district financial officers sell this idea of the community education department purchasing its own facility to the Board, and Superintendent have no real knowledge or training in the purpose of community education. These employees are typically well-intentioned district accounting employees who have never had to earn their own salary based on selling a service to the public. The school district holds the mortgage on the property and charges the community education program whatever they decide on as an interest rate.

Generally, the district charges a higher rate than the return that they are getting from the banks on the school district funds lost to purchase the building. At any time, they choose they can change the rate to suit the market. The community education program is not allowed to acquire a mortgage at a fixed rate or to shop the banks for a low interest rate. When the persons who have told the community education program that they are going to buy a specific building and pay a mortgage at a certain rate acquire a building that requires more improvements and remodeling than they planned for, they

simply extend the note on the number of years that the community education program will pay for the building. This is an incredibly bad way to do business. This shows little or no respect for the community education program. It reveals the lack of relationships between those who control the power and those who plan and run the community education. When it suits the school district accountants, they demand that the community education program function like a business, and when they cannot, they blame it on poor budget management and leadership. This organizational arrangement is the ‘tail wagging the dog.’ The accountants meet with the leaders of the community education program, tell them how the purchasing arrangement is going to work, and then ask them if they agree. This is the concrete sequential accountant’s idea of collaboration.

What is the community education director supposed to do? If he or she says no, the district does it anyway or takes their fund balance and uses it for something else other than community education, and the staff remains in a small if not awful office building. Community education leaders do want a building that can house their staff and has the space for additional programming during the school day. They would like a facility in a neighborhood that can support financially the programming they can offer in the additional space. If the building selected by the district does not meet those criteria, community education is stuck with attempting to create programs in a location and space that has trouble paying for itself.

Ideally, community education would like a nice building, one they can be proud of, and one that sells at fair market value. If the building requires remodeling, they want that cost not to exceed the resell value of the property. Finally, they would like to have a

fixed mortgage just as a business would acquire. The accountants miss the purpose of community education.....to provide low cost programming for the community, preferably in a school building already purchased by the taxpayers. Whenever community education can acquire funds in excess of their salaries and expenditures, they want to fold that money back into the programming and services they offer the public. These educators do want to do what is right, and they do not mind purchasing a building with the revenues they obtain if they can use the facility to further the mission of community education. They just want to be full partners in the same way that members of the community should be in a fully functioning learning community.

I do not wish to conclude this situation in a way that the reader thinks that all this is bad because it is not. What is important in this situation is that the community education professional staff drives this process. They should determine the location of the facility so that it is strategically located in an area where they can generate the financial benefit from programming. This will allow them to generate the most dollars they can to pay the mortgage and interest rate. Should they be able to generate sufficient revenue, they can fold the extra money back into the less affluent neighborhoods, which is in keeping with the philosophical concept of community education. The district can hold the mortgage but should not charge the community education program any more interest than they could have generated from the dollars having been in the district fund balance.

As states strive to meet increased expectations for student achievement, there is a growing understanding that learning takes place in many places during and after school,

at home, and in neighborhoods and communities. Research also recognizes that children need support from their families and their communities to reach their full potential. In order for families and communities to do their part, it is important that a community have a strong adult education program as well as a strong community education program. Lifelong learning of individuals within a community improves the opportunity for a community to remain strong and vibrant. Undereducated parents who have the opportunity to learn to read and acquire a high school equivalency certificate can help their children in school and often can obtain a better job. This, in turn, results in the opportunity to assist and support both their family and community in a better way. Parents who can read, can help their children in school; and parents who return to school in order to achieve a skill or goal, instill in their children the importance of education and the joy that comes from achievement. Deep down, we are all learners. Not only is it our nature to learn, but we love to learn. Community education creates the formal opportunity to learn and to be with others who have the same desire to learn. A strong educational community will have a strong community education program.

### **Community Education**

The ideas embraced by community educators are not some new phenomena contrived from the most recent management and leadership voodoo but instead are grounded in views and ideas of great educators of the past. Plato in *The Republic*, in order to assure the good life, suggests a need for continued emphasis on the establishment and maintenance of the community. Plato's thinking was dominated by the



importance of education and the positive force it could have on the community. In 1983,

Long concluded that:

The idea that knowledge is derived from practical experience as well as rational empirical sources has a long history. The debate concerning the relative values of rational thought and practical activity can be traced to classical Athens, where both Plato and Aristotle identified experience with purely practical concerns and, hence, with material interests as to its purpose and with the body as its organ. (p. 25)

The debate continues today but the more rational educators acknowledge that both play a role in today's learning communities. Dickenson (1953) in Chapter XV of the Fifty-Second Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education sums up what community educators should have learned from the Utopian experiments of Thomas

Moore in this way:

Each Republic Theocracy, divinely ordained kingdom, or utopia offered a final, authoritarian solution of the innumerable problems of human association for all times. Coping with the problems of its own time, each unknowingly tried to make time stand still – to rule out new problems. Since every existing organization is a tentative solution of a social problem which the preceding form of organization could not solve, one cannot simplify new difficulties or existing ones by ignoring or deploring them, or yearning for archaic living conditions. – What may be adequate for today is inadequate for tomorrow. (p. 249)

Dickenson's understanding that community education is a dynamic and evolving process remains true today. Community educators have always responded to the evolving needs of the community and those it is ordained to serve.

With the emergence of the industrial revolution, society needed a well-trained work force. The community needs and those of industry were met by developing vocational schools that taught what was related to the needs and wants of the community. These early 19<sup>th</sup> century efforts were the beginning of what would be

considered the first modern approach to community education. The United States entered the industrial revolution early and eagerly embraced the idea of vocational training in education. The needs of the business and industrial community drove education to relate what it was teaching to those needs. In this way, education was related to the improvement of an individual's life through the teaching of skills that could be used or honed by industry. Bernard (as cited in Dickenson, 1953) in the middle 1800's wrote:

It is a matter of vital importance to manufacturing villages to close the deep gulf with precipitous sides, which too often separate one set of men from their fellows, to soften and round distinctions of society which are nowhere else so sharply defined...At least the elements of earthly happiness and of a pleasant and profitable intercourse should be brought within the reach of all, be given to all through good public schools, and by other means of public education, good manner, intelligent and inquiring minds, refined tastes, and the desire and ability to be brought into communion with those who possess these qualities. (p. 256)

Bernard expands the thinking regarding the purpose of public education. Not only does he propose that it meet the needs of the community but also act as a medium through which social, economic, and racial barriers can be overcome.

John Dewey, one of America's most respected and revered educators, incorporated many ideas we now consider to be those of the community education concept in his early writings. Dewey (1916) understood the relationship between the needs of society and individuals:

The development within the young of the attitudes and dispositions necessary to the continuous and progressive life of a society cannot take place by direct conveyance of beliefs, emotions, and knowledge. It takes place through the intermediary of the environment. The environment consists of the sum total of conditions which are concerned in the execution of the activity characteristic of the living being. (p. 26)

Dewey's (1938) progressive thoughts on adult-centered education and his insistence that education be related to experience were expressed late in his career when he said,

To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from text and teachers, learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making the most of the opportunities of present life; to static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world. (pp. 5-6)

The words chosen and expressed by Dewey have relevance to learning at any age. Many adult educators embraced these words as validation of their own feelings about the mission they were called upon to perform. Houle (1982) suggests,

The specific goals of learning, he [Dewey] argued, are constantly changing and evolving, the sole principles of process are the continuity of experience and the interaction of the learner with his environment, and the central distinction between education and miseducation is that the former enlarges the capacity of the individual or society for richer experiences in the future while the latter arrests, diminishes, or distorts it. (p. 11)

As early as 1926, Lindeman published a series of essays which applied Dewey's approach in various ways, suggesting, for example:

The approach to adult education will be via the route of situations, not subjects. Our academic system has grown in reverse order: subjects and teachers constitute the starting point, students are secondary. In conventional education the student is required to adjust himself to an established curriculum; in adult education the curriculum is built around the student's needs and interests. Every adult person finds himself in specific situations with respect to his work, his recreation, his family life, his community life, et cetera—situations which call for adjustments. Adult education begins at this point. Subject matter is brought into the situation, is put to work, when needed. Texts and teachers play a new and secondary role in this type of education; they must give way to the primary importance of the learner. (pp. 8-9)

In 1933, Kotinsky published an even more systematic exposition of Dewey's thoughts as they applied to adult education. Her book was subsequently complimented by many other publications, both books and essays, which dealt with Dewey's idea of education. Eventually his thoughts began to influence the methodological thought of the field of education. In 1899, Dewey (as cited in Olsen & Clark, 1977) published *School and Society*, his first book, to stress the social responsibility of the schools to improve the community as well as to educate the child and he suggested:

We are apt to look at the school from an individualistic standpoint, as something between teacher and pupil, or between teacher and parent. That which interests us most is naturally the progress made by the individual child of our acquaintance ....Yet the range of the outlook needs to be enlarged. What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy. (p. 60)

In 1911, the National Society for the Study of Education (as cited in Olsen & Clark, 1977) issued *The City School as a Community Center and the Rural School as a Community Center*. They describe the school as a center of learning and activity in the community. They embraced the idea of adult lectures in school buildings, vacation use of school playgrounds, evening use of school facilities for recreation, home and school associations, and extension courses. The National Society for the Study of Education (as cited in Olsen & Clark, 1977) concluded:

The secret of success of the work described seems to have been in bringing the school into touch with the community at as many points as possible, and by having the school relate itself to some form of helpful work that may be appreciated by the community. (p. 61)

Hart (as cited in Olsen & Clark, 1977) wrote the first book on community resources in 1913, *Educational Resources of Village and Rural Communities* in which he perceived the rural educational community as having major influence:

Within the community there is work that educates and provides for life; within the community are the roots of the cosmopolitanism that marks the truly educated man; within the community there is room for a noble and dignified culture and leisure for all. Let us become aware of our community's resources, physical, social, moral....Let us organize our socially supplementary institution—the school—until it shall adequately reinforce the work of education where it is weak and supply it where it is wanting. So, and only so, will the child become really educated, and the community find education genuine, practical, thorough, and vitally moral. (p. 61)

Collings in 1923 organized a one-room rural school around the problems of the community. He demonstrated how a project curriculum was academically more effective than the traditional subject-centered one. Collings put into actual practice the concept we today call the “education-centered community.” He held the belief that the school’s “chief mission is to provide opportunity for continuous education of children and parents jointly in the affairs of community life,” and that

(1) The school curriculum should be expressed in terms of activities of community life, (2) The school procedure should provide opportunity for boys and girls to pursue activity in the way they normally do in life outside the school, and (3) The school should be the educational center of the community. (Collings, 1923, pp. 61-62)

In Everett's 1938 report of community school programs, he wrote:

An analysis of the programs presented in this book indicates that an acceptance of the community approach to education involves the acceptance of fundamental positions in both educational and social theory....All life is educative.... Education requires participation....Adults and children have fundamental common purposes in both work and play....Public-school systems should be primarily concerned with the improvement of community living and the improvement of the social order. (Everett, 1974, p. 29)

Seay (1974) reported that in 1933, the Tennessee Valley Authority (T.V.A.) community education project was funded by the federal government. The goal of this federal project was to improve conditions of life in rural southern areas served by the T.V.A. The federal government recognized the emergency needs of the people of this region and established many work and educational programs designed to assist both the people and the community. The goal of the T.V.A. was to control river flooding and produce as a by-product electrical power. Helping the people of the region to develop their social institutions and economic future were an added benefit of the project. As part of the T.V.A. development project Norris, Tennessee, in 1936, selected Glenn Kendall to become the first superintendent of education. Olsen and Clark (1977) wrote this was in designed contrast to the traditional superintendent of schools. Education would be considered far more comprehensive than schooling. As Kendall (as cited in Olsen & Clark, 1977) explained,

The educational philosophy which governs the program has been stated: The aim of education in Norris is to develop healthy, intelligent citizens and happy, socially useful members of a democratic society....The curriculum should be centered around basic areas of human activity....There should be core fields of instruction adjusted to the needs and interests of individuals rather than a definite number of separate subjects....Subject matter should be used as it applies to real life situations; not as having virtue in itself....The curriculum should be society-centered rather than subject-centered....The school should be organized throughout for laboratory procedures, using the community as much as possible for first-hand studies and experience. (p. 62)

Maurice Seay was director of the training division of the Authority from 1934 to 1937. In describing the first four years of the training project he wrote,

TVA needed electricians, for example, but the residents of the Valley were farmers. Training began before any construction work could start—training in all

of the skills needed for the tremendous task that was ahead. And at the same time elementary and secondary schools and adult programs were established for all the families in the new communities. Pressed for immediate action and staffed with trainers and teachers, innovation was inevitable. (Seay, 1974, p. 29)

Everyone shared the philosophy of adult and continuing education. The following excerpt indicates the kind of philosophy:

An electrician does not have an ‘education’ to make him an electrician, another ‘education’ to cause him to use his leisure time profitably. An electrician has an education to which all his experiences contribute...[This concept] does not eliminate study of specialized subject matter or practice in highly technical skills, but it relegates such study to a subordinate position—a part of the whole educational process for an individual...The conception that education is continuous is, of course, not new. However, the application of this conception is to a planned program of education for all age levels of a community has seldom been attempted. (Seay, 1938, pp. 46-47)

Seay (1974) notes that seven years later in 1945, Edward G. Olsen wrote in the preface of his book, *School and Community*, “From many sources one learns that all life is educative” (p. 30).

By the forties, it was readily accepted that education should be continuous. “Schooling patterns became somewhat more diverse, but the most dramatic evidence appeared after World War II with the development and proliferation of adult education, continuing education, and the two-year community college” (Seay, 1974, p. 30).

In a 1942 paper to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, William Carr (as cited in Minzey & LeTarte, 1994) wrote:

Many schools are like little islands set apart from the mainland of life by a deep moat of convention and tradition. Across the moat there is a drawbridge, which is lowered at certain periods during the day in order that the part-time inhabitants may cross over to the island in the morning and back to the mainland at night. Why do these young people go to the island? They go there in order to learn how to live on the mainland. After the last inhabitant of the island has left in the early

afternoon, the drawbridge is raised. Janitors clean up the island, and the light go out...Such, in brief, is the relation of many American schools to many an American community. (p. 63)

Before we move to more recent developments in community education, we should address the contribution provided in the field of study by Ferdinand Tönnies. Tönnies was a German sociologist who, in his book, *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft*, describes the difference between two types of communities and the subsequent impact on living conditions these differences bring about (Minzey & LeTarte, 1994). “The theory developed by Tönnies suggests that as communities become larger and more impersonal, relationships between people become more contractual and structured; more distant and impersonal” (Minzey & LeTarte, 1994, p. 26). This impersonal society is the *Gesellschaft* society. The contrasting society, *Gemeinschaft*, is dependent upon relationships, trust, and personal interaction between individuals. “The *Gemeinschaft* of medievalism is very much a part of community education. The contemporary neighborhood is vaguely reminiscent of yesterday’s fiefdom” (Berridge, Stark, & West, 1977, p. vii). Like the medieval age, community education fosters a feeling of togetherness that is akin to the finest notion of family. Hugo (2002) concludes that “learning communities are one response to the shifting *gemeinschaft* (community) – *gesellschaft* (society) patterns of social interaction that strengthen connections between people, facilitate ability to keep up with rapid social change that come with industrial and social change, and right social injustices” (p. 21).

In 1935, in Flint, Michigan, Frank Manley, a physical education teacher, approached Charles Stewart Mott, a wealthy industrialist, to provide financial assistance



to start an after-school and weekend recreation program for kids. Frank Manley as a result became “widely acknowledged by education historians to be the founder of the modern community school movement” (Decker, 1999c, p. 5). Others often consider Manley as the father of community education due to his lifelong dedication, commitment, and leadership in community education development throughout the nation and in other countries. Were Frank Manley attending public school today, he would be known by educators as an ‘At Risk’ student who ultimately dropped out of school. He held various jobs as a telephone lineman, traffic cop, railroad and construction worker, and shoe salesman. Manley loved sports and in 1927, he was drawn back to school in Flint, Michigan, and began his professional career as a physical education teacher. All that knew Frank Manley recognized his leadership talent. He excelled in working with children and the community and was soon given the responsibility to supervise the physical education and adult education programs in Flint.

Undeniably, the best known of all the early community education programs was started in the 1930’s, Manley and a few of his staff members declared war on juvenile delinquency and crime. At that time, recreation was his hobby and his faith. “He had unqualified confidence that delinquency could be cured by sports—baseball, tennis, basketball, football, swimming, track, wrestling, boxing—any activity that would release tensions while developing a strong body” (Campbell, 1972, p. 33). Later Manley would broaden his idea of community, but recreation always ranked high in his value system.

Campbell recalled in his writings that Manley was the most effective leader he had ever known. He had the ability to tap the hidden leadership talent in all of his staff

members and the loyalty that his staff felt for him was unmistakable and real. Frank Manley was a man of conviction and courage. He was a bold leader who knew what he wanted, and he made it his goal to convince others that his idea had merit. He boldly spoke to the establishment about the needs of the community and how he felt they could help solve them. Manley was a man with a dream for the community. Charles Stewart Mott was not yet in his corner. Mott's work in community education began in Flint in 1935. Frank Manley had attempted for five years to engage the Flint School Board and other civic groups in support of his ideas concerning education and recreation.

Then, in a June 1935 speech to the Flint Rotary Club, he captured the attention of General Motors industrialist and philanthropist Charles Stewart Mott, and the community school philosophy that evolved over the next 37 years intertwined the shared vision of these two men. Both believed deeply that the "spirit of teamwork" could be used to solve community problems using available community resources. Both believed that "schools were the core democracy" in providing educational opportunities for everyone, and that each person has a personal responsibility in pursuit of a common goal. Their operating principle was that "the community school...serves people of all types in any given neighborhood—the young and old, rich or poor, all denominations, all colors and creeds—in fact, everybody." It is not hampered by racial, religious, political or other barriers which divide people. (Decker, 1999c, pp. 7-8)

"It was Frank's fearlessness and undeviating conviction that attracted Mott to him" (Campbell, 1972, p. 33). In the Fall of 1935, five schools embarked on a pilot program funded by a \$6,000 Mott Foundation grant. These schools were opened as community centers to provide enrichment and recreational opportunities for youth and adults. Flint became a laboratory for community education programs and practices and soon the concept spread across the country. As the literature reflects, these were not the

first community schools but the Flint program has since its inception served as a model for the community school concept.

Patrons from the Parkland Elementary School area once demanded that the Mott Foundation give them certain facilities, equipment and supplies. Frank responded to their demands head on. What he is reported to have said became a legend that mothers and fathers of the school would proudly relate to visitors: “We are not going to give a thing. If you people will come up with contributions on your own, we shall try to help you.” Among other demands was one for a dictionary in every home. As I recall, the cost of the small dictionary under discussion was one dollar. In a compromise, Manley and Mott said that if the families would pay half, the Foundation would pay half. Parents at the Parkland School were genuinely proud that they were becoming increasingly self-reliant, more creative, more cooperative, more concerned about the rights of others. They gave unqualified credit to Frank Manley and Charles Stewart Mott for enhancing their dignity rather than taking dignity away from them. (Campbell, 1972, p. 33)

Proconier (1999) writes that in 1936, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt toured the Flint schools. During the next decades, thousands of visitors came annually to Flint to study the community education concept. Flint’s first planned community school was opened in 1951—Freeman Elementary. It was the first school architecturally designed as a community school, in contrast to the schools that had had alterations and additions to the original building. Freeman was designed with a large gym, auditorium, community room, and other features that best fit the expanded use of the school.

What would later be called Driver’s Education was developed in 1951 as a safe driving program. In the mid-1950’s, a program of work experience was developed for junior high students. “In 1957 the Flint Olympian and Canusa (Canada and USA) Games were started; Frank thought that the summer programs should end with some kind of flourish” (Proconier, 1999, p. 20). A personalized curriculum program for high-risk students was very popular during this period. The Mott program, Better Tomorrow for

the Urban Child, was a direct forerunner of many federally funded programs. In an effort to better serve the urban child, a preschool program and parent involvement program were started in 13 schools. In addition, extra teachers, counselors, material, and equipment were provided to better serve this population. Mott hosted the first Michigan community school workshop in 1955. The first national community school workshop was hosted in 1959.

In 1961, Frank Manley co-authored *Community Schools in Action: The Flint Program* (Manley, Reed, & Burns, 1961). This book explained that the original Flint experiment was an attempt to reduce juvenile delinquency. The goal was to open schools and community sites as places for recreation and thereby keep young people busy with athletic activities, leaving very little time to commit crimes, or get into trouble. This idea did not meet all the needs and, therefore, was expanded to include adult recreation programs primarily to give unemployed men and women something to do during “The Depression.” It became clear to Manley that the pressing economic and social needs of the Flint community called for something in addition to what was being offered.

Many community problems were found to be interrelated and as a result, the Visiting Teacher Program was started to work with families who had children not attending school on a regular basis.

Frank asked Mott for \$10,000 to hire visiting teachers to go into the homes of so-called delinquents to find out what their homes were like. They learned that you can't just give a kid a ball and bat and expect him to do well in school if he has congenital syphilis, or if his mother is entertaining men and he is under orders to stay of the house until 3:00 a.m., or if his parents are drunk. (Edwards, 1999, p. 26)

Soon after, additional programs like the Health-Center Program, Industrial and Vocational Program, Adult Homemaking Program, and Mothers' Club Program were added in response to the needs and wants of the community.

Eastern Michigan University developed a tailor-made Master's Degree in Leadership as the first formal university training for community school directors. Other Michigan universities wanted to become involved and by the late 1950's and early 1960's, seven public universities joined to offer a leadership program called the Mott Colloquium Series. Procunier (1999) pointed out that once-a-month people would come to Flint to hear a nationally known speaker and after dinner, they would break into study groups and have a discussion. The next day they would extend the conversation until noon. "This Mott Colloquium Series was the forerunner of the Mott Inter-University Clinical Preparation Program for Educational Leaders" (Procunier, 1999, p. 21).

The principles that guided Mott and Manley were enumerated in *Community Schools in Action: The Flint Program*:

- Community schools help people help themselves.
- Community schools focus on prevention and education rather than charity.
- Leadership development programs must provide encouragement to people who have ideas, initiative, creative ability, and the necessary "feel" or touch.
- Wise administration combines sound business judgment with sound vision.
- Start at home. After your neighbor has been cared for, give nationally and internationally based on a proven model of "helping people help themselves." (Manley, Reed, & Burns, 1961, pp. 65-69)

“These five principles guided the Manley-Mott partnership and the initiatives that evolved from it. They are still the foundation of community education and the community school concept because they are still relevant” (Decker, 1999c, p. 8).

Olsen and Clark (1977) reported in 1963, the Mott Foundation recognized a need for training and in response developed the Inter-University Clinical Preparation Program that lasted until 1973. During the life of the Clinical Preparation Program, one-year internships were offered to more than 700 doctoral and masters’ degree students from seven Michigan universities. In 1965, the National Center for Community Education was established at Flint, and a six-week training course was offered to community school directors from across the country. Today, the National Community Education Association serves 1,350 members and 37 state community education associations. Approximately 800 national and international educators are trained annually. In 1979, the Mott Foundation established the International Community Education Association in England.

In the mid-sixties, Charles Stewart Mott urged President Lyndon B. Johnson to replicate Flint’s community school concept in the difficult and failing Washington, D.C. public schools. In 1968, under the direction of the U.S. Commissioner of Education, community centers were started in 24 Washington D.C. schools from a \$9 million allocation. By 1970, about 600 districts had adopted the community school center concept. Seven years later, the number of districts had increased to 1,300. President Gerald R. Ford in 1974 signed the Community School and Comprehensive Community

Education Act. This Act established a federal Office of Community Education and \$3 million annually for community education programs.

Currently there are various models of the Flint Michigan model for community partnerships. These models include after-school programs, wrap-around programs as well as weekend, summer, and holiday programs.

Minzey and LeTarte (1994) point out that four principles emerged during this period and became the foundation of the modern community education concept:

1. The school serves all the community, not just its youth. As the educational center of the community rather than the educational center for the youth of the community, all people should be provided extended learning opportunities.
2. The school facilities in a community are a major resource of that community, and utilization of that resource should be maximized. Schools should not be limited to an 8:00 to 3:00 day, but should be available in the evening and on weekends for a variety of community activities.
3. Educational opportunities made available to the community should reflect citizen interests, and need, not the perceived “appropriate” offerings established by the professional educators of the community.
4. The quality of education provided children is enhanced when a close relationship between school and community is established. Providing educational opportunities to the entire community is one of the best ways of assuring this close interrelationship. (p. 30)

These four principals have continued to be the foundation of community education. They formed the nucleus of what would become an expansive program in the 1950’s and 1960’s.

Frank Manley distinguished himself as a community educator. He is considered the father of community education because of his lifelong dedication and leadership in community school education. He was deeply committed to the concept of solving local

problems through the involvement and input from the community. He believed that the public schools were underutilized, and since these facilities were available and owned by the people, they should be used to serve and enhance the lives of those living in the community.

Our program was to make the community school director a part of the community. He developed enthusiasm and interest by talking to the people in the community. Relevancy is the word everybody uses now, but that's [sic] what we were trying to do. The idea of passing out balls, bats and basketballs, opening up doors, and pouring coffee, was in my way of thinking just a simple "Come on folks, come on in and get involved." (Pendell, 1999, p. 39)

In the following excerpt from the last interview given before Frank Manley died, one gets a feel for this man of courage and for the obstacles he and others faced. The interviewer is asking him about the beginning of the community school program in 1935.

One instance will best illustrate what we were up against in those days. Teachers resented our using "my classroom." The principals resented our using "my school." Some of the janitors felt that they were imposed upon because they had extra work to do. In one school, we were having particular trouble because the principal claimed that every morning when a teacher came to open the school, there was graffiti written all over the blackboard with some very obnoxious four-letter words. The principal called me and complained vociferously, blaming it all on the Mott Program. I called the building director in and he assured me that every door had been tried and locked up when he left the building every night. We finally discovered that our night program was interfering with the love life of the custodian, who was enjoying some nocturnal revelry with a member of the opposite sex. So, Bacon, Patterson, and myself went down early one night and surprised them. The custodian admitted that he had been writing these things on the wall and on the blackboards hoping to embarrass the program to the point where it would be eliminated. Well, I said, I'll tell you what I'll do. If you don't get this building in shape and keep it the cleanest, most immaculate school in the city, I'm not only going to report you to the board of education, I'm going to report you to your family. I felt pretty cheap about sneaking in there on him, but we had to stop the accusations against our program. But there was a lot of wonder as to why that school became the cleanest, neatest, most immaculate building in the city's school system. The principal and the teachers never did understand. I never told anybody what had happened. I know you won't dare print this, but



that's just one illustration and I could give you a million more like that. (Pendell, 1999, p. 37)

Frank Manley during his lifetime did not realize all that he had hoped for community education. Most great leaders can always see to the next mountaintop even though they may not have the time to climb it. The staff of the day programs funded by the Mott foundation did not accomplish all that Manley wanted to achieve. "When he dealt with the community, with the voluntary associations, with the public, he was notably successful, but success was harder to come by within the education establishment" (Melby, 1999, p. 32). This once again simply points out that the obstacles to educational reform are to be blamed on the system of public education and not the community at large.

Charles Stewart Mott died in 1973, one year after Frank Manley. Proconier (1999) wrote, "With both gone, community education was to experience its first survival test. It passed with flying colors" (p. 23). The Mott Foundation along with educational and political leaders nationally continued to provide both financial and leadership support for the community education program. Through the 1970's and 1980's, community education continued to flourish. State and federal legislation provided millions of additional dollars to support the concept of community education. "The Mott Foundation launched a major grant program that aimed at significantly increasing the number of community education programs and improving the quality of both community life and schools" (Proconier, 1999, p. 24).

Those of us who have spent a lifetime in public education, in the community, and in the universities are still not allowed to take the road that he pointed out and on which he traveled so far. The paradigm shift that is required upsets the status quo. The road is considered too hard and upsets school staff and school systems. We can take small steps and we can accept grants and gifts to implement community programs, but when the cart gets upset or when principals complain, superintendents abandon us.

The public school systems where community education is embraced and revered are the exception rather than the rule. Even in those arrangements, community education is generally self-funded. The school systems are charging the community education programs a building use fee and they are already paying their cost-share of the custodian and utilities. They are more than happy to pay the cost where community education exists and where they have the funds to offset their share of additional utilities. To be charged a building fee when the public has already paid for the building should cause public outcry. In general, the public are unaware they are being charged twice. Most of the time, the local community education staff works for the district, and they would be counseled or considered un-loyal if they brought those issues to the attention of the public.

Public school systems are looking for new panaceas, new machines, new gadgets, and new paper models. They are a profession intrigued by abstraction and complexity. Perhaps, the model created by the Manley/Mott team is just too simple for them to accept. I challenge any person to show that the community will not benefit from lifelong learning. "Frank Manley saw that unless education ministered to the needs of 'the least,'

no other success would save it or the society it serves” (Melby, 1999, p. 32). We should all care about our community in the same way that Manley did, and we should be challenged to expand the concepts and extend the programs to improve both society and our individual community.

Manley’s long-term friendship with Charles Stewart Mott proved to be one of mutual respect and admiration. Proconier (1999), former dean of Community Education at Mott Community College in Flint, Michigan, and former program officer of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, had these words to say about Mott and Manley:

The concept of the Mott Program evolved gradually as a long-lasting creative partnership between Mott and Manley. That partnership went on until they died. Each was the other’s greatest public relations person. Everything C.S. did, he would credit Frank for, and vice versa. It was a partnership in which Frank had the ideas and the leadership necessary to make things happen, and C.S. had the resources. (p. 20)

“Reflecting on the history of the Mott foundation, C.S. Mott commented that it should be called the Manley Project, because it was developed and guided by Frank’s genius”

(Pendell, 1999, p. 40). Harding Mott (as cited in Pendell, 1999), son of C.S., said:

Since the beginning of the [community education] program of the Mott Foundation 37 years ago, Flint, Michigan, has been considered a laboratory in finding answers to the ills of modern urban society...We are fortunate to have Frank Manley as the director of the laboratory, I doubt there will ever be another. (p. 40).

It is reported that C.S. Mott stated that one reason he enjoyed helping the poor was there was so little competition. Generally, all the programs supported by Manley and Mott strongly supported less fortunate or low-income families. It was never their goal or intention to be like a charity and dole out money but instead to partner with people in a

way that could assist them to become sturdy, strong, and more self-reliant. In this way, the support they provided never robbed those receiving it of their dignity or respect. “Charles Stewart Mott’s high standards probably helped develop the great leadership potential in Frank Manley. And Frank Manley’s vision, dedication, and drive undoubtedly helped the Mott Foundation become the great philanthropic institution it is today” (Campbell, 1972, p. 35).

Decker (1999b) writes about the extraordinary partnership between Frank Manley and Charles Stewart Mott:

The evolution of the community school in Flint would not have been possible without the philanthropy of Charles Stewart Mott. It was not just Mott’s generosity but his personal philosophy that made him responsive to Manley’s goal of making the community a better place in which to live. (p. 17)

Mott (as cited by Young & Quinn in Decker, 1999b) wrote in the introduction to a biography being written about him in 1963:

It seems to me that every person, always, is in a kind of informal partnership with his community. His own success is dependent to a large degree on that community, and the community, after all, is the sum total of the individuals who make it up...For me, this sense of partnership has become a growing reality over the years. In the simplest terms: Flint has given me much that is good: I try, in return, to make available to the people of Flint much that is good, placing human values first. (p. 17)

Decker (1999c) concluded that among Frank Manley’s community connections was Marge Pearlson. Manley met her at a cocktail party hosted by the Motts. Pearlson (as cited in Decker, 1999c) had this to say about Manley:

He was the man who, in my opinion, took the hinges off the schoolhouse doors. Those doors were wide open, and you were welcome. You didn’t feel like an outsider. I never felt that because I hadn’t gone to college—wasn’t a professional—I wasn’t a very important part of this whole process, a partner. The

term is community education and I was community. That is what Frank did for me. (pp. 14-15)

Community education is not easily defined. It is a function of the entire community and should be designed and directed to benefit the community and the people it serves. “Community education, therefore, is an all-inclusive phenomenon functioning in the community to help people of all ages, races, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds to fulfill their learning needs and to aid in the development and improvement of the entire community” (Totten, 1970, p. 3).

Maurice Seay (as cited in Minzey & LeTarte, 1994), while professor at Western Michigan University, said, “Community education is the process that achieves a balance and a use of all institutional forces in the education of the people—all of the people—of the community” (p. 57).

Walter Beggs (as cited in Minzey & LeTarte, 1994), Dean of the College of Education at the University of Nebraska reported:

We come to the conclusion that community education was the process of a community assessing its needs, also its resources, deciding which resources it could use to meet specific needs, assigning a priority to the needs; and in our project theory, we assumed that the greatest resource of any community for meeting its own needs and for its own improvements is its educational system. (p. 57)

Wilson Riles (as cited in Minzey & LeTarte, 1994), Superintendent of Education for the State of California wrote:

As a philosophy, Community education concerns itself with everything that affects the well being of all citizens within a given community and the dynamics of relating the problems of people to community resources. It allows people to experience success in resolving their community problems, meeting their goals, and making institutions more responsive to community needs and wants. (p. 57)

In an attempt to combine all the definitions of community education, Minzey and LeTarte (1994) formed the following definition:

Community Education is a philosophical concept which serves the entire community by providing for all of the educational needs of all of its community members. It uses the local school to serve as the catalyst for bringing community resources to bear on community problems in an effort to develop a positive sense of community, improve community living, and develop the community process toward the end of self-actualization. (p. 58)

### **Adult Education**

Education has been one of the great success stories of American society. The founding fathers saw education as indispensable to a democratic society and sowed the seeds of a vital system of public education in every community and state. Since the beginning of American society, and even before that in Europe, adult and continuing education has been an important part of the lives of the people. Because of the need for skilled people during the 1600's and 1700's, lifelong learning was an early necessity. Benjamin Franklin and a few of his friends started an early discussion club (Junto) for the purpose of exploring a variety of intellectual problems in the pursuit of self-growth and improvement. They called their early group Junto, meaning a group of persons joined for a common purpose. The first American public library is considered to have been an outgrowth of the Junto organization.

In the early 1800's, the lyceum movement was another contributing force in the development of adult education in the United States. Josiah Holbrook in Connecticut initiated this early movement with the purpose of facilitating self-improvement of participants. Lyceum is a Latin word that was used to describe a gymnasium near Athens

where Aristotle taught. Today a lyceum is considered a hall for public lectures or discussions. A lyceum association provides public lectures, concerts, and entertainment. Hiemstra (2002) in his book, *Lifelong Learning*, reports that the Chautauqua movement developed in the 1800's was another important contributing force to the development of adult education in the United States. This movement affected small towns and rural areas throughout the United States. The movement derived its name from the site of the first program at Lake Chautauqua in western New York State. The first program was originally an adult religious summer school program for Sunday school teachers. The idea became so popular that the intended programs were expanded to provide education on numerous other topics of interest during that period. Tent shows traveled to small towns and rural areas throughout the country providing entertainment, lectures, religion, and cultural experiences. Not all these offerings were always legitimate and the movement ended by the turn of the twentieth century.

The Hatch Act of 1887 established agricultural experimental stations within the land grant colleges. This is considered the first real federal government entry into the field of adult education. Minzey and LeTarte (1994) note that the Hatch Act was

followed in 1914 by the Cooperative Extension Act. The Cooperative Extension Act was intended to educate farmers to improve crop yield and farming techniques. Today, this effort is heralded as the nation's greatest adult education venture and its most successful. (p. 119)

A century ago, as the nation began to take giant steps forward in its industrial and agricultural development, the Morrill Act (land grant colleges) and then later the Smith-Hughes Act (vocational education) brought into being a great partnership between

education and economic development. This partnership between vocational education, career and professional education was indispensable in providing the educated manpower, knowledge, and skills required of workers during our industrial period. It is important to have a deep sense of pride in the leaders that made our historic progress possible. Today, we are confronted with a new sense of urgency. The accelerated age of information has caused a climate change in jobs and industry. We live in a fast-changing technological world. The age of information and technology has made our historic education effort obsolete. The old notion of a terminal education is out-of-date. We live in a fast-changing world.

As early as the 1980's, it was predicted that the new information age would make it necessary for adults to return for re-education or re-training from three to five times during their lifetimes. All these predictions have come true. Information and technology have changed the world, as we once knew it. Today's worker will have to have more than a screwdriver and hammer to stay employed. Even professional careers will require retraining at regular intervals. Americans expect their schools and colleges to prepare people for better jobs, careers, and for the good life. Given the economic and social realities, educators become a natural target for the disappointments and frustrations of those who do not achieve financial success.

During the past century, many other adult education programs or agencies that have furthered the cause of adult education were created. "The development of the Cooperative Extension Service, university extension programs, public libraries,



Americanization programs, and ABE/GED efforts are only a partial listing of the many important branches of the developing field” (Hiemstra, 2002, p. 1).

The Adult Education Association (AEA) of the United States was formed in 1950. Two years later in 1952, the National Association of Public School Adult Educators (NAPSAE) was established. The NAPSAE eventually became the National Association for Public Continuing and Adult Education (NAPCAE). The AEA and the NAPCAE were primary forces in shaping the field of adult and continuing education. Both organizations supported research and established a relationship with federal and state programs. The Adult Education Association and the National Association for Public and Continuing and Adult Education merged in 1982 to form the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE).

The 1950's and 1960's were a special period of growth and development for the field of adult education. Aided by the philanthropy of Corporations and Foundations like Carnegie, Kellogg, and Mott, the ideas behind adult education and learning grew and flourished. With the encouragement of the many significant foundations, the federal government drew up legislation creating the Adult Education Act of 1965. This act legitimized the previous efforts of those working and serving in the field of adult education. Adult Basic Education programs have been established in every state with the federal support provided under the act. Millions of adults are helped each year because of this legislation. The Adult Basic Education Act stimulated an interest in adult education at the state and local levels. Programs for minorities, migrant workers, and undereducated adults in the workplace and at home were provided.

Harrington (1979) states that during the years from 1915 to 1965, that adult education was emerging as a recognized field of study. He reports that much of John Dewey's writings had meaning for the education of adults. During the 1920's, Thorndike (1928) wrote a trailblazing book on adult learning. Harrington (1979) relates "that in the decade that followed, Carnegie Corporation grants arranged by Frederick Keppel produced a whole shelf full of books on adult education, some fairly good and all important as starting the flow of ink on related subject (and it flows still)" (p. 24).

The early to mid-1960's brought many changes to not only adult education but the entire realm of education. During this decade, some of the most dramatic changes occurred in the field of adult and continuing education. Knowles and Klevins (1982) report that "the formation, in 1965 of the Bureau of Adult and Vocational Education—as a part of the U.S. Office of Education –within which was created a division of Adult Education Programs, was one such action" (p. 22). During this decade, several legislative acts were passed: the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962; the Vocational Education Act of 1963; the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964; and the Adult Education Act of 1966. Those years saw a rapid growth in the Federal contribution to education.

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 began the federal involvement in adult basic education. This act provides funds to "encourage and expand basic educational programs for adults to enable them to overcome English language limitations, to improve their basic education in preparation for occupational training and more profitable employment, and to become more productive and responsible citizens" (Minzey & LeTarte, 1994, p. 121). Equity and access were the focal points of this federal

involvement. Originally, this was Title II-B of the Economic Opportunity Act. Two years later, it became a piece of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, administered through the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and in 1966 was titled the Adult Education Act.

Adult education programs provided an open-learning environment. Participants may enter and exit at any time depending on their individual needs, aspirations, and the availability of instructional programs. Adult learning is a way of life and need not be restricted to formal schooling. It was to occur through a variety of means and methods depending on the circumstances of the individual, his needs, and his environment.

Knowles and Klevins (1982) point out that an international definition of adult education was put forward in 1966. A meeting of 26 educators representing eight countries met to formulate the definition.

Their conclusion was that...adult education is a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular and fulltime basis (unless fulltime programs are especially designed for adults) undertake sequential and organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, understanding, skills, appreciation and attitudes. (p. 23)

Houle (1982) indicates that each episode of learning consists of a countless number of aims and actions of the learner and teacher. The teacher has personal reasons and specific goals for undertaking his work. The learner has broad personal aspirations, immediate goals, and private motives. The efforts by either the teacher or student are diverse and complexly interwoven. He believes that adults ordinarily begin a learning program because they believe it has immediate and direct meaning for them. "Learning is

typically defined as the acquisition of a new skill through practice or experience” (Schaie & Geiwitz, 1982, p. 300).

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) provided the following definition of adult education: “Adult education is a process whereby persons whose major social roles are characteristic of adult status undertake systematic and sustained learning activities for the purpose of bringing about changes in knowledge, attitudes, values or skills” (p. 9).

Harrington (1979) defines adult education as “those who have completed or interrupted their schooling and are entering a college or university or are coming into contact with a higher education program after an interval away from the classroom” (p. xii).

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) provide synonyms and related terms used for Adult Education:

Continuing education, which implies that the adult learner is pursuing education beyond the point where he or she left formal schooling;

Lifelong learning, used as a synonym for adult education but more correctly as a reconceptualization of the entire educational process;

Recurrent education, found in foreign literature as a synonym for adult education;

Nontraditional education, used by higher education activities in awarding credit towards external degrees for examination and assessment of nontraditional education;

Community education, refers to any kind of educational program or activity designed to serve people out in the community. Associated with the community school movement supported for many years by the Mott Foundation and dedicated to making neighborhood public schools centers for educational, cultural, and recreational activities for people of all ages.

Andragogy, meaning the art and science of helping adults learn. Used in Europe as a synonym for Adult Education. (pp. 12-14)

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) recognized that no universally accepted definition of adult education is possible. The definitions, synonyms, and related terms for adult education emphasize “the learner’s characteristics and intentions and the processes and outcome of educative activity” (p. 90). Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) state that: “Adult education is concerned not with preparing people for life, but rather with helping people to live more successfully” (p. 9). Schroeder (1970) states,

There is still no single definition universally accepted by adult educators nor is there a universally held public image of adult education. The adult educator and layman alike naturally tend to define adult education within the limits of their own immediate experience with it. Accordingly, adult education has erroneously been equated with the adult educational activities of the public schools or with such specific program areas as remedial or vocational technical education. (p. 29)

Confusion can exist between the use of the terms adult education and continuing education. “Some people use the terms synonymously; some draw sharp lines of distinction between them; and still others seem unable to decide” (Schroeder, 1970, p. 28). At the operational level, it has become common for adult educators who take classes at the university level to describe their studies as continuing education. Adult classes or studies outside the confines of transcript credit are often referred to as adult education.

Essert (1951) defined adult education by operation analysis when he stated:

Adult education is an experience of maturing, voluntarily selected by people whose major occupation is no longer that of going to school or college, in which these individuals or groups plan meaningful tasks and apply sustained inquiry to them....the major portion of adult education in the nation is engaged in helping people meet their individual needs as they are interpreted by individuals themselves. (p. 8)

Knowles (1986) defines andragogy as “the art and science of helping adults learn” (p. 86). Merriam (1993) reflecting on Knowles’ definition states: “while

andragogy does not define the uniqueness of adult learning, it does provide a set of guidelines for designing instruction with learners who are more self-directed than teacher-directed” (pp. 8-9). Knowles (1975) explains that his definition of andragogy is prefaced with: “self-directed learning usually takes place in association with various kinds of helpers, such as teachers, tutors, mentors, resource people, and peers. There is a lot of mutuality among a group of self directed learners” (p. 18). Commenting on Knowles’ philosophy, Pratt (1993) states:

Knowles’ conception is based in part, on beliefs about human nature, the relationship between individual and society and a commitment to a democratic society... Thus, andragogy appears to be based on at least five fundamental values or beliefs: (1) a moral axiom that places the individual at the center of education and relegates the collective to the periphery, (2) a belief in the goodness of each individual and the need to release and trust that goodness, (3) a belief that learning should result in growth toward the realization of one’s potential, (4) a belief that autonomy and self-direction are the signposts of adulthood within the democratic society, and (5) a belief in the potency of the individual in the face of social, political, cultural and historical forces to achieve self-direction and fulfillment. (p. 21)

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) consider the adult as a self-directed learner.

“Adult education... assumes that students are already functioning as adults in society. Thus, its mission is not preparatory so much as it is one of assistance—helping adults to realize their potential, make good decisions, and in general better carry out the duties inherent in the adult role” (p. 78). Caffarella (1993) reports, “self-directed learning is viewed as the essence of what adult learning is all about” (p. 25). Caffarella’s (1993) belief is that the focus of adult learning is on the individual, their self-development, and needs rather than the content. Self-direction and autonomy are two characteristics that appear in self-directed adult learners. Four variables influence these characteristics

according to the author: “their level of technical skills, their familiarity with subject matter, their sense of personal competence, and the context of the learning event” (Caffarella, 1993, p. 30).

For some adults who have passed the legal age to attend public schools, there is a need for the traditional education services of the school. Minzey and LeTarte (1994) suggest that adults in this group perhaps are “in need of basic education skills, adults who need or want a high school diploma, persons who need vocational skills, and community members who desire other programs related to avocational interest, health, physical activity, or personal problems” (p. 60).

One adult educator (Bergevin, 1967) summarized this need to engage continuously in learning activities by defining several goals for adult and continuing education. These ideas are as relevant today as they were 35 years ago:

- To help learners achieve a degree of happiness and meaning in life.
- To help learners understand themselves, their talents and limitations, and their relationship with other people.
- To help adults recognize and understand the need for lifelong learning.
- To provide conditions and opportunities to help adults advance in the maturation process spiritually, culturally, physically, politically, and vocationally.
- To provide, where needed, education for survival, in literacy, vocational skill, and health measures. (chap. 3, p. 2)

It is interesting that Bergevin pointed out in 1967 the health measures to be derived from adult education (lifelong learning). Mott (1999) pointed out, “Adults are

living longer and healthier lives, frequently returning to the classroom for personal and professional reasons; current medical and education research suggest that returning to engaging educational environment can actually promote better health” (p. 16).

Clark and Caffarella (1999) provide a biological perspective regarding the development of adults, “we are physical beings; as such we will change physiologically, whether those changes are driven by natural aging, the environment, our own health habits, or by accident or disease process” (p. 5).

Taylor, Marienau, and Fiddler (2000) offer four aspects of development for understanding adult learners:

- People develop through interactions with their environment.
- Development follows a cycle of differentiation and integration.
- Within individual development is a variable, not uniform, process.
- The ability to reframe experience serves as a marker of development (p. 11).

Milton (2003) suggests, “One can, however, provide the environments within which changes are more likely to occur and be gratified to know that such development is an ongoing process of becoming rather than of arrival at some final destination” (p. 15). Aging is a lifelong progression toward more multifaceted ways of knowing and more refined understanding of self and others.

Aslanian and Brickell (1980) conducted a nationwide telephone survey in an effort to determine what factors cause adults to learn. A summary of the survey findings is as follows:



- Learners are considerably younger than non-learners—half are under age 40.
- Learners are considerably better educated than non-learners—adults who have gone beyond high school are twice as likely to learn as those who have not.
- Adults with high incomes are more likely to learn—twice as many learners as non-learners are from families earning \$25,000 (in 1979) a year or more.
- Employed adults are far more likely to engage in learning than unemployed adults - the more work a person is doing, the more likely he or she is to engage in learning.
- Adults engaged in professional and technical work are most likely to learn.
- Adults employed in business and professional fields are more likely to engage in learning.
- Single adults who have never married and divorced adults are more likely to engage in learning.
- Women with children under age 18 are considerably more likely to engage in learning than women with children over 18.
- Participation in learning drops sharply among adults who have five or more children.
- Blacks supply considerably less than their proportionate share of learners; Hispanics supply their share; Whites supply more than their share; while other groups supply considerably more than their share.
- Learners are slightly more likely to live in urbanized areas.
- Adults in the Pacific Coast states are more likely to engage in learning than those in any other region in the nation, while adults in the South Atlantic states are less likely to participate than in any other region.
- There is no difference in adult learning according to sex or number of persons in the household 25 years of age or older. (p. 47)

The National Center for Education Statistics in 2001 found that participation in

Adult Education compared to 1991 was up from 38% to 48% for those 18 years and

older. The study showed that adults “with a bachelor’s degree were more likely to participate in a learning activity (65%) than were high school completers (39%)” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001, p. 12).

Aslanian and Brickell (1980) concluded, “demographic characteristics can help describe adult learners but they cannot explain why all adults learn” (p. 47). These researchers found that, “more adults learn in order to make career transitions than all other reasons combined with family and leisure transitions competing for a distant second place” (p. 55).

According to Courtenay (1990), location for older adults is more important than any other factor. Older adults prefer sites familiar to them and near their homes. They prefer late morning to mid-afternoon classes during the week. Older adults prefer programs that are easy to register for and are not for academic credit or certification. The older adults like classes that are flexible and open for discussion. Adult students enjoy their courses more when the pace is leisurely. Therefore, when I talk with supervisors of adult education, I tell them when programming for older adults to make it more like a ‘waltz than a rumba.’

Robinson (1983) reports there are several variables to consider when attempting to program for older adults: “variables influencing older adult participation fall into three different groups: influences that practitioners can do very little about, interventions that practitioners can use, and variables associated with results in the form of successful educational participation” (p. 66). As one would expect, formal education, age, and health are variables about which practitioners cannot do anything. Robinson (1983)

pointed out, “Formal education is the characteristic most highly associated with the extent of educational participation” (p. 66). One’s age and health are factors that are generally associated with social class. Persons who are more affluent have a tendency to enjoy better health and, therefore, live longer. Age and health are not factors over which the practitioner has any control. Adult educators do have control over programmatic issues like class schedules, registration, accessibility, effective teaching, meaningful curriculum, and open participation.

Birkenholz (1999) provides suggestions for the prospective or practicing adult educator in his text, *Effective Adult Learning*. He offers his version of “Adult Learning Principles”:

- Learning is change – perhaps not perceivable in the short run but traceable in the long term.
- Adults must want to learn – participants require a “felt need,” especially for required training (inservice, certification, update training).
- Adults learn by doing – facilitators must overcome barriers of participant low self-esteem and lack of confidence, fear of ridicule, or failure.
- Learning should focus on realistic problems – inductive instruction is more effective for adults (e.g., case studies, play situations, demonstrations).
- Experience affects adult learning – facilitators must recognize both positive and negative experiences and their impact on adult learners.
- Adults learn best in informal environments – provide adults the opportunity to establish their own rules and focus on positive aspects.
- Use variety in teaching adults – use the maximum number of senses, encourage participant interaction.

- Adults want guidance, not grades – encourage and affirm their abilities as learners. (p. 31)

In 1959, Burman conducted a study on aspirational fulfillment among lower socio-economic level adults to determine implications for adult education. He found disadvantaged adults' major interest was attainment of a better standard of living and few had any plans to fulfill their intellectual aspirations. Burman concluded that the fundamental task of adult education was to determine how to engage these adults in experiences that would assist them in developing new interests and accept continuing education as a means for personal development and fulfillment.

The 1962 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Yearbook has an excellent resource on self-fulfillment, entitled *Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming*. This chapter by Earl C. Kelly has many implications for adult education. He points out that in order for the fully-functioning self to develop, the person must have a reason to be and the opportunity to live the good life. Kelly lists several criteria worth consideration for the fully functioning person: creative, thinks well of himself, and others and sees himself as part of a world in movement. This fully functioning person sees the value of mistakes and lives in keeping with his values.

Maslow in 1962 developed a hierarchy of needs for human development. Maslow contends that only when a person's needs at the lower level are satisfied, are they able to satisfy higher needs. Maslow classified his idea of needs for human fulfillment as: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Until

disadvantaged adults can improve their basic needs for survival, they are unable to concentrate on becoming self-fulfilled.

Puder and Hand (1968) considered some personality factors that interfere with adult learning: alienation, avoidance, hostility, fear of school, rejection of desire to learn, and poor self-image. The challenge for leaders in the adult education field is to minimize as many of the factors that may interfere with the adult learner and to create programs that develop positive attitudes toward lifelong learning.

Benne (1967) puts the charge directly to adult educators: “Educators must concern themselves with the individual’s quest of identity, the quest for community, the proper uses of fraternity, the assumptions which underlie problems created by bureaucratic behavior, and the re-education of persons in human relations” (p. 198).

Vocational training is a function of adult education and is appropriate for meeting the needs of those who need to support themselves and their families. Not only does adult education have the responsibility to assist adults with their survival needs, they also have a responsibility to assist them in becoming self-fulfilled.

Kirsch (1998) reports the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) included over 26,000 individuals over the age of 16. The participants responded to questions about their “demographic characteristics, educational background, reading practices, labor market experiences and other areas thought to be associated with literacy” (Kirsch, 1998, p. 14). Smith and Reder (1998) summarized the most significant findings of the NALS:

- About one-half of the American adults performed at the two lowest levels of literacy proficiency.
- Educational attainment was associated with literacy proficiency: those adults with few years of education were more likely to perform in the lowest literacy levels.
- Racial and ethnic group differences were also apparent: African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics and Asians were more likely than Whites to perform in the two lowest literacy levels. (p. 6)

The relevance of these findings has implications for this research. Stakeholders in my study have a high level of educational attainment, and therefore, had they been surveyed under the study, one would expect they would have been classified as highly educationally proficient.

Venezky and Kaplan (1998) reviewed the National Adult Literacy Survey with regard to political participation. They concluded:

Among the core Socioeconomic Status (SES) demographic variables, higher education, income and occupational status have been associated with higher tendencies to vote. Older citizens have exhibited higher turnouts than younger citizens, a difference that holds up when adjustments in voting rates are made for education, income and sex. (p. 110)

The voting behavior of older adults is of interest to this researcher and has relevance to this study. The school district will at sometime in the future ask the public to vote for a bond issue. Historically, older community education participants, because of their participation in classes, have voted in favor of additional taxes to support the schools. Knowing that older adults who are taking adult education courses are more likely to vote, it would make sense to determine if they are positive or negative regarding any upcoming school bond vote.

Minzey and LeTarte (1994) reviewed the growth and establishment of adult education in this country. They maintain that the following basic principles have emerged in public education:

1. Public schools have a responsibility to assist the citizenry in keeping abreast of change within the society. Adult educators have recognized that the society requires not only a literate population but an intelligent one that is willing to share responsibility for social progress.
2. Public schools have an important role in training for the wise, purposeful, and enjoyable use of leisure time. The ill effects of enforced idleness and expanded time for leisure can be offset by creative, wholesome, recreational activities, and educational opportunities.
3. Public schools have a responsibility to provide second chance opportunities to those individuals in the society who, for a variety of reasons, did not complete high school. The problems faced by the non-high school graduate are severe and will become increasingly so. Adults must be given the opportunity to obtain the basic high school credentials that are required in the society.
4. The public schools should expand the use of their facilities, personnel, and leadership. They should become more active within, and available to, the community they serve.
5. Because of technological advances and expanding job automation, the public schools should become increasingly involved in vocational training, retraining, and readjustment.
6. Adult education provides the means for accomplishing the goal of creating a learning society—for establishing learning as a lifetime process rather than some activity that concludes at age 18 or 22.

In addition to these six principles, community education is in the process of establishing a seventh for the public school—that of coordination. It is clear, through any cursory review of adult and continued education efforts, that literally thousands of agencies and organizations are involved in the process. A crucial role that has emerged is the need for some coordination and cooperative activity, some analysis of overlap and duplication with a corresponding determination of remaining need and potential area of service. Community education, with its broadened service role in public education,

naturally leads the adult education component to this very critical coordinating responsibility. This last principle is at some risk of achieving fulfillment, as many adult educators focus on taking all responsibilities rather than working with and through others. (pp. 119-120)

### **Learning Communities – A Transformation**

A review of the literature about learning communities provides the transformational language that has been the goal of adult and community education.

“We are refocusing on the deep longings we have for community, meaning, dignity, and love in our organizational lives” (Wheatley, 1992, p. 12).

According to Minzey and LeTarte (1994), there is a need for the school to be aware that students are a product of their entire environment and to be mindful of the words of Dr. James Conant, who said:

The community and the school are inseparable. It has been established beyond any reasonable doubt that community and family background play a large role in determining scholastic aptitude and school achievement. Anyone who thinks differently simply has not visited widely among American schools. (p. 60)

In the late 1970’s, federal community education legislation briefly attracted national attention to the efforts being made by the community school movement. When categorical federal funding for community education, childcare, and adult work training programs were terminated during the Ronald Reagan Administration and replaced by block grants to the states, community education survived as a program for which block grant money could be spent. A basic tenet of community education is that each community is unique, so authentic community education programs bear the distinctive imprint of the communities that create them. “What they have in common is precisely the goal that inspired the Manley-Mott partnership: to make public schools the



educational, social, and recreation centers of their communities, and to involve all community member in lifelong learning activities both for self-improvement and for the enhancement of the community itself” (Decker, 1999a, p. 45).

The U.S. Congress enacted legislation in 1997 stating that public schools:

Should collaborate with other public and nonprofit agencies and organizations, local businesses, educational entities (such as vocational and adult education programs, school-to-work programs, community colleges, and universities), recreation, cultural, and other community and human service entities, for the purpose of meeting the needs of and expanding the opportunities available to, the residents of the communities served by such schools. (Decker, 1999a, p. 45)

In early 1998, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Educational Research and Improvement opened the first national grant competition for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers. More than 5,000 people attended a series of regional workshops to find out how to compete for these grants. The training workshops were co-sponsored by C.S. Mott Foundation and the Department of Education.

At the unveiling of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program on January 26, 1998, Mott Foundation President William S. White announced that the Mott Foundation was prepared to commit up to \$55 million as part of the five-year federal initiative. (Decker, 1999a, p. 46)

“White noted in his remarks that the many years of continuous funding by the Mott Foundation make it “a natural partner in this important collaborative effort.” (Decker, 1999a, p. 46).

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers programs goes to the core legacy of the Mott Foundation, building on our earliest work—work before I was born—to encourage and train communities and schools to work together to address community needs and student achievement... We recognize that there are other funders interested this field. Pooling our experiences and resources can only contribute to the success of this initiative. To that end, we helped to open the schoolhouse doors literally and figuratively to the Flint community many, many

years ago, today we hope to help open doors to a new era of partnership in education....This day has been long in coming! (Decker, 1999a, p. 46)

Fewer than 2000 grant applications were received and on June 17, 1998, President Bill Clinton announced the first 99 grant recipients. The first series of awards totaled \$40 million. Funding was increased to \$200 million during fiscal year 1999. On November 12, 1999, President Clinton announced that 183 additional programs were approved and funded at the \$60 million level. In 1999, the Department of Education announced an additional 300 awards totaling \$100 million (Decker, 1999a).

Minzey and LeTarte (1972) referred to “community self-actualization [which occurs] when a community is capable of the initiative and sustained action necessary for attacking and solving its own problems, and when it is moving in the direction of the fulfillment of individual and community needs and community potential” (p. 33). Schools that are “communities are socially organized around relationships and the felt interdependencies that nurture them...[they] are defined by their centers of values, sentiments, and beliefs” (Sergiovanni, 1994, p. 217). It is community, Boyer (1995) contends, that “is without question, the glue that holds an effective school together” (p. 23). My definition of learning communities takes on a more comprehensive definition than just that of the school and staff. This research and review of literature will regard learning communities as encompassing the entire community that makes up the school and the school district. In order to be a progressive and effective organization, the public schools beginning with the central administration, should embrace the idea of becoming a learning community. The schools and the district will involve everyone in the learning

community that I am proposing. The studies on learning communities that are currently in existence focus on organizations in the business world rather than schools. Huber (1991) contends that organizational learning occurs if any of the units in the organization “acquires knowledge that it recognizes as potentially useful to the organization. A corollary assumption is that an organization learns something even if not every one of its components learns that something” (p. 89). In order for a school district, a school, or a program to be a learning organization and then a learning community, everyone within the larger public who in anyway supports or enjoys the benefits of the school must be considered a unit of the school organization.

Adler and Cole (1993) contend “a consensus is emerging that the hallmark of tomorrow’s most effective organizations will be their capacity to learn” (p. 85). “To date, there have been far more ‘thought papers’ on why learning matters than empirical research on how managers can build learning capability” (Ulrich, Jick, & Von Glinow, 1993, p. 59).

It is hoped that the results of this research will be helpful to school district leaders not in an attempt to prescribe how an organization becomes a learning community but instead a desire to create a learning community so everyone in the community has a voice, a lifelong education opportunity, and a desire to support the K-12 programs.

Stein and Imel (2002) recognize that the challenge to adult educators is to encourage the formation of a learning community without directing, interjecting, or interfering with process. Stein (2002) reports:

Today, active citizenship is manifest in the contribution being made by local communities to their own social and economic regeneration. Learning in community is marked by a community creating and perpetuating a participative collaborative of organizations and person investing time and resources to inquire ever more deeply into their culture, values and needs. (p. 38)

Organizational learning is said to be contingent on the “the development of insights, knowledge, and associations between past actions, the effectiveness of those actions and future actions” (Fiol & Lyles, 1985, p. 811). Argyris and Shön (as cited in Thomas, 1999) consider learning transformative when it results in “setting new priorities and weightings of norms” (p. 16). Organizational learning has to be more than merely adaptation or adjustment if we are to transform our current public school organizations into learning communities. This type of learning should be transformative in that it “redefines the rules and change[s] the norms, values, and world views” of the organization (Fiol & Lyles, 1985, p. 811).

Clark (1993) defines transformational learning in adults as, “meaning making that results in a change of consciousness” (p. 53). Continuing, Clark notes that transformational learning views “human beings as free and responsible, an understanding of knowledge as a personal and social construction, and a belief in a liberal democratic vision of society” (p. 55). Clark (1993) acknowledges that “transformational learning has the ultimate goal of social change” (p. 48).

In order for public schools to create a learning community, it will require the current leadership and staff to do more than adapt and adjust. They will have to transform themselves cognitively and physically. They will have to demonstrate their

understanding of the school as a hub of the learning community, and they will have to demonstrate this understanding through action.

Learning communities acquire input from all stakeholders. This, in turn, provides them with information. Information can be converted into knowledge. Shrivastava (1983) states, “knowledge that is distributed across the organization, is communicable among members, has consensual validity, and is integrated into the working procedures and administrative structures of the organization” (p. 13). Communication is vital in a thriving, productive, and healthy organization. As organizations grow, they tend to departmentalize and specialize. In unhealthy organizations, this can create communication boundaries. According to Tushman (1977), “Communication across organizational boundaries is difficult and prone to bias and distortion, yet is simultaneously a requirement for successful innovation” (p. 591).

The division leaders of an organization typically set up communication boundaries. In the case of school districts, they are probably the assistant superintendents. These appointed leaders do not want their employees talking to employees in other divisions because they do not want them saying or agreeing to something that was not thought of as their idea. By imposing these boundaries, they create communication gaps, destroy the organizational climate of teamwork, and impose control over those who work for them. Soon, the organization turns into the good tribes (those who would communicate) and the bad tribes (those not allowed to communicate). Tribal warfare at the intellectual level ensues and the results are poor cooperation and attempts to control the opposing tribe by whatever means the tribes can muster. This

occurs at the conscious level and is thought out, planned, and pre-meditated by those who would attempt to control. It destroys teamwork, culture, and while it does not destroy the organization, it cripples the organization in such a way that those who once participated in a great team, who trusted one another, who complemented each others' strengths and weaknesses, and who produced extraordinary results either move on, go down in their hole, or war at the tribal level. In my opinion, there are two types of these divisive division leaders, those that have inadequate self-confidence and those who wish to control the flow of information. Leaders who possess both traits are incredibly dangerous to the health of an organization, especially one that would like to become a community of learners.

Individuals within the organization have knowledge and memory of past activities, efforts, ideas, attempts, successes, and failures. Without the ability to communicate and communicate without bias, an organization that imposes communication boundaries is destined to repeat failures or minimize their success without open communication. This type of organization not only lacks corporate memory, they lack the synergy that comes from a team. Organizational memory "consists of mental and structural artifacts that have consequential effects on performance" (Walsh & Ungson, 1991, p. 58). When personnel retire who have corporate memory and there is no stored information for adequate decision-making and problem solving, the results are a diminished capacity to perform. "Personnel turnover creates great loss for the human components of an organization's memory...[and] nonanticipation [sic] of future needs

for certain information causes great amounts of information not to be stored, or not to be stored such that it can be easily retrieved” (Huber, 1991, p. 105).

A school district where retired employees continue to reside would call those who possessed corporate memory and probe them for suggestions and answers if they were truly a learning community. They would include them in their learning community and profit from their knowledge and wisdom. Why does this not occur...probably for the same reasons that leaders impose communication boundaries...fear and a selfish need to control!

Cook and Yanow (1996) state, “learning can indeed be done by organizations; [and] that this phenomenon is neither conceptually or empirically the same as either learning by individuals or individuals learning within an organization” (p. 431). Cook and Yanow’s idea of organizational learning is not a cognitive view but rather a cultural one. They view organizations as if they were tribes rather than individuals. Every organization has a culture. One could consider an organization’s culture as either inclusive or exclusive. If you want information that you can turn into knowledge, you should go beyond an exclusive culture.

Schein (1992) defines organizational culture as

a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems, external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 12)

Every school organization should have a culture that embraces the entire community, not only because it has the capability of improving student scores, but more importantly, it

has the capability of improving the community. Senior staff should be demonstrating to new workers the correct way to perceive the community, include the community and develop the support of the community. When challenged by certain members of the community, they should seek to understand those concerns without becoming defensive or argumentative. The school community will not always be wrong and neither will they always be right. It is important to attempt to find a solution to substantive issues and to move to higher ground on petty and inconsequential concerns.

Changing a school community or district from an organization into a learning community will involve changing how educational administrators and leaders view the community. All communities are different and, therefore, creating a learning community will not occur by just following some blueprint or a cookie cutter approach. It involves changing how present day school leaders run their organizations and how they view and include the community. The era of rugged individual autocratic leadership is over. It has been replaced with collaboration, cooperation, and teamwork. “But this is only the beginning. The quantum world has demolished the concept of the unconnected individual. More and more relationships are in store for us, out there in the vast web of universal connections” (Wheatley, 1992, p. 38). Learning communities that are rich and healthy will have collaborative goals, positive attitudes, minimum uncertainty, and respect and appreciation for everyone.

A good place for school to begin this process would be with teachers and members of the local school staff. McLaughlin (1998) asserts that learning communities for teachers are critical for teachers to be able to respond to the press for school reform



and change. Accordingly, McLaughlin (1998) has structured a policy frame for education reform around five features that promote learning communities for teachers:

- increased opportunities for professional dialogue
- reduced teachers' professional isolation
- a rich menu of embedded opportunities for learning and discourse
- professional development opportunities connected to meaningful content and change efforts
- restructured time, space and scale within schools. (p. 79)

If school administrators/leaders could accomplish this with teachers and staff, they could begin to do the same with members of the school community. They could create avenues for dialogue, opportunity, input, support, concern, and caring with the diverse population they serve. With the members of the community they serve, they could engage in a collective effort to learn together. In a learning community, everyone benefits especially those who participate in the process.

The concept of organization culture, learning communities, and organizational learning is hardly new. In 1990, Peter Senge published *The Fifth Discipline*, a book that relates to these issues. Tsang (1997) states, "organizational learning is a concept used to describe certain types of activities that take place in an organization while a learning organization refers to a particular type of organization in and of itself" (p. 75). Garvin (1993) writes, "a learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights" (p. 80). Dodgson (1993) reports that learning organizations are continually

transforming themselves, innovating, improving their competitiveness, and increasing their productivity by encouraging all members to develop their full potential.

For years, community education has championed the idea and importance of learning communities. This idea continues to be full of promise for school districts that would open their doors and minds to the new and diverse members of the community it presently serves. “We are now learning that what goes on in any creative process isn’t about organization, it’s about community” (Senge, 1996, p. 1). In order for an organization to be transformed into a learning organization, a shift in thinking, organization, inclusion, and culture must occur. “The process by which a learning organization is formed involves individual commitment and community building, and the heart of a learning organization is thus a community of commitment” (Thomas, 1999, p. 30).

Changing a school/district from an organization into a learning community involves changing how administrators lead and how the community interacts with the school or district. When a school/district considers itself a learning community, there will be shared dialogue, input, ideas, suggestions, support, and a spirit of ownership between the members of the community and the school/district. It will not just be the members of the campus improvement committee.

All the stakeholders within the community will be part of the collaborative effort to enhance the community. “Collaboration can be defined as the cooperation of equals who voluntarily share decision making and work toward common goals” (Hart, 1998, p. 90). It is important for a school district to treat the community as an equal in an effort to

achieve collaboration. Why would school professionals do anything less? Relationships and commitment are the common results of collaboration. The process involves continuous sharing, cooperation, and communication.

Sergiovanni (1994) states, “there is no recipe for building community. No correlates exist to implement. There is no list available to follow, and there is no package for trainers to deliver” (p. 218). Sergiovanni (1992) believes that a thriving learning community will develop common values and beliefs, and this will “provide the needed cement for uniting people in a common cause” (p. 41). When the community is united behind a common school district cause, whether it be technology, instruction, athletics, fine arts, community education, building improvement, or any other initiative, the likelihood that the program will be a success is greatly enhanced. How can you fail when you collaborate and treat your community as an equal? How can you fail when you align yourself with the wants and needs of those you serve and when you unite with the members of your community behind common goals? In a true partnership, everyone wins.

The type of school district leadership required to serve the needs of a learning community and produce an increase in student achievement will require something different from what is at present demonstrated by school leaders. The leadership required in schools is transformational leadership. Burns (1978) defines transformation leadership as “one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 20). “Transformational leaders motivate others to do more than they originally intended and often even more

than they thought possible. They set more challenging expectations and typically achieve higher performances” (Bass, 1996, p. 4). The transformation leader will be a courageous risk taker, a leader with the commitment and motivation necessary to restructure fundamentally the current way school(s) involve and serve the members of the community.

To construct a learning community where the voices of the members of the community have meaning and credibility requires transformational leadership at the very highest level of the organization. It requires training and focus from all leaders within the organization. A transformational school leader (principal) can do it in his or her neighborhood school, but for an entire district to benefit from this type of synergy, requires a district leader with vision, understanding, and a sense of teamwork. The entire system within a school district and the relationship between its parts has to be reconsidered and reworked in order to meet the wants and needs of an entire community. The outcome will be worth the struggle as student achievement will improve, community support will increase, and the commitment to continuous and lifelong learning by members of the community will be realized. The goal of transforming a school district from an organization to a learning community will result in “a place where students discover, and adults rediscover, the joys, the difficulties, and the satisfaction of learning” (Barth, 1990, p. 43).

### **Summation**

The literature reviewed for this study included four strands: (a) organizations and leaders, (b) evolution of community education, (b) history of adult education, and (c)

learning communities – a transformation. The review of organizations and qualities needed by educational leaders in a new world economy were explored. The literature regarding community education included chronological developments in the process and evolution of the community education concept. The review of adult education included the historical as well as the current ideas associated with adult learners. The literature review regarding learning communities pointed out the need to champion this concept of inclusiveness and participation by the entire community.

The research body regarding these four areas is full of scholarly works regarding the differences and similarities of these concepts. The information compiled in the preceding literature review formed a strong base for the study of user satisfaction of adults who are participating in community education programs. Identifying the level of satisfaction will help provide suggestions for the improvement, enhancement and upgrading of the courses, programs, and opportunities available to participants. Including all members of the community in the development of community education programs and encouraging support and input from all stakeholders is the groundwork necessary to create a vibrant learning community.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The primary purpose of this study was to determine user satisfaction of the community education program as perceived by adults in North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas. A secondary purpose of this study was to examine the impact of community education on selected variables affecting the regular K-12 school program in North East Independent School District.

Chapter III contains the research methods used to accomplish this study. The chapter is divided into the following sections: (a) population, (b) instrumentation, (c) procedures, and (d) data analysis.

The three major questions to be answered through this research were as follows:

1. What is the user satisfaction of selected community education programs as identified by stakeholders in North East Independent School District?
2. Does a difference exist in perception between stakeholders' and older adults' attitudes toward community education programs offered in North East Independent School District?
3. Does participation in community education programs affect attitudes and support of the regular K-12 school program as identified by stakeholders in North East Independent School District?

Knox (2002) states: "A central function of evaluation is to help program coordinators explain how the education program works and what might strengthen it" (p. xii). My goal in this research is much the same as stated by Knox. I want to determine

the level of program satisfaction and the needs of those who are participating in our community education programs. I want to determine if their satisfaction level has anything to do with whether they will support the K-12 school program. I know that the findings will assist us in future programming. Boulmetis and Dutman (2002) offer two definitions for evaluations:

- Evaluation is the systematic process of collecting and analyzing data in order to determine whether and to what degree objectives have been or are being achieved.
- Evaluation is the systemic process of collecting and analyzing data in order to make a decision. (p. 4)

The type of methodology used is determined by the intent of the evaluation. Boulmetis and Dutman (2002) explain that the evaluation process relates to program efficiency and effectiveness. The efficiency prong reflects cost, people, time, facilities, and materials. The effectiveness question is: “Did the program do what it was supposed to do?” According to Boulmetis and Dutman (2002) “evaluations that focus on examining and changing processes as they happen are called formative evaluations; those that focus on reporting what occurred at the end of the program cycle are called summative evaluations” (p. 14).

Adult Education Programs were qualitatively evaluated by Ko (1998) in his dissertation study. Ko coined the acronym “SUCCESS” to describe the seven steps that were representative of the programs studied. They are:

- Situation Identification
- Understanding Priorities
- Conceiving a Design

- Continuing Review
- Evaluation
- Satisfaction
- Steady Follow Up. (p. 138)

The various programs studied by Ko used 27 various meanings for the term “evaluation.” Evaluation took on different meanings for the various programs, and they conducted the process in different ways and formats. A successful program is what all community education programs would like to attain and so the acronym “SUCCESS” is a good one for program developers and coordinators to use as they develop course offerings.

The four parts of this chapter report on: (a) the procedures used in selecting a population, (b) instruments developed to gather data from identified stakeholders, (c) the procedures employed to gather data from the population, and (d) the analytical procedures applied to the data.

### **Population**

The population for this study was defined as all persons attending North East Independent School District community education classes, during a specific week, at the end of a summer community education session. A survey was handed out to every adult in attendance for a community education class during a specific week. The population size was determined by counting the number of surveys that were handed out. The total number of surveys that were handed out was 535. The total number of surveys that were returned was 522.



Survey participants were selected by first determining what community education classes were in session and then providing a survey for every adult in attendance for that specific class. Every stakeholder was enrolled in at least one class during the summer of 2006. Stakeholders participating in each class were requested to voluntarily respond to a written survey.

### **Instrumentation**

Hogan (1985) and Dewitt (2001) in their doctoral dissertations developed instruments that were modified and validated by the researcher for this study. A validity check was made using the revised instrument with the assistance of volunteers (stakeholders) in North East Independent School District community education classes and community education staff. Modifications suggested were incorporated to reflect participant satisfaction responses. The researcher followed the guidelines contained in “Collecting Research Data With Questionnaires and Interviews,” in *Educational Research: An Introduction* (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The questionnaire was adjusted using the suggestions of the validity test. The Stakeholder Questionnaire is found in Appendix A. The information sheet for stakeholders surveyed is in Appendix B.

The primary reasons for the use of the questionnaire method were threefold. The first and most important was that it was the most efficient means of reaching all those adults enrolled in community education classes at a specific time. Secondly, there were advantages that questionnaires offer in regards to cost and time of conducting individual interviews. Thirdly, survey participants would be provided consistent stimulus and an opportunity for truthful uncensored responses (Bourque & Fielder, 1995; Fink, 1995).

A survey instrument was used because the audience was readily identifiable and accessible. The survey instrument was divided into three sections: (a) personal development, (b) program satisfaction, and (c) general and demographic data. The first section requested information regarding personal development. In the second section, the participants responded to 20 statements regarding their level of satisfaction with the facilities, instruction and material, scheduling, cost, and description (perceptions). Using a Likert scale, respondents indicated the extent to which each of the items was satisfactory by selecting the corresponding response of A – Strongly Disagree, B – Disagree, C – Agree, and D – Strongly Agree. The Stakeholder Questionnaire consisted of variable domains addressing the stakeholders' community education class experience including: facilities, instruction and material, scheduling, cost, and perceptions (description). In the third section, the participants answered general and individual demographic questions. The demographic data requested information regarding the participants' age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, number of children living at home, level of education, retirement status, and income.

### **Procedures**

The community education director of North East Independent School District, Ms. Becky Stoughton, was contacted in person and consented to participate in this study. Ms. Stoughton provided student data, class location, and supervisor names. The school district superintendent was provided a letter (Appendix C) formally requesting access to the program information and permission to proceed with the study. The superintendent referred me to the division and program that approves all research in North East

Independent School District. Permission to survey community education participants was granted by Dr. John Cadena, Director of Research, North East Independent School District.

The researcher selected North East Independent School District because he is the Executive Director of Special Programs in the district. Community Education is part of his supervisory responsibility, and he has intellectual interest in furthering the influence and success of the North East Independent School District Community Education Program.

All adults attending community education classes during the final weeks of summer programming were provided a questionnaire (Appendix A) and a cover letter (Appendix B) explaining the proposed survey. The program supervisor or the community education teacher handed out the survey. Participants were informed that their responses to the survey would remain anonymous. Survey questionnaires were collected by the supervisor and sent to the researcher. Data from the 31 classes surveyed were counted and analyzed.

The Stakeholder Questionnaire (Appendix A) consisted of four parts: (a) questions about personal development, (b) questions about the community education class attended, (c) general questions, and (d) demographic questions. Responses to personal development were limited to “Yes,” “No,” and “Don’t Know.” A four-choice Likert scale was used for responses to questions about the community education classes attended. The available responses were: “Strongly Disagree,” “Disagree,” “Agree,” and “Strongly Agree.” The four-part response was chosen to avoid a noncommittal middle

ground response. The general demographic questions requested descriptive or numerical data answers unique to the stakeholder.

### **Data Analysis**

Quantitative research methodology was used for the conduct of this study following the definition provided by Gall et al. (1996):

Inquiry that is grounded in the assumption that features of the social environment constitute an objective reality that is relatively constant across time and settings. The dominant methodology is to describe and explain features of this reality by collecting numerical data on observable behaviors of samples and by subjecting these data to statistical analysis. (p. 767)

Boulmetis and Dutman (2002) summarize: “Quantitative techniques are used to establish facts numerically, to predict, and to show causal relationships” (p. 88).

Analysis and interpretation of the data followed the principles prescribed in *Educational Research: An Introduction* by Gall et al. (1996). The data collected from the questionnaire were entered into a statistical program entitled SPSS for Windows – Standard Version 11.5, to obtain an analysis of desired information regarding the demographics and the satisfaction level perceived by participants taking community education classes. Several statistical procedures were performed to answer the research questions including analysis of variance to test for significant differences in answers to the questions and frequencies, mean scores, and correlations were also used for descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations were used in multiple displays of tables to show findings. Demographic data were analyzed as they related to each factor.

An Alpha level of 0.05 was used to establish significance. Results from the study were reported using numerical and graphical techniques.

Specific statistical procedures were used to analyze data for each research question. The stated procedures were chosen for their applicability to the data as well as to the research objective. Treatment of all data was restricted to the three primary research questions of this study:

1. What is the user satisfaction of selected community education programs as identified by stakeholders in North East Independent School District?
2. Does a difference exist in perception between stakeholders' and older adults' attitudes toward community education programs offered in North East Independent School District?
3. Does participation in community education programs affect attitudes and support of the regular K-12 school program as identified by stakeholders in North East Independent School District?

To answer these questions, the researcher calculated the frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations for all three research questions. In order to answer research question one, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run on each of the five strands of satisfaction by themselves and within each strand. Post-hoc analysis was performed on each of the five strands. The Scheffe analysis was used to determine a real significance. This procedure has been discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.

To determine if there was a difference between adults and older adults in research question #2, the researcher calculated frequency, mean, and standard deviation

of all responses in the age ranges. An independent sample test was conducted to determine t-value and degrees of freedom. This procedure has been discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.

The third research question regarding community education participation and support of the K-12 program was analyzed by frequency, mean, and standard deviation. This question was analyzed by an independent sample test to determine t-value and degrees of freedom. This procedure has been discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.

Merriam (1998) asserts that “reliability in the traditional sense seems to be something of a misfit when applied to qualitative research” (p. 206). She acknowledges that what a researcher wishes is for others to concur that given the data, the findings are consistent and dependable. This may not always, if ever, be the case with qualitative research. My study is a quantitative research study. I have confidence that the data I have compiled is reliable, and although it should not be generalized or considered reliable to a different school district, it should be considered reliable in North East Independent School District. In order for a study to be reliable, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that the process should be consistent and reasonably stable over a period of time (p. 278). They place a strong emphasis on quality control of the research questions, careful data collection, accurate coding checks, and meticulous review of the data by a colleague.

In summary, my research study employed all the suggestions, ideas, and advice provided by numerous experts in the field of research theory as well of those members of my doctoral committee. I have been careful to explain both the assumptions and basis for selecting the group surveyed. I have left a well-documented audit trail for other researchers to follow should they attempt to replicate my study or to run a similar study in the school district of their choice.

Databases were created from the information gathered from the questionnaires using Microsoft Excel computer software. Each questionnaire was meticulously analyzed and coded on a scantron card to be read by a computer. A peer checked each card for accuracy. Inferential statistics were used to organize and interpret raw data collected from the questionnaires to produce descriptive statistics.

Each question of the Stakeholder Questionnaire (Appendix A) was treated as a variable for analysis purposes. Precautions were taken to prevent the examiner's behavior or any of the test instructions or examples from influencing the responses of the subjects, and the study did not call for anyone to make subjective judgments in order to record a score or observation.

Study results were recorded using numerical and graphical techniques. Displays such as tables, charts, and graphs were used to present findings.

Even novice researchers understand that no single methods of obtaining data to test a hypothesis are perfect. "Each one has certain inadequacies which leave the door open for the possibility of rival hypotheses explaining the finding" (Van Dalen, 1962, p. 128). I feel confident that I have identified the problem to be investigated and that I have

collected the essential information related to the purpose of this study. Now, I shall present the data developing explanations of the findings and evaluating the results to determine the relative similarity with the facts.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

#### **Introduction**

This study investigated user satisfaction of the community education program as perceived by adults in North East Independent School District. A secondary intention of the study was to examine the impact of community education on selected variables affecting the regular K-12 school program in North East Independent School District.

A questionnaire provided the information for the research results presented in this chapter. The questionnaire requested demographic information from each participant. Participants were asked why they enrolled in community education and if they benefited personally from participation. The main portion of the questionnaire requested information in order to determine participants' level of satisfaction with the community education program in North East Independent School District.

The intent of the research was to answer three questions concerning perceived adult user satisfaction of the community education program in North East Independent School District.

Each research question was addressed independently. The research questions were:

1. What is the user satisfaction of selected community education programs as identified by stakeholders in North East Independent School District?

2. Does a difference exist in perception between stakeholders' and older adults' attitudes toward community education programs offered in North East Independent School District?
3. Does participation in community education programs affect attitudes and support of the regular K-12 school program as identified by stakeholders in North East Independent School District?

Data gathered for this dissertation are reported and analyzed in this chapter.

### **Profile of the Respondents**

Of the 535 eligible participants, a total of 522 participants completed the questionnaire. The response to surveys section presents in tabular form the data gathered from the survey of 522 stakeholders participating in community education classes during the close of the summer 2006 community education session. Data from some of the respondents were missing for some question in the study, accounting for discrepancies in total numbers of responses from one item to another.

Stakeholders are adults who have enrolled and taken part in a community education class offered by North East Independent School District. Table 1 contains the demographic and general descriptors (independent variables) provided by stakeholders who completed the survey questionnaire. These responses are reported in frequencies and percentages.

Table 1. Stakeholder Response to General and Demographic Questions Included in Stakeholder Questionnaire Gathered From Community Education Classes at North East Independent School District for Summer Session 2006

Category	Frequency	Percent
<u>Type of Community Education Class</u>		
Educational	439	83.9
Recreational	78	14.9
Missing	6	1.1
<u>Number of Courses Taken</u>		
1	22	4.2
2	240	45.9
3	52	9.9
4 or more	203	39.3
Missing	6	1.1
<u>Future Enrollment Possibility</u>		
Yes	504	96.4
No	3	.6
Don't Know	10	1.9
Missing	6	1.1
<u>What is your age?</u>		
18 to 54	262	50.1
55 and older	259	49.7
Missing	2	.4
<u>What is your gender?</u>		
Male	181	34.6
Female	340	65.3
Missing	2	.4
<u>What is your ethnicity?</u>		
Caucasian	352	67.3
Hispanic	155	29.6
African American	4	.8
Asian	5	1.0
Other	5	1.0
Missing	2	.4

Table 1 (continued)

Category	Frequency	Percent
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Unmarried (single, divorced, widowed)	281	53.7
Married	240	45.9
Missing	2	.4
Children Living at Home		
None	251	48.0
One	135	25.8
Two	135	25.8
Three	1	.2
Four or More	1	.2
Missing	0	.0
Education		
K-8	3	.6
High School	8	1.5
Attended College	165	31.5
College Degree	283	54.1
MS/MA/Ph.D.	61	11.7
Missing	3	.6
<u>Retired</u>		
Yes	422	80.7
No	97	18.5
Missing	4	.8
Household Income		
<=20K	8	1.5
<=40K	195	37.3
<=60K	262	50.1
<=80K	20	3.8
>80K	29	5.5
Missing	9	1.7

## **Response to Surveys**

### *Stakeholder Responses*

The following tables, Tables 2-8, report the stakeholder response to the manifest variables (dependent variables) included in the survey instrument. The survey instrument, a questionnaire, completed in community education classes by stakeholders, was derived from survey instruments used by Hogan (1985) and DeWitt (2001) in their doctoral dissertation and revalidated by the researcher.

The Stakeholder Questionnaire (Appendix A) sought responses from stakeholders in eight areas relevant to community education classes: personal development, facilities, instruction and materials, scheduling, cost, description (perception), and general responses. A final set of demographic variables was captured, as well. Each table reports the frequency of a given response as a number and percent of a response. The responses, except for general questions, are ordinal data, which expresses the stakeholders' degree of agreement between extremes. A rank order is implied by the position of the response in relation with the other options.

The responses to the personal development question (Table 2) were reported as "Yes," "No," or "Don't Know." Stakeholders answered three questions regarding reason for enrolling, benefit, and future goals.

Table 2. Stakeholder Response to Personal Development Questions as Part of a Survey of Adult Participation in Community Education Classes Offered by North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Personal Development Questions	Response	Frequency	Percent
Did you enroll to meet a personal need?	Yes	460	88.0
	No	47	9.0
	Don't Know	15	2.9
	Missing	1	.2
Do you feel that enrollment has helped your personal development?	Yes	513	98.1
	No	1	.2
	Don't Know	8	1.5
	Missing	1	.2
Has enrollment lead you to work on personal goals?	Yes	470	89.9
	No	27	5.2
	Don't Know	25	4.8
	Missing	1	0.0

The question on climate controls in Table 3 shows a disparity between stakeholder response of Strongly Disagree and Agree. Anecdotal comments made by stakeholders in class indicated that the temperature was too cold.

Table 3. Stakeholder Response to Community Education Class Facilities Questions as Part of a Survey of Adult Participation in Community Education Classes Offered by North East Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas

Facilities Questions	Response	Frequency	Percent
The facilities for the community education classes are adequate.	Strongly Agree	87	16.7
	Agree	386	74.2
	Disagree	32	6.2
	Strongly Disagree	15	2.9
The location of the classes is convenient.	Strongly Agree	170	32.8
	Agree	324	62.4
	Disagree	8	1.5
	Strongly Disagree	17	3.3
Parking space is convenient.	Strongly Agree	258	49.6
	Agree	252	48.5
	Disagree	0	0.0
	Strongly Disagree	10	1.9
The climate controls are set at the appropriate level	Strongly Agree	32	6.2
	Agree	242	46.5
	Disagree	129	24.8
	Strongly Disagree	117	22.5

All of the seven questions regarding instruction and material provided in the classes were rated as agree and strongly agree by 95% or more of the participants (Table 4).

Table 4. Stakeholder Response to Community Education Class Instruction and Materials Questions as Part of a Survey of Adult Participation in Community Education Classes Offered by North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Instruction and Materials Questions	Response	Frequency	Percent
The materials provided for the classes are suitable.	Strongly Agree	148	28.4
	Agree	361	69.3
	Disagree	2	.4
	Strongly Disagree	10	1.9
The instructors present information in an efficient and effective manner.	Strongly Agree	212	40.7
	Agree	299	57.4
	Disagree	10	1.9
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
The instructor presents the material clearly.	Strongly Agree	210	40.3
	Agree	299	57.4
	Disagree	2	.4
	Strongly Disagree	10	1.9
The content of the class met my expectations.	Strongly Agree	211	40.5
	Agree	296	56.8
	Disagree	0	0.0
	Strongly Disagree	14	2.7
The instructor understands the subject matter.	Strongly Agree	248	47.6
	Agree	263	50.5
	Disagree	0	0.0
	Strongly Disagree	10	1.9
Individual help is available when needed.	Strongly Agree	188	36.2
	Agree	310	59.6
	Disagree	10	1.9
	Strongly Disagree	12	2.3
The instructor allows for appropriate interaction between participants.	Strongly Agree	219	42.2
	Agree	290	55.9
	Disagree	2	.4
	Strongly Disagree	8	1.5



The scheduling question responses in Table 5 were in positive agreement:

however, the Agree responses were greater to all questions.

**Table 5. Stakeholder Response to Community Education Class Scheduling Questions as Part of a Survey of Adult Participation in Community Education Classes Offered in North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas**

Scheduling Questions	Response	Frequency	Percent
The length of the class (days & weeks) is acceptable.	Strongly Agree	153	29.7
	Agree	349	67.6
	Disagree	6	1.2
	Strongly Disagree	8	1.6
The length of the class period (s) (session) is adequate.	Strongly Agree	149	28.9
	Agree	345	66.9
	Disagree	12	2.3
	Strongly Disagree	10	1.9
The class meeting time is appropriate.	Strongly Agree	176	34.1
	Agree	330	64.0
	Disagree	2	.4
	Strongly Disagree	8	1.6

The cost question did not address reduced or discounted fees that stakeholders may have received (Table 6). Employers may also have paid for the stakeholder to attend the class that would alter the perception of cost.

Table 6. Stakeholder Response to Community Education Class Cost Questions as Part of a Survey of Adult Participation in Community Education Classes Offered by North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Cost Question	Response	Frequency	Percent
The cost of the class is appropriate.	Strongly Agree	211	40.9
	Agree	297	57.6
	Disagree	0	0.0
	Strongly Agree	8	1.6

The disagree and strongly disagree (total 50) response to the question: “As a result of participating in community education classes, I would support future school bond issues for building necessary facilities as long as these facilities would also be available for community education classes,” may be an indicator of stakeholder attitude to be considered along with the high percentage of positive response of Strongly Agree and Agree (Table 7).

Table 7. Stakeholder Response to Community Education Class Perception Questions as Part of a Survey of Adult Participation in Community Education Classes Offered by North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Perception Questions	Response	Frequency	Percent
I will enroll in another community education class based on my experience in this class.	Strongly Agree	220	42.7
	Agree	285	55.3
	Disagree	2	.4
	Strongly Disagree	8	1.6
Community education classes are beneficial to the community.	Strongly Agree	253	49.0
	Agree	253	49.0
	Disagree	2	.4
	Strongly Disagree	8	1.6
I gained valuable information that is useful.	Strongly Agree	226	43.8
	Agree	282	54.7
	Disagree	0	0.0
	Strongly Disagree	8	1.6
I enjoyed participating in the community education classes.	Strongly Agree	254	49.2
	Agree	246	47.7
	Disagree	4	.8
	Strongly Disagree	12	2.3
As a result of participating in community education classes, I would support future school bond issues for building necessary facilities as long as these facilities would also be available for community education classes.	Strongly Agree	162	31.4
	Agree	304	58.9
	Disagree	24	4.7
	Strongly Disagree	26	5.0

Table 8 reports stakeholder responses to general questions regarding their community education class experience. Stakeholder response to the type of class attended reflected only their perception of the class and not necessarily the intent envisioned by community education administrators.

Table 8. Stakeholder Response to Community Education Class General Questions as Part of a Survey of Adult Participation in Community Education Classes Offered by North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

General Questions	Response	Frequency	Percent
The community education class(es) you attended are:	Educational	439	84.9
	Recreational	26	14.3
	Don't Know	4	.8
Do you think that you might enroll in other community education courses in the future?	Yes	504	97.5
	No	2	.4
	Don't Know	11	2.1

The next section on research questions, consists of stakeholder responses and analysis to research questions. Questions analyzed stakeholder responses to Research questions #1, #2, and #3. Data were provided that includes appropriate descriptive statistics and the results of inferential analyses.

### **Research Question #1**

The first research question of this study asked: “What is the user satisfaction of selected community education programs as identified by stakeholders in North East Independent School District?” The respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction of the community education program in five areas: facilities, instruction and material, scheduling, cost, and perception of the program. This indication was made by selecting A = Strongly Disagree, B = Disagree, C = Agree, and D = Strongly Agree. Means were calculated using the following coding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree. All the means were listed in ascending order of

agreement. The lowest mean value of an item indicated the least agreement and the highest mean value indicated the most agreement.

Research question #1 was analyzed in two phases. First, the researcher looked at the possible differences among the five strands. Secondly, the researcher looked at the questions within each strand. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure was used to determine differences within the groups (5 strands) for level of satisfaction. In the questionnaire, there were five strands. If a significant difference was found using the ANOVA, the Scheffe post hoc was used to determine which strand or strands were different from which other ones.

Therefore, the first part of the first research question investigated the potential differences within the five strands of community education. It was analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure. Table 9 reports the descriptive statistics for the five strands.

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics of the User Satisfaction of the Community Education Program as Perceived by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Survey Areas	N	Mean	SD
Facilities	2,087	3.03	.807
Instruction & Materials	3,644	3.35	.589
Scheduling	1,548	3.26	.566
Cost	516	3.38	.573
Description	2,579	3.37	.635

Table 10 provides the results of the one-way ANOVA. The level of significance for the procedure was less than 0.001. This was less than the alpha level of 0.05. As a result, the decision was made to reject the null hypotheses of no difference. Therefore, it was inferred that at least one of the means in the population, from which these sample means were drawn, was different from at least one of the other means. Because this topic, user satisfaction of the community education program, was disaggregated by five groups, it was necessary to conduct a post hoc analysis to determine which means were different from which other means.

Table 10. ANOVA Results of the User Satisfaction of the Community Education Program as Perceived by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	176.803	4	44.201	105.010	.000
Within Groups	4,364.540	10,369	.421		

The post hoc analysis (Table 11) indicated that the five strands were perceived at three distinct levels. The one strand that was least favorable from all the other strands was facilities. The second lowest level of agreement was also a single strand – scheduling. Three of the strands were statistically the same - instruction and materials, description, and cost. The three collectively were perceived to be the most positive aspect.

Table 11. Post Hoc Results of the User Satisfaction of the Community Education Program as Perceived by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Survey Strand	N	Subset for alpha = .05		
		1	2	3
Facilities	2,087	3.03		
Scheduling	1,548		3.26	
Instruction & Materials	3,644			3.35
Description	2,579			3.37
Cost	516			3.38
Sig.		1.000	1.000	.857

After the researcher looked at the major strands, each of the five strands was considered individually. Within the facilities strand, there were four questions. Each of these questions was compared to the other questions within this strand.

The researcher compared the level of significance generated by the ANOVA to the alpha value of 0.05. The value was less than 0.05, and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. Some areas were stronger and some were weaker. The Scheffe post hoc test concluded that each of these four questions regarding facilities was statically significantly different. The lowest level of satisfaction, with a mean of 2.36, was question 7 regarding climate controls. The highest level of satisfaction, with a mean of 3.46, was question 6 regarding parking.

Next, the potential differences within the four questions contained within the facilities strand were analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure. Table 12 reports the descriptive statistics for the four facilities questions:

Q4. The facilities for the community education classes are adequate.

Q5. The location of the classes is convenient.

Q6. Parking is convenient.

Q7. The climate controls are set at the appropriate levels.

**Table 12. Descriptive Statistics of the User Satisfaction of Facilities Questions by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas**

Survey Questions	N	Mean	SD
4	522	3.04	.591
5	521	3.25	.642
6	522	3.46	.603
7	522	2.36	.897

Table 13 provides the results of the one-way ANOVA. The level of significance for the procedure was less than 0.001. This was less than the alpha level of 0.05. As a result, the decision was made to reject the null hypotheses of no difference. Therefore, it was inferred that at least one of the means in the population, from which these samples means were drawn, was different from at least one of the other means. Because this topic, stakeholders satisfaction of community education facilities, was disaggregated by



four groups, it was necessary to conduct a post hoc analysis (Table 14) to determine which means were different from which other means. The post hoc analysis indicated a statistically difference between all four facilities questions. The question on climate was the most different from all other questions

Table 13. ANOVA Results of the User Satisfaction of Facilities Questions by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	352.295	3	117.432	243.384	.000
Within Groups	1,005.037	2,083	.482		

Table 14. Post Hoc Test on the User Satisfaction of the Community Education Facilities Questions as Perceived by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Facilities Questions	N	Subset for alpha = .05			
		1	2	3	4
7	522	2.36			
4	522		3.04		
5	521			3.25	
6	522				3.46
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000

The instruction and materials strand was made up of seven separate questions.

The researcher examined the seven questions within the instruction and material strand.

Table 15 reports the descriptive statistics for the seven instruction and materials questions:

Q8. The materials provided for the classes are suitable.

Q9. The instructors present information in an efficient and effective manner.

Q10. The instructor presents the material clearly.

Q11. The content of the class met my expectations.

Q12. The instructor understands the subject matter.

Q13. Individual help is available when needed.

Q14. The instructor allows for appropriate interaction between participants.

Table 15. Descriptive Statistics of the User Satisfaction of Instruction and Materials Survey Questions by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Instruction and Materials Questions	N	Mean	SD	SE
8	521	3.24	.554	.024
9	521	3.37	.590	.026
10	521	3.36	.595	.026
11	521	3.35	.624	.027
12	521	3.44	.602	.026
13	520	3.30	.621	.027
14	519	3.39	.581	.026

When the analysis of variance was conducted, a significance value of less than 0.001 was obtained. This was less than 0.05, and therefore, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis for this strand. At least one of the seven questions was significantly different from at least one of the other questions. The Scheffe post hoc test was run resulting in three subsets. All the questions in each of the subsets were determined to be the same. The null hypothesis investigating the potential differences with the seven questions on instruction and materials was analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure.

Table 16 provides the results of the one-way ANOVA. The level of significance for the procedure was less than 0.001. This was less than the alpha level of 0.05. As a result, the decision was made to reject the null hypotheses of no difference. Therefore, it was inferred that one of the means in the population, from which these sample means were drawn, was different from at least one of the other means. Because this topic, user satisfaction of instruction and materials, was disaggregated by seven groups, it was necessary to conduct a post hoc analysis (Table 17) to determine which means were different from which other means. The post hoc analysis indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the questions on instruction and materials. All questions in the same column or row are considered statistically the same. Results in a separate column or row are statistically different. In subset 1, questions 8, 13, 11, 10, and 9 are statistically the same even though the means vary from 3.24 to 3.37. In subset 2, questions 13, 11, 10, 9, and 14 are statistically the same even though they range from 3.30 to 3.39. In subset 3, questions 11, 10, 9, 14, and 12 are statistically the same even

though they range from 3.35 to 3.44. Every question within subset 1 is statistically the same as subset 2 except questions 8 and 14. Questions 8 and 14 are statistically different. Between subset 1, 2, and 3, questions 11, 10, and 9 are all the same. Between these same three subsets, questions 8, 13, 14, and 12 are statistically different. This is due to a series of overlapping bars.

Table 16. ANOVA Results of the User Satisfaction of Instruction and Materials Survey Questions by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Instruction & Material	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.561	6	2.094	5.896	.000
Within Groups	1,291.426	3,637	.355		

Table 17. Post Hoc Test on the User Satisfaction of the Community Education Instruction and Materials Survey Questions as Perceived by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Instruction & Materials Questions	N	Subset for alpha = .05		
		1	2	3
8	521	3.24		
13	520	3.30	3.30	
11	521	3.35	3.35	3.35
10	521	3.36	3.36	3.36
9	521	3.37	3.37	3.37
14	519		3.39	3.39
12	521			3.44

The scheduling strand contained three questions. Table 18 reports the descriptive statistics for the three scheduling questions:

Q15. The length of the class (day & week) is acceptable.

Q16. The length of the class period(s) (session) is adequate.

Q17. The class meeting time is appropriate.

**Table 18. Descriptive Statistics of the User Satisfaction of Scheduling Survey Questions by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas**

Scheduling Questions	N	Mean	SD
15	516	3.25	.553
16	516	3.23	.582
17	516	3.31	.560

The researcher examined the questions within the scheduling strand. The mean scores on the scheduling strand range from 3.23 to 3.31. These differences are statistically inconsequential. The population means for Questions, 15, 16, and 17 were considered to be statistically the same.

The null hypothesis, investigating the potential differences of the three questions on scheduling was analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure. Table 19 provides the results of the one-way ANOVA. The level of significance for the procedure was 0.072. This was greater than the alpha level of 0.05. As a result, the decision was made to fail to reject the null hypotheses of no difference. Therefore, it was

inferred that all the means in the population from which these samples means were drawn, were the same. That is, there was no statistical difference between the populations means. In other words, the three scheduling questions are not perceived differently by the stakeholders.

**Table 19. ANOVA Results of the User Satisfaction of Scheduling Survey Questions by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas**

Scheduling	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.683	2	.842	2.633	.072
Within Groups	493.833	1,545	.320		

The fourth major strand was cost. No comparison was done for the cost strand because it was a single item. The researcher put this item in perspective in research question #1.

The descriptive strand contained five questions.

Q19. I will enroll in another community education class based on my experience in this class.

Q20. Community education classes are beneficial to the community.

Q21. I gained valuable information that is useful.

Q22. I enjoyed participating in the community education classes.

Q23. As a result of participating in community education classes, I would support future school bond issues for building necessary facilities as long as these facilities would also be available for community education classes.

This researcher examined the questions within this strand. Table 20 reports the descriptive statistics for the five questions.

Table 20. Descriptive Statistics of the User Satisfaction of Community Education Class Questions as Perceived by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Description Questions	N	Mean	SD	SE
19	515	3.39	.583	.026
20	516	3.46	.591	.026
21	516	3.41	.579	.025
22	516	3.44	.634	.028
23	516	3.17	.732	.032

Table 21 provides the results of the one-way ANOVA. The level of significance for the procedure was less than 0.001. This was less than the alpha level of 0.05. As a result, the decision was made to reject the null hypotheses of no difference. Therefore, it was inferred that at least one of the means in the population, from which these samples were drawn, was different from at least one of the other means.

Table 21. ANOVA Results of the User Satisfaction of Community Education Class Questions as Perceived by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Description	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	28.435	4	7.109	18.118	.000
Within Groups	1,009.961	2,574	.392		

Because this topic, user satisfaction of the community education classes, was disaggregated by five groups, it was necessary to conduct a post hoc analysis (Table 22) to determine which means were different from which other means.

Table 22. Post Hoc Test on the User Satisfaction of the Community Education Class Questions as Perceived by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School district in San Antonio, Texas

Description Questions	N	Subset for alpha = .05	
		1	2
23	516	3.17	
19	515		3.39
21	516		3.41
22	516		3.44
20	516		3.46
Sig.		1.000	.622



The post hoc analysis indicated that stakeholders had the same perception regarding questions 19, 20, 21, and 22. There was a statistically significant difference in the perception between the support of the bond levy and all other questions. Based on these data, the negative responses regarding support of the bond levy is not in alignment with strong positive response on the other four questions.

### **Research Question #2**

The second research question asked: “Does a difference exist in perception between stakeholders’ and older adults’ attitudes toward community education programs offered in North East Independent School District?”

The analysis of this item separated the adults into two age groups. The two groups were those 18 to 54 and 55 or older. Each of these groups was compared by the five strands: facilities, instruction and materials, scheduling, cost, and description. Age range counts, means, and standard deviations were obtained for each strand by age range.

The null hypothesis investigating the potential differences in perception of adults 18 to 54 and adults 55 and older regarding user satisfaction of the community education program was analyzed using an independent sample test procedure. Table 23 reports the descriptive statistics for the two groups.

Table 23. Descriptive Statistics of the Difference in Perception Between Adults' (18 to 54) and Older Adults' (55 and Older) Attitudes Toward the Community Education Program in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Survey Areas	Age Range	N	Mean	SD	SE
Facilities	18 to 54	260	3.0346	.44942	.02787
	55 or older	258	3.0223	.43075	.02682
Instruction & Materials	18 to 54	259	3.3525	.54147	.03365
	55 or older	257	3.3519	.54617	.03407
Scheduling	18 to 54	258	3.2649	.53341	.03321
	55 or older	256	3.2617	.54079	.03380
Cost	18 to 54	258	3.3953	.57738	.03595
	55 or older	256	3.3633	.57126	.03570
Description	18 to 54	257	3.3751	.54458	.03397
	55 or older	256	3.3719	.54893	.03431

A t-test for equality of the means within each of the five strands was conducted (Table 24). The level of significance for each of the five strands was greater than the alpha level of 0.05. As a result, the decision was made to fail to reject the null hypotheses of no difference in each of the five cases. Therefore, it was inferred that for each strand, the two means in the population, from which these sample means were drawn, were the same. That is, there was no statistical difference between the population means. In other words, age made absolutely no difference in perception between adults (18 to 54) and older adults (55 and older) across the five strands.

Table 24. Independent Sample Test Results of the Difference in Perception of Adults' (18 to 54) and Older Adults' (55 and Older) Attitudes Toward Community Education Programs in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Survey Areas	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Facilities	.319	516	.750
Instruction & Materials	.012	514	.990
Scheduling	.066	512	.947
Cost	.633	512	.527
Description	.067	511	.947

### Research Question #3

The third research question asked: “Does participation in community education programs affect attitudes and support of the regular K-12 school program as identified by stakeholders in North East Independent School District?”

N-counts, means, and standard deviations were determined for support of the bond levy by income groups. The income groups were:

1. Less than or equal to 40K
2. Less than or equal to 60K
3. Less than or equal to 80K
4. Greater than 80K

Table 25 reports the descriptive statistics for the four groups.

Table 25. Descriptive Statistics of Bond Levy Support by Income Level of Stakeholders Participating in Community Education in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Income Level	N	Mean	SD	SE
<=40K	200	3.23	.819	.058
<=60K	261	3.08	.621	.038
<=80K	19	3.21	.918	.211
>=80K	27	3.59	.747	.144

Participants with incomes less than or equal to 40K, those with incomes less than or equal to 60K, and those with income less than or equal to 80K were all the same. Participants with incomes less than or equal to 40K, income less than or equal 80K, and income over 80K were all the same. The only two that were different were participants who reported income over 80K and those who reported income greater than 40K but not over 60K.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was administered. The null hypothesis investigating the potential differences in support of the bond levy by income of stakeholders was analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Here, we have the ANOVA in terms of support for the bond levy by income. Table 26 provides the results of the one-way ANOVA. The level of significance for the procedure was 0.003. This was less than the alpha level of 0.05. As a result, the decision was made to reject the null hypotheses of no difference. Therefore, it was inferred that

one of the means in the population, from which these sample means were drawn, was different from at least one of the other means.

Table 26. ANOVA Results of Bond Levy Support by Income of Stakeholders Participating in the Community Education Program of the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Description	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.484	3	2.495	4.767	.003
Within Groups	263.242	503	.523		

Because this topic, support of the bond levy by income, was disaggregated by four groups, it was necessary to conduct a post hoc analysis (Table 27) to determine, which means were different from which other means.

The post hoc analysis indicated that there was a statistically significant difference regarding support of the bond levy by those with income over 80K and those with income above 40K but under 60K. Those with income above 80K indicated they would support a school bond levy. Perhaps, this income groups is not as concerned with some additional taxes, or perhaps they are 65 and older and they are aware that their school taxes will remain the same. Those who make less than 60K but more than 40K were less willing to support a school bond levy. This income group could be first-time homebuyers who have invested all that they have to support their families, and they may have no disposable income to support additional taxes. Those with incomes less than 40K,

indicated they would support a school bond levy increase. It is possible that they live in rental property and, therefore, do not see the relationship to school tax increases.

Table 27. Post Hoc Test for Support of Future School Bond Levies by Income of Stakeholders Participating in the Community Education Program in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas

Household Income (4 groups)	N	Subset for alpha = .05	
		1	2
<=60K	261	3.08	
<=80K	19	3.21	3.21
<=40K	200	3.23	3.23
>=80K	27		3.59
Sig.		.844	.131

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section presents a summary of the literature review, the purpose of the study, and a description of the population who were sent the questionnaires. The second section presents the conclusions that were derived from the data. Section three is comprised of the recommendations based on the study for educational leaders and recommendations for further research.

#### **Summary**

Lifelong Learning has a role in developing the potential of all persons including improvement of their personal well-being, upgrading their workplace skills and preparing them to participate in the civic, cultural and political life of the nation. (Preamble to the Lifelong Learning Act Passed by Congress in 1976)

A review of the literature revealed a rich history of adult education and volumes on the subject of this dissertation. Knowles and Klevins (1982) pointed out that adult education is, or ought to be, a highly political and significant activity:

When individuals are involved in education they tend to expand: Their awareness of self and environment, their range of wants and interests, their sense of justice, their need to participate in decision-making activities, their ability to think critically and reason rationally, their ability to create alternative choices of action, and, ultimately their power or control over the forces and factors which affect them—this is political action. (p. 16)

During the last 15 years, much attention has been given to school reform, and almost every reform proposal contains the suggestion that schools should change the way they are organized and administered. Whatever we are doing now is not, apparently, sufficient for significantly improving student academic achievement. (MacKenzie & Rogers, 1997, pp. 9-11)

We can no longer cling to the traditional model if we are ever going to succeed with a new order of things. I could hardly suggest that we ‘throw out the baby with the bath’ since our constituents are not that enamored with change themselves. However, we better ratchet up the idea of learning communities if we have any hope of surviving what is already taking place in lieu of our failing schools.

The interest in full service schools comes in response to the concerns of teachers and administrators who are confronted with students unable to increase their academic achievement because of their experiences with violence, hunger, family breakup, or health problems. Students with these barriers to learning are not as likely to achieve academically as students with few or none of these problems. The full service school concept is one way of confronting barriers to learning. The administrative emphasis on collaboration, client orientation, pluralism in structure and participation, and consensus-oriented, policy making process is apparently more in line with changing American values and what is needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (MacKenzie & Rogers, 1997, pp. 9-11)

Since the 1960’s, we have had at our disposal a community education model that has not been completely understood. Educational leaders believe that the methodology, content, and equipment of schools can be modified to make the existing programs more effective. They have been doing this since the 1930’s. Educational leaders refuse to accept the fact that the program itself is obsolete, inadequate, and poorly fitted to the needs of the changing society. They have ‘tweaked’ the education machine just enough to survive and in some cases, they have not. Educational leaders have debated the merits of gadgets and methodological changes and have gotten the same results as before.

Today, we have community school concepts in most every school district in the nation.

The obstacles to educational reform are within the system rather than in the larger community. Even now, we—in the community, in the university, in the school systems—are not all ready to take the road he [Frank Manley] pointed out and on which he traveled so far. It’s too hard a road. We are looking for gadgets,



new paper models, new machines, and panaceas. But there is no panacea. Perhaps the answer is too close to us, too simple for a profession intrigued by complexity and abstraction. (Melby, 1999, p. 32)

“Many of the new leaders do not know the breadth of the community education concept, offering instead a narrowed vision that brings to mind the Aesop fable about blind men describing an elephant” (Decker, 1999c, p. 15).

School leaders have always adopted theories from various publications especially from the field of science. This has been a waste of time and problematic for teachers as well as for those who are attempting to create a different order of things in education. These scientific models can be interesting and some elements of any theory or practice can be useful. When completely copied and layered on a school or learning community, they tend to focus on procedures rather than purpose. School leaders invented the idea they are creating a new way to improve learning when what they are really doing is adopting additional management structures, rules, regulations, and procedures in an attempt to accomplish their purpose. When are the so-called educational leaders going to wake up and stop focusing on the organization and focus instead on the community? As soon as we begin to rethink our schools as living, breathing, thinking communities with diverse patrons who have many different wants and needs, we will return to the concept of the school as the hub of the learning community. The school will once again be thought of as a community center instead of a fortress for an organization. The community school will be one built on relationships, connections, and respect. “This bonding and binding are the defining characteristics of schools as communities. Communities are defined by their centers of values, sentiments, and beliefs that provide

the needed conditions for creating a sense of *we* from a collections of *I's*" (Sergiovanni, 1994, p. 217).

The enormous power and energy of a learning community can only be realized through relationships. Relationships require more energy, more nurturing, more communicating, more listening, and more understanding.

To live in a quantum world, to weave here and there with ease and grace, we will need to change what we do. We will need to stop describing tasks and instead facilitate process. We will need to become savvy about how to build relationships, how to nurture growing, evolving things. (Wheatley, 1992, p. 38)

Managers, and unfortunately some appointed and anointed leaders, look only at how an organization arranges its tasks, responsibilities, functions, and hierarchies. According to Wheatley (1992), we have believed for so long that the best way to understand things is to break them down into parts and fragments and as a result, we are unequipped to see a different order of things. We want things to be easily compartmentalized, to be broken down into boxes, diagrams, units, and systems.

Over the years community education, lead by people like Frank Manley and Charles Steward Mott, has had its difficulties. These early pioneers set out to improve the community in which they lived, the lives of those they served, and the very nature of the public schools. The latest gimmicks and fads that regularly plague our system of public education have drowned out their ideas from time-to-time. "But while fads come and go, good ideas have a way of enduring, of turning up again and again, often coming back stronger than ever" (Decker, 1999a, p. 45).

The primary purpose of this study was to determine user satisfaction of the community education program as perceived by stakeholders in North East Independent School District. Secondly, the purpose of the study was to examine the impact of community education on selected variables affecting the regular K-12 school program. A questionnaire regarding user satisfaction of the community education program was provided to everyone enrolled in a community education class at the end of the 2006 summer community education session. Demographic information was probed as well. Surveys were provided to 535 participants, with 522 surveys being returned.

The questionnaire consisted of five domains: personal development, program satisfaction, general questions, and demographics. The intent of the questionnaire was to identify the participants by demographics as well as their reasons for enrolling and to evaluate their level of satisfaction with the community education program and classes. The personal development domain sought “Yes,” “No,” or “Don’t Know” responses to three questions related to stakeholders’ personal needs, development, and goals. The program satisfaction domain consisted of five strands: facilities, instruction and materials, scheduling, cost, and perception (description). Each of these strands provided a four-part Likert scale for stakeholder response. Stakeholders were requested to circle responses, A - Strongly Disagree, B - Disagree, C – Agree, and D – Strongly Agree. The facility strand consisted of four questions on facilities adequacy, location, parking, and climate control. The instruction and materials strand consisted of seven questions relating to instructional materials provided, effective instructor presentation, clarity of presentation, expectations, instructor knowledge, availability of help, and student

interaction. The scheduling strand consisted of three questions on length of class, length of class period, and meeting time. The cost strand had one question on the appropriateness of the fee for the class. The perception strand had five questions relating to stakeholders enrolling in future classes, community benefits of classes, information value gained, stakeholders' enjoyment, and future support of a school bond levy vote.

The stakeholders' questionnaire requested participants to answer eight demographic questions (independent variables). The demographic variables included stakeholders' age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, number of children at home, educational attainment, retirement status, and household income.

The resulting data from the questionnaire was entered in a database for analysis and reported in Tables 1-27. The results of the study are discussed in further detail and conclusions drawn that suggest how the results contribute to the current body of knowledge in community education.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the findings from the demographics of this study, 65.3% of those responding were female, and 34.6% were male. Respondents between the ages of 18 to 54 represented 50.1% of the responses and those 55 and older represented 49.7%. By ethnicity, the participants were: Caucasian-67.3%, Hispanic-29.6%, African-American-0.8%, Asian-1.0%, and Other-1.0%. An analysis of the marital status of the respondents indicated that 53.7% were unmarried (single, divorced, or widowed) and 45.7% were married. Information obtained on the number of children at home indicated that 0.2% had 4 or more children at home, 0.2% had 3 children at home, 25.8% had 2 children at

home, 25.8% had 1 child at home, and 48.0% had no children at home. Analysis of education indicated that 3 participants had only a K-8 education, 8 participants had only a high school education, 165 participants attended college, 283 participants had a college degree, and 61 participants had a graduate degree. The percentage of those who were retired was 80.7% and those not retired was 18.5%. Eight (8) participants reported household incomes of less than 20K. One hundred ninety-five (195) participants reported household incomes of 40K or less, 262 participants reported household incomes of 60K or less, 20 participants reported household incomes of 80K or less, and 29 participants reported household incomes of 80K or more.

The questionnaire asked the participants if they enrolled to meet a personal need. Eighty-eight percent (88.0%) responded affirmatively to that question. With this significant response, it would indicate by enrolling in a community education class that most persons fulfilled a personal desire. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of those who enrolled in community education class indicated that it helped their personal development. Respondents were asked if enrollment leads them to work on personal goals. Eight-nine percent (89.9%) or 470 participants responded affirmatively.

The collection of data from the questionnaires provided the basis for analysis to the following three research questions.

*Research Question #1*

What is the user satisfaction of selected community education programs as identified by stakeholders in North East Independent School District?

This research question sought to determine the level of satisfaction of selected community education programs as identified by stakeholders in North East Independent School District. The researcher hypothesized that the level of satisfaction resulting from the number of participants selecting Agree or Strongly Agree on the survey questionnaire would result in strong agreement to the questions. Research question #1 was analyzed in two phases. First, the researcher looked at the five strands by themselves. Secondly, the researcher looked at the questions within each strand. The five strands that were analyzed were: facilities, instruction and materials, scheduling, cost, and perception (description). The mean average for each of these five separate strands was strong and indicated strong user satisfaction in each of these five areas. The facilities strand, while strong, was the weakest of all five strands. Of the four questions in this strand, participants rated the climate control setting the lowest. A large number of those surveyed considered the room temperature too cold. Because the building has centrally controlled air conditioning, the temperature could not be adjusted on an individual room basis. Climate satisfaction, while overall strong, clearly had a result on the overall mean score of the facilities strand. Satisfaction with the parking was the strongest item in the facilities strand. The ability to park close to the instructional facility was highly rated by all age groups.

The purpose of research question #1 was to investigate if there was a difference in the satisfaction between the five major strands examined in the area of community education. To investigate that question, I used a one-way ANOVA because the ANOVA tests the difference between the means of two or more groups. The first step in the process was to compare the actual level of significance generated by the procedure against the critical value of significance, the alpha value of 0.05. The null hypothesis in natural language states that there is no difference between the areas being compared. The researcher's findings indicated that the alpha value of the five strands being compared was  $\leq 0.05$ . Therefore, the decision to reject the null hypothesis (the null is set aside) was made. It was determined from the findings that in the population at least one mean was significantly different from at least one other mean.

#### *Research Question #2*

Does a difference exist in perception between stakeholders' and older adults' attitudes toward community education programs offered in North East Independent School District?

This research question sought to determine if there was a difference in attitudes toward the community education program with adults between the ages of 18 to 54 and those 55 or older. The analysis of this item separated the adults by these two age groups. Each of these groups was compared by the strands: facilities, instruction and materials, scheduling, cost, and description (perception). Table 23 lists the age range, number, mean, and standard deviation for each strand. The number of persons surveyed in each age group was almost identical. The mean and standard deviation scores of each age

group on each strand were just about identical. The least favorable strand was facilities. The stakeholders were least satisfied with the climate control in the rooms. The stakeholders felt that the rooms were too cold. The thermostat for the temperature control in the building is controlled through a central system that does not take into account the individual concern of each person attending the class. It is not simply a matter of going to the thermostat in the room and raising or lowering the temperature to satisfy those who are too cold or too hot. The temperature in the various rooms was determined to be calibrated correctly, and still the stakeholders complained they were cold. Those who were concerned about being too cold were from both age groups. Table 24 shows the result of a t-test for equality of the means within each of the five strands. It was inferred that for each strand, the two means in the population, from which these sample means were drawn, were the same. That is, there was no statistical difference between the population means. In other words, age made absolutely no difference between adults (18-54) and older adults (55 and older) regarding their perception of the community education program in North East Independent School District.

### *Research Question #3*

Does participation in community education programs affect attitudes and support of the regular K-12 school program as identified by stakeholders in North East Independent School District?

Stakeholders were grouped by income level in order to determine support for the bond program. N-counts, means, and standard deviations by income groups were obtained. Tables 25-27 display the values of variables for which significant relationship



occurred. All those surveyed were divided into four (4) income groups. Participants with incomes less than or equal to 40K supported the bond levy. Those with incomes greater than 40K but less than or equal to 60K did not support the bond levy. Those with incomes greater than 60K but less than or equal to 80K indicated they would support a bond levy. Those with incomes greater than 80K also indicated that they would support the bond levy.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated significant variance between those stakeholders with incomes greater than 40K but less than or equal to 60K and those stakeholders with incomes over 80K. The Scheffe analysis revealed this difference was a statistically significant difference. Perhaps those stakeholders with incomes greater than 80K are not concerned with some additional taxes or perhaps they are 65 and older and are aware their school taxes will remain the same even if they support a bond levy. Those stakeholders with income greater than 40K and less than or equal to 60K could be first-time homebuyers who have invested all they have to support their families, and they may have no disposable income to support a school tax increase. Those with incomes less than 40K, indicated they would support a school bond levy increase. It is possible they live in rental property and do not see the relationship to school tax increases.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations section is divided into two areas: (a) recommendations based on the study and (b) recommendations for further research.

*Recommendations Based on the Study*

1. Community education program coordinators should focus on the quality and convenience of the facilities and classes when programming for adults.
2. Community education building supervisors should pay close attention to the temperature in each room as well as the entire building.
3. While this study found that adults participating in community education classes were supportive of the K-12 regular program, qualitative data should be obtained from the population to fully explore the reasons behind their support.
4. Information should be provided to community education participants who are 65 and older regarding the school tax benefits available to their age group.

*Recommendation for Further Study*

1. Adults who do not participate in Community Education classes should be studied in order to define the population and determine their educational, recreational, and vocational training needs. The school district will then be able to determine their capability to meet those needs.
2. A longitudinal study of stakeholders over several years would be beneficial in evaluating the long-term impact of community education programs.
3. Adults who attend community education classes but who send their children to private or parochial schools should be studied to determine if they support school bond issues.

4. First-time homeowners should be studied to determine if they support a school bond initiative.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE INSTRUMENT**

## North East Independent School District

### Community Education Questionnaire-2006

Please mark on these sheets and circle the letter that best represents your answer.

#### Personal Development

1. Did you enroll to meet a personal need. (A) Yes (B) No (C) Don't Know
2. Do you feel that enrollment has helped your personal development. (A) Yes (B) No (C) Don't Know
3. Has enrollment lead you to work on personal goals. (A) Yes (B) No (C) Don't Know

#### Community Education Classes Attended

<b>FACILITIES</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
4. The facilities for the community education classes are adequate.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
5. The location of the classes is convenient.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
6. Parking space is convenient.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
7. The climate controls are set at the appropriate levels.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>INSTRUCTION &amp; MATERIALS</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
8. The materials provided for the classes are suitable.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
9. The instructors present information in an efficient and effective manner.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
10. The instructor presents the material clearly.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
11. The content of the class met my expectations.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
12. The instructor understands the subject matter.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
13. Individual help is available when needed.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
14. The instructor allows for appropriate interaction between participants.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>

<b>SCHEDULING</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
15. The length of the class (days & weeks) is acceptable.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
16. The length of the class period(s) (session) is adequate.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
17. The class meeting time is appropriate.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>COST</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
18. The cost of the class is appropriate.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
19. I will enroll in another community education class based on my experience in this class.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
20. Community education classes are beneficial to the community.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
21. I gained valuable information that is useful.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
22. I enjoyed participating in the community education classes.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
23. As a result of participating in community education classes, I would support future school bond issues for building necessary facilities as long as these facilities would also be available for community education classes.	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>

### General Questions

24. The community education class (es) you attended are  
(A) Educational (B) Recreational
25. How many courses have you taken in the community education program.  
(A) 1 (B) 2 (C) 3 (D) 4 or more
26. Do you think that you might enroll in other community education courses in the future.  
(A) Yes (B) No (C) Don't Know

Demographics

- 27. What is your age? (A) 18 to 54 (B) 55 or older
- 28. What is your sex? (A) Male (B) Female
- 29. What is your ethnicity?  
(A) Caucasian (B) Hispanic (C) African-American (D) Asian (E) Other
- 30. What is your marital status?  
(A) Unmarried (single, divorced, widowed) (B) Married
- 31. How many children live at home? (A) 1 (B) 2 (C) 3 (D) 4 (E) More than 4
- 32. Education (highest)  
(A) K-8 (B) High School (C) attended College (D) College Degree (E) MS/MA/PhD
- 33. Are you retired? (A) Yes (B) No
- 34. Is your household income  
(A)  $\leq$ \$20k (B)  $\leq$ \$40k (C)  $\leq$ \$60k (D)  $\leq$ \$80k (E)  $\geq$ \$80k  
  
< Less Than  
> Greater Than
- 35. Please include any additional comments or suggestions you have.

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**APPENDIX B**  
**SURVEY INFORMATION LETTER**

## INFORMATION SHEET

### USER SATISFACTION OF THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM AS PERCEIVED BY ADULTS IN THE NORTH EAST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

I am Twain Tharp from Texas A&M University. I am conducting a survey of community education participant in North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas to gain data that will be used to measure the user satisfaction of the school districts community education programs. This study is part of my studies for a Ph.D. in Education Administration.

You are one of approximately 500 community education participants that have been selected to complete a survey on your perceptions of the community education programs in North East Independent School District. Please do not identify yourself. The requested data in this survey are to be anonymous. No one will sign anything, no names will be given and survey will be returned with no identification.

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate simply, make no entries. Your non-participation will have no consequence on your selected community education class or future classes in which you enroll. Participation assists only my research. Your opinions are of value to the research I am conducting.

The class in which you are participating only determined your selection. The only other criterion used was the total number of North East community education participants during the period of June to September 2006. Completing this survey is expected to take twenty minutes of your time.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board-Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted through Angelia Raines, Director of Research Compliance, at (979) 458-4067 ([araines@vprmail.tamu.edu](mailto:araines@vprmail.tamu.edu)). Questions and comments relating to North East Independent School District Community Education may be addressed to Ms. Becky Stoughton, Community Education Director, 10333 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78217 (telephone 210-657-8866, email [bstoughton@neisd.net](mailto:bstoughton@neisd.net)).

Please address any questions about this survey to, Dr. Stephen L. Stark at (979) 845-2656 ([sstark@tamu.edu](mailto:sstark@tamu.edu)) or me at (210) 804-7130 ([ttharp@neisd.net](mailto:ttharp@neisd.net)).

Please retain this Information sheet.

Thank you for your assistance and participation in this survey of community education participants. Your answers will assist in understanding who is participating in community education classes and their level of satisfaction with the classes offered.

**APPENDIX C**  
**LETTER TO THE SUPERINTENDENT**



**TWAIN O. THARP**  
13311 Southwalk  
San Antonio, Texas 782332

February 14, 2005

Dr. Richard A. Middleton, Superintendent  
North East Independent School District  
8961 Tesoro Drive  
San Antonio, Texas 78217

Re: Request for Assistance with Dissertation Research

Dear Dr. Middleton:

Permission is requested to conduct a research study of adults who are enrolled in community education classes in North East Independent School District.

As you are aware I am a doctoral student in the College of Education, Texas A&M University pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree.

The proposed title of my dissertation is: *User Satisfaction of the Community Education Program as Perceived by Stakeholders in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas.*

Stakeholders are adult participants, 18 years of age and older who are participating in a class through the North East Community Education Program.

All persons taking community education classes during a selected term will be requested to complete a written survey during a class session. The time to complete the survey is estimated to be twenty minutes or less.

Enclosed is the Texas A&M Institution Review Board's approval of the research I intend to undertake.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Twain O. Tharp, Executive Director of Special Programs, NEISD

Encl.

## VITA

TWIN OWENS THARP  
13311 Southwalk  
San Antonio, Texas 78232

### EDUCATION

- 2007                      Doctor of Philosophy, Educational Administration  
Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas
- 1976                      Master of Arts, Psychology  
The University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas
- 1970                      Bachelor of Science, Speech and Drama  
Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas
- 1968                      Associate of Arts, Liberal Arts  
Blinn Junior College, Brenham, Texas

- CERTIFICATION      Professional Mid-Management Administration  
Professional Guidance Counselor  
Provisional Special Education  
Provisional High School Speech and Drama  
Dupont Leadership Trainer  
Certified 504 Coordinator

### EXPERIENCE

- 1973-Present            North East Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas  
Executive Director of Special Programs, 1991-Present  
Executive Director of Special Education, 1983-1991  
Assistant Director of Special Education, 1982-1983  
Executive Director of the North East Teachers Association, 1981-1982  
Guidance Counselor, 1976-1981  
Consultant for Emotionally Disturbed and Troubled Students, 1973-1976
- 1971-1973              Abilene Independent School District, Abilene, Texas  
Speech and Debate Teacher

This dissertation was typed and edited by Marilyn M. Oliva at Action Ink, Inc.