About Tribes Learning Communities:

Thousands of schools throughout the United States, Canada, Australia and other countries have become Tribes Learning Communities, safe and caring environments in which kids can do well! After years of "fix-it" programs focused on reducing student violence, conflict, drug and alcohol use, absenteeism, poor achievement, etc., educators and parents now agree, creating a positive school or classroom environment is the most effective way to improve behavior and learning. The Tribes TLC® process is the way to do it.

Students achieve because they:

- feel included and appreciated by peers and teachers
- are respected for their different abilities, cultures, gender, interests and dreams
- are actively involved in their own learning
- have positive expectations from others that they will succeed.

The clear purpose of the Tribes process is to assure the healthy development of every child so that each one has the knowledge, skills and resiliency to be successful in a rapidly changing world.

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Tribes Learning Communities®

Information Summary

Tribes Learning Communities (Tribes TLC®) is a research-based elementary, middle and high school program that promotes academic social and emotional development by creating a positive learning environment. The Tribes group development process focuses on resiliency and the stages of human development.

The Mission of Tribes is to assure the healthy development of every child so that each has the knowledge, competency and resilience to be successful in today's rapidly changing world.

The Goal is to engage all teachers, administrators, students and families in working together as a learning community that is dedicated to caring and support, active participation and positive expectations for all students.

Tribes is a community building process—a culture and active learning pedagogy best learned by experiencing it. The purpose of the 24-hour experiential training is to prepare teachers, administrators and support staff personnel to develop a caring school and classroom environment, and to reach and teach students through an active learning approach that promotes student development, motivation and academic achievement.

For most effective implementation, teachers participate in a 24-hour training led by a Certified Tribes TLC® Trainer. Schools are encouraged to include not only teachers but also principals and other school administrators in the Tribes training. This helps ensure that the entire school or school system reinforces the same culture, motivation, and behavior among students.

Teachers organize their students into collaborative learning groups of three to six students, known as “tribes.” Each tribe works together throughout the academic year. To promote a spirit of cooperation and social acceptance, students and teachers also honor four basic agreements while in the classroom: 1) attentive listening, 2) appreciations/no “put downs,” 3) mutual respect, and 4) the “right to pass” or participate. As students become better at honoring the four agreements and working together, teachers gradually transfer responsibility to the tribes, so the members can set their own goals, monitor progress, solve problems, and achieve success through project learning.

Teachers learn to integrate curriculum through active learning strategies to engage students in meaningful learning and peer leadership. There is a clear planning process for implementation throughout the whole school system. Collegial teacher groups and leadership teams are developed to create a professional learning community, and to enhance curriculum planning, problem solving, and authentic assessment.

CenterSource Systems produces a variety of Tribes training curricula and employs an international network of over 1100 certified trainers. More than 5000 schools are currently implementing the Tribes process throughout the United States, Canada, Australia, and other countries.
Bring Your School to Life with
Tribes TLC® Professional Development

“What Tribes can bring to a class is dynamite—
what it can bring to a total staff is spectacular!”
Leslie McPeak, Principal

Tribes is a community building process—a culture and active learning pedagogy best learned
by experiencing it. You can make the process come alive for your district or school by
scheduling training for your teachers, administration and support staff.

CenterSource Systems has a network of licensed trainers who conduct professional
development training in many countries throughout the world. Schedule an overview
presentation and classroom demonstration at your school where the key concepts of Tribes
are explained and demonstrated through typical training strategies and our videos. Give
your administration, school board and staff the information they need to consider whole
school training. Schools and districts can arrange training and support with the following
staff development opportunities:

**Building Community for Learning (Tribes “Basic” Training)**
- 24 hours – Eight 3-hour sessions; various delivery options available
- Offered online in June 2013

Prepare teachers, administrators and support staff personnel to develop a caring school
and classroom environment, and to reach and teach students through an active learning
approach that promotes student development, motivation and academic achievement.

**Discovering Gifts in Middle School**
- 24 hours – Eight 3-hour sessions; various delivery options available

This is a research-based approach for middle level educators to focus their schools on the
critical developmental learning needs of young adolescents, and to create caring learning
communities that support the full range of students’ growth and development for academic
excellence.

**Engaging All by Creating High School Learning Communities**
- 24 hours – Eight 3-hour sessions; various delivery options available

Provide the research-based concepts, experience, and strategies that are essential for
engaging all by creating high school learning communities. Critical indicators of the very
different needs of 21st century youth, voices of students themselves, and a consensus of
recommendations from the literature and studies, including the National Association of
Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and attention to pedagogy of the whole system are
vital to preparing today’s students for an entirely different era—the Era of Learning.

**Tribes TLC for After-School and Youth Development Programs**
- 12 hours – Four 3-hour sessions; usually a 2-day training

Prepare after-school educators, youth workers, and community members to develop a
caring learning center environment and to reach and teach children and youth through an
active learning approach that promotes human development, resiliency, and social-
emotional competence.
Artistry for Learning
• 24 hours – Eight 3-hour sessions; various delivery options available
This advanced course increases the capacity of teachers and administrators within Tribes Learning Community Schools to intensify quality implementation of the research-based developmental process of Tribes – thereby to assure that all students, no matter their diversity and ability, achieve higher social, emotional and academic learning.

Collaboration: The Art Form of Leadership – Leading for Results in a Tribes Learning Community
• 14 hours – Four 3 1/2 hour sessions; usually a 2-day training
An experiential training designed to bring together school leaders and leadership teams who have already been trained in the process of Tribes TLC® so that they can explore and complete authentic leadership tasks and gain a new exciting view of their roles in re-culturing the school community. The Tribes collegial team learning experiences will create a professional learning community environment that will support and sustain increased student learning and achievement.

Parent Overview and Training
• 6 hours – Three 2-hour sessions spread out over several weeks
Help parents gain knowledge about the well-researched concepts that support and maximize learning and development of the whole child. Parents will learn why social and emotional learning are important for academic achievement and well being in life. Together they will consider why and how the Tribes TLC® process provides a foundation for learning and development and have the opportunity to generate ways for the family to use the caring process at home to join with teachers in supporting and maximizing their children’s development, learning, and resilient qualities.

Tribes TLC X – Online Course
• Five online sessions over 10 weeks
This online course is offered for professional development. Participants will understand the research behind the Tribes TLC process as well as the influence of the Tribes TLC process on Social-Emotional Learning.

Training-of-District Trainers
• 40 hours – a week-long training offered twice a year during the summer
• Completion of any 24 hour course is a required pre-requisite
CenterSource Systems has designed a capacity building model for professional development so that your district or school can have your own Certified Tribes TLC® Trainers to provide on-going training, coaching and support to teachers, administrators, resource personnel and parent community groups. The 40-hour Training-of-District Trainers provides in-depth skills, knowledge, experience and quality training materials to your own qualified personnel. A variety of training modules enable them to facilitate the Basic Tribes Course, support faculty groups, initiate parent community groups and conduct classroom demonstrations.

(continued)
International Summer Institute for District Trainers

- 30 hours – a four-day conference retreat

The purpose of the Tribes TLC® Summer Institute is to advance the professional capacity of the Tribes Learning Community international network of trainers to lead and accelerate academic, social and emotional learning for all students and to develop the leadership capacity to sustain and intensify implementation of Tribes through the development of professional learning communities.

All courses are approved for college credit through California State University.

Follow-up coaching is available so that your staff can fully implement the process of Tribes and intensify its use throughout the whole school community.

Tribes TLC is recognized as a Model or Promising Program by:

- Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning
- Ontario Ministry of Education’s Registry of Resources for Safe and Inclusive Schools
- KidsMatter - Australian Mental Health Initiative
- Find Youth Info.gov

For additional information contact: CenterSource Systems
800-810-1701 tribes@tribes.com www.tribes.com
Reaching All by Creating Tribes Learning Communities®

Join the thousands of Administrators, Teachers and Community members throughout the country who are convinced that the community building process called “TRIBES” is the secret ingredient that makes teaching easy and effective.

The purpose of this 24-hour training is to prepare teachers, administrators and support staff personnel to develop a caring school and classroom environment, and to reach and teach students through an active learning approach that promotes student development, motivation and academic achievement.

The Tribes TLC® Staff Development Process: The Tribes 24-hour Basic experiential workshop prepares Pre-K–12 administrators and teachers, as well community members, to use the community building process of Tribes as the foundation for transforming the school community environment to one in which teaching methods are effective in reaching and teaching students for today’s world. Using multiple intelligences, brain compatible learning and cooperative methods, school and classroom climate and teacher awareness will begin to reflect the message of life-long learning, personal development and social responsibility as the keys to academic excellence.

Educators will learn how to:
- Develop a positive learning environment in the classroom and whole school community
- Teach students specific collaborative skills to work well together
- Transfer responsibility to students to help each other learn academic material and to maintain the positive Tribes agreements and environment
- Use the process for problem-solving and conflict resolution
- Design cooperative learning lesson plans
- Initiate faculty groups for planning, co-coaching and support.

You will receive a copy of the 430 page book, Reaching All by Creating Tribes Learning Communities, by Jeanne Gibbs, a Certificate of Completion and the materials to enable you to implement Tribes in your school community and classroom.

Follow-up coaching and support at your school site are available throughout the year so that your staff can fully implement the process of Tribes and intensify its use throughout the whole school community.
Discovering Gifts in Middle School:
Learning in a Caring Culture Called Tribes TLC

Join the thousands of administrators, teachers and community members throughout the country who are convinced that the community building process called “TRIBES TLC®” is the secret ingredient that makes teaching through cooperative learning easy and effective.

The Tribes TLC® Staff Development Process:
The purpose of this 24-hour experiential training is to provide a research-based approach for middle level educators to focus on the critical developmental learning needs of young adolescents. The training illuminates how to transform the cultures of middle schools into caring learning communities that support the full range of student growth and development as well as establish academic excellence.

Participants will:
- Recognize the critical importance of the middle level school to make as its focus, all aspects of the development of its young adolescent students
- Gain an understanding of four developmental tasks of young adolescents
- Learn how collaborative groups of learners (students, teachers, administrators and parents) can create and sustain a caring school culture
- Recognize the comprehensive studies that underlie the caring process of Tribes Learning Communities
- Understand why and how group learning supports adolescent development
- Learn how teachers can move through sequential stages towards excellence and into responsive education and discovery learning
- Design active group learning experiences that develop student-centered classrooms
- Realize the need for fairness, equity and social justice in middle schools and consider ways to reverse inequities
- Learn why democratic leadership is needed in a middle school that is focused on students’ development and learning
- Understand the need for and power of reflective practice throughout all groups in the school community
- Learn how authentic assessment promotes learning and student development
- Realize what a responsive middle level school is – the gifts students discover and the meaningful learning that is achieved!

You will receive a copy of the 440 page book, Discovering Gifts in Middle School: Learning in a Caring Culture Called Tribes, by Jeanne Gibbs, a Certificate of Completion and the materials to enable you to implement Tribes in your school community and classroom.

Follow-up coaching and support at your school site are available throughout the year so that your staff can fully implement the process of Tribes and intensify its use throughout the whole school community.

For Registration and Information, Contact:
CenterSource Systems, LLC. The Home of Tribes www.tribes.com 800-810-1701 Fax: 707-894-2355
60 Commerce Lane Suite D, Cloverdale CA 95425 USA
A Special Invitation to High School Educators

Engaging All by Creating High School Learning Communities

You are invited to participate in an exciting professional development opportunity to make a recognized community learning process come alive in your high school. The interactive training is based on the newly published book, Engaging All By Creating High School Learning Communities, authored by Jeanne Gibbs and Teri Ushijima, Ed.D.

The 24-hour training provides the research-based principles and strategies that are essential to prepare today's students for an entirely different era – The Era of Learning. Participants will explore the most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement – that of building the capacity of school personnel – "the insiders" – to function as a collegial learning community. Participants will understand why and how this research-based developmental process can transform the culture, structures and pedagogy of the whole high school system.

As a teacher the interactive training prepares you to…

- Create a personalized motivational culture throughout all of your classes
- Design active learning experiences that correspond to how today's 21st century students best can learn and succeed
- Engage all students in collaborative learning groups for inquiry, research, creative projects, presentations, self and group assessment and evaluation
- Work in collaborative teacher learning communities to engage, motivate and together help all of your students succeed.

As an administrator you will discover ways to…

- Initiate and sustain a caring and challenging culture throughout the whole school community
- Build the capacity of the faculty to work together in collegial learning communities to achieve educational excellence
- Activate the sound principles and improvement practices recommended in the NASSP ground-breaking document "Breaking Ranks II – Strategies for Leading High School Reform" (2004)
- Implement effective practices that enhance rigor, relevance and relationships to transform your school community.

This book is a very valuable, stimulating, and informative guide for collaborative teams of teachers who commit to creating an engaging school culture to promote the successful learning and development of all high school students.

Roger P. Weissberg, PhD
President, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

There are so few books on personalizing high school into layers of learning communities. Engaging All is terrific – comprehensive, practical – all and all a resource with multiple payoffs for adults and youth alike.

Michael Fullan, PhD
Dean, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto
Artistry for Learning: The Research-Based Components of the Developmental Process of Tribes Learning Communities®

The purpose of this new and exciting 24-hour experiential training is to increase the capacity of teachers and administrators within Tribes Learning Community Schools to intensify quality implementation of the research-based process of Tribes – thereby to assure that all students, no matter their diversity and ability, achieve higher social, emotional and academic learning.

Participants will:

- Reflect upon their professional learning and progress in using the process of Tribes TLC
- Discover the sound framework that underlies the Artistry for Learning
- Understand how social emotional learning leads to greater academic achievement and success in school and life
- Learn how the process of Tribes contributes to the development of resilience in the normal course of the classroom day
- Become familiar with the palette of seven research-based components that catalyze student learning
- Begin to deepen their understanding of the research-based components of Tribes Responsive Education, by working with the “colors” of the palette
- Assess their own preferred ways of learning, and plan how to differentiate curriculum to reach students of multiple intelligences
- Learn a variety of ways to assess student-learning experiences
- Select a current curriculum theme or unit and design a cooperative learning experience that integrates several components of the palette
- Discuss specific ways that cooperative or discovery (constructivist) pedagogy can be utilized to make the content meaningful and lasting for students
- Recognize the importance of teachers having designated time in on-going collegial groups to confer, plan and assess student achievement

You will receive a copy of the 235 page book, What Is It About Tribes? The Research-Based Components of the Developmental Process of Tribes Learning Communities, by Bonnie Benard of WestEd, an interactive participant journal, a Certificate of Completion, and the materials to effectively implement the Artistry for Learning concepts in your classroom and school community.

Follow-up coaching and support at your school site are available throughout the year so that your staff can fully implement the process of Tribes and intensify its use throughout the whole school community.
Creating
Tribes Learning Communities®
in After School and
Youth Development Programs

Join after-school educators, youth workers, and community members throughout the country who are convinced that the community building process called “TRIBES” is the secret ingredient that transforms the after-school learning center environment to one of caring and cooperation.

Resilience research demonstrates that schools, and the people within them, have the power to transform young lives. The Tribes process shows educators and youth workers exactly what they can do to provide the caring relationships, positive expectations, and opportunities for participation and contribution that promote positive youth development and successful learning.

Bonnie Benard, WestEd
Human Development Program

The Tribes TLC® Staff Development Process: The purpose of this 12-hour experiential training is to prepare after school educators, youth workers, and community members to develop a caring learning center environment and to reach and teach children and youth through an active learning approach that promotes human development, resiliency, and social-emotional competence. Participants will learn to use the community building process of Tribes as the foundation for transforming the after-school learning center environment to one in which group facilitation and Tribes strategies are effective in reaching and teaching children and youth. Using multiple intelligences, brain compatible learning and cooperative methods, the community learning center climate and staff awareness will begin to reflect the message of life-long learning, personal development, and social responsibility as the keys to success in the 21st Century.

Educators will learn how to:
- Provide safe and educationally enriching alternatives for children and youth during non-school hours by developing a positive recreational and learning environment
- Teach children and youth specific collaborative skills so that they can play and work well together
- Transfer responsibility to children and youth to help each other maintain the positive Tribes agreements and caring environment
- Use the process for problem-solving, conflict resolution, prevention, and youth development
- Facilitate cooperative strategies for social, emotional and academic learning and enrichment
- Encourage an understanding and appreciation for diversity of ideas, culture and values
- Understand the relationship between effective Arts programs, after school environments, and the Tribes TLC® process
- Come together as a staff for planning, co-coaching and support.

You will receive a copy of the 432 page book, Reaching All by Creating Tribes Learning Communities, by Jeanne Gibbs, a participant journal, a Certificate of Completion, and the materials to enable you to implement Tribes in your after-school community learning center. Follow-up coaching and support are available so that your staff can intensify the use of the Tribes process throughout the year and at every level of the after-school program.

Contact CenterSource for information on After School Funding

Tribes TLC is recognized as a Model or Promising Program by –
- Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning
- CSAP’s Western CAPT
- Helping America’s Youth
A THREE EVENING
TRIBES LEARNING COMMUNITY
PROGRAM FOR PARENTS

Invitation to Parents!

Join other parents to learn about and experience the Tribes Active Learning process that teachers of the school are using to maximize students' academic learning and human development in all of their wholeness and unique potential.

You will have the opportunity to:

- Gain knowledge and experience ways in which teachers are creating ideal learning cultures and using effective ways to assure success in learning for all in their classrooms.
- Understand how the support of all aspects of their student's development is important for his or her academic achievement... and well being in life.
- Experience how and why students' motivation and academic learning increases when working actively together in collaborative small groups (teams or tribes).
- Discover how to use the positive culture, collaborative strategies and caring process in their homes.
- Enjoy sharing and becoming acquainted with other parents also committed to readying their children for meaningful purpose and well-being in today's world.

We encourage you to attend all 3 meetings in order to learn more about our school community, to understand how to better help our children realize educational and personal goals, and to connect with other parents.

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The Mission of Tribes Learning Communities is to assure the healthy development of every child so that each has the knowledge, skills and resiliency to be successful in a rapidly changing world.

The Goal for a Tribes School is to engage all teachers, administrators, students and families in working together as a learning community dedicated to:

- caring and support
- active participation
- positive expectations for all students
Collaboration: The Art Form of Leadership
Leading for Results in a Tribes Learning Community

14-hour Leadership Academy

There no longer is any doubt that the most effective and powerful way to achieve and sustain substantive school improvement is by building the capacity of "inside" school personnel to work together as a professional learning community. – Jeanne Gibbs

Purpose:
School leaders and leadership teams will complete authentic leadership tasks and gain a new exciting view of their roles in reculturing the school. The Tribes collegial team learning experiences will create a professional learning community environment that will support and sustain increasing student learning and achievement.

The training will help participants answer the following questions:

- What ideas, tools, and structures help leaders facilitate school-wide change?
- How do you build the capacities of a leadership team?
- What unique knowledge or skills do leaders need to work with adult learners?
- How can we increase trust, common knowledge, energy, and hope within our leadership team?
- How do you utilize the Tribes TLC process as a seamless bridge to create professional collaborative learning communities?
- How does living the Tribes Trail build the relational trust, collegiality and resiliency that are critical for school improvement?
- How do we have reflective conversations around tough issues and continue to grow a caring culture?

Facilitators:
Annette Griffith, M.Ed., A Tribes Trainer since 1995, Annette has experience in several districts as a teacher, counselor, high school coordinator, and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction helping to implement programs campus and district-wide. Most recently, as Executive Director for Teaching and Learning in Spring Branch Independent School District, she was involved in the 11-year implementation of the Tribes TLC process district-wide. Currently she is an independent consultant working with school districts to help increase the leadership capacity of students and adults.

Nancy W. Latham, M.Ed., A Tribes trainer since 1994 and a former elementary school principal in Oahu, she was also the District Educational Specialist for Special Services in Central Oahu District for many years until her retirement from the district in 2002. She now resides in Daytona Beach, Florida, where she continues her work with Tribes and schools in Florida.

Linda Reed, Ed.D., A Tribes trainer since 1995, a former elementary school principal, area Superintendent, Interim Superintendent, and Assistant Superintendent of the Spring Branch Independent School District in Houston, Texas. Linda recently completed her Doctor of Education with a research emphasis on implementation and continues to be a private educational consultant.

Marilyn Sumner, M.Ed., A Tribes trainer since 1995, she has experience as a teacher, curriculum coordinator, and district administrator with responsibilities for schools, special programs and instructional support primarily in Spring Branch ISD. An independent consultant since 2000, she works with public and private schools as well as nonprofits with a focus on improving work, learning, and organizations through collaboration.

PD Fee: $500, includes all materials; a minimum of 20 participants is required. Participants are encouraged to attend as leadership teams from their schools; however, individual registration is welcome. Participants should have already completed a 24-hour Tribes training in order to understand this next level of implementation.

Follow-up coaching and support are available throughout the year so that schools can intensify the use of the Tribes TLC leadership development processes and increase the effectiveness of Tribes TLC throughout the whole school community.
ORIGIN AND DESIGN STAGES

The process, known simply as “Tribes,” and now more specifically as “Tribes Learning Communities,” was developed some years ago at a time when concerned educators in eighteen school districts of Contra Costa County, California, were seeking ways …

- to prevent substance use and abuse, and other behavioral problems
- to demonstrate improvement in academic test scores, and
- to stem the tide of teachers leaving the profession.

Yes, and the same issues still are of great concern today.

The developmental learning process of Tribes has evolved through two stages of design that have led to the current Tribes Learning Community – whole school model.

INITIAL DESIGN: SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

The goal of the first design was to prevent substance use and other youth behavioral problems. The twofold strategy was:

- to develop inclusion, a sense of value and community for all students in every classroom, thereby to overcome isolation, alienation and acting-out behavior, and
- to have well-trained teachers use small groups to teach the content of drug education curriculum in an active learning way.

Now along with other big issues we see it as a need for whole school reform.
Secondary students as “Youth Educators” and parent volunteers as “Parent Educators” also were trained in the group learning process to facilitate drug education curriculum in elementary schools, intermediate and high schools. During the 1980s more than 3000 parent volunteers were active in San Francisco Bay Area schools. For more than ten years the teacher, student and parent models were used in hundreds of schools and youth centers throughout the United States. The professional development was coordinated by the non-profit corporation, the Center for Human Development, which Jeanne Gibbs had founded and managed.

OUTCOMES: Schools reported…

✦ significant decreases in student behavior problems
✦ increases in student self-esteem and self-responsibility
✦ improvements in school climate.

UN-ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES:

✦ Teachers realized that they could also teach core academic content in small groups—thereby reaching and involving all of the students in a classroom.
✦ Individual teachers and whole schools began to request training in cooperative group learning.

SECOND DESIGN: TRIBES COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Comprehensive studies on cooperative group learning, social development and group process were synthesized for the cooperative learning model. The approach trained teachers to build long-term small membership groups (tribes) for peer support and responsibility; to teach students essential democratic group skills; and to integrate academic concepts into cooperative learning strategies. A positive culture was built and sustained in classrooms by having students learn, practice and remind each other to honor the four Tribes Agreements….

ATTENTIVE LISTENING
THE RIGHT TO PASS +
THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

APPRECIATION/NO PUT DOWNS
MUTUAL RESPECT

Training courses emphasized transferring responsibility from teacher to student groups to support each others’ learning, to problem-solve issues and to manage their work together.

OUTCOMES:

✦ significant decreases in student behavior problems (average: 75% decrease in 3 months)
increased in teacher collegiality and parent involvement
-improvement in teacher-student relationships
-increase in students’ liking of school and motivation for academic learning.

UN-ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES:
- Teachers reported they did not spend as much time managing their classrooms, and that they had more time to teach subject matter.
- More special education students could be mainstreamed into regular classrooms.
- Teachers of separate special education classrooms began to report indicators of positive social and emotional development in their students.
- Schools that had all teachers trained together and that set aside time for teacher learning and planning groups better sustained the learning process. Teacher collegiality increased.
- The Tribes Cooperative Learning approach began to be marketed teacher-to-teacher, principal-to-principal and parent-to-parent across the country.

CURRENT MODEL: TRIBES LEARNING COMMUNITY
Ever-growing inquiries and training requests from schools throughout the United States and Canada led to the development of CenterSource Systems, LLC in 1995. The task of the new organization was: (1) to develop a research-based whole school model, and (2) to create a professional capacity-building training system—based on the long-standing philosophy and process of Tribes.

PHILOSOPHY AND GOAL
We believe that:
- The goal of education is to develop greatness in young human beings, active constructive citizens who are valuable contributors to society. To educate is to call forth all aspects of a student’s human development—intellectual, social, emotional, physical and spiritual.
- Intellectual, social and emotional learning is an interdependent growth process. It is influenced daily by the quality of the systems in a student’s life.
- Schools of excellence are student-centered. They have caring cultures, supportive structures and pedagogy that respond to and support the stages of development and the diversity of students’ learning needs.
School reform depends upon the whole system working together as a learning community—a school community committed to continual reflective practice towards improvement and educational excellence.

The philosophy and concepts above are the foundation of the dual mission and goal statement of Tribes Learning Community schools:

*The mission of Tribes* is to assure the healthy development of every child so that each has the knowledge, competency and resilience to be successful in today’s rapidly changing world.

*The goal* is to engage all teachers, administrators, students and families in working together as a learning community that is dedicated to caring and support, active participation and positive expectations for all students.

**The Design of the Whole School Model**

The design moves the four philosophy beliefs forward into a clear action plan framework for school reform. The four-fold philosophy and four-step framework are grounded in a synthesis of a wide-range of literature and research on human development, child and adolescent development, elements of ideal cultures for learning, resilience, cognitive-neuroscience theory, brain compatible learning, multiple intelligences, cooperative group learning, project learning and constructivism, multicultural and gender equity, democratic group process, school climate, classroom management, reflective practice, system change, professional development and authentic assessment… approximately 17 research-based components for effective pedagogy and school reform.

**The Developmental Process of Tribes**

The purpose of the graphic on the next page is to illustrate the research-based framework for the school renewal process. Brief discussions on the four strategies and the literature on which they are based follow.

**Student Learning and Development—Re-Focusing**

Although the goal of the majority of schools today is to have higher student achievement on standardized tests, the promise of that happening depends upon the school community as a system: (1) becoming student-centered, and (2) learning how to reach and teach the diversity of students. The primary focus of the Tribes school is not computer literacy, not a reading program or preparation for year-end tests—although all may be addressed and sequenced into the school’s action plan. *The focus is on the students.* All policy, structures, decisions, curriculum and pedagogy depend upon the response to one question: “How and to what extent will ‘this’ support the learning and developmental needs of these students?”

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1. Unless reform is child centered, children and society alike are going to be hurt— are being hurt. —James Comer
Even to begin to know how to respond to the pivotal question, the Tribes school staff commits to working as an on-going collaborative “learning community.” They up-date their knowledge and perspectives on children’s development, resiliency, cognitive learning and multiple intelligences. Rather than teachers taking courses on their own, the whole staff learns together to better identify and respond effectively to the diversity of students’ cultures and needs, and to use multiple ways to accelerate the inseparable interdependent triad: academic, social and emotional learning.
A CARING CULTURE—RE-CULTURING

Given that the focus of a Tribes school is student-centered, the next question becomes, “How do we create an ideal culture for learning?” Comprehensive studies verify that the culture must be safe and caring. The culture in Tribes school communities is based on the three well-proven principles that foster human resilience: caring relationships, positive expectations and beliefs, and opportunities for participation and contribution. Its components are those of an ideal learning culture. Namely, it is participative, proactive, collaborative, communal and given over to constructive meaning. The safe and caring culture is created and sustained by the students, teachers and the whole school community through daily use of the four previously mentioned Tribes Agreements:

- ATTENTIVE LISTENING
- RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE +
- THE RIGHT TO PASS
- APPRECIATION/NO PUT DOWNS
- MUTUAL RESPECT

The responsibility to honor and to monitor the agreements is transferred from the teacher to the tribes. Signs are posted throughout the school community, student groups and school meetings begin with reminders of “how we want to be while we work together.” The agreements and the step-by-step community building process of Tribes assure that every student has inclusion (belonging to a small peer group), a sense of identity and value, and a community of supportive peers and adults.

THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS—RE-STRUCTURING

The culture is activated and sustained throughout the many small learning groups in which the students, teachers, administrators, support staff and parents are involved. All teachers belong to and meet regularly in small professional learning communities to study and move to research-based instruction, plan active learning curriculum and timely benchmark goals, to design authentic assessments and collectively identify how to help all students in their circle of care. A leadership team—composed of the principal, core teachers and the school or district’s Certified Tribes TLC Trainers—coordinate overall action planning, implementation and assessment. They too are an inquiry group, raising questions and learning together. The same inquiry group process moves throughout teacher and parent groups. Training opportunities, courses and events are identified to the leadership team. As much as possible, just as with student tribes, integration and alignment of curriculum, problem-solving and decision-making is transferred to faculty and parent groups. District resource coordinators and the Certified Tribes Trainers participate and facilitate as needed. As learning areas are identified, the core leadership team are informed. Additional courses and special training are arranged by the school, preferably courses that their own Certified Tribes TLC Trainers are capable of conducting. The democratic...
community-building approach based on the caring culture fosters collegiality, school spirit and achievement.

**RESPONSIVE EDUCATION—ACTIVE LEARNING**

“Responsive Education” is an essential pedagogy for academic achievement and school reform. It is the synthesis of artful teaching practices. It is based on understanding the critical developmental needs of a student age and cultural group. Its sole purpose is to enable more students to acquire knowledge in a lasting and meaningful way. Crafting a caring culture and trusting small active learning communities throughout a school gives all students the opportunity to excel.

The CenterSource Systems professional development courses and training of a school’s own teachers as Certified Tribes Trainers assures continuous on-site learning for the instructional staff. It prepares all teachers, working in small teams, to be responsive to how the students of the school can best learn and grow socially, emotionally, spiritually (inner development) and intellectually—depending upon their respective stages of development, ways of learning and culture. It enables all teachers in a school to have students learn core academic content in meaningful ways via well-proven active learning strategies, project learning, group inquiry, research, composition projects, debates, team performance and peer assessment. Tribes materials provide teachers with approximately 175 strategies (or structures). 

Reflection on what was learned and how it was learned is an on-going practice after every group learning experience. Cognitive research validates that this maximizes the recall of information and concepts. To a certain degree Tribes Learning Community teachers do use some direct instruction as well as active learning. However, once they recognize and experience the positive results of cooperative learning (validated by more than 1000 studies), the majority have students working in learning groups as much as possible.

“But,” some say, “I gave up trying to use groups. Kids don’t always work together well.” Of course not! Nor can all adults. Time must be taken for all to learn some essential community building group skills that first are demonstrated, and then are woven into group curriculum tasks—one or two at a time as “social learning objectives.” Having students themselves assess the social objective along with the content learning objective not only transfers teachers’ responsibility but internalizes both the social and content learning. The partnership role of students and teachers consistently working together institutionalizes the ideal learning culture and “responsive education” pedagogy throughout the collaborative school community. Best of all, the caring culture, trust and energy significantly transforms a school system. Over time, it results in educational excellence and meaningful learning for all.

—CATHERINE FOSNOT

See the Resources section of this book for a summary of external evaluations on the developmental process of Tribes TLC.
Tribes TLC: A Resource for Bullying Prevention
FEBRUARY 22, 2013

*Tribes Learning Communities has now been added to the Ontario Ministry of Education’s Registry of Resources for Safe and Inclusive Schools.*

**Registry of Resources for Safe and Inclusive Schools**
The Ontario Ministry of Education’s registry provides information about resources to help prevent bullying and promote safe and inclusive schools. The resources may be suitable for purchase and use in elementary and secondary schools. View the complete registry of resources at [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/bullyprevention/registry.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/bullyprevention/registry.html)

The following is the Tribes TLC posting from the Ministry of Education’s Registry of Resources for Safe and Inclusive Schools.

**Tribes Learning Communities**
Tribes Learning Communities (Tribes TLC®) is a research-based elementary, middle and high school program that promotes academic, social, and emotional development by creating a positive and safe learning climate for the classroom and school community. The Tribes group development process focuses on resiliency and stages of human development. The TLC purpose is the development of the whole child – academic, social, emotional, physical and spiritual growth. Inclusive learning challenges develop self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and self-management/relationship skills, all of which are critical components in reducing or eliminating bullying. Curriculum is integrated through active, engaging strategies for meaningful and collaborative learning.

*A special thank you to Linda Groen, Wendy Harrison, Marilyn Turner and others from the Ontario Tribes Learning Community Consortium for their hard work on this successful submission!"
Reducing Bullying with ‘Tribes’

by Wendy Ryan

Research shows that anti-bullying programs don’t always work.1 One reason for the limited success of some anti-bullying programs could be that teachers may be unable to invest the sustained time and effort necessary to implement a program focused only on bullying because of their other daily preoccupations, such as discipline, classroom management and student motivation.2

A general program aimed at school improvement may have a wider impact on many undesirable student behaviors, including bullying, as this approach is easier for teachers to adopt and maintain compared to a program focused solely on bullying.3

The Tribes program4 fits the description of the type of general program that authors Galloway and Roland5 propose might be effective to reduce undesirable student behaviors, such as bullying. Tribes uses a whole-school, learning community model and aims to create a positive school climate through improved teaching and classroom management, positive interpersonal relations and opportunities for student participation.6

The Tribes process consists of four key principles:

• Attentive listening.
• Appreciation and no put-downs.
• Mutual respect.
• Participation and right to pass.

These principles serve as a stable foundation for building positive interpersonal relations in classrooms and throughout a school. Teachers in Tribes classrooms model respectful behavior and encourage respectful interactions among students. Tribes teachers aim to use the most effective teaching methods and meet the learning needs of students with a variety of different learning styles.7 Instead of focusing solely on verbal (or linguistic) and logical (or mathematical) forms of intelligence, Tribes schools provide students with opportunities to develop other forms of intelligence, such as kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, visual, special, naturalist, existential and intrapersonal.

In classrooms committed to the Tribes process, students participate in daily community circles in which there is an opportunity to share ideas, thoughts and feelings. This can be a time in which problems encountered on the school yard can be discussed and worked through together. It can also be a time to celebrate successes or get to know classmates better.

ASQ Primary and Secondary Education Brief November 2010 (Vol. 3, No. 6)
www.asq.org
Students also work together in long-term, small, heterogeneous groups called tribes that foster, in which social skills—such as active listening, problem solving and conflict resolution. In addition, a series of fun activities are interspersed throughout the day to help students develop feelings of inclusion and a sense of community.

Ideally, all school staff members are trained in the Tribes process and agree to follow the principles, and parents are informed about the Tribes agreements and encouraged to model them at home. With this support in place, consistent positive behavioral expectations are more likely to occur in each classroom, on the school yard and at home.

Seeing it for yourself

As part of my doctoral research, I studied an elementary school that had been using the Tribes process for four years.8 This school posts the Tribes agreements as “school rules” and has them hanging in every classroom and hallway. All parents receive a newsletter at the beginning of each school year that explains the Tribes agreements. Children and parents sign a portion of the form indicating they have carefully read and discussed the Tribes agreements, and they return the signed portion to the child’s teacher. The Tribes agreements are also incorporated into the student handbook and on the school’s website.

Observations and interview data from staff and students at this school—which indicate the Tribes agreements—are often referred to throughout a typical school day and frequently referred to as a guide to behavior in classrooms, on the school yard and at assemblies.

There is a token incentive system in place to promote pro-social behavior, including compliance with Tribes agreements, outside and inside the classroom: Students receive colored popsicle sticks on the school yard and colored tags in classrooms for behaviors that comply with the Tribes agreements. Each Tribes agreement is represented by a different color. A group reward—for example, an afternoon trip to a local park or a movie—is delivered after the school accomplishes an agreement, which is symbolized by filling a container full of popsicle sticks. An individual reward (such as a Tribes star with a student’s name on it) is given when a child receives one of each color. This star goes up in the hallway on a bulletin board called the “Tribes Wall of Fame.”

Additionally, a longer-term incentive was recently created at this school: After students collect seven Tribes stars each, they will be able to paint their names on a ceiling tile in the school hallway.
I also observed other incentive systems. For example, the principal gives individual awards—such as a certificate—to those students identified by classroom teachers as having put in an extra effort in school work or behavior. These principal’s awards are distributed at assemblies. At the assemblies I attended, several students received awards for putting forth a special effort in following the Tribes agreements.

There are also incentive systems for good behavior in assemblies: Classes earn points on a thermometer chart for following the Tribes agreements. When a class reaches the top of the thermometer, the principal visits the classroom, and there is a drawing for small prizes. Several students and staff who were interviewed said they thought this incentive was making a positive difference in student behavior in assemblies.

Tribes agreements are also emphasized on special occasions. For example, Halloween and Christmas plays written and performed by staff members each had a clear Tribes message. For the school’s Tribes activity day, a newsletter informed parents that awards would be given to tribes (groups of students) that had the most points—not only for activities, but also for showing the best listening skills, mutual respect, appreciations, participation and enthusiasm.

Additional support

Support from the school board was also important in making Tribes a success at this school. The principal applied for and received funding from the school board to implement Tribes. These grants allowed all teachers to be trained, provided manuals and other resources for teachers, and allowed some teachers to visit other school boards to observe Tribes in action and learn new ideas.

Teacher buy-in to the Tribes philosophy was identified as an important factor for successful implementation of the program. This school has an active Tribes committee, which consists of 10 teachers and the principal. The committee meets on a regular basis to plan strategies to facilitate Tribes implementation at its school. A grant helped to fund four school days, one at the beginning of each term, during which the Tribes Committee could meet to plan learning activities they share with the rest of the teachers. As a result of each of these special professional development days, the Tribes Committee was able to provide the rest of the teachers with lesson plans and activity ideas linked to the provincial curriculum.

Teachers indicated that linking Tribes activities to the provincial curriculum was an important factor that increased implementation. On regular professional development days
when all teachers are available to meet, Tribes committee members take turns volunteering to model to the rest of the teachers how they actually used specific Tribes activities in their classroom. Members of the Tribes committee model the Tribes’ way of learning and being together for the rest of the teachers. Tribes processes, such as community circles and following the Tribes agreements, also are used during staff meetings.

Implementing the Tribes way

The principal uses several methods of motivating and supporting staff members in the implementation of Tribes. At the beginning of the school year, a schedule of Tribes activities and examples of energizers are given to teachers for a six-week period. A number of whole-school activities, including assemblies, are planned for the first week of school. During the second week, teachers are asked to focus on teaching their students a specific Tribes agreement on each of four consecutive days.

For the remainder of the six weeks, teachers are encouraged to implement the Tribes activities outlined on the schedule. Teachers are provided with all of the resources necessary to undertake these activities, as well as links to the provincial curriculum. The links to the curriculum are given to justify their inclusion in the school day as something valuable and mandated, and not just something extra.

Throughout the school year, teachers are provided with resources they can use in implementing the Tribes philosophy. Whenever there is a schoolwide event, such as Tribes day, many staff members on the Tribes committee are involved in planning it. The Tribes committee consults the rest of the staff and provides teachers with information and resources.

The Tribes philosophy includes promoting teaching methods that aim to meet the needs of all learners. In the classes I observed at this school, teachers were using a wide variety of teaching techniques to engage learners. I saw a variety of instructional methods, such as individual seat work, pair work, small-group work and whole-class instruction, including community circles and a mixture of teacher-led and student-led instruction.

In the lessons I observed, the level of student engagement was moderate to high, and most students seemed to have fun while learning. The teachers I observed tended to manage student behavior by referring to the agreements and praising students for following them. Teacher-student and student-student interactions I observed were rated as neutral to pleasant—no hostile or aggressive interactions were observed in any of the classrooms.
A few barriers to conducting Tribes activities, such as energizers or community circles, include difficulties in student behavior management, teacher stress, workload, lack of time, characteristics of students and the classroom lay out. The most powerful facilitating factors seem to be strong pedagogical leadership from the principal, links to the provincial curriculum and parental support.

For more information on how schools around the world have used Tribes, visit the Tribes’ website at www.tribes.com/tlc-schools.

References


3. Ibid.


5. Galloway, “Is the Direct Approach to Reducing Bullying Always the Best?” see reference 2.


Wendy Ryan, a former teacher, has a master’s degree in educational counseling and a doctorate in education. She is currently working as an independent program evaluation consultant in Luskville, Quebec.
What America Can Learn From Ontario's Education Success
MICHAEL FULLAN
MAY 4 2012, 10:25 AM ET

In the last decade, the Canadian province dramatically improved its education system to become one of the best in the world. Its innovative strategy can provide a blueprint for U.S. reform.

Ontario is Canada's largest province, home to over 13 million people and a public education system with roughly 2 million students, 120,000 educators, and 5,000 schools. As recently as 2002, this system was stagnant by virtually any measure of performance. In October 2003, a new provincial government (Canada has no federal agency or jurisdiction in education) was elected with a mandate and commitment to transform it.

Improvements began within a year, and now some eight years later its 900 high schools have shown an increase in graduation rates from 68 percent (2003-04) to 82 percent (2010-11), while reading, writing, and math results have gone up 15 percentage points across its 4,000 elementary schools since 2003. Morale of teachers and principals is stronger (fewer teachers leave the profession in the first few years), and achievement gaps have been substantially reduced for low-income students, the children of recent immigrants, and special education students (although not for "First Nation" students). In short, the entire system has dramatically improved.

These accomplishments have not gone unnoticed outside Canada. The McKinsey group, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris, the National Center on Education and the Economy in Washington, D.C., and Harvard’s Program on Education Policy and Governance have all done recent case studies on Ontario’s education system, concluding that it is one of the most improved and highest performing in the world. They especially admire the impressive, innovative strategy that got the results. So, what’s the secret?

It’s simple. Ontario public schools follow a model embraced by top-performing hospitals, businesses, and organizations worldwide. Specifically, they do five things in concert -- focus, build relationships, persist, develop capacity, and spread quality implementation.

In practice, this meant refocusing the way Ontario schools delivered education. Like many school systems, Ontario had too many "top" priorities. The Ministry of Education selected three--literacy, math, and high school graduation--with a commitment to raise the bar for all students and close achievement gaps between all groups. There are other goals, of course, but these three are non-negotiable and take precedence because they leverage so many other learning goals.

Focus and persistence ensure that these priorities are not going to be discarded along the way. The history of education innovations has generated a "this too shall pass" mindset among teachers. One of our colleagues calls this phenomenon "the law of innovation fatigue." Any
attempt to create a high-leverage priority (like the three adopted by Ontario) requires that the education system as a whole commits to them long-term.

But priorities don’t mean anything if you don’t develop the relationships necessary to enact them. The provincial government set out to develop a strong sense of two-way partnerships and collaboration, especially between administrators and teachers, and in concert with teachers’ unions. This required providing significant leeway to individual school districts to experiment with novel approaches to reaching the province’s three main educational goals, and focusing significant reform efforts on investments in staffing and teacher development.

By focusing on teacher development, Ontario was also able to raise teacher accountability. Decades of experience have taught Canadian educators that you can’t get greater accountability through direct measures of rewards and punishments. Instead, what Ontario did was to establish transparency of results and practice (anyone can find out what any school’s results are, and what they are doing to get those results) while combining this with what we call non-judgmentalism. This latter policy means that if a teacher is struggling, administrators and peers will step in to help her get better. (There are, however, steps that can be taken if a situation consistently fails to improve.)

The final element of the strategy involves identifying and spreading quality practices. Most education systems are loosely coupled to say the least -- behind the classroom door, teachers are islands unto themselves. In such isolated systems, two problems emerge. The first is that good ideas do not get around; they remain trapped in individual classrooms or schools. The other problem is that poor teaching can remain entrenched, because good practices are not being disseminated. A big part of the Ontario strategy has been to break down the walls of the classroom, the school, and even the district by increasing communication, cataloging and sharing best practices, and fostering a culture of teamwork. To that end, the Ministry of Education guides local school districts in developing more collaborative professional environments, while also acting as a clearinghouse for innovation and best practices.

The net result of these five forces is an education system that has the characteristics of a high-performing organization: relentless focus, interactive pressure and support, a preoccupation with results and how to improve them, a culture of mutual commitment, and what we call collaborative competition, where there is no limit to what is being attempted. The fact that this strategy develops leaders at all levels -- leaders who focus on results, as they help develop other leaders -- means that sustainability is built into the whole enterprise. Ontario isn’t perfect. But it proves that large-scale reform can be accomplished in school systems in fairly short periods of time.
Ideas and ways of thinking that spark innovations in education, and that have a positive impact on teaching and learning, often become the excellent strategies that we adopt as educators. Based on my experiences and research, the Tribes Learning Community process, developed by Jeanne Gibbs, is an example of an innovation that has the potential to inform best practice at faculties of education and to impact faculty, graduates of the program, the students in their future classrooms, and the communities in which we all teach and learn. The Tribes process is based on relationships and the value of school culture and community-building in order to construct meaningful and safe environments for learning and improved professional practice.

The challenges related to beginning-teacher-education programs are topics of debate in Canada, as well as in the United States. In an extensive pan-Canadian study, Crocker and Dibbon (2008) identified the need for research to inform best practice in beginning-teacher-education, noting that faculties of education are frequently investigating, piloting, and implementing new innovations but rarely examine their impact in the field. I have taught at a faculty of education for eight years. During my second year, I began to implement Tribes, and the results were so significant that I began a research project with former teacher candidates in my cohort groups. The research examined Tribes training as a component of a beginning-teacher-education program. The study involved investigating teacher candidates’ perceptions of the effectiveness of
Tribes training in enhancing their learning, their concerns about implementing the Tribes process, and their use of Tribes during the beginning-teacher-education year and their first four years of teaching.

Over 86% of my former students (96/111) responded to my request to complete a questionnaire and to participate in an interview. This high response rate did not surprise me because we had maintained the learning community that we had created during the beginning-teacher-education year. The research findings, however, did surprise me. I had anticipated that my former students would tell me that implementing Tribes in the real world of schools was not as easy or as possible as it seemed. I expected that those teaching in JK to Grade 3 would be implementing the process, based on the nature of primary programs ... and that implementation in Grades 4-6 would be happening to some degree ... and that by Grade 7, the demands of a traditional rotary timetable with subject experts, combined with the nature of the adolescent learner, would prevent most teachers from implementing Tribes. In spite of the challenges of being a teacher, particularly for those within their first five years, and of implementing Tribes in an imperfect world, the data clearly indicated that all but two participants were using Tribes with classes from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 Calculus.

Such a sustained effort on the part of beginning teachers to implement Tribes is unexpected, given the competing demands on their time and efforts, and the inadequacy that they often feel. The research indicates that their commitment and perseverance lies in the Tribes training and experiences lived during their beginning-teacher-education year. They described the sense of community that was created and sustained with the other members of the cohort group, and the strength that came from meeting the challenges of
teaching and learning together. The collaborative work, the discussion of tough questions, the problem solving, and the reflections on their academic learning and teaching practice, had an impact on their philosophies of education and their belief systems. They wanted to create learning communities for their students as a result of the Tribes experiences that they had shared with their cohort. Learning about the process through discussion, demonstration, guided practice, feedback, and reflection helped to prepare them to go beyond thinking like teachers, and to act upon their beliefs.

My former teacher-candidates identified learning about the Tribes process as one of the fundamental components in their beginning-teacher-education program that helped them to become more effective teachers. In the words of one of them, “Think about what could happen if the Tribes process was carried throughout a student’s whole educational experience from Kindergarten to Grade 12. What a tremendous difference it would make in the lives of kids and the world!” Just think about it . . . and imagine.
Building a Caring Community That Calls Forth the Whole Child
By Jeanne Gibbs

Picture a third-grader who, when first entering Cathy Allen's classroom, brought a sense of wildness, anger and bewilderment with him; a young man who lashed out at teachers and peers alike. Picture him later as he expresses sorrow that a four-day weekend is coming up. He doesn’t want to leave the classroom – a place where he feels safe, accepted and loved by all.

Notice a child, who because of environmental conditions at home, speaks only in a whisper to those around her and can only look at the ground with a cowering posture when spoken to by an adult. Now notice her smiling, laughing and eagerly sharing a favorite experience with all of her classmates as they sit together in a community circle.

These young people were fortunate to be in a school that had become a safe and caring Learning Community dedicated to developing children in all of their social, emotional, intellectual, physical and ethical/moral wholeness. This school, like thousands of others throughout the United States, Canada, Australia and other countries accomplishes this by creating and sustaining a caring and challenging school culture - an environment that provides a sense of belonging, support, connection to others and to ideas and values that make young lives meaningful and significant.

Decades ago, respected educator John Dewey urged that each public school should be a model home, a complete community. It would be a school that had a shared vision, realistic goals for children's development, and a caring way for people to be and learn together. Not only would such a school energize students but make it safe and exciting enough to learn. Now more than ever, almost a century later, this still needs to be our quest.

Consider what typically would have happened to Mrs. Allen’s third grade students in a school that either would have dismissed, admonished or labeled the behaviors as “learning problems.” More likely than not, in time the self-confirming images of her two students would have led them on tracks of alienation and failure. Massive categorical funding has been and continues to be allocated to deficit-focused programs for special education, individual treatment and costly remedial strategies. The problem focus persists in spite of comprehensive studies and consensus among informed educators that rather than continuing to try to "fix kids", we need to fix the deficit-focused system. That means challenging schools to be strength-focused on students' development in the fullness of their interests, ways of learning, gifts and humanity.

No longer do we have to guess how to create positive school systems that can transform or "turnabout" the lives of children like those we met at the beginning of this article. Two compelling bodies of well-researched studies on learning and human development show the way. They are the…

- Comprehensive neuroscience principles on how the brain best learns, and
- Longitudinal studies on positive protective factors that when present in child rearing or learning systems foster resilient strengths, well-being and success in life success.
Learning About Learning

First, let's look at what can be learned about learning. It is startling to realize that scientists have learned more about the human brain during the last decade than during the entire preceding century. One of the most important factors that make every child unique is that the body, mind and brain operate in a dynamic unity. This means that no longer can the body-mind-brain unity be ignored in favor of filling students' brains with concepts and information, and counting on the practice as the guaranteed path to academic achievement. Where is there to be found a single piece of authentic research that proves this is how the human brain learns best? Today it is well-recognized that cognitive information becomes meaningful and more lasting when coupled with application and experience. Moreover, the chemistry and structure of the brain changes in response to the environment, prior learning, remembered experiences, beliefs and values. All of which demystifies why it seems more difficult to reach and help today's 21st century youth achieve academically. The chemistry and structure of their brains have been conditioned by being raised in an instantaneous change environment filled with visual and sensory stimuli from computers, television, cell phones, electronic games, I-Pods etcetera - all of which most enjoy and are proficient in using. This may be the prime reason that we lose young learners with traditional direct instruction, listening passively to teachers, now and then answering questions and filling in worksheets - the latter which do not grows dendrites.

Knowledgeable school systems and teachers are engaging students by using cooperative learning, active group inquiry and participatory projects. Perhaps more than all else going on for school reform, teachers' onsite professional development with their peers in on-going small learning communities is proving to be highly effective. Together they learn about learning, cognitive theory, collaborative group structures, students' developmental needs and how to create supportive classroom environments.

Creating a Caring School Community

The first step in creating an ideal caring learning environment in classrooms and schools is to pose the following question to the policy-makers, teachers, leaders and parents of the school community:

Are you aware that the daily culture of the school is the primary factor that supports students' development and academic learning?

Many probably would reply, "No, it's the curriculum!" And that would lead to enlightening folks with a few facts that curriculum cannot change.

Children who come to school from a stressful less than supportive or caring environment carry the stress all day and everyday to school. They may be like the two third graders above or they may be disillusioned secondary kids. Traditionally they have been referred to as "kids at risk" affected by outside factors in their lives that the school cannot fix. However, the impressive longitudinal studies on environmental factors that enable humans of all ages to overcome deprivation and adverse conditions in life, give schools a clear way to establish a caring strength-focused culture that nurtures resilient strengths in all students (-and teachers too!) within the system. Schools committed to having all kids "at promise" rather than any "at risk" create and sustain caring community environments that activate the following three categories of well-proven positive protective factors.
Caring and supportive relationships – Caring relationships within systems convey compassion, understanding and respect. They are grounded in attentive listening and establish safety and basic trust.

Positive and high expectations – High expectations communicate firm guidance, structure and challenge, and most importantly convey a belief in a young person’s innate resilience. They highlight strengths and assets as opposed to problems and deficits. Opportunities for meaningful participation – Opportunities for meaningful participation, leadership and contribution to the community may be actualized through decision making, listening and being heard, with each person being included with valued responsibilities. It is no surprise that these protective processes work. They meet our basic human needs for love and belonging; for respect, challenge and structure; for involvement, power and ultimately, meaning. They meet every child's need to be included, recognized and valued by others.

As predicted by longitudinal studies, students from such schools would have developed the life-long abilities of. 7

- social competence: responsiveness, cultural flexibility, empathy, caring, communication skills and a sense of humor;
- problem-solving skills: planning, help-seeking, critical and creative thinking;
- autonomy: a sense of identity, self-efficacy, self-awareness, task-mastery and adaptive distancing from negative messages and conditions;
- a sense of purpose with belief in a bright future: goal directed, educational aspirations, optimism, meaning, and spiritual connectedness. 8

The Community Building Process

The question becomes, how can we bring this about for all of the students in our school? This ambitious mission can be systematically achieved as the school engages all teachers, administrators, students and families in working together as a learning community dedicated to caring and support, active participation and positive expectations for all students. The stated goal is:

To assure the healthy development of every child so that each has the knowledge, skills and resiliency to be successful in a rapidly changing world. 9

The approach involves all of the groups mentioned above in long-term membership in mini-communities (groups of 4-6 members); parents in classroom groups, teachers in faculty groups and students in cooperative learning tribes. The structure provides inclusion, a sense of value and community for everyone in the groups. The communities learn and use a series of collaborative skills and help each other honor four positive agreements: attentive listening, appreciation/ no put-downs, the right to participate or to pass and mutual respect. The positive agreements (norms) assure appreciation for each person’s culture, race, gender, abilities, contributions and uniqueness. The sense of community that all age groups seem to seek today becomes a reality as people work together on meaningful goals, tasks and challenges. Strength evolves out of the special quality time that is spent to build inclusion whenever the groups come together. No one is an isolate, no one fears to talk. It is safe enough to ask questions - safe enough to learn. Every active learning academic experience (lesson) in a Tribes classroom has two objectives: the content to be learned and the social skill to be practiced. Each lesson begins with the teacher.
announcing the objectives to the students and each learning experience concludes with student groups reflecting on or assessing the extent to which they achieved the objectives while working together. Comprehensive studies repeatedly have proven that cooperative group learning and the reflective practice improves student active learning.\textsuperscript{10} It is compatible with how the human brain constructs, processes and retains information for extended periods of time.

If indeed we want to improve academic test scores, teachers need to learn how to transfer leadership and individual accountability to peer groups. Studies have shown that group interdependence consistently increases student achievement more than individual control methods.\textsuperscript{11} The inclusion and safety within caring groups takes peer leadership and responsibility to exciting new levels for children and youth learning and development. Educator Ron Miller reminds us that ultimately our work is not about a curriculum or a teaching method... it is about nurturing the human spirit with love.\textsuperscript{12} The many problems of youth can be lessened and healed by transforming schools into caring communities, by including youth as leaders in solving problems and in reaching out in kindness to each other.

I believe that John Dewey was right. Each public school should be a model home, a complete community actively developing future compassionate citizens capable of creating, leading and contributing to the kind of democratic communities - in which we all long to live.

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Assuring Futures of Promise
By Jeanne Gibbs

"So many kids come from neighborhoods and families with overwhelming problems."
"It's hard to know what to do…"

Yes, poverty, unemployment, lack of health care, inadequate childcare, community crime, divorce, alcoholism, drug abuse and stress surround many young teens in our classrooms. True today's world is harsh for many young people.

Yet there are those who somehow live through deprivation, adversity, and stress more easily than others. Why do some children in a family do well while others raised in the same environment fail?

The answer is to be found in the exciting longitudinal studies on human resiliency, which finally are being brought to the attention of schools throughout the nation. Unlike the typical problem focused-pathology approach-to identify what is wrong with kids (risk factors), resiliency research identifies the positive factors in children's lives that develop competency, wellness, success and the capacity to meet and overcome life stress. Throughout more than forty years Dr. Emily Werner studied the lives of children who were growing up in high risk conditions- such as: neglect, poverty, war, parental abuse, physical handicaps, depression, criminality and alcoholism. A percentage of the children did develop various problems, but to the amazement of the researchers, a greater number moved into adulthood as competent and healthy adults. The greater number had developed the capacity to face and overcome life difficulties. Werner describes them as "vulnerable but invincible."

The Attributes of Resiliency
The longitudinal studies of Emily Werner and other researchers highlight four human attributes that are evident in resilient children and adults. They have…

• **Autonomy:** an internal locus of control, a strong sense of independence, power, self-efficacy, self-discipline and control of impulses
• **Social competence:** pro-social behaviors such as responsiveness, empathy, caring, communication skills, a sense of humor
• **A sense of purpose and future:** healthy expectations, goal directedness, belief in a bright and compelling future, motivation, persistence, hopefulness, hardiness, a sense of anticipation and a sense of coherence
• **A capacity of problem-solve:** abstract and constructive thinking, a capacity to analyze and reflect on possibilities and creative solutions; flexibility

It is no coincidence that (as we realized the previous chapter) the same set of attributes are what young adolescents are striving to develop-consciously or unconsciously. They are the important "tasks of adolescence" remarkably enough identified through studies on human development.

Take time out now and think of those times in your own life when you were somehow able to move through a difficult situation or period of time, when you were able to face a seemingly insurmountable difficulty and overcome it - no doubt due to you own resilient strengths.
Inside-Out Rather Than Outside-In

By

Jeanne Gibbs

“The school that becomes a self-renewing enterprise will shape its own future.”¹ – Roland S. Barth

There no longer is any doubt that the most effective and powerful way to achieve and sustain substantive school improvement is by building the capacity of "inside" school personnel to work together as a professional development community.² For several decades schools have brought in an array of "outsider" approaches – the hiring of costly educational corporations, consultants, well known speakers, strategic planning experts and people to train teachers in test-prep materials – all hopefully to bring about school reform and higher student achievement. For the most part the imposed "outside-in" approaches may initially kindle hope, but inasmuch as they are imposed, not owned and possibly not facilitated collaboratively and enthusiastically by the "inside" school community, they ultimately wither, and are added to the list of the "predictable failures of school reform."³ The good news is that innumerable respected educators, researchers and journalists now are taking a hard look at the evidence against conventional top-down outside-in reform and improvement efforts, and are examining the evidence that substantiates the on-going professional development of collegial teacher teams (learning communities) to define, tailor and assess initiatives that significantly accelerate student learning.⁴ Peter Senge, researcher and author of the fine books, The Fifth Discipline and Schools That Learn, states:

“There is an emerging consensus across the nation that high quality professional development is essential to successful education reform. Professional development is the bridge between where educators are now and where they will need to be to meet the new challenges of guiding students in achieving higher standards of learning.”⁵

Moreover, it is well proven that productive teams in which teachers collaboratively learn, research, design instruction, mentor each other, reflect and assess student learning achieve:⁶

- higher-quality solutions to instructional problems,
- increased confidence and collegiality among faculty,
- increased ability to support one another's strengths and to accommodate weaknesses,
- more systematic assistance to beginning teachers, and the ability to examine an expanded pool of ideas, research on learning, constructive pedagogy and materials.

In addition to the wealth of literature on professional development and school improvement, recent surveys of high performance Tribes Learning Community (TLC®) schools clearly indicate that there are four essential practices that not only maximize the effective implementation of the research-based process of Tribes, but also teacher performance and student learning. The four practices are:

1. The principal has participated with his/her whole staff in the Tribes TLC training courses, and is committed as the educational leader of the school to leading facilitation of the system-wide implementation of the community learning process.

2. The principal has organized a small core leadership group of teachers who meet regularly with the principal (and if available the school’s certified Tribes TLC district trainer) to plan, support, reflect upon, mentor and assess progress.
3. All teachers belong to small on-going professional learning groups to plan active learning curriculum, to create and share helpful materials, to reflect upon using the research-based process and pedagogy, and to assess student learning and needs. Groups also study and share pertinent articles, helpful books and documents that lend support to their collegial professional development.

4. Reflective practice is used throughout the school to guide the overall student-centered strategy, to maintain the caring culture, to monitor teacher, student and parent suggestions and needs, and to authentically assess student learning.

When districts or schools recognize that building the capacity of inside personnel, ultimately, is the best bet to achieve school improvement and to accelerate student achievement — indeed, they consider ways to reallocate time and resources for on-going professional learning groups. Some districts add days to the teaching year or distribute the time of in-service days. Others extend or cut minutes of the school day to provide at least an hour a week for teachers and school leaders to work and learn in various types of small groups, and to assess implementation of principles and practices that lead to educational excellence for the school.

Readers of this article and teacher learning groups may learn the full scope of the literature and research supporting the Tribes Learning Community process in the new book, What Is It About Tribes? by Bonnie Benard, Senior Program Associate of West Ed. A summary article entitled, The Research-Based Components of the Developmental Process of Tribes Learning Communities, also is available. *

Most important it is time to consider the nationwide long-term impact that can be made through the "inside" sound professional development of the teaching staff who best know their students, who thrive on learning together, and daily are able to make continuous improvement — well beyond top-down facilitation by "outsider experts" or organizations. The path to significant educational excellence is set forth clearly by respected superintendent, educator and writer Richard DuFour who emphasizes that...

"All we need to do is to work hard to honor and organize the creative capacities of school-based teacher teams of authentic "learning communities." 8

The time is now. And no longer is it a mystery as to how school learning communities can do it.

References*


*The 250 page book, What Is It About Tribes?, as well as the summary article, The Research-Based Components of the Developmental Process of Tribes Learning Communities, are available from CenterSource Systems.

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Professional Learning Communities

By Bonnie Benard


...Creating a classroom community of learners is dependent on staff having a professional learning community.

One of the major theories underlying Tribes TLC is that of systems theory. This perspective, growing out of the fields of biology, psychology, and sociology, focuses on the inter-related nature of a living system and underlies most current thinking in social psychology [see Fritjof Capra’s The Web of Life (1996) and The Hidden Connections (2002) for wonderfully readable overviews of this perspective]. Individuals, families, schools, organizations, and communities are all social systems, made up of yet smaller subsystems. Applying this perspective to a school, schools consist not only of student groups or subsystems but of staff, parents, and other community subsystems. What has become clear is that none of these subsystems operate in isolation and that improving one necessitates improving all the others. The Tribes TLC process recognizes this systemic nature of schools, acknowledging that focusing on human development and learning for students necessitates creating parallel processes for teachers and other school staff as well as for families and the larger community. We must remember that, “Although the individual student is the focus of the learning process,… individual behavior and psychological experiences arise out of a cultural context and are based on interpersonal relations. The systems theory alerts us to the systemic nature of classroom life and turns us away from a narrow individualistic focus” (Schmuck & Schmuck, 2001), p. 33).

Thus the Tribes theory of change focuses on transforming all the subsystems within a school community into learning communities. Especially critical to school transformation is the creation of professional learning communities consisting of teachers and other school staff. In fact, as we will see in this section, research has identified that having a professional learning community is sine qua non the most important factor associated with positive health and learning outcomes for students—and with increased teacher satisfaction and job retention.

The literature is also clear on what constitutes a professional learning community (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Kruse et al., 1995; Lieberman, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 1990; Talbert & MacLaughlin, 1994). Summarizing much of what leading school reformers like Linda Darling-Hammond, Milbrey McLaughlin, Ann Lieberman, and Judith Warren Little have advocated, Sergiovanni lists the practices of professional learning communities as doing the following (1996):
March 25, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

Our school is and has been a Tribes school for the last ten years. Tribes was one of the founding pillars upon which our community was developed. Actually, our school was created with five different and important innovations in middle level programming. Tribes was by far the most powerful and impactful. Our entire community was developed on the Tribes principles. The program has been very successful in helping us create one learning community. This is especially pertinent for us because we accept students from all parts of Tulsa, based on geography not ability. So, our school is comprised of children from across the city who do not necessarily know one another, have the same backgrounds, values or experiences. Tribes helps our school become a community of learners based on the Community Agreements. During our tenure, I have seen the school rise to a prominence that we could have only have hoped for ten years ago. We consistently score at the top or near the top of the district academically and athletically. The social fabric of the school is such that we become stronger because of our diversity. You can look at the demographics on our web site. The school profile is also listed on the district web pages. Tribes was the most important process that we were able to implement not only for students, but for ourselves! The staff has to understand and believe in these values. They do because of extensive and continual professional development and regular re-visiting of these ideals. I wholeheartedly endorse the Tribes process and am grateful for what it has meant to our children and families. Parents regularly refer to the “language” of Tribes which tells me that we have done a good job in educating them about the benefits of this program and they appreciate what it means to them and to their children. I am available to answer any questions or concerns about the value that Tribes has brought to our community.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Padalino, Principal

Thoreau Demonstration Academy
7370 E. 71st Street
Tulsa, OK 74133
918-833-9700
March 18, 2008

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in strong support of Center Source and the TRIBES Learning Community Program. I have used this program in three different schools in San Francisco, and brought it to PS 156 in the spring of 2007. As a principal struggling to bring trust and positive spirit to a troubled community, TRIBES has been a tremendous and unique resource.

We first trained a pilot group of 25 teachers during the February recess of 2007. We then built on this success by training 75 more staff members during the week before school began this year. From the very beginning the response was incredible. The training built a strong and sincere bond between teachers, paraprofessionals, out-of-classroom staff, and school aides, providing participants with a much-needed opportunity to negotiate professional boundaries, learn a common social language, and set of norms of behavior. The bonds created between teachers were then transferred to the students as teachers implemented the program with earnest and inspiration.

The students immediately noticed the change this fall when school began. Students throughout the school were speaking about the community agreements and the obvious efforts we were all making. We could not say that the school community at this point is perfect, but our data is impressive. Most importantly, our suspension rate has dropped 80%. Our suspension rate was my “bottom line,” so to speak, and this change speaks volumes. We will hopefully see more positive data when our learning environment surveys come out.

I cannot stress the amount of satisfaction I have had with this program. I hope to carry to each and every school I lead, and I consider it one of the best gifts I can bring to a community. I encourage the Department of Education of New York to take advantage of this vendor and award contract approval.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

James M. Lee
Principal

Marla Lopez
Assistant Principal

James M. Lee
Principal

Timothy H. Bohlke
Assistant Principal
EVALUATION OF TRIBES LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Evaluation of Tribes Learning Community Schools has shown that:

✦ Tribes TLC has a positive impact on classroom environment
✦ teachers spend less time managing student behavior
✦ students are less likely to be referred for disciplinary problems
✦ the Tribes process helps teachers address academic standards
✦ students in well-implemented classrooms score significantly higher on standardized tests than students from comparison groups
✦ teachers report increased staff collegiality and planning.

WestEd conducted a 2-year evaluation of Tribes TLC that involved administering surveys in 13 schools and collecting standardized test results for 40 Tribes schools and 80 control schools. The evaluators found that:

✦ the Tribes TLC process was fully implemented
✦ Tribes was seen as a vehicle for facilitating continuous school improvement
✦ there was evidence of improved student inclusion, collaboration, respect for multicultural populations, sense of value, resiliency, and student engagement
✦ students and staff enjoyed safe and supportive classroom and school environments
✦ teachers and principals reported declines in student referrals and suspensions
✦ there was evidence of better classroom management and increased teacher collaboration and planning
✦ three-quarters of teachers reported that the Tribes process helped them to address academic standards and helped students master standards
✦ 2nd and 5th grade reading and math scores increased more in high-growth Tribes schools than in comparison schools.

The School District of Beloit in Wisconsin conducted a 3-year evaluation of the Tribes process that included more than 3,000 elementary and middle school students. Dr. Derick Kiger presented the study at the 2001 American Education Research Association Annual Meeting and earned the First Place Instructional Program Evaluation Award.
Evaluators found that:

✦ 4th graders from Tribes classrooms where the program was well-implemented scored significantly higher on the CTBS than students from less well-implemented Tribes classrooms.

✦ sixty percent of the teachers reported that they spent less time managing student behavior because of the Tribes process.

In Tulsa, Oklahoma, Dr. Judith Holt used a randomized design to conduct an evaluation of the impact of Tribes on discipline referrals at a middle school. The study found that:

✦ students based in Tribes classrooms were significantly less likely (27%) than non-Tribes students (73%) to be referred to the principal’s or counselor’s office for disciplinary problems of all types, including disruptive behavior, refusal to work or follow directions, and fighting.

The Central Oahu School District in the State of Hawaii conducted a study of 17 elementary schools that implemented the process of Tribes. The evaluators found that:

✦ Mutual respect was the most common practice for students and faculty.

Fifty-five classroom teachers and their students in Spring Branch ISD in Texas participated in a Tribes evaluation survey, which found that in Tribes classrooms:

✦ teachers spent less time managing student behavior

✦ teachers had more time for creative teaching

✦ students saw new learning as “fun”

✦ mutual respect was evidenced through behaviors

✦ group behaviors changed even at bus stops as students began accepting more responsibility for their behavior.
Based on more than a year of extensive research and analysis, the CASEL Guide identifies 23 school-based programs that successfully promote students’ self-control, relationship building, and problem solving, among other social and emotional skills. It is the first review of its kind in nearly a decade.

The CASEL Guide focuses on:

- Universal school-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs intended for all students (not those targeting students with special needs or pre-existing challenges); and

- School-based programs that can be delivered by existing school personnel during the regular school day.

Recent research has shown that school-based SEL programs improve students’ classroom behavior and reduce conduct problems, such as bullying. They can also help students make significant gains in academic achievement—on average, a gain of 11 percentile points, according to a recent review of 213 studies published in the journal Child Development.

The CASEL Guide includes detailed, Consumer Reports-type descriptions and ratings for each program earning the CASEL SESelect designation.

If your district or school is just beginning to explore SEL, the Guide will help in your planning and selection of strong, evidence-based programs that serve your students’ needs. If you are seeking to deepen SEL practice you have already begun, the Guide will help you reflect on and augment your efforts.

In addition to being a resource for educators, the Guide also documents the significant advances the SEL field has made in the past decade, establishes new and more rigorous standards for SEL program adoption, and provides suggestions for next steps for SEL research and practice.

To earn the CASEL SESelect designation, programs must meet three requirements:

- Be well-designed classroom-based programs that systematically promote students’ social and emotional competence, provide opportunities for practice, and offer multi-year programming.

- Deliver high-quality training and other implementation supports, including initial training and ongoing support to ensure sound implementation.

- Be evidence-based with at least one carefully conducted evaluation that documents positive impacts on student behavior and/or academic performance.

CASEL SESelect programs comprehensively address five research-based social and emotional competencies:


CASEL is the nation’s leading organization advancing the teaching of academic, social, and emotional skills. Through research, practice, and policy, we collaborate to ensure that all PreK-12 students have the opportunity to master these skills and become knowledgeable, responsible, caring, and contributing members of society.

The 2013 CASEL Guide was developed with funding from NoVo Foundation and 1440 Foundation. It is the successor to our landmark 2003 guide, Safe & Sound, which has been downloaded more than 100,000 times.
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