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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

for the May 2012 issue

By Lois Brown Easton
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- December 6–7 Cerritos, CA

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- October 9–10 San Antonio, TX
- October 16–17 Denver, CO

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- November 13–14 San José, CA
- November 28–29 San Diego, CA

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- October 4–5 San José, CA

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- September 26–27 Baltimore, MD
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Contents

5  Guide to *Philanthropy gets in the ring: Edu-funders get serious about education policy*
    Frederick M. Hess
    *Phi Delta Kappan*, 93 (8), 17-21

8  Guide to *Investing in high school*
    Daniel G. Green
    *Phi Delta Kappan*, 93 (8), 28-33

10 Guide to *Grassroots philanthropy on the prairie*
    Joanne M. Marshall
    *Phi Delta Kappan*, 93 (8), 34-38

12 Guide to *R&D: New talk about ELL students*
    Stacey J. Lee
    *Phi Delta Kappan*, 93 (8), 66-69

14 Applications

Using this guide

This discussion guide is intended to assist Kappan readers who want to use articles in staff meetings or university classroom discussions.

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Philanthropy gets in the ring: Edu-funders get serious about education policy

By Frederick M. Hess

*Phi Delta Kappan, 93 (8), 17-21*

**OVERVIEW OF THE ARTICLE**

Philanthropies have changed their focus in the last 10 years from funding programs and practices to funding high-leverage actions that affect policy. But philanthropists and their staffs must consider the civic responsibility they have to affect education in a positive and long-lasting way.

**KEY POINTS**

- In 2005, the educational philanthropy world — before Race to the Top and the Common Core — was quite different, with big philanthropies investing in programs and practices that looked promising (but often failed to live up to that promise) and hoping to change policies.

- In 2010, foundation-funded programs amounted to less than 0.2% of total funding on education ($983 million out of $600 billion).

- The big shift in the thinking of philanthropists and their staffs is that they should no longer fund programs and practices hoping to influence policy, but should focus on “advocacy, research, and efforts to upend structural constraints.”

- They should consider the degree to which what they fund can leverage substantive change — a lot more oomph for their penny on the dollar. The author calls this approach “muscular,” or assertive, philanthropy.

- While not new, muscular philanthropy requires careful attention to democratic principles.

- Foundations must be willing to “embrace criticism and feedback much more productively than has been the norm”; they need to become civicly responsible.

- Public (rather than private) self-appraisal that includes the viewpoints of those who are most skeptical about the philanthropy’s efforts (not just the sycophants) and ending explicit collaborations with the federal government are important moves philanthropies can make in order to become more democratic.

**FULL VALUE**

One way of thinking about foundations that fund education is to examine their mission statements. Here are a few:

*Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:* Our foundation is teaming up with partners around the world to take on some tough problems: extreme poverty and poor health in developing countries, the failures of America’s education system. We focus on only a few issues because we think that’s the best way to have great impact, and we focus on these issues in particular because we think they are the biggest barriers that prevent people from making the most of their lives.

*Broad Foundation:* Transforming K-12 urban public education through better governance, management, labor relations, and competition.

*Walton Family Foundation:* The Walton Family Foundation is committed to improving K-12 student achievement in the United States at every level — in traditional public schools, charter public schools, and private schools. Our core strategy is to infuse competitive pressure into America’s K-12 education system by increasing the quantity and quality of school choices available to parents, especially in low-income communities.

*Michael & Susan Dell Foundation:* Transforming the lives of children living in urban poverty through better health and education.
DEEPEN YOUR THINKING

Choose one or more of these individual topics for thinking and writing:

1. What experience have you had with education foundations?
2. What do you know about the following philanthropies that have funded education: Annenberg Challenge, Small High Schools Project or Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Carnegie Foundation, Broad Foundation, Walton Family Foundation, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, and Silicon Valley Community Foundation?
3. To what extent have these funders affected policy? To what extent have the reforms they sponsored been sustained?
4. What do you know about government and foundation partnerships designed to affect policies and practices: Common Core State Standards, Race to the Top, i3, and development of teacher evaluation systems, merit pay, charter schools.
5. What does the current understanding of the school as you think about muscular philanthropy or assertive philanthropy?
6. What structural restraints might interfere with making change at the school, district, state, and federal levels?
7. What aspects of policy and practice are advocacy groups, such as teacher unions and associations (such as the National Association of School Boards), similar to or different from foundations?
8. In what ways might foundations be influenced by friends, allies, and grantees rather than critics and skeptics?
9. How could foundations incorporate the advice of critics and skeptics?
10. To what degree should foundations partner with the federal government to effect policy change?

EXTEND YOUR THOUGHTS THROUGH ACTIVITIES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Use a Deconstruction Protocol to discuss some of the issues raised by the author of this article. Here is how the protocol works:

What do we know about this issue?
Based on what we know, what are the issues within the issue (in other words, unpack the issue to discover its components or aspects)? What is it about the issue that we might discuss?
Look for polarities or dichotomies within the issue. Are these really opposites? Can they be linked in some way by “and” rather than “or”?
Now, what do we know about this issue? What else do we need to know?
If we were to take some kind of action on this issue, what kind of action would we take? Why?

Here are some issues to discuss:

- Why foundations fund education
- The appropriate role of private and corporate philanthropies in funding educational reform
- Whether private and corporate foundations are “buying” American schools by funding them
- The effect of moral and political beliefs on philanthropic funding in education
- The influence philanthropies should have on what schools, districts, states, and the federal government do in terms of educating youth
- Whether philanthropic projects or programs are more likely than publicly funded programs or projects to have an effect on teaching and learning
- The role of leverage; whether funded projects or programs should “go to scale” and, if so, how they “go to scale”
- The role of scholarly research and evaluation in privately funded initiatives
- Muscular, or assertive, philanthropy
- Scaling up individual programs, practices, and policy reforms
- The relationship of the federal government and private and corporate philanthropies in funding reform
• The responsibilities of private and corporate philanthropies to engage in open discussion (including critics and skeptics) about their funding initiatives
• Self-appraisal and public (rather than private) exchanges within foundations
• How foundations can get smart
• The promise and peril of skeptics, cynics, and sycophants

References
OVERVIEW OF THE ARTICLE
Leaders at Brookline High School near Boston created their own funding mechanism to support teacher-proposed innovations that improve the lives of Brookline students and offer teachers authentic leadership opportunities.

KEY POINTS
In today's economic climate, school leaders must find creative ways to fund worthwhile programs that will benefit both teachers and students.

- Working with 10 prominent community members, Brookline High School developed the concept of the 21st Century Fund, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) venture capital organization based in the high school.
- The 21st Century Fund provided tax exemptions to donors and a structure for organizing funding and follow-up that would make Brookline a laboratory for innovation.
- A collaborative, consensus-driven system of approval for proposals — based on numerous reviews and incorporating reviews of team leaders from other funding organizations, such as the Parent Teacher Organization and Brookline Education Fund — ensures that the 21st Century Fund is not redundant.
- The first funded program was Teachers Mentoring Teachers (2000); since then, the fund has supported 15 more programs, such as a tutoring program, an African-American Scholars Program, and a Social Justice Leadership Program.
- If they are effective, programs are supported for three years and then incorporated into the regular program and budget for the school; if not, they’re dropped.
- In addition to program benefits for students and teachers, the fund benefits Brookline by establishing it as a “leadership factory,” expanding student learning opportunities and raising achievement, and deepening and expanding community involvement.

FULL VALUE
The word “philanthropy” etymologically means “the love of humanity” — love in the sense of caring for, nourishing, developing, or enhancing; humanity in the sense of “what it is to be human” or “human potential” (Wikipedia).

Further exploration into the origins of the word reveals that “the word was coined in ancient Greece by the playwright Aeschylus,” who was said to have written “Prometheus Bound” (Philanthropy, n.d.). In the myth of Prometheus Bound, “primitive creatures that were created to be human at first had no knowledge, skills, or culture of any kind — so they lived in caves, in the dark, in constant fear for their lives” (Philanthropy, n.d.). “Zeus, the tyrannical king of the gods, decided to destroy them, but Prometheus, a Titan whose name meant ‘forethought,’ out of his ‘philanthropos tropos,’ or ‘humanity-loving character,’ gave them two empowering, life-enhancing gifts: fire, symbolizing all knowledge, skills, technology, arts, and science; and ‘blind hope’ or optimism. The two went together — with fire, humans could be optimistic; with optimism, they would use fire constructively, to improve the human condition.

The word philanthropy combined two Greek words “philos,” which means loving “in the sense of caring for, nourishing, and anthropos,” . . . “human being” in the sense of “humanity” or “human-ness” (Philanthropy, n.d.). “What Prometheus evidently ‘loved,’ therefore, was not individual humans or groups of individuals, but humanity as a kind of being, human potential — that these proto-humans could become with ‘fire’ and ‘blind hope’ ” (Philanthropy, n.d.).
DEEPEN YOUR THINKING

Choose one or more of these individual topics for thinking and writing.

1. How has the economy affected schools you know? Have programs been discontinued because of scarce funding? Are new programs being funded?

2. Do the schools you know benefit from donations from private donors, religious institutions, foundations, federal and state governments, and local businesses? What are the results of these types of funding?

3. Think of a school you know well. What are the critical problems at that school? What proposals could teachers make to improve that school?

4. How could people in the school community (including parents and other citizens) select among proposals? How could they monitor the success of the proposal? What would happen when funding of the proposal ended?

5. What leadership opportunities are offered to teachers at this school? To what extent could they affect programs at the school?

6. Why could programs proposed by teachers and funded outside the school budget engage students in learning and increase student achievement?

7. What would be the benefits of deepening community involvement through a community-based fundraising mechanism? What would be the challenges?

EXTEND YOUR THOUGHTS THROUGH ACTIVITIES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Use the Extend Your Thoughts activity that is part of the Professional Development Guide for Joanne M. Marshall's article in this issue of Kappan. Like Green's article, Marshall's article describes "grassroots" or "homegrown" philanthropies.

Or, work with your colleagues to apply the Steps to Building a Local Foundation (the sidebar for this article) to your own school or district.

Reference

Grassroots philanthropy on the prairie

By Joanne M. Marshall

Phi Delta Kappan, 93 (8), 34-38

OVERVIEW OF THE ARTICLE

Three teacher leaders founded a community-based, grassroots, teacher-led philanthropy aimed at making a difference in Boone, Iowa, by addressing the needs of children in poverty.

KEY POINTS

- Three teachers seeking to address poverty among students in their community founded the Boone Hope Foundation, which has given away more than $130,000 in six years.
- The mission of the Boone Hope Foundation is “to provide comfort to our community’s children in emergency situations”; it is separate from other foundations in the district.
- The money supporting the foundation comes through a one-day fundraiser, donations throughout the year, and discounts from service providers; teachers, administrators, and others donate gift baskets to be auctioned and provide food and drink for purchase at a fundraiser held each December.
- Although the foundation started because of the leadership of teachers in a particular school, Boone Hope now serves seven schools within the district as well as two parochial schools, with each school designating at least one faculty member to serve on the board.
- Seven foundation board members act upon recommendations for aid from anyone working in the school district — from bus drivers, for example — approving one instance of assistance per family per year.
- Participation is high; more than 90% of staff members are involved in the fundraiser, and all are encouraged to make referrals for student needs as they become aware of them.
- There are no administrative salaries, so all money raised by the foundation goes to children and their families to be spent honestly and responsibly.
- The Boone Hope Foundation spends nearly all it receives to serve about 100 families a year, knowing that all it can do is “Band-Aid” poverty by helping with rent, utilities, food, clothing, or health care.
- The author suggests that those contemplating similar philanthropies provide information about local poverty, let the person who steps forward lead, and build relationships throughout the community.

FULL VALUE

The National School Foundation Association referenced by the author has as its mission encouraging “K-12 school and school foundation personnel in the very rewarding and important process of establishing, developing, and maintaining school foundations” (www.schoolfoundations.org). The organization has state affiliates in Florida, Iowa, Indiana, New Jersey, Utah, and Texas.

A 2009-10 study identified the top 10 education foundations/funds in the nation’s largest school districts as:

1. Pinellas Education Foundation (Fla.),
2. Denver Public Schools Foundation (Colo.),
3. Clark County Public Education Fund (Nev.),
4. Hillsborough Education Foundation (Fla.),
5. Brevard Schools Foundation (Fla.),
6. Polk Education Foundation (Fla.),
7. The Fund for Public Schools, (N.Y.),
8. Albuquerque Public School Foundation (N.M.),
9. Children's First Trust Chicago (I.l.), and

The foundations were identified according to these indicators:

- Long-term financial sustainability (total assets, assets per student, investment income);
- Fundraising/revenues (total revenues and revenues per student);
- Program expenditures (total program expenses and program expenses per student both less salaries and benefits); and
- Volunteers (total volunteers) (Dewey and Associates).

DEEPEN YOUR THINKING

Choose one or more of these individual topics for thinking and writing:

1. What do you know about poverty in your community?
2. Who, in addition to government social services, addresses the miscellaneous needs of families experiencing poverty?
3. How would a local, “homegrown” philanthropy work in your community? Who might start it? How would it be run?
4. What would be the challenges of sponsoring a “homegrown” philanthropy? What would be the benefits?
5. How would the philanthropy obtain the funds to address the needs of people in poverty?
6. To what extent would the philanthropy you have in mind be embedded in a school or district or be separate from it?

EXTEND YOUR THOUGHTS THROUGH ACTIVITIES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Comparing two articles

With colleagues, compare this article and the article in this issue of Kappan that was written by Daniel Green, “Investing in high school.” Both articles address the kinds of “homegrown” or “grassroots” philanthropies that can benefit schools and their students and teachers.

Put the Venn diagram, below, on a large sheet of chart paper and collaborate to identify similarities and differences related to any of the following topics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INITIATIVE</th>
<th>LEADERSHIP</th>
<th>ADMINISTRATOR INVOLVEMENT</th>
<th>RELATIONSHIPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSES OF PHILANTHROPY</td>
<td>FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES</td>
<td>ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS</td>
<td>SOURCE OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST AND INTEGRITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EFFECT ON SCHOOL, DISTRICT, COMMUNITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write aspects that are similar in the middle of the diagram and the aspects that are particular on either side of the diagram.

Reference

R&D: New talk about ELL students

By Stacey J. Lee

*Phi Delta Kappan, 93 (8), 66-69*

**OVERVIEW OF THE ARTICLE**

Reaching and teaching late-entry (immigrant adolescents) English language learners can be accomplished through professional development on cultural and linguistic diversity, collaboration, an interdisciplinary approach, and schoolwide commitment to serving this population.

**KEY POINTS**

- Immigrant teens who enter the U.S. have a particular difficulty succeeding in high school because it takes four to seven years to develop academic English (although casual English can be developed in considerably less time), and students may have had their education interrupted in their home country as well as in transition.

- Usually immigrant students are placed in ELL (English language learners) classes focusing almost exclusively on teaching English, but “often to the exclusion of academic content.” Although they may graduate from ELL programs before graduating from high school, they often are unprepared to take graduation exams.

- The author recommends the approach taken by a set of 15 schools called The Internationals in New York City, supported by the Internationals Network for Public Schools.

- Teachers work in interdisciplinary teams (ESL-certified teachers with others) with all teachers receiving professional development on language acquisition and building on students’ own cultural and linguistic identities.

- Students learn English through interdisciplinary content based on themes important to their lives.

- These schools offer what is called plurilingual instruction because it “centers on individual students’ linguistic, cultural, and schooling experiences” and “recognizes that language experiences are occurring in an increasingly multilingual global society.”

- The strategy honors students’ cultures and languages and also helps students deal with the many obstacles they face as they work to graduate from high school and make postsecondary plans.

- Too often, the author concludes, “the work of educating English learners is seen as the sole responsibility of the ELL or bilingual staff in a school,” leaving staff and students “marginalized and isolated.”

**FULL VALUE**

The author uses *plurilingualism* to describe the variety of language experiences in our global society and to suggest the focus on more than language — on students’ cultural and school experiences as well. Several years ago, bilingualism was a focus of controversy in the United States. Bilingualism can be defined as “information presented to students in more than one language” (Bilingual, n.d.).

The University of Michigan provides a nice summary of some of the pros and cons of bilingualism (with the cons first):

**Cost:** Bilingual education may be more costly than running “dominant language-only programs,” but it may be the most effective.

**Assimilation:** Bilingual education allows “minority-language speakers to resist assimilation and avoid learning the dominant language,” but speakers of other languages “have much to offer from their diversified languages and cultural backgrounds” and “minority language speakers can maintain their first languages and cultures AND learn English.”

**Implications:** “Because bilingualism in the United States is often indexed with immigration, the term . . . may imply poor or uneducated,” but “bilingualism and multilingualism are actually worldwide norms . . . . The United States is in the monolingual minority and would benefit from educating its students in bilingual classrooms.”
Isolation: Government programs, such as bilingual education, that are “designed to help immigrants assimilate into American culture actually do the opposite,” keeping immigrants “linguistically isolated, which limits one’s earning potential.” One study “showed that differences in earning between former ESL and bilingual students is small and not even statistically significant.”

DEEPEN YOUR THINKING

Choose one or more of these individual inquiry topics for thinking and writing:

1. What do you know about the history of immigration in the United States? What might characterize immigration before 1900? From 1900 to 1950? From 1950 to 2000? In the last decade?
2. Consider your own community (neighborhood, city/town, region, state). How has it changed in terms of diversity (ethnicity, religion, language background, immigration status, and social class)?
3. To what extent do you have immigrant adolescents in your community who are not proficient speakers in English, though they may be able to chat with friends and engage with media?
4. How has the school you know best dealt with immigrant English learners? Have they been put into ELL classes that focus on acquiring English? How do they learn other subjects? What happens when they exit ELL programs?
5. In this school, how do ELL teachers and all other teachers interact? How do students in ELL classes interact with students taking a “regular” course of study?
6. In terms of native language and culture, what do ELL students bring to their learning of English and content areas?
7. What do you think about looking at an approach to teaching English as a “plurilingual” endeavor? How about from the perspective of a global society?
8. Why would collaboration among teachers and an interdisciplinary approach to content learning be important in schools that teach students to use English?
9. How might state testing, especially graduation tests, affect late-entry, adolescent immigrants?

EXTEND YOUR THOUGHTS THROUGH ACTIVITIES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

With colleagues, use a variation of the Success Analysis Protocol to consider what the Internationals are doing to educate students whose native language is other than English. Here is how the protocol works:

Step #1: In lieu of having everyone write about a success they’ve had (which is what participants do in a traditional Success Analysis Protocol), have everyone individually write down some characteristics of the Internationals, the schools profiled in the article. One example: They have interdisciplinary teams.

Then, have the group compile a list of what the Internationals do to help students learn.

Step #2: As a group, consider each characteristic. What is it about the characteristic that led to success? For example, what is it about having interdisciplinary teams that led to success?

Step #3: Use your analysis in Step #2 to consider another population of students that needs attention. What could you do (Step #1) that would help those students learn? Why? (Step #2)

Step #4: Debrief the process (which is somewhat circular, on purpose).

If you want to know more about a Success Analysis Protocol, as it is usually done, please see Easton (2009) in References.

References


Applications

This Professional Development Guide was created with the characteristics of adult learners in mind (Tallerico, 2005):

- Active engagement
- Integration of experience
- Choice and self-direction
- Relevance to current challenges
- Learning style variation

As you think about sharing this article with other adults, how could you fulfill the adult learning needs above?

This Professional Development Guide was created so that readers could apply what they have learned to work in classrooms (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001):

- Identifying Similarities and Differences
- Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition
- Nonlinguistic Representations
- Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback
- Cues, Questions, and Advance Organizers
- Summarizing and Note-Taking
- Homework and Practice
- Cooperative Learning
- Generating and Testing Hypotheses

As you think about sharing this article with classroom teachers, how could you use these strategies with them?

References


About the Author

Lois Brown Easton is a consultant, coach, and author with a particular interest in learning designs — for adults and for students. She retired as director of professional development at Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center, Estes Park, Colo. From 1992 to 1994, she was director of Re:Learning Systems at the Education Commission of the States (ECS). Re:Learning was a partnership between the Coalition of Essential Schools and ECS. Before that, she served in the Arizona Department of Education in a variety of positions: English/language arts coordinator, director of curriculum and instruction, and director of curriculum and assessment planning.

A middle school English teacher for 15 years, Easton earned her Ph.D. at the University of Arizona. Easton has been a frequent presenter at conferences and a contributor to educational journals.

She was editor and contributor to Powerful Designs for Professional Learning (NSDC, 2004 & 2008). Her other books include:

- The Other Side of Curriculum: Lessons From Learners (Heinemann, 2002);
- Engaging the Disengaged: How Schools Can Help Struggling Students Succeed in (Corwin, 2008);
- Protocols for Professional Learning (ASCD, 2009); and
- Professional Learning Communities by Design: Putting the Learning Back Into PLCs (Learning Forward and Corwin, 2011).

Easton lives and works in Arizona. E-mail her at leastoners@aol.com.
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