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THE PROGRAM ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

The Program on Conflict Management Alternatives was established in January, 1986 by a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and additional funds from the University of Michigan. These basic grants were renewed in July, 1988 and again in July, 1991. The Program supports an agenda of research, application, and theory development. PCMA also establishes links among other university research and teaching efforts relevant to conflict management alternatives, and maintains liaison and collaboration with similar efforts in other Universities and Practitioner agencies. The Program staffers own work focuses explicitly on the relationship between social justice and social conflict, specifically: (a) the use of innovative settlement procedures and roles for disputants and third parties; (b) the institutionalization of innovative mechanisms and the adoption of organizational and community structures that permanently alter the way conflicts are managed; and (c) the fundamental differences and inequalities between parties that often create conflict and threaten its stable resolution.

We examine these issues primarily in United States' settings, in conflicts arising within and between families, organizations and communities, and between different racial, gender, and economic constituencies. These specific efforts are supported by a variety of research and action grants/contracts with governmental agencies, foundations, and private and public organizations/agencies.

The Program in Conflict Management Alternatives is housed within the Center for Research on Social Organization, College of Literature, Science and the Arts, Room 4016 LS&A Building, Telephone: (313) 763-0472.

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Children's Environments

Theory, research, policy and applications

Volume 9
Number 1
1992
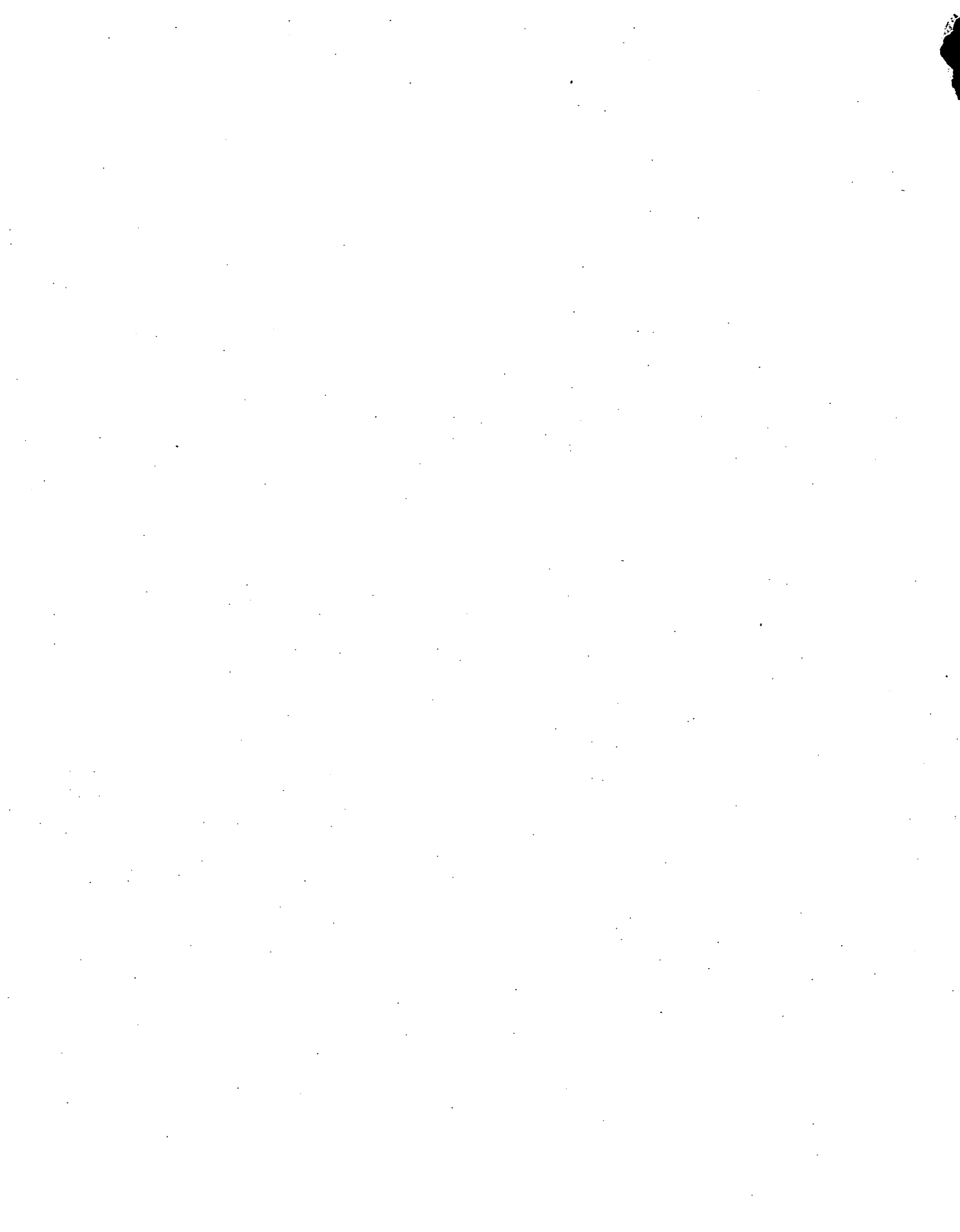
Enabling Children to Map out a
More Equitable Society

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A paradigm of environmental learning is elaborated that was conceived in response to the diminishing sense of community in post-industrial society, and to the conflicts that result from increasing socioeconomic differences. This three-factor paradigm specifies the values, content, and teaching methods that can enable children to understand their capacity to shape a just and peaceful global environment; and is centered around a creative enterprise that is akin to a quilting bee.[1] Implementations of the theory are used illustratively to show how a learning situation can resist or advance environmental justice through its devaluing or support of group process as well as individuality, adult collaboration, and children's participation. Finally, the paradigm serves as a critique of prevailing educational approaches that define "success" as intellectual achievement, promote content-driven teaching and specified outcomes, and deny the presence of personal and political values in learning.

In my innocence, I had thought that young children were not conscious of social divisions. Their memories, however, were full of references to social divisions. They knew just where class changed on a street; they knew the racial divisions; they knew where it was safe to go and where it was not. They had found that society was mapped out on the ground (Lynch, 1979, p. 105).

As diversity within communities and institutions increases, educators at all levels of the instructional ladder are being called upon to develop pedagogies that advance peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society; a paradigm of environmental learning that is set forth in this article seeks to address that need. The overarching goal of this approach is to enable children to elaborate on their intuitive understanding of the physical environment as a map of society—one that reflects its beauty as well as its injustices—and to understand their own power to participate in its re-creation. By utilizing a process within the classroom that promotes the valuing of cooperative, equitable human relationships; teachers and students are encouraged to develop the sense of connectedness, mutual respect, and empathy for the "other" that will enable them to help shape a global community of peace and justice in the twenty-first century.

Various implementations of this theory have occurred under my tutelage in schools and community organizations in the United States as well as Mexico and Canada. Youth and adults learn about and critique their local neighborhoods, plan and implement a range of collaborative projects, and then share the outcome of their efforts with other groups. Although these implementations are referred to later on in an illustrative manner,[2] the purpose of this article is neither a how-to nor a program evaluation. Rather, I wish to establish the need for new social and cultural awarenesses; to show how the physical environment provides a descriptive text as well as a laboratory for developing these insights; and to elaborate a model of learning that has the potential to involve children in a discourse on environmental justice.

Knowing that this paradigm evolved during a Kellogg National Fellowship is critical to understanding its distinctive character. The fellowship, which coincided with increasing incidents of racial violence throughout the country, required a multidisciplinary exploration of social problems as well as the articulation of an individual "learning plan" for addressing those problems. Biannual seminars focused on a variety of issues. However the underlying theme of our work quite naturally revolved around the topic of race and conflict in a multicultural society that was in the national spotlight.

Although I had been using a method of design education to promote cooperative behavior among children and adults in school and community settings

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since the early 1970s, looking through the lens of the fellowship at that particular moment in history led me to ask more specifically if and how the art of making the environment could promote respect for cultural differences. The learning plan component of the Kellogg fellowship—which seeks to stimulate leadership skills that transcend traditional disciplines and problem-solving methods—inspired me to bridge across the boundaries of art, architecture, education, and psychology in order to articulate an educational approach responsive to emerging social patterns.

Accordingly, the first part of this article summarizes societal changes that call for a new worldview, especially with respect to the escalating differences between poverty and wealth; and shows how the art of making the environment can serve as a tool for creating that new vision. The second part outlines a paradigm of environmental learning, including a perspective on how theory and practice intersect in learning situations so as to either resist or advance social progress; and concludes with some of the broader issues of environmental justice that educators might explore.

EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Assaults to Our Sense of Community

In a global society, there can be no doubt of the exigency of helping "children . . . to feel that they are part of an international community that is committed to improving the quality of the urban environment for all its peoples" (Sutton, 1987, p. 3). However, achieving a sense of community—whether local, national, or international—is a difficult challenge nowadays because the ingredients that traditionally linked people together in a common moral ethos (physical place, shared history, similar social characteristics, and so forth) have been displaced by the growth of a bureaucratic, corporate culture.

> By the time of the American Revolution when private property was the rule, the ownership of the means of production was still quite widespread. About 80 percent of the non-slave·adult males in the United States were independent property owners or professionals—farmers, merchants, traders, craftsmen or artisans, businessmen, lawyers, doctors, and so on. By 1880, this figure had fallen to 33 percent and, at present more than 90 percent of all adults in the labor force are non-managerial wage and salary workers (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 59).

Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton (1985) contend that the expansion of corporate manufacturing disrupted the delicate balance between an individual's freedom (to amass wealth and power, among other things) and the moral imperative for a just society that was part of the country's Biblical heritage. Powerful economic interests eclipsed local ones and gave rise to the entrepreneur "who could ignore the clamor of public opinion and rise to truly national power and prestige by economic means alone" (p. 43). One of the myths ushered in at the dawn of industrial capitalism was a definition of progress that accepted as inevitable the disruption of social fabric, thus beginning the assault on communities that had been woven together in previous times by history and a sense of social commitment.

Today, threats to the sense of community continue to escalate as the means for extracting human and material wealth from the planet increasingly fall under the purview of fewer and more powerful multinational corporations that use technology to decrease and internationalize the labor force. In 1982, companies "found a certain utility in the recession. It allowed them to shut down obsolete plants, which also meant destroying living communities, and to plan for more efficient, robotized, automated production" (Harrington, 1984, p. 11). Automation also supplied the means to force "inefficient" farm families out of the farming business while globalization of trade enabled industry and agribusiness to further outdistance the recession by exploiting cheap labor in rural areas or in the developing countries.

Prevailing social mores that accept capital mobility and the expendability of human labor place the tug-of-war between the pursuit of wealth and the pursuit of social justice firmly in the former's court. The corporate model for devaluing human relationships and exaggerating economic gain creates a public ʾconsciousness in which individuals are licensed—even encouraged—to get as much as they can for themselves, making the sense of a cooperative, global community illusive. Ultimately, the struggle for vanishing resources pits women against men, black against white, old against young, urban against suburban, ununionized against unionized, and so forth. It is not the struggle, per se, that is problematic but rather that it is occurring in a morally-deficient context.

> A new global economy is emerging where neighborhoods and even national borders have as little lasting meaning to investors as the constantly changing computer readouts on comparative wage rates and tax laws.

Cities, regions, even whole nations are made to compete with one another as investment capital moves swiftly around the world (Raines & Day-Lower, 1986, p.7).

Added to these economic forces are changes in the status of women which have affected the definition and conduct of family life in a profound manner during the last two decades. Fewer children are growing up in two-parent families and in recent years they have been spending less and less time with adults in communal settings (Wynne, 1977, p. 54). Yet, there are increasing demands on their powers of moral reasoning in a world where few things are constant except the certainty of race, class, and cultural conflicts that are inherent in an unjust distribution of wealth. Replacing a geographically-defined context in which children inherited family conventions and rituals, religious moral laws, and an unqualified concern for and connection with other discreet groups (Bloom, 1987, pp. 56-58) is the anonymity of a VCR, computer games, and cable television which occupy about one-third of a preschooler's day. These market-driven media now serve as a powerful socializing medium, displacing many traditional family and community relationships (Winn, 1985, pp. 4-7).

Additionally, "the high value that post-industrial adults attach to prolonged formal education has magnified the impact of school on their children" (Wynne, 1977, p. 16). However, the social milieu of most schools seems quite antithetical to developing the capacities that are needed for peaceful coexistence or for re-creating a new vision of humanity. While individualistic, content-driven teaching methods sort children according to their skills as well as the specializations of teachers, an opposing expectation for conformity of performance matches those individuals against one another in a competition for placement within a narrowly-defined ranking system. "Schools legitimate inequality through the ostensibly meritocratic manner by which they reward and promote students, and allocate them to distinct positions in the occupational hierarchy" (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 11). It is this learned inequality that is the breeding ground of conflict. Those higher up in the pecking order must fight to maintain the status quo that awards them privileges; those lower down must fight to create their own rewards—a struggle that intensifies as the real differences between a life of wealth and one of poverty increases.

When schools do attempt to address the acquisition of humanistic values, the outcome is likely to be quite artificial. For example, conflict management curricula frequently result in a set of slogans for minimizing conflict ("Talk Out a Win-Win Solution" or "Fighting Is a Bore"), or on establishing formalistic mediation processes rather than on an analysis of the underlying causes of conflict. As with Bellah et al.'s informant Brian Palmer, "solving conflicts becomes a matter of technical problem solving, not moral decision" (ibid., p. 7) which keeps teachers on safe ground within the purportedly objective domain of education. However, it is the narrow definition of ability that would seem most severely to compromise the sense of community in schools.

> A competitive, meritocratic society depends for its smooth functioning upon individuals' readiness to accept positions of varying status, power, and wealth without directly confronting all the others in comparing or competition for those places (Nicholls, 1989).

By elevating those cognitive skills that are supposedly required for "increasingly complex and intellectually demanding production technologies" (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 23), children are socialized early on to accept dominance and subordination as inevitable, and to associate both with distinct ways of being. Even within a cooperative learning situation, the narrow range of skills required for a given task preclude a truly collaborative effort. As with the myth of promoting an approach to progress that tramples the social fabric, the fallacy of using rigid achievement measures squashes the possibility that children will learn to work together in a meaningful manner. Recreating this possibility is fundamental to the paradigm of environmental learning that will be outlined here.

Messages that Cry out from Poverty and Affluence

All of the economic and social forces described above have had a notably crushing effect on the urban environment and on the low-income people of color who are ghettoized in its deteriorating infrastructure. In recent memory, black urban neighborhoods were economically diverse if racially segregated.[3]

> Before desegregation, the black community included poor, working-class, and middle-class people . . . . It was not uncommon to find black teachers and black maids attending the same church and living in the same neighborhood (Irvine, 1990, p. 126).

The movement of middle-class blacks out of traditional urban communities is, in part, attributable to

the highways that were plowed through their neighborhoods and to the chain-store, shopping mall phenomenon that undermined family-owned businesses. In addition to these exogenous forces, the Civil Rights movement gave black people the choice to buy into the national myth that progress means moving up and out of one's community. Today, the poor people who were left behind have only memories of a productive, economically-viable community.

> We close our eyes and reflect on the past.
> We remember a neighborhood where
> Babies were born, grew up, married,
> Raised their own children, shopped,
> Went to work, even owned businesses.
> We remember the car wash, auto repair,
> The beauty parlor, barber shop, and diner.
>
> We remember a full-course meal
> That cost just 35 cents in a rib joint
> Owned by folks in the neighborhood.
> We come back to the present . . .
> We see drugs and trash in the street.
> We come back to the present . . .
> We see a neighborhood full of neglect.
> (Sutton, 1991).

The erosion of the quality of life in the ghettos of the nation's cities has had harsh consequences for youth who have no memory of a better reality. Their recollections are of racial violence on the streets of New York City, children being murdered by their peers in Detroit, wanton destruction of property in Los Angeles, and (in the imagination of one well-to-do suburban child) of "people in the stores shooting everybody, kids playing in garbage cans, ugly fat women sitting on people, and wicked policemen taking people to jail for no reason." Growing up in an environment where individual and community well-being are blatantly ignored in favor of corporate interests threatens the natural idealism that Robert Coles (1986, p. 35) observed in children who struggle against the odds, especially since they are bombarded with the differences between a life of wealth and one of poverty via an omnipresent media.

> If young people live in a community that has been discarded as of no value, then . . . that message will cry out to them from every corner that they themselves are of no value. The message is internalized not only through the condition of streets and sidewalks and the housing and the lack of parks and the lack of upkeep of vacant lots, but also through the

> lack of opportunities for people to create something that is aesthetic and beautiful, and that invites their creativity as well as helps sustain them materially (Wheeler, 1992, p. 6).

Intuitively we accept the sensibility of this statement, but what messages cry out to young people who live in luxury? How are *they* affected by knowledge gained through the media of decaying urban ghettos and the aberrant behavior that they hear happens on inner-city streets? What are wealthy children learning from being kept apart in sparsely-developed suburbs, high-security urban enclaves, or posh recreational communities implanted into developing countries? Do such experiences equip those who are most likely to be the nation's future leaders with an integrated, empathic view of society? To paraphrase a question one woman asked during the second 1992 Presidential Debate: "Is there something in well-to-do persons' upbringing that might actually obstruct their sensitivity to others who are different than they?"

While many scholars and educators have studied the effect of poverty on academic progress, hardly anyone has looked at the outcome of privilege or having as one's birthright a sense of entitlement. "Power and privilege are not usually central issues in discussions of education. After all, part of the tradition of democracy is that individuals should be allowed to succeed according to their abilities. . . . If some students excel while others fall behind it is a personal, not a social, problem" (Cookson and Persell, 1985, p. 14). Indeed, the educational community accepts privilege as unquestioned while focusing on poverty as the source of deviance when in reality these two phenomena are mirror images of a single enigma. To bring about a more just world requires changing both likenesses since *all* future citizens, not just poor ones, are reinforced in their beliefs about themselves through their encounters with physical space.

The intention of the theoretical approach that will be described here is to enable *all* children to draw on their natural creativity and critical ability so that they can bridge the abyss of their socioeconomic differences in order to transform the racial, cultural, and class conflicts that are escalating as families and communities are assaulted by capital mobility, individualistic approaches to education, and vast differences between poverty and wealth. But why use the physical environment as a stage upon which to negotiate these conflicts?

Figure 1. Teenagers render their version of an ideal community on a wall in Harlem, New York.

Making Self and Community by Making the Environment

> Children act on the world by transformation of what is and creation of the new to fit their needs and dreams. It is in the active agency, their seizing of possibilities inherent in a garage or an unused attic, that children express their power to appropriate the world and to find their place (Polakow & Sherif, 1987, p. 6).

Places embody a way of life and thus help to shape the individual and collective consciousness. Since children have limited mobility, the immediate surroundings are especially critical to the way they see themselves, yet many urban neighborhoods lack opportunities for safe, imaginative exploration (Berg & Medrich, 1980); and suburbs (though safer) may be equally lacking in visual and social stimulation. To involve students in reshaping this unsympathetic milieu provides a means of making the school or neighborhood more suited to their needs. More importantly, it is a way for children to achieve a sense of competence since "few external objects are experienced as so central to the self as those representing the outcome of our own efforts" (Rosenberg, 1979, p. 36).

When the making of objects occurs within a group, the process can take on a larger, symbolic meaning as exemplified by such traditional art activities as a barn-raising, group singing and dancing, or the quilting bee described in the following exhibition notes for a museum installation, *Hommage to the Quilt*:

> The quilting bee was a productive social event, a gathering of women sharing a common goal. As they stitched, they talked and symbolically sewed their fears, hopes, and memories into the fabric. A strong sense of community was reinforced by the quilting bee. Women channeled their creative energy not only for themselves, but for the good of society (Exhibition Notes, 1987-1988).

My previous experience in working on environmental art projects with children as well as adults confirms that they have the social, community-building quality of a quilting bee. By defining and achieving a common goal, participants have an opportunity to cultivate the sense of community that is so lacking in post-industrial society and in the schools that serve it. Since the built environment is itself a collective commodity through which people share the earth's resources, the shaping of that environ-

ment—whether explicitly acknowledged or not—
reflects a moral stance (Tuan, 1989, p. vii). By engag-
ing children in a process of collective creativity, in
a thoughtful questioning of the existing environ-
ment, and in acknowledging the ethical dimensions
of their decisions to modify it, they are encouraged
to develop a shared social consciousness that can
bridge cultural and economic differences.

A Foundation for Multicultural Learning

In the above discussion, I have attempted to estab-
lish that there is a prevailing public consciousness
which favors economic progress over enduring
human relationships, making it difficult for children
to gain a sense of commitment to community,
regardless of the geographic scope or economic
makeup of that community. This morally-vacuous
consciousness is reflected in so-called objective ped-
agogies in which narrowly defined measures of
achievement preclude more pluralistic educational
experiences separating, instead of uniting, the learn-
ers. Through such pedagogies, children are taught
that there is only one way to be, that some people
are better than others, that standards of performance
are not determined by a local need but by external-
ly-imposed rules. All of these lessons—lessons that
are at the very core of the schooling process—work
against the possibility that children will learn to
respect the 'other' and to envision themselves as
active agents in a just community. Neglected inner-
city neighborhoods heighten the challenge because
they provide yet another vivid lesson in devalued
human relationships to poor and affluent children
alike. In essence, the educational challenge is not
just to encourage mutual respect but to stop teach-
ing disrespect and subordination.

Instead of ignoring negative and unjust environ-
mental messages, the approach to learning that is
described in the next section proposes to use the
built world as the backdrop against which to probe
alternative human relationships, its social milieu
akin to a quilting bee in which the remaking of the
physical world begins to symbolize the collabora-
tors' caring and sense of social purpose. The
paradigm presented here is an attempt to respond
to the need for reestablishing a moral consciousness
in the post-industrial era which places commitment
to others on par with existing measures of achieve-
ment. It is an attempt to invent a multicultural learn-
ing context that incorporates a wide range of com-
petencies, especially in relation to the making of
esthetic objects, and to evaluate those competencies
from children's perspective and in accordance with
locally-defined needs. It is an attempt to rekindle

the natural idealism of children so that they can
recreate their history, sensitivity toward others, and
capacity to bring about change.

A PARADIGM OF ENVIRONMENTAL
LEARNING

Becoming an Active Community

The most definitive impact of the Kellogg fellow-
ship on my thinking about environmental learning
came through a subgroup called the Forum on
Leadership Alternatives (FOLA) which I coordi-
nated for the purpose of identifying pluralistic
approaches to leadership. Early on in the fellow-
ship, FOLA held an organizational meeting and dis-
cussed how to examine leadership in varied socio-
cultural settings. Our primary concern was to
understand effective relationships between leaders
and followers as well as to see how leadership was
influenced by history and particular sociocultural
contexts.

It seemed to us that the effectiveness of leadership
depended on the values that a given leader brought
to a situation, the micro and macro context of that
leadership as well as the specific leadership strate-
gies employed—each of these dimensions requir-
ing an alignment between the intentions of the lead-
er and the reality of a given situation. Our think-
ing was not dissimilar from that of Amitai Etzioni
(1968) who described an "active society" as one in
which social progress occurs as a result of the val-
ues shared by a group of individuals, the social con-
sciousness that is a consequence of dialogue among
those individuals, and the power that emanates as
they produce their own collective knowledge. Both
views place values at the center of a change-mak-
ing situation and acknowledge the social construc-
tion of reality. However since the FOLA model
included the *techniques* of change, it seemed more
directly transferable to learning situations which
are often characterized in terms of subject matter
and teaching methods.

Applying the three factors of the FOLA model to
the numerous built-environment approaches that
have developed in the United States over the past
two decades, including the values around which
instructional approaches are centered as well as their
subject matter and teaching methods, vast differ-
ences surface in what at first glance seem to be sim-
ilar curricula. For example, one of the driving val-
ues of the built-environment education movement
came from the architectural community which
wished to promote an awareness of "good" design.
Since architects were the most qualified judges of

Figure 2. Teacher development is a critical component of some built-environment education programs.

good design, many contents and methods evolved which required the presence of an architect working in collaboration with classroom teachers. The American Institute of Architect's *Learning by Design* program, the Foundation for Architecture's *Architecture-in-Education* program, and the Cooper Hewitt Museum of Design's *Architecture-in-the-Classroom* program are all outstanding examples of such architect-centered curricula.

Many built-environment programs began in the 1970s as an extension of art education which had benefited from the general public's acceptance of experiential, hands-on learning popularized during the 1960s as a means to understanding citizenship and culture (Conant, 1959). For example, the National Endowment for the Arts' *Architects-in-Schools* program was an elaboration of it's older *Artists-in-Schools* program. However the back-to-basics, anti-art era of the 1980s prompted some built-environment educators to regroup around the technical dimensions of design in order to access funding slated for science education. *The Salvadori Education Center on the Built Environment* at the City College of New York is an example a program in which design education is focused explicitly on improving basic skills in math and science. In Minneapolis, two magnet elementary schools have evolved during the last decade as urban environmental learning centers that incorporate architectural concerns into more traditional science-oriented natural environment curricula. Architects play a role in these programs; however since teachers are in charge of overseeing compliance with standardized academic goals, teacher development is the central component of these programs.

As with leadership, these and other built-environment education approaches have a *theoretical* dimension which results in a planned program, and an *applied* dimension which determines how the pro-

gram actually is realized. For example, the values of any program are interpreted by a particular teacher who has a personal as well as a professional outlook that is defined by a school, district office, union, and so forth. Similarly, the same content is perceived differently by various teachers who, in turn, influence how children attach meaning to that content (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, pp. 129-130). Finally the educational methods, including the resources and administrative structure at a given site, can extend or block those outlined in the curriculum. In short, the theoretical framework for any curriculum is mediated by the various contexts in which it is applied. Figure 3 illustrates this dynamic theory/practice paradigm, depicting two overlapping
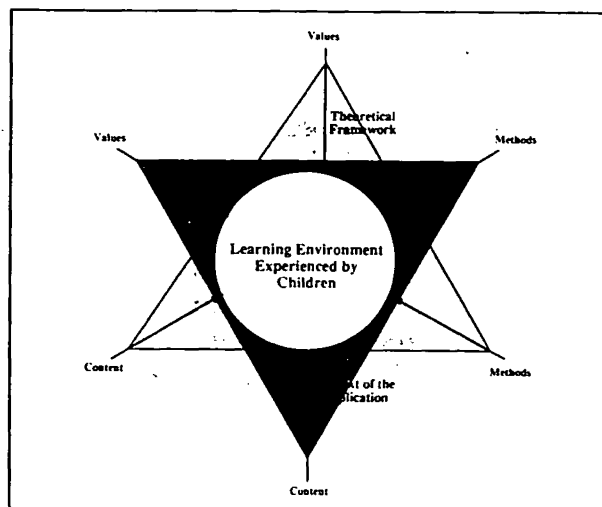

Figure 3. A paradigm of environmental learning.

triangles whose legs are values, content, and methods—one triangle representing a curricular theory, the other representing the context in which it is interpreted—their overlap forming the actual learning experience.

Theory + Practice Create a Learning Environment

Here I will briefly set forth my own theory of built-environment education and then suggest the critical contextual features that determine whether this theory can be realized in practice.

Theoretical Ingredients

The values of environmental learning that I am advocating were elaborated at the outset of the article; they can be summarized as a commitment to cultivating cooperative, equitable human relations that encourage a nonhierarchical learning process and empowerment to bring about change. These

values might be explored through various subject matters which assist participants to look outward from their own situation in order to gain an understanding of the "other's" situation. Indeed, it is my explicit intent not to link this approach to any particular content or discipline, but rather to encourage teachers and youth development workers to utilize whatever skills and resources they may have. Using my own work in urban design as an example, looking outward might be accomplished by involving youth and adults in a critique of and intervention into the design of their local neighborhood, and in sharing this experience with others outside the neighborhood so as to develop a more broad-based outlook on the built environment. Whatever the choice of subject matter, it should be presented in a manner that involves students in a creative and critical exploration of the human relationships that are manifest in the configuration of built space.

Quite naturally instructional methods will vary in relation to the subject matter on which any learning community chooses to focus, but these methods must have certain characteristics. Two of several features of multicultural group process as identified by the Program on Conflict Management Alternatives at the University of Michigan during its ongoing discussions of social justice and conflict (Schulz, 1992, p. 12) are salient. First, a strategy is needed to promote group identity among participants through an expanding network of subgroups since the capacity for environmental advocacy requires not only individual action but a feeling of "we." Second, a strategy is needed to solidify commitment to a shared vision. "Any kind of community is more than a set of customs, behaviors, or attitudes about other people. A community is also a collective identity; it is a way of saying who 'we' are ... [Community] is born from this union of shared action and a shared sense of collective self" (Sennett, 1978, p. 222). For reasons given earlier, the "shared action" that I am advocating is some collaborative remaking of the physical environment. Finally, a strategy is required to involve participants in self-governance so that they can define the shape of their own learning process and evaluate its outcome.

Contextual Ingredients

In applying this theory of environmental learning in numerous schools and community organizations over the past five years, three ingredients have emerged as the determining factors in its practical application. These ingredients all lie at the intersection between values and instructional methods including how a school or organization values and accommodates individual and group process, adult collaboration, and children's participation in direct-

	Values	Content	Methods
Theoretical Ingredients	Reflect a commitment to cultivating cooperative, equitable human relationships Encourage nonhierarchical learning process Promote the capacity of youth to envision and bring about environmental justice	Any environmental subject matter is suitable Content must assist participants to look outward from their own situation in order to gain an understanding of the "other" Content must involve participants in a creative as well as critical exploration of built space as a manifestation of social values	Strategies that promote group identity among participants Strategies that create a commitment to a shared purpose Strategies that involve participants in self-governance
Contextual Ingredients	Persons who value group process as well as individual exploration Persons who value adult collaboration and communication Persons who value youth participation		Schedules that allow for mixed-group activities as well as solitary pursuits Situations in which two or more adults are present; schedules that accommodate adult meetings Adults who allow youth to plan, direct, and evaluate their own learning process

Table 1. Ingredients in the paradigm of environmental learning.

ing their learning process. These values become apparent in administrative structures or teaching strategies that can either thwart or enhance the possibility for implementing the theoretical approach described above (Table 1 provides a summary of the theoretical and contextual ingredients required for a successful application).

The first ingredient requires a delicate balance between group process and individual exploration, but many situations are entirely lacking in anything resembling a positive group process. Although small groups of students might form around a specific task—what Bellah et al. (1985) refer to as a "community of interest [where] self-interested individuals join together to maximize individual good" (Ibid., p. 134)—opportunities for sustained group activities are all too often quite lacking. Instead divisive cliques occur that are frequently gender-, race-, or class-based. In other situations, collective action is hampered, oddly enough, by individualized instruction which in no way guarantees "exploration" in the true sense of the word. Many teachers and children in individualized programs are shuttled back and forth on externally-devised schedules with little time left over either for unprogrammed, solitary pursuits or for establishing prosocial heterogeneous relationships—both equally necessary to create a group that can organize to carry out a long-range plan of action.

The second ingredient—adult role modeling of collaborative behavior—was identified in a cross-cultural study by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1970) as an effective means of socialization. According to this study, two or more adult models are even better than one because they can demonstrate, through their interactions with one another, how children should behave. "It is of course precisely this kind of triad that is found in the human family, but it can also be introduced into any group structure of more than three persons, such as a classroom, work team, etc." (p. 136). Through this type of modeling, a team of adults can vicariously reinforce desired behaviors while allowing youth to reinterpret the observed interactions within their own peer group. Unfortunately, as others have noted, many settings are scheduled so as to actually prevent adult collaboration and communication.

In other cases, however, the possibility for modeling—which I have seen to be extraordinarily powerful in a multitude of situations—is built into the administrative structure, for example, when a grade level is team-taught; or it can also be realized through an outside visitor if the two adults assume different, but equally important, roles. In one school in Mexico City, a live-in family offered a unique version of the modeling concept. This family was not involved in the academic judging of children; yet as building residents, they served as the "instructors" in social life. The female members popped popcorn, brewed coffee, and baked sweets; the male members kept the building spotlessly maintained (sometimes bringing in neighbors to help with a repair) and supervised the older boys; the eldest woman served as a congenial, but dignified matriarch. Accepting the gender-specificity of this family's behavior (which is more normative in Mexico than in the United States), their presence assured an unusually homelike, humble atmosphere which seemed to benefit children, parents, and teachers alike.

The third ingredient, which involves the willingness of teachers and youth-development workers to allow children to assume a leadership role in their own learning process, may be the most difficult of all to access.

> The patriarchal contract feeds the wish of each of us to be dependent, to be taken care of, and to submit to a higher authority. To not have to be responsible for our lives or our actions. It's a willing union between those of us with authority who hold onto it tightly and those of us who work for others who want somehow to avoid the responsibility of

creating an organization themselves (Block, 1989, p. 32).

A few of the adults with whom I have worked have succeeded in breaking the patriarchal contract. For example, on agreeing to participate in my program, one fourth-grade teacher immediately identified a group of third graders and included them in the first planning session. Her empowering approach required a great deal of perseverance as she endeavored throughout the year to place the students in a leadership position, requiring them to decide what and how they wanted to proceed. At the beginning of the year, many students were frustrated by not being told what to do. However as the year progressed, this group revealed a depth of learning that did not occur in other situations despite the fact that these students were categorized as low achievers on standardized tests.

Table 2 is a list of her students' responses relating to conflict, cooperation, and environmental change that were contained in evaluations that they wrote at the end of the year. Compare this list to Figure 4 which depicts a typical evaluation from another fourth-grade group that lacked an emphasis on student participation in the learning process. In this case, all the students turned in identical lists of teacher-generated slogans about how to improve the environment. There can be no doubt of the superior divergent thinking demonstrated by the group whose teacher stressed student empowerment.

Reflections on the Paradigm of Environmental Learning

> Once there were two planets called Radian and Narcissan. They had been arguing over the control of the space trade. Finally war broke out. Everyday, when both of the planets were out blowing each other up, they heard a very, very loud voice saying, "WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?"
>
> After a long time, both of the planets found out who was transmitting these messages. It was all the children of both of the planets! After that, the government of both planets realized how stupid they were being. They stopped fighting and helped each other recover from the loss of the war.
> —Duane, Fourth Grader.

In this article, I set out to articulate a theory of environmental learning that would enable students, such as Duane, to imagine that they can work together

as a global community and help each other to recover from the loss of human dignity in the post-industrial era, especially in the nation's inner cities. Although many different contents might develop, youth in my own program are engaged in collect-

Comments about cooperation
It's hard to cooperate, but you have to even if girls want trees and flowers and other pretty things and boys just want cars
You must give up some things that you want because some other people should get things that they want
I learned that it is good to work in groups on things like this so you know how to get along with other people when you are doing these things
People have to work together to make something that's worth the time
I learned that a group project should be done by a group, not just one person
I don't have to have everything the way I want to for it to look nice
Even working with people you didn't want to, it turns out to be fun
I found out more about my friends and even the people that I did not like

Comments about conflict
Most people disagree on a lot of things, and if you do something without asking the people in your group, they get mad and sometimes hurt each other's feelings and then when its too late they try to excuse themselves. Another thing is they get the teacher when something isn't done their way
You can't get your own way all the time
It is not as easy as it sounds. Everyone has different ideas
Groups can have lots of fights and disagreements
The bigger the group is, the harder it is to work together
It's easier working with people of your own sex
You have to talk about everything you do. It gets messed up if you don't
People sometimes don't listen. If can be very boring and take a long time to do things when people don't listen
It was hard because we kept on disagreeing on everything that we wanted. Finally, we worked things out. It's not easy, because you can't have everything you want

Comments about environmental change
If one person can make a difference, a group can make a whole lot more
Nice neighborhoods don't have to be made by adults, kids can make them too.
I can put stuff that no neighborhood has. It's very good experience to make a perfect land

Table 2. Assessment by fourth graders who learned divergent thinking.

Figure 4. Assessment by a fourth grader who learned to mimic the teacher.

ing information about the urban design of their local school and neighborhood environment and in communicating their findings to others outside the neighborhood, thus becoming attuned to the benefits and deficits of their own situation. By providing feedback to children in distant situations, I hope that they will learn to project themselves into another's shoes. Through sustained group activities, I hope that they will develop a community spirit, a shared vision of what that community should be, a sense of being able to bring into being an aspect of that vision, and a realization of each person's unique contribution to the whole. To engage their creative energies and to cultivate a valuing of physical productivity, the children's work takes the form of an aesthetic environmental improvement which presents unique opportunities for developing a shared agenda.

The three factors that compose this theoretical framework—values, content, and teaching methods—are affected by those same factors in the field, with actors in some situations resisting and others informing an aspect of the theory. At some schools and community organizations in which I have worked, a disjuncture on the values dimension of the theory has overshadowed the fact that adults had an optimum knowledge base or superior resources for implementing the program. Indeed, the fit between theory and practice seems most dependent on an alignment of values which can compensate for inexperience with the subject matter, extreme deficiencies in resources, or low academic ability among students as measured by standardized tests. Of especial importance is the adult leader's openness to youth self-governance which affects the degree to which they are able to reflect on and internalize a given content. If adults are able to incorporate youths' autonomous creativity early on in the process, these young people are more likely to envision themselves as "neighbors" who, like the children of Radian and Narcissan, can speak loudly and in unison about environmental injustices.

The Paradigm as a Critique of the Public Consciousness

In addition to pointing out specific ingredients necessary in an emancipatory learning situation, my experiences reveal three provocative issues in the boundaries of this discussion that bear further debate among the educational community. One relates to the concept of "success"—who defines it?, how?, and to what social end?—a topic that is quite unexplored in educational reform debates because we accept, without question, intellectual ability as the preferred indicator of competence. As Nicholls (1989) states: "In Western culture, disciplines that

Figure 5. Through sustained environmental learning activities, children can literally elaborate a shared vision of what their community ought to be.

seem to involve abstract reasoning have long been accorded special status." Because of this history, we educators continue to define success as intellectual advancement despite glaring evidence of the social failures such a definition creates. To compensate for these failures, we propose increasing certain types of opportunities and resources, and then focus educational debate on their access which persistently is unequal across income groups. My approach to environmental learning, instead, redefines success and in so doing creates another playing field in which those folks with the prerequisite opportunities and resources are not necessarily the most successful. In thinking about what children need to become active agents in their community, perhaps educators should begin with a serious reevaluation of what it means to achieve.

Secondly, in lieu of content-driven teaching and specified effects, the paradigm that is outlined here suggests a dynamic interplay between pedagogical philosophy, program content, and learning processes which occurs both in theory and in practice. Within this fluid model, there are potentially as many outcomes as there are applications, with some yielding results inferior to those expected and others going beyond to further inform the theoretical basis. Such a model confirms the critical input that

both teachers and students make in directing the learning process; and suggests that program evaluation actually can be viewed in reverse. That is, if theory informs practice and practice informs theory, the performance of teachers and children on an educational program should be able to serve as a critique of that program, including its theoretical underpinnings.

Finally, within the dynamic model proposed, the dimension that emerged as most critical in all of the applications that I have observed was values, yet in educational circles, this subject is a hornets' nest. Over the years as schooling has become more bureaucracized, the values dimension has been hidden behind the cloak of objectivity, but common sense and the recent heated "political correctness" debate inform us that values are preeminent in any educational program. They are *the* determinant of all educational outcomes, including the very arena of success that is specified. In a stable, cohesive society, there is less need to probe cultural beliefs and norms. In a dynamic, diverse society such as ours, I propose that the most critical educational discourse that is needed is a debate on national values—not those relating to the conduct of private life, but values relating to the conduct of public life and to the distribution of the earth's resources, including the

distribution—and definition—of knowledge. Further, it is possible that, in this sensitive arena, focusing the debate on the physical environment as a collective map of societal values would enable us all to separate our individual biases from the larger problem of learning to live together in a manner that promotes human dignity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the input of Professors David Schoem and Mark Chesler at the University of Michigan, who reviewed an earlier draft, as well as her ongoing discussions with colleagues in the university's Program on Conflict Management Alternatives and the Feminist Practice Work Group, both of which have greatly influenced the ideas presented here.

ENDNOTES

1. A "quilting bee", once common in rural areas of the United States, had both a practical and symbolic role in a community's social life. A group of women would gather in someone's home to sew a quilt commemorating a holiday or other important event, such as a funeral or birth. The occasion provided an opportunity for the women to talk, share family concerns, and socialize while making a concrete contribution to their community.

2. The program referred to here is called the Urban Network, a program in urban design for youth that is sponsored by the College of Architecture & Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. The observations reported are based on site visits to approximately 25 schools and community organizations throughout the United States and Mexico.

3. In fact, so-called undeveloped communities were (and are) more economically diverse. It is the planning process of advanced societies that fragments people into separate sectors as described by Bellah et al. (1985), Sennett (1978) and others.

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