

FIELDWORK

NOTES FROM EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING CLASSROOMS

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WALKING YOUR TALK

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP BY DESIGN

BY SCOTT HARTL

IN THIS ISSUE:

Instructional Leadership

Guiding Question:

What does instructional leadership look like in Expeditionary Learning schools?

They Pay Me to Worry 3

By Mike McCarthy

Teachers as Leaders Take Risks and Rely on Trust 4

By Gretchen Morgan

Beyond the Pitfalls: Shared Leadership in a First-Year School 6

By Hae-Sin Kim

Sailing and Schooling: Focus on What's Important 10

By Thomas Van Winkle

For more teacher tools related to this issue, visit our website at www.elob.org/publications/webarchive/v11n1tt.html.

Instructional leadership is one of those phrases so present in educational discourse that its very ubiquity can leave it blurry and undefined. For me the notion of instructional leadership remained largely unexamined for years. I assumed that if I was a school leader, then I was an *Instructional Leader*. I was, of course, wrong.

I have come to view the idea of instructional leadership as a provocateur, stimulating an ever-deepening understanding of what powerful learning is, and how best to make it happen for ourselves and those around us. I am thankful that I have been part of an Expeditionary Learning school—The Harbor School in Dorchester, Massachusetts—where the demands of our approach to teaching and learning create a need for instructional leadership throughout the building and provoke an ongoing examination of what instructional leadership is and what it might be.

The Expeditionary Learning design places a strong call for the presence of effective instructional leadership. This is no coincidence. It is by design. In an Expeditionary Learning school there is no such thing as “teacher-proof” curriculum. We create an original curriculum to best meet the needs of our students, to address standards, and to take full advantage of local re-



The artwork in this issue is from a third-grade botany expedition at ASCEND in Oakland, California (see article by ASCEND Principal Hae-Sin Kim on page 6). This sketch is by Lai Chao.

sources. In Expeditionary Learning schools, textbooks do not drive instructional pedagogy. We strive to support teaching and learning that emphasizes authenticity, inquiry, deep thinking,

continued on next page

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Walking Your Talk, continued from page 1

and original student creation. Teachers are asked to define and consider not only what they will teach but how it will be offered to and learned by students. These are no small tasks, and much of this creative and original teaching falls directly on the shoulders of our teachers. A real audience shows up every day at the start of school. And the quality of our work is subject to the gut wrenchingly honest assessment of how successful our students are in producing quality work of their own.

A LEARNING COMMUNITY

To succeed in this exciting but challenging enterprise, everyone in an Expeditionary Learning school needs to be a learner. For instructional leaders in Expeditionary Learning schools this presents both opportunity and responsibility. The opportunity lies in being part of an effective learning community ourselves. The responsibility lies in the fact that we must practice what we preach. As we shape our approach to ongoing professional development, we must strive to apply the same kinds of practices and approaches to our own learning that we have found to be most successful in supporting the learning of our students. I offer the following questions as examples of how we might begin to open up this inquiry:

~ If all of the teachers in the building are creating original curriculum, then how can we provide them with the requisite support, through models, clear criteria, the expectation of multiple drafts, and the helpful feedback to ensure the curriculum is of consistently high quality?

~ If we are working to create classrooms where students are active and engaged, where

the work is purposeful and authentic, then how can we approach our professional development offerings with these same goals in mind?

~ If we believe that quality student work requires quality time and that we need to go deeply into what is being investigated to attend to learning process as well as content, then how do we bring this same orientation to our professional development program?

~ If classroom climate and culture can act to either support and encourage (or deter and discourage) students to engage positively as a learner then how do we create a professional culture that is encouraging to adult learning?

The goal in the schoolhouse for adults is the same as it is for students: powerful ongoing learning and the creation of quality original work. A culture of ongoing adult learning is central to the success of an organization in any industry. But we are particularly fortunate as educators that learning itself is the central product of our business. Roland Barth reminds us in *Learning by Heart* (Jossey-Bass, 2001) that learning is what we do in schools. This is a simple notion, but for me it offers a particularly provocative lens through which to think about providing instructional leadership. In this context, I believe that the most powerful ways we know to stimulate and support student learning in the building must be applied in how we approach professional development and learning for the adult community. This might be thought of as striving to “walk our own talk.” When we experience the same learning processes as our students, we double the benefit of the time we spend learning because examining how we learn becomes as beneficial as what we learn.

When we approach our own learning through the same pedagogy and practices that we might use with our students, then the time we spend learning pays off not only in our own deeper understandings, but it also serves as “practice” for the work we might do with our students the next week. There is no better way

continued on page 8

The leaders who fare best are those who continually see themselves as designers not crusaders. Many of the best intentioned efforts to foster new learning disciplines founder because those leading the charge forget the first rule of learning: people learn what they need to learn, not what someone else thinks they need to learn.

— Peter Senge
Fifth Discipline, 1990

THEY PAY ME TO WORRY

BY MIKE MCCARTHY

At King Middle School in Portland, Maine, we have an outstanding staff and an outstanding student body. We are a school of about 550 students, rich in diversity. We speak 28 different languages and the halls of our school are filled with students from all over the world. We are a school that has many socioeconomic challenges. Our school is known for our diversity and also for the quality of the work produced by our students. I have found—in my 10 years as principal of an Expeditionary Learning school—there are certain essential elements I maintain each year and each day to sustain quality student work. It brings to mind the question a student occasionally asks me, “So what do you do all day?” (King Middle School students get right to the point.)

My short answer to this question is, “They pay me to worry.” I spend a lot of my time worrying and planning for the future. The worry part is about always trying to anticipate barriers that might hinder the learning environment at King. The planning part is all about trying to create the optimum conditions for the success of each King Middle School student and staff member. So what are the fundamentals of “school” to which a principal of an Expeditionary Learning school pays attention to help foster quality student work?

VISION

A principal has to be the keeper and protector of the vision. Of course, if the vision is lousy it might not be worth protecting. Therefore the principal needs to lead the staff in the creation of a vision that is all about high achievement for every student. This vision has to live and breathe in the school and every decision has to be in concert with the vision. This is not a one-

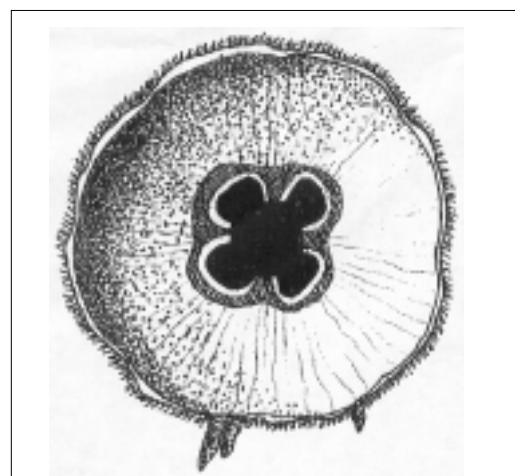
time event. It is the day-to-day decisions that give life to the vision. A principal is constantly making sure the school “stays the course,” and this can be difficult at times. The vision is the filter for all programs, policies, and decisions. The principal has to stand for the vision and be willing to say, “No, we are not doing that. It does not fit the vision of this school.” This can get a little dicey at times, depending on who is on the receiving end of that statement.

PERSONNEL

The teaching staff is the crucial element in producing quality student work. School is all about the relationship between teacher and student. A principal focused on quality takes special care to hire bright, interesting people who love children. She also works to create cohesive teams within the school. When an opening occurs it should be looked at as a golden opportunity to improve the learning environment. The staff can be thought of as professional baseball lineup. At times the principal needs to change the lineup to increase effectiveness. This needs to be carefully planned with problems anticipated. Personnel issues are one place where principals do a lot of worrying and planning. It is a key to quality and often ignored in school reform models. Most models focus on the structures and curriculum delivery and too little on leadership and personnel. While all are important, it is the people in an organization that make the difference.

continued on page 9

In 1995, King Middle School seventh-grade students created an annotated field guide that is still used as an example throughout the Expeditionary Learning network. Charanay Pok sketched this Moon Jelly.



TEACHERS AS LEADERS

TAKE RISKS AND RELY ON TRUST

BY GRETCHEN MORGAN

School leaders play a pivotal role in any school change process. Effective school leaders are often the first to see a new vision for their school, so they become the initiators of change. But even the most talented school leaders cannot support lasting comprehensive school reform by themselves. Teachers keep reform moving by taking risks in their classrooms and by supporting each other through the painful disequilibrium they reach when they understand that they want to do things differently, but they do not know how.

As a school designer, I have seen teacher leadership have positive impact on the school reform process at Manaugh Elementary School, which is located in a rural area in southwest Colorado and is in its fourth year with Expeditionary Learning. Manaugh is a first- through fifth-grade school, serving a diverse student population with 83 percent free- and reduced-lunch and a large number of Native American students. In its first few years

with Expeditionary Learning, the school focused on developing a culture in which the adults felt comfortable collaborating as a learning community. In the beginning some staff members believed Expeditionary Learning, like previous school reform attempts, would soon pass.

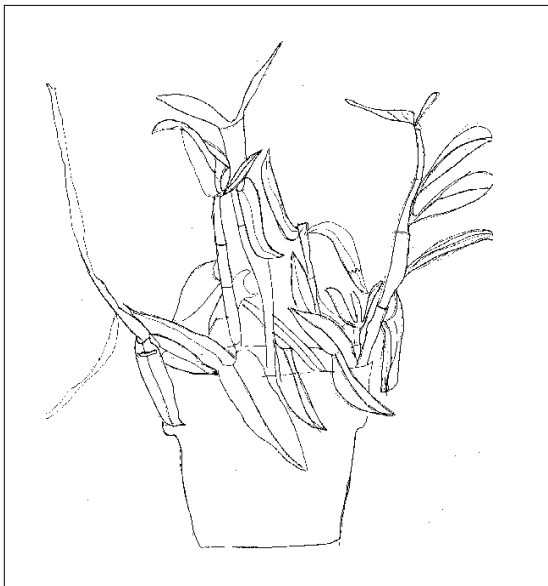
A group of staff members, however, embraced the design, started making changes in their own practice, and took steps to lead the change process. These

teachers wrote grants, facilitated staff community-building initiatives, read books about good teaching practice, and shared what they learned with other teachers. They kept the conversation going when the school designers were not on campus. These teachers did not need new job titles or training in how to be a leader, they only needed to be inspired to make change happen in their classroom and in their school. Some structures also nurtured their inspired leadership.

At Manaugh, grade level teams plan learning expeditions, and some teams share students. In an attempt to create a more effective group, Manaugh's principal, Rob Lee, reorganized the leadership team last spring to include one member from each of the grade level teams. Then he took his newly formed leadership team to visit Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning, a veteran Expeditionary Learning school. What those teachers saw surprised, impressed, and even scared them a bit. The leadership team discussed what they saw, and what pieces of it fit or did not fit their school and their teaching styles. Through that dialogue, the leadership team built a common vision of what they wanted Expeditionary Learning to look like at *their* school. They became a new group of believers with a vision of how Expeditionary Learning could look at Manaugh Elementary.

The leadership team's insights influenced the school review, goal setting, and learning expedition planning process that took place during a whole staff retreat last fall. All of the teachers found many things to celebrate in their school review process, as well as some things to work on. They set precise, measurable, and appropriate goals. Adding their new vision to their strong staff culture, the teachers questioned and sup-

Third grader Ernesto Hernandez sketched this plant for an expedition on botany at ASCEND in Oakland, California.



ported each other through complicated conversations about what they believe students are capable of doing and how much they believe in the power of learning expeditions.

The leadership team carried back to their grade level teams an excitement and a new willingness to take risks. They returned with what would prove to be a lasting commitment to sustaining an ongoing conversation about quality educational practices.

Since then, that enthusiasm has spread, and teachers throughout the school are fostering change, just by being reflective about their practice and being public about those reflections. In the past, Lee could not convince staff members to attend off-site professional development. Many of the professional development opportunities offered through Expeditionary Learning went unused. This year deciding who gets to go where is a hot debate fueled by teachers' interest in specific offerings based on their assessment of their teaching. In the past, writing learning expeditions had been a draining process; this year it was one of the most energizing days they had as a staff. In the past, teachers spoke only with Lee about their practice during evaluations. Now there are several ongoing conversations between teachers about their practice. People are open about their weaknesses and anxious to help other teachers by sharing their successes. They are not all satisfied with the results yet, but each teacher at Manaugh has become a leader fostering continued growth.

Fostering teacher leadership is a complicated process. It is not complicated, however, for one teacher to decide that they want to be an agent of change. To be an agent of change, to be a leader in the implementation of Expeditionary Learning, a teacher just has to take one risk. The risk is putting enough faith in Expeditionary Learning to really try one important change in your teaching practice and share it with someone else. After a group of Manaugh teachers attended the Portland Literacy Institute last November, they agreed to teach pieces of the institute to the rest of their staff. Many members of the Manaugh staff have also

SMALL STEPS OF CHANGE: TEACHER BY TEACHER

Teachers can begin to take on leadership roles in their schools by making one small change at a time. For example:

- ~ Take the first bold step into peer critique by opening your classroom doors to colleagues, by submitting your expedition for public critique, or by asking other teachers for help.
- ~ Ask other members of the teaching staff to join you in a teaching and learning book club. Read and discuss something new about teaching, try it with students, and then observe it in each other's classrooms.
- ~ Visit another Expeditionary Learning school with colleagues, and then as a group plan a way to share your learning with other staff members.
- ~ Attend Expeditionary Learning professional development offerings, such as summits, institutes, conferences and site seminars, with a colleague or colleagues. Follow up by supporting each other as you implement new ideas. Also, collaborate to share experiences with the remaining faculty.

agreed to participate in book clubs, reading and discussing various educational texts with their colleagues.

The basic idea teachers must remember is to try something in good faith, and share their learning with someone else. While teachers are often reluctant to ask for help, we are usually happy to help when someone asks. One of the most powerful ways a teacher can become an agent of change is just to ask someone to collaborate with you on something. Let someone help you. Small acts like that build the trust among teachers that is the backbone of teacher leadership. ✎

Gretchen Morgan is a school designer based in Colorado. She taught at Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning in Denver, Colorado for five years.

I have seen stunning examples of teachers offering leadership to their school by remaining within their classroom. They bring others in—to observe their work, to reflect, to have conversations, to tell stories, and to exchange their craft knowledge about teaching. Teacher leader, indeed.

Leading by example is perhaps the purest form of leadership and the one over which each of us has the most control. You can lead only where you will go.

—Roland S. Barth
Learning by Heart

BEYOND THE PITFALLS:

SHARED LEADERSHIP IN A FIRST-YEAR SCHOOL

BY HAE-SIN KIM

I used to define instructional leadership as supporting teachers and their professional development to enable powerful instruction. I soon realized, however, that the instructional leadership challenge for me has been so much more than that. I have to coordinate the countless instructional, operational, logistical, and emotional variables that immediately impact powerful learning.

Our school, ASCEND, located in the multicultural Fruitvale district of Oakland, California, opened in the fall of 2001 with 171 students in four grades—kindergarten, second, fourth, and sixth. ASCEND’s vision is simple. Every student will demonstrate high levels of academic performance, and every child will ASCEND (see box on page 6). What is less simple is the means by which this happens. What enables every child to ASCEND? My first year taught me how complicated it is to answer

this question. Everything counts when it comes to student learning: a clean and efficient physical plant; a supportive community culture; a rigorous academic setting; working relationships with the community and the school district; and the emotional safety of families, children, and teachers. And, no one person can address everything that matters. How, then, can new schools avoid the pitfalls and still address all these factors?

PITFALL #1: TOO MANY THINGS TO DO

A brand new school is work, and a lot of it. Leaders of new schools will inevitably find themselves waking up in the middle of the night coming up with new ways to improve the school and new interventions to meet the needs of the students. More will become your obsession, and less will become your accomplishments.

To ensure the leadership team spends their time wisely and effectively, prioritize and share. Begin with prioritizing. Not everything can be in place in year one of change, or even year three. Decide, as a team, what is critical based on your goals for year one, and be realistic. This process is hard, and giving up something you think is critical, like an after-school program or extensive fieldwork, might be necessary. Then, once priorities are set, distribute tasks. With shared leadership, administrators and teachers do not have their energies pulled in a million directions, can focus on one or two areas of strength, and give more commitment to their instructional programs.

PITFALL #2 : I AM NOT IN THE CLASSROOMS

When we open a school we assume it is not going to happen. But it will. Operational emergencies inevitably will pull the focus away from children and powerful instruction. Leaders will start to realize they are not spending enough time in classrooms, not giving enough time to creating powerful professional development, and not doing the two-hour, post-ob-

Jabari Jones, a third grader at ASCEND in Oakland, California, drew this plant for an expedition on botany.



servation dialogues they were trained to do at graduate school.

The answer to this pitfall is again shared in instructional leadership. Support all teachers to become instructional leaders. Develop strong partnerships with organizations with a solid reputation for instructional innovation. Give autonomy to participating partners and teachers to develop the professional development. Set teachers and partners up to support each other's instructional programs, so they coach each other. This alleviates the responsibility of the leader as sole instructional leader, and this creates a collaborative culture and an expectation of collective responsibility around powerful teaching and learning at the school. The lead instructional leader can then focus on enabling that leadership by providing time, compensation, support, and modeling. When sharing leadership, be careful, however, of pitfall three.

PITFALL #3: TEACHER BURNOUT


I quickly realized how many factors affect a child's ability to maximize learning. The obvious factor, and arguably the most influential, remains the classroom and the teaching within it. But in a school where you cannot lose a single child, you have to address the many issues of those single children. No matter how dynamic the instruction, needs around emotional health, academic remediation, home stability, access to recreation and arts, or physical health can impede a child's ability to access that lesson being presented in a classroom. Too often, the model presented in small under-resourced schools is teacher-as-everything. Teachers counsel children, run after-school programs, tutor, do parent education, and in addition to the core instructional programs, are often expected to teach physical education and the arts, regardless of ability. The problem with this model at ASCEND is that we need teachers to focus their energies on leading our instructional program. The inevitable outcome of this model of teacher-as-everything-including-in-

structional leader is the strongest teacher in the director's office in December with huge bags under her eyes saying she made a mistake.

To avoid this outcome and to allow teachers to create a powerful instructional program and become instructional leaders, you must choose another way to address the other factors affecting student learning. Recruit and hire multitalented/multifaceted specialists or support staff who have the flexibility and the organizational strength to do numerous jobs. For example, hire someone who can run an after-school program, work with families and students

in accessing community resources, and develop family leaders. Also, do not neglect the power of parents in filling the gaps. Parents as volunteers, and as hourly staff, have become counselors, tutors, instructional in-class support, office support, and everything else under the sun. ASCEND's parents make up the majority of the after-school tutors. Do not limit the human resource options to just teachers.

CONCLUSION

There are so many pits to fall into when opening a new school, but there are definitely ways to avoid the deeper ones by prioritizing the goals and enabling the instructional leadership of everyone. I predict ASCEND will fall into more pits this second year, but I am fairly certain that the powerful instructional leadership of the entire ASCEND team will guide us through. 

Hae-Sin Kim is principal of ASCEND, which currently serves first, third, and fifth-seventh grades in Oakland, California.

HOW TO ASCEND

When we think of the word ASCEND, we think of a young bird learning to fly for the first time.

TO ASCEND, YOU MUST:

1. Take charge of your own learning.
2. Be kind and considerate.
3. Help each other.
4. Persevere.
5. Be responsible for yourself, your family, and your community.
6. Be reflective.

For a more complete description, visit our website at www.elob.org/publications/webarchive/v11n1tt.html.

Stephanie Rivera, a third grader at ASCEND in Oakland, California, depicted this plant for an expedition on botany.



Walking Your Talk, continued from page 2

to learn a new teaching practice than to experience it as a participant.


MODELING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Another benefit to walking our talk as learners is that students and families know when we are “being real.” If, as instructional leaders, we can succeed in even beginning to approach learning through the same practices that we use with students, then the entire faculty will notice. Practicing what we preach as instructional leaders is, for me, both a stimulating and an intimidating idea. Time for adult learning in schools is devastatingly short, and adults are sometimes tougher critics of emerging practices than even students might be. But, these are difficulties worth facing.

In a professional community where the adults are engaged in real learning there is a great need for feedback, modeling, coaching, and simple attention. Meeting this need calls for shared leadership structures as the work is far too broad to be carried on the shoulders of only a few. It is critically important to engage and support instructional leadership from among the teaching staff. Instructional leadership support can also come from Expeditionary Learning staff and other criti-

cal friends from outside the school.

At The Harbor School, every six weeks the faculty presented curriculum plans to each other to get feedback and critique. A small group of teachers were released from classes monthly to participate in new literacy practices. At our summer institute one year we focused on working with data ourselves so that richer data work could be built into our learning expeditions. And every summer teachers attended and even led Expeditionary Learning summits and Outward Bound courses. These experiences did result in teachers bringing new practices back to their own classrooms. We needed even more instructional leadership. But practices such as these were a step in the right direction.

In Expeditionary Learning schools it is not just the students who are on a learning expedition. We are all on the journey. This simple assumption that we are all learners is one of the most powerful features of the Expeditionary Learning design and it has significant implications for what effective instructional leadership looks like in our schools. 

Scott Hartl is founder and former director of The Harbor School in Dorchester, Massachusetts. He currently works for Expeditionary Learning as a school designer and program developer.

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development is another key to quality student work. Teachers require quality professional development experiences in which they learn and improve their Expeditionary Learning practices. These experiences need to be of constant, paramount importance in the thinking, planning, and worrying of the principal, long after the adoption of the model. While it has been 10 years since King adopted the model, we still run an Expeditionary Learning institute and a separate planning institute each summer. We make sure that each new teacher has the knowledge, skills, and vision necessary to help students produce quality work. Expeditionary Learning practice is sustained when a principal creates a position that allows one teacher to focus on quality work constantly. We developed a teaching strategist position to support Expeditionary Learning practices, and we have been fortunate to have three outstanding educators play this on-site role in the past decade. The teaching strategist anticipates the needs of a team and can go to the principal to advocate for support. The strategist breathes the vision into all aspects of teacher interaction and quality student learning.

TIME

Principals need to make sure that time is used effectively. Most professionals in the outside world manage their own schedule, and it works wonders in the world of professional teachers as well. When teachers have the autonomy to control time, the quality of student work improves. Teachers should prioritize time so that student learning drives the use of time. The principal also needs to make sure teachers have compensated time during the summer for team planning. Scheduled common planning time during the school week also gives teams time to plan, discuss, and reflect on the quality of student work. This resource takes the principal's constant attention for it can be the first thing to dry up during tough budget times.

You've got to be careful if you don't know where you're going 'cause you might not get there.


—Yogi Berra

MATERIALS AND EXPERIENCES

High quality materials, coupled with high quality experiences, produce high quality products. The principal has to be very resourceful in seeking financial support and different ways of funding creative people and their ideas. When a staff member suggests a fresh idea, rather than focusing on obstacles, a principal's first thought might be, "How can I make this happen?" For example, a teacher proposed to study the intertidal zone of Casco Bay by having students snorkel in the bay and learn underwater photography. My first reaction was "What? Are you kidding me?" Because it was such a great example of experiential learning, our focus was to make sure it was safe and also make sure it could happen. The seventh graders created, as their final product of the expedition, one of the first scientific field guides in the network. The field guide, "In the Zone, Where the Land Meets the Water," has become an exemplar throughout the Expeditionary Learning community.

PRIDE AND CELEBRATION

School leaders in an Expeditionary Learning school have to constantly showcase the school. They should try to be present at every culminating expedition event. They should make sure parents, community, central office personnel, and school committee members understand and experience the quality of student work. They must let the students and faculty know about the pride they have in their work. At King Middle School, "It's cool to do good work."

High quality work and achievement for all students is no accident. It takes time, attention, resources, planning, pride . . . and a lot of worry. 

Mike McCarthy is principal of King Middle School in Portland, Maine.

SAILING AND SCHOOLING: FOCUS ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT

BY THOMAS VAN WINKLE

A big, foaming sea came out of the mist; it made for the ship, roaring wildly, and in its rush it looked as mischievous and discomposing as a madman with an axe.

— Joseph Conrad, *The Gale*

After reviewing my 2001-2002 calendar in my role as principal of Winnequah Middle School in Monona, Wisconsin, I thought Joseph Conrad's rich depiction of the onslaught of a storm at sea accurately portrayed my daily activities. Paging through each month, I reaffirmed my belief that it is common for educators to become lost in the deluge of everyday challenges. We are notorious new school year resolution makers. Unfortunately, our zeal for a fresh commitment to "getting into classrooms more often," "observing my colleagues," "improving communication with parents," and other honorable goals can be derailed by waves of issues that threaten to disrupt and corrupt the learning environment. Expeditionary Learning schools deal with the extraordinary additional challenge of implementing a "whole-

school" reform. So, how is it possible to make any headway in transforming an entire school when there are so many daily challenges that get in the way of any real progress?

When I reflect on education issues, I regularly draw on my nautical heritage as a transplanted Connecticut Yankee. This explains why I believe that Expeditionary Learning schools ought to operate like a finely tuned sailboat with a superb crew. A glimpse at the parallel worlds of sailing and schooling

might lend insight as to how we can remain committed to important matters of Expeditionary Learning while dealing with the day-to-day struggles as well.

STRUCTURES THAT ENDURE

Just as an ocean-going sailboat must be designed and built to withstand the most severe conditions that the sea can deliver, a school that hopes to educate all students must have the organizational framework and structures that will survive extreme conditions. Expeditionary Learning provides a surprisingly strong superstructure for a school: the 10 design principles define the true philosophical framework of the school and the core practices characterize the organizational structures. This might sound idyllic, but in my experience a commitment to Expeditionary Learning principles and practices can result in increased organizational fortitude.

I spent three years as assistant principal and five years as principal of Winnequah Middle School. During this eight years, Winnequah transformed from a traditional junior high with a reputation as a "holding tank" to a middle school lauded for its positive approach to teaching and learning and visited as a demonstration site for schools interested in reform. I have been asked on several occasions how such a positive and dramatic change took place at Winnequah. While we still sweat the small stuff, I like to think that we also focused on the big important rocks.

LEADERSHIP TEAMS: WHAT'S IMPORTANT?

- ~ Sustaining Expeditionary Learning financially
 - ~ Setting school improvement goals aligned with the Core Practice Benchmarks
 - ~ Designing the professional development calendar for the entire school year
 - ~ Collecting information for the school portfolio
 - ~ Collecting and analyzing data relative to Expeditionary Learning implementation
-

As you sweat through the urgent and sometimes unimportant daily challenges, ask yourself these questions to evaluate the capacity of your organization to work smoothly as an Expeditionary Learning school:

~ Does your school's master schedule promote flexibility in scheduling and teaming? Your master schedule clearly promotes a philosophy embraced by the school. Does yours provide for teaching learning expeditions all day long?

~ Does your school have an effective leadership team? Does the leadership team represent a true cross-section of the school? Consider inviting teachers, administrators, students, secretaries, educational assistants, parents, custodians, or other community members to be on the team.

~ Has any thought gone into the physical space considerations necessary for supporting Expeditionary Learning?

~ Is precious inservice and professional development time reserved and preserved for Expeditionary Learning?

~ Is there open discussion regarding financial resources and sustainability of Expeditionary Learning in your school?

~ Are you an effective leader? Are the conditions that you create at school supportive of adult and student learning? Do people in your building trust you and do you trust them?

~ How are decisions made in your school? How are decisions communicated to people once they are made? Is this decision-making structure supported by the principles of Expeditionary Learning?

STEADFAST CREW DETERMINES SCHOOL CULTURE

While the design and structure of a sailboat or school is vital to weathering harsh conditions, the boat and school cannot function without the efforts of a talented crew. The crew is the operative glue in the school. Depending on the make-up of the crew, a sailboat or school can experience significant amounts

of success or failure. The proving ground is when the storm is raging. Sinking or floating, failure and success can be directly related to how the captain and crew choose to behave.

In a school setting, the behavior and interactions of the principal and teachers reflect the school culture. How can a positive school culture be preserved and cherished in the midst of daily adversity and turmoil? A school's culture is a deliberate and ongoing measure of the attitudes, values, and skills existing in a school that continually reinforce each other. In Expeditionary Learning schools where the school culture is strong, the professional community seems to reinforce resiliency. Staff members feel invigorated, challenged, professionally engaged, and empowered just because they teach there. Outward Bound courses, summits, and institutes all provide experiences that help build a positive culture.

A talented crew on a sailboat or in a school nurtures the organization and becomes resilient when the going gets tough. Every member of the crew has key duties to perform, some of which are interchangeable with other crewmembers. These duties are well articulated and each person knows how to respond quickly if one of his/her comrades is hindered.

continued on next page

While the waves of adversity, turmoil, and present-day issues crash all around, the beam from the lighthouse will provide direction, helping the captain and crew to remain focused on what matters.

THE MASTER SCHEDULE: WHAT'S IMPORTANT?

- ~ Plan at least a semester ahead
 - ~ Create the master schedule collaboratively as a staff
 - ~ Make sure the schedule supports the basic tenets of Expeditionary Learning
 - ~ Provide for significant common planning time each week
 - ~ Promote adult collaboration
 - ~ Increase uninterrupted time for student learning and teacher planning
 - ~ Promote professional reflection time
 - ~ Give students and teachers time for solitude and reflection
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FIELDWORK

NOTES FROM EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING CLASSROOMS

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Sailing and Schooling, continued from page 11

It is remarkably easy to become distracted and burdened by the challenges of the present reality in schools. My calendar, no different than that of my peers working in public schools across the country,

reveals countless issues that can derail any well-intentioned practitioner. Fortunately, the resilient structure and philosophy of Expeditionary Learning can act as a lighthouse during a nasty storm. While the waves of adversity, turmoil, and present-day issues crash all around, the beam from the lighthouse will provide direction, helping the captain and crew to remain focused on what matters. The question becomes, what will the crew and captain focus on, the

waves or the lighthouse? There is no direction in the waves. Yet, should the crew focus on the directional signals rather than the waves crashing around them, they will continue to make headway and, ultimately, reach their destination port. 

Thomas Van Winkle, former principal at Winnequah Middle School in Monona, Wisconsin, is now a school designer in the Midwest region. He lives in Madison, Wisconsin.

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March 21-22, 2003

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**DESIGN PRINCIPLES
THAT TRAVEL**

We recently discovered the origin of the children's version of the Expeditionary Learning Design Principles mentioned in *Fieldwork* (Nov. 2002). Chris Weaver, a former second/third-grade teacher at Pathfinder School in West Seattle, Washington wrote them, and since then they have made their way to Expeditionary Learning schools across the country.