

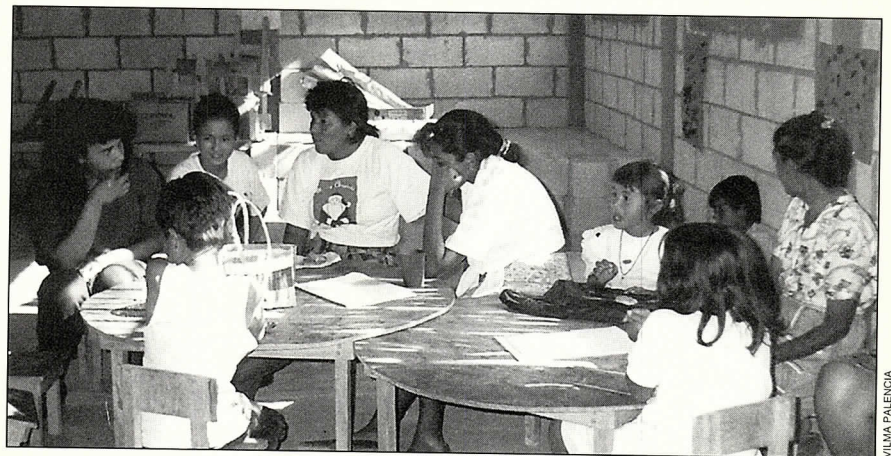
Learning in the 21st Century

by Bill & Barbara Alerding

In a small rural village in the hot lowlands of Guatemala, the people of Conacaste gathered in front of their village school. It was graduation day for sixth grade students, quite an accomplishment for the average Guatemalan village. One of the graduating students selected to be the speaker for his class said: "The only reason we are graduating today is because we all went to the preschool."

This was in the early 1980s. In the audience were preschool teachers and parents who remembered another day not long before when the preschool was closed for more than a year because they couldn't find the funding to keep it open. With renewed courage to start again, parents and teachers had taken the bus to Guatemala City to talk with the ICA staff who had trained village women to use an innovative curriculum derived from the ICA's early work in the Fifth City Preschool on Chicago's West Side. To restart their preschool, the villagers said they would write proposals and contact funding organizations. In the meantime, the teachers would teach without salaries until the funding came in.

Coincidentally, the ICA had just finished sponsoring a four-day Conference on "New Horizons for Learning" with eight international presenters in Guatemala City. The staff asked the preschool teachers if they would be willing to update their curriculum,



VILMA PALENCIA

using the methods from the conference. The response was a resounding 'yes'. A new curriculum was designed, based on Dr. Howard Gardner's work with multiple intelligences and the 4-MAT system of Dr. Bernice McCarthy. These methods helped the teachers create a new approach that enabled different types of learners to participate according to their particular styles, something relatively unheard of in preschools before.

Every weekend over the next four months, Conacaste preschool teachers came to Guatemala City and wrote a year-long curriculum based on what was needed for the life of the community — health, good nutrition, history of the village, basic math and more. The teachers also instructed other villagers from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador who came to learn how to start and maintain their own preschool. Nine villages surrounding Conacaste started their own preschools as well. In teaching others, the Conacaste teachers deepened their own knowledge of how to facilitate learning.

Preschool mothers and their children learn communication skills in Conacaste village, Guatemala.

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An Adult Experiment

In a vastly different setting, in the 1990s, the ICA set up Technical Training Services, Inc.

Continued on page 6

Wholistic Lifelong Learning



Ruth
Lukona

Quietly Powerful: Ruth Lukona

When Ruth Lukona died on March 27, ICA Zambia not only lost a most capable and committed director but women in Zambia, Africa and the world lost a passionate advocate.

Born in the small Zambian town of Kabwe, she was brought up by her aunt and father, the former actively supporting her right to be educated and the latter vehemently opposed to it. Her aunt won through and upon completing her secondary education at a Catholic school, she became a teacher. After marriage, she was appointed staff development officer of the Zambia Preschool Association, which she later headed for 12 years.

In 1988, she joined the Zambia Alliance of Women, to work with underprivileged rural women who were denied the chance to be educated. She then turned to the ICA and helped develop a program on women's participation in development.

A member of the Executive Committee of ICA International, Ruth's presence was a cherished one at ICA gatherings. Said ICA USA president, Louise Singleton, "Ruth was one of the most quietly powerful people I have ever met. Her smile simply lit up her face in a way I have seldom seen, probably the result of her understanding of the joy and darkness of life. There is no way to predict the effect of her loss."

A Learning Community for All

The public elementary school in the multicultural, inner-city suburb of Lewisham in Sydney, Australia, is classified as "disadvantaged." But thanks to an amazing partnership that has developed among the school staff, parents, community organizations, businesses and government agencies, it is becoming a model of how a school can become the nucleus of a much broader "learning community."

Known as the "Lewisham Meeting Place on Cadigal [local aboriginal tribe] Land," the project was conceived in 1996 as a way to develop a green space to bring together a cross-section of the community for learning and recreation. Funding from the federal government seeded the formation of a team including an

urban designer, indigenous artist, permaculturist, youth workers and filmmakers, to work with the school and the community on the project. At the Multicultural Fair launch in July, 1997, students interviewed more than 500 people, setting the stage for nine months of consultation, workshops and hands-on designing, culminating in a plan in May 1998.

Although still in its early stages, the project has much to show, including a

community garden, three eye-catching murals, and more than 200 native shrubs. An exciting spin-off of the project is the decision of "Good Beginnings," a national family/early childhood support program, to locate its Sydney office at the school.

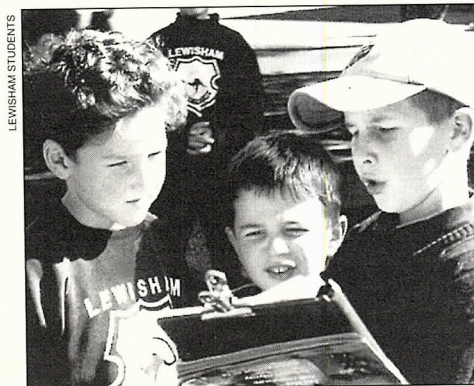
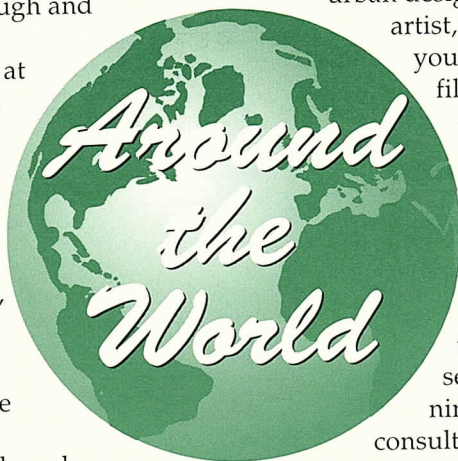
Said principal and ICA colleague, Robyn Hutchinson, "Education must be seen as a cradle-to-grave process, in the context of a supportive community. The school is an obvious hub for this lifelong learning process. The ICA's five basic principles of community development are guiding the process all the way. At the moment, it feels like running a school and a community development project!"

Self-Esteem for Educators

ICA Spain focuses its energy in three arenas — entrepreneurship, "convivencia" or living in synergy with others, and self-esteem for educators. In all three, it uses the ICA's *Technology of Participation*™ methods with other tools such as learning styles and multiple intelligences.

ICA Spain director, Franco Voli, who has published his own book on self-esteem, has worked with teachers in Spain and Guatemala on this subject. Said Franco, "Feeling good about oneself opens all kinds of possibilities to learn, grow and relate. We are all capable of continuous learning, and we can all improve our personal and social well-being. We have a right to feel good and can begin by adopting that attitude in our thinking and actions."

During their courses, Franco and his colleagues use *ToP*™ methods to help people create a vision of what they want to achieve, name barriers they need to overcome to attain well-being, identify resources at their disposal, and anticipate the dangers and benefits of doing this work. For further information, contact Franco at francovoli@csi.



LEWISHAM STUDENTS

Lewisham students conducting interviews.



Students studying creek ecology pulling garbage out of an urban creek.

Go Greensboro!

Headed by Elaine and Nelson Stover, the ICA in Greensboro, NC, has been a hotbed of activity of late. In January, the Stovers led a group to India and neighboring Nepal, where they met with the director, Tatwa Tamsina, and staff of the fledgling ICA Nepal. The Stovers led a *Technology of Participation*™ training with 15 leaders from business, government and non-profit organizations. "We were very impressed by their enthusiasm and vision," said Elaine.

More recently, ICA Greensboro program associates Robert Powell and Tracey Brown secured a two-year

contract from the city's housing authority to provide facilitation and related services to a community revitalization effort in the public housing neighborhood of Morningside Homes. Greensboro is one of 22 US cities awarded funding for such projects which have the dual purpose of physical revitalization and resident self-sufficiency.



Tatwa Tamsina, Director ICA Nepal [left] with his brother Pradeep.

Students Say "YES"

Any teacher will tell you how much time and creativity goes into dealing with "problem" students. But in Oakland, CA, thanks to a new approach called Service Learning, teachers are finding many such students aren't so great a problem after all.

Part of the wider trend toward experiential education, Service Learning is a teaching strategy that integrates the classroom curriculum with service in the community. Known as Project YES (Youth Engaged in Service), this effort of the East Bay Conservation Corps works with K-12 teachers in nine schools, from elementary to high school.

The ICA's *Technology of Participation* (ToP)™ methods have played a key role in the project. All staff have been trained in Group Facilitation Methods and student members of the project's Youth Advisory Board have used them with their peers to do a Community Needs Assessment. Said project coordinator, Fiona Tavernier, "In service learning, it is essential kids have genuine buy-in to what is happening. ToP™ methods have helped do this. It's especially gratifying to see so-called 'trouble makers' participating so positively."

Across these United States

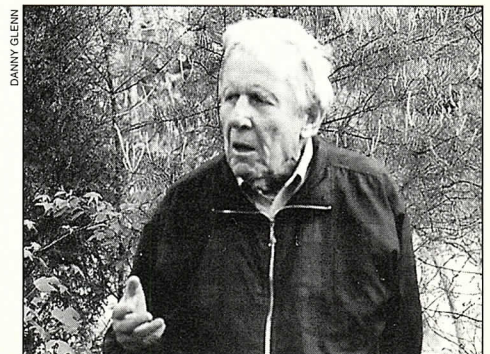


Global Meets Local

Taking an early morning walk, Shirley Heckman of the ICA's Phoenix office met a neighbor and told her about the *International Technology of Participation*™ Training of Trainers program they were preparing for. With two dozen people from 12 countries coming for five weeks, Shirley mentioned they were looking for nearby places to house participants. Her neighbor volunteered her home and suggested Shirley approach the Neighborhood Association and the local Block Watch, which she did. The result? Five families opened their doors, the ICA made some new connections, and seven participants experienced a sample of American family life.

In a more reflective vein, noted theologian and environmentalist, Thomas Berry, dedicated a "Permanent Universe Story Walk" on the Stover's five-acre property at Greensboro. Berry and 30 other people participated in the event. Nelson Stover produced a guidebook with readings, activities and broodings for every one of the 20 "billion-year" markers along the gentle half-mile walk. The book draws

extensively from *The Universe Story Book* by Berry and Brian Swimme. Comments from people included "thanks for this awe-inspiring experience" and "powerful and humbling." For more information, contact the Stovers at (336) 605-0143.



Thomas Berry inaugurates the Permanent Universe Story Walk in Greensboro, NC.

It's Time to Party!

When conference planners decided that participants needed to include at least 25% from outside North America and a large number of youth, they knew it would require additional funding to make it possible for many of these people to attend. In response to this need, the ICA USA board agreed to raise \$150,000 for 200 scholarships and related conference costs. Since November, over a third of that amount has been donated or is committed, including three scholarships from Denver colleagues.

To help raise the balance, parties are being planned across the country. They will include information on the conference, an opportunity to contribute to it, and a chance to become acquainted with others in the ICA network in your area. At the launch party held at the ICA Spring Gathering in the East, two people offered scholarships. Over 30 parties are anticipated to take place between April and December. If you wish to attend or host a party, call the following persons:

East	Dwala Ferrell	(804) 732-4030
West	Shirley Heckman	(602) 955-4811
Heartland	Judy Lindblad	(513) 241-2149

Streams Update

- The national Network for Youth and the National 4-H Innovation Center are confirmed partners in the *Community Youth Development* stream and two young people with international connections are working on the coordination team.
- Dick Alton, coordinator of the *Philanthropy for Social Innovation* stream, has spoken with 40 foundations and organizations to understand the cutting edge of philanthropy and what they would like to see developed by the conference. A copy of his report is available from the conference office, Carol Pierce in Chicago, or Dick Alton in Brussels.
- Bill Grow, of the *Arts for Community Transformation* (ACT) stream, reports that many Colorado artists and arts agencies are committed to the conference and that Maryo Ewell, Associate Director of the Colorado Council on the Arts, has agreed to officially welcome the ACT stream.
- Amara Gilbert, an ICA intern in Chicago, has joined the Wholistic Lifelong Learning coordination team as youth representative. [See Amara's article, p.5.]

Denver Welcomes Planning Team

In February 1999, the Executive Committee of ICA International, co-ordinators for the seven conference streams, and the ICA USA Board met in Denver, CO, to report on conference planning and develop the research phase leading up to the conference. A highlight of the meeting included a tour of the University of Denver campus facility, site of the Millennium Connection, July 30 to August 5, 2000. According to ICAI Executive Vice-President for Europe, Martin Gilbraith, "It is a beautiful campus and will provide an excellent backdrop for what promises to be a landmark event."

The Millennium Connection is the pivotal point in a six-year partnership-building process. During the research phase, all stream partners are discussing such questions as: What are the tributaries and deep springs that feed this stream? What are the key issues we must deal with? What are emerging future directions? This pre-conference dialogue will hammer out how and where we will work together and prepare us to move to decision making and action planning during the conference.



Stream Coordinators

The next conference planning meeting will be at the ICA's Phoenix office, August 5-7, 1999. Your questions and ideas are needed! To give input or receive information, contact a Stream Coordinator below or the Conference Administrator, Linda Smith, at (303) 627-2796 or e-mail her at milconnex@igc.org.

Sustainable Community Development

Jim Wiegel (602) 955-4811

Community Youth Development

John Oyler (602) 955-4811

Wholistic Lifelong Learning

Paula Otto (773) 769-6363

Philanthropy for Social Innovation

Carol Pierce (773) 769-6363

Spirituality in Organizations

David McCleskey (888) 282-7737

The Art and Practice of Participation

Marilyn Oyler (602) 955-4811

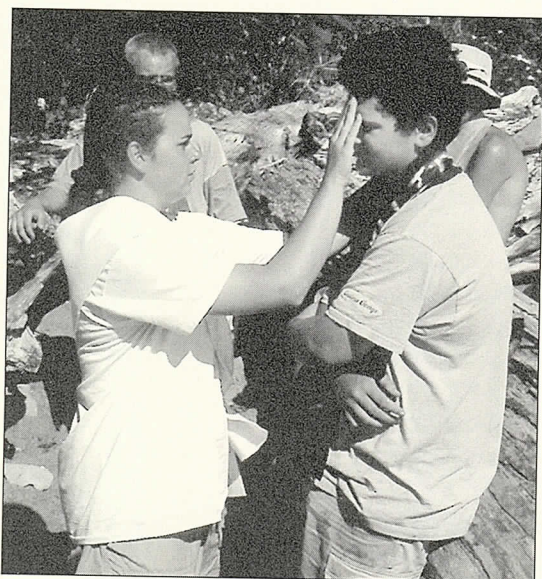
The Arts for Community Transformation

Bill Grow (912) 758-3707

Coming of Age

by Amara Gilbert

"Are you ready to say goodbye to your childhood? Are you, in your heart, committed to completing this vigil to adulthood? Are you committed to the vows of solitude, fasting, staying awake, and keeping your fire burning? Then your vigil has begun. For the next 24 hours, you are neither a child nor a youth. You do not belong to either world. You are in a place with no name, no time, no location. In this place, you too are nameless. You shall be known only as 'initiate'."



Staff/mentor Natasha Morgan anoints Ben Betz to symbolize his initiation as a responsible, self-conscious youth.

With this dramatic enactment, 13 children began their vigil — 24 hours of reflection which would symbolically mark their transition from childhood to adolescence. This scene took place in 1997, as it does every year, on the ICA's Coming-of-Age Journey, a three-week hiking trip in Washington State.

The ICA has been running coming of age trips for youth for 32 years. With each year, another group of kids has an experience that often becomes a defining point in their lives. The trip stretches many of their capacities — the physical challenge of intense hiking, the emotional challenge of living in community, the personal challenge of being treated as a responsible adolescent, and being held accountable to that expectation. Responding to these challenges prepares participants for the full potential of the vigil. Through symbolic activities, art, and journaling, the vigil helps them reflect on what they want to release from their childhood and what responsibilities, character and freedom they want to take up.

Twelve years ago, on my own trip, we followed this very structure. It had the same effect on me then as it seems to have on these young people now. I believed I was becoming a youth. I believed I was becoming more

responsible. I believed that surviving the vigil proved my capacity in all these things. Belief became reality.

Rites of passage help celebrate and acknowledge the change that comes when an individual moves from one life stage to another. Coming-of-age events, like the one described here, are one kind of rite of passage. They help a pubescent child and her/his community to celebrate the emergent adolescent and to acknowledge and welcome the changes that growth brings. Many pre-industrial societies have been known for such rites. However, the shift in our society away from community, along with other factors, our traditional rites of passage — weddings, funerals and graduations — often feel empty and hollow, and occasionally misplaced.

Different happenings in our lives are occasions when rites of passage could be valuable — a couple pregnant with their first child or the birth of that child, a girl having her first period, parents sending grown children off to college. Rites of passage are meant to help individuals and their close communities accommodate and affirm these changes.

Rites of passage also help us respond to two fundamental questions: "Who am I?" and "What is my place in society?" On my vigil, when I drew a timeline from my birth to the present, I saw how solidly I was rooted in a family and a larger community. Then I was asked to think in depth about the next three years of my life. Questions such as "What are ten things you look forward to?" and "What are five talents and skills you have to contribute?" guided me in becoming an active participant in my life and helped me see that I could learn from myself.

My coming of age, like many rites of passage, was a powerful experience of choice. My vigil provided an opportunity to reflect on what had been, and to consciously choose what would be. This realization that you are not a passive recipient of your life but an active participant in it, is a key to life-long learning. Once you see you can choose what you will become, your life becomes a fascinating journey of learning and discovery. ☺



Amara Gilbert is an intern with ICA Chicago and has been a staff/mentor with ICA Rite of Passage Journeys in Seattle. Phone (773) 769-6363, Ext. 293.

Learning in the 21st Century ... *Continued from page 1*

(TTS), a program for at-risk African-American men being trained to work in building maintenance in Indianapolis. TTS was an extension of another innovative program, Training Inc., established by ICA-trained staff to train unemployed people in clerical and personal development skills. The objective of Training Inc. is to take people from "I can't" to "I can". Shifting the focus from clerical to building maintenance skills, the TTS curriculum was developed with the help of the property management industry. While stating the obvious need for training in the technical building trades, the advisors were adamant that "life management" — human relations, communication and public speaking — was the most important skill the trainees needed, even though many trainees didn't see its relevance.

However, many employees soon changed their tune. A year after they had begun their first job, trainees were invited back as honored guests on the "Graduate Panel." Many had great stories to tell new trainees about what it means to be part of a company "culture" and how important it is to relate well to others. Of course, some trainees dropped out. They couldn't stick to their jobs or found it too hard to be on time every day. Interestingly, those who had the most trouble with the soft skills also had the most problems on the job. The weekly Toastmasters' Club, a key part of the program, helped shift trainees' low self-esteem. When they were chosen to speak at the graduation ceremony, they amazed people with their confidence and speaking ability.

Trends in Education

These two "learning experiences" come from our long involvement with the ICA. The Institute has pioneered a number of innovative educational methods in a variety of cross-cultural situations. [See sidebar p.7.] Our experiences reinforce three lessons the ICA has learned about learning:

- It belongs to the community or workplace, i.e. wherever it takes place. Participants must decide what and how they need to learn since they are in charge of their own destiny.
- It affects everyone within the organization or community. The neighborhood or the community of interest needs to keep updating its own learning methods. Since we live in a global society, the community must share what it learns with others.
- It is, and must be, a lifelong activity, a reality accentuated by the growing number of displaced and downsized adults who are beginning new careers at mid-life. As our age span lengthens, we have more time to focus on new vocations than ever before.

While there is growing recognition of this new understanding of learning, there still is little consensus about, and few examples of, how to practice it in our education systems. Advocates of "Accelerated Learning," based on Bulgarian psychiatrist Georgi Lozanov's theory of suggestology, claim super-fast ways to learn. Dr.

Lozanov discovered a new malady in his patients called "didactogenic syndrome" — sickness caused by poor teaching methods! If an educator mistreats a learner, even unintentionally, s/he can cause a

deep, lifelong sickness in the learner.

Yet such seriousness surrounding the role of the educator is often lost today in the midst of conflicting beliefs about education. Politicians, school administrators, teachers, parents and other interested stakeholders debate at length why schools are not working and what should be done about it, but often to little effect. However, in the midst of this maelstrom, some trends are emerging that deserve our attention. They indicate a paradigm shift taking place around what we have traditionally thought of as education. Key elements of this shift are listed in the adjoining center column. ... continued on page 7

BARBARA ALERDING



Bill Alerding teaching a communication class in the TTS.

PARADIGM

From:

The assembly line approach that teaches each discipline as a separate entity ...

A self-contained school environment separate from the community ...

Restrictive social groupings of classes by age, competing against one another ...

"The expert" imparting information ...

Teachers trained by professors who model the lecture approach ...

Ineffective "one method fits all" of the traditional classroom based on the belief that "mass society" really exists ...

Formal, competitive and authoritative structures ...

A fact-driven curriculum for the logical left brain ...

Using questionable IQ tests to categorize learners ...

An over-reliance on national and state tests, which cause curriculums to slant toward test learning ...

IN LEA

**In a time of dra
the learners w
future. The lea
themselves eq
a world that n**

M SHIFTS

To:

wholistic projects that integrate various disciplines

the local community as an active partner in the learning process

mixing different ages and using cooperative learning with the wider peer group

the teacher as facilitator and coach

teachers who learn their art with master teachers and real classroom experiences

the use of methods that enable each person's understanding through his/her particular learning style

self-directed learning in informal, collaborative settings

more emphasis on emotional intelligence and the "people skills" to manage our lives

working with the unique multi-intelligences of each brain

approaches that allow learners to evaluate their own progress and trust their own methods of learning

RNING

**stic change, it is
to inherit the
ned usually find
ipped to live in
longer exists.**

Eric Hoffer

Challenges Ahead

Acknowledging these shifts in our understanding of learning and the role of education, the question remains: What will learning look like in the 21st century? While this is tricky exercise, we can at least raise questions that education needs to deal with in the new millennium. They include:

- *What kind of learning is necessary to help all people adapt to the enormous technological developments that are radically changing the way we live?*
- *How do we help people see these changes as challenges and not as threats?*
- *Knowing that more people will live to a much greater age than they do now, how do we view education as something not only for the young?*
- *How do we obtain the whole world's input to create the human community that will decide the fate of the planet or the universe?*
- *How do we expand learning to embrace all ages and all cultures, being sure to include the wisdom of elders in the process?*
- *What if every community saw learning as a basic right for every citizen, at no cost?*
- *What learning systems must we put in place to encompass every human being across the planet, regardless of income level?*
- *How do we decide the basic necessities of learning in a time of instantaneous, global communication?*
- *What kind of international group will make these decisions?*
- *What basic values of learning do they need to address?*
- *How do we create a learning process where there are no winners and losers?*
- *How does learning deal with real issues that affect people's lives and the lives of the broader community?*
- *How do we ensure that every citizen has the chance to learn basic skills of relationship building, parenting, problem solving, and the art of discourse?*

These are some of the challenges we need to deal with as we contemplate the awesome task of designing human learning in the new millennium. They are among the questions we and others will be grappling with as part of the "Wholistic Lifelong Learning" stream of the Millennium Connection conference in

Feeding the Stream

To try and define the contribution made by the Ecumenical Institute and the Institute of Cultural Affairs to the field of *Wholistic Lifelong Learning* is almost impossible. Throughout their 45-year existence, most of the Institutes' work would qualify as a contribution. We have selected those programs and methods that stand out for the unique role they have played in furthering *Wholistic Lifelong Learning*.

Programs

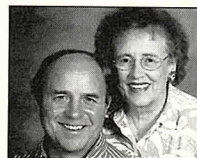
Earthwise Learning Series
Fifth City Preschool
Global Academy
Global Language School
Human Development Training Institute
International Training Institute
Leadership Options
Rite of Passage Journeys
Social Methods School
The Learning Lab
Training, Inc.

Methods

Charting
Corporate Reading Research Project
Focused Conversation (aka the Artform, Discussion or ORID method)
Gridding
Imaginal Education
Social Process Triangles
Technology of Participation™

For more information on these programs and methods and other items not listed, contact ICA CentrePointes at (773) 769-6363 or e-mail icaarchives@igc.org. Ask for the booklet *Resources for the Future* or the CD *Golden Pathways*.

Denver next year. We may not yet have the answers but we are eager to continue the journey of discovery to find them. As American social philosopher, Eric Hoffer, said, "In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists." ☸



ICA colleagues Bill and Barbara Alerding are a team of skilled trainers, facilitators and consultants with a passion for "facilitated learning." Their work over 30 years has taken them to five continents. They now live in Indianapolis, phone (317) 290-1876.

The Learning Basket™

by Keith Packard

Imagine groups of parents in humble settings gathering to learn to be teachers of their infants and toddlers. Fill the picture with laughter, children, colorful hand-made objects, and a basket weaving people together. This snapshot could have been taken recently in Utah with Migrant Head Start parents, in five Paraguayan villages with women, or with teen parents in inner city Chicago. It will be taken again this year with Early Head Start teachers and parents in Chicago, with teen mothers in El Paso, TX, with day care parents in Denver, CO, and with parents in a village in Haiti. These are snapshots from the Learning Basket Project™.

This project is a collaboration of the ICA, Laubach Literacy, Latter Day Saints (LDS) Charities and Utah State University. The ICA and Laubach Literacy developed two books for adults who are not confident readers or are too busy to read. *Parents Are Teachers*, is used to stimulate conversations on artforms from across the world and to relate information on child development. *Play to Learn* [see page 11], contains over 100 activities that can be done with infants and toddlers. Using the framework of the ICA's Infant and Mini School curriculums, these activities and learning objectives are expressed in pictures. The Learning Basket™ contains the same 18 categories of objects in *Play to Learn*, *Learn to Play* to stimulate learning in play. Many objects are handmade, and for the initial pilot projects, have been contributed by the LDS Relief Societies. Dr. Ann Austin, Associate Dean of the College of Family Life at Utah State University, designed and conducted the evaluation process and has taken the project to Paraguay. LDS Charities has funded the initial pilot projects.

The Learning Basket™ pilots have touched the lives of parents and children in profound ways. In Paraguayan villages, where children never had toys, one woman walked three miles with her newborn child to get to the

meetings. A Utah migrant worker said he wanted to help his child learn but until he saw *Play to Learn*, he never knew what he could do. Paraguayan mothers meeting with their children and Learning Baskets have called this "going to school."

Indeed, many people have "gone to school" through the Learning Basket™ approach. Women in the church Relief Societies have recovered handwork and passed it on to younger women. Volunteer parents have attended preparation sessions so they could conduct group conversations and introduce the objects in activities. Eagle Scout candidates have learned to make finely sanded blocks for the basket. Those introducing the project have learned to work across language barriers, teaching in Spanish, English and Guarani, the local Paraguayan language. Most of all, children have made strides in their physical, verbal and mental development.

From these pilot projects, the Learning Basket™ approach is being developed by fostering collaborative relationships. In each site, there has been a host program, such as Migrant Head Start, Healthy Families of America and the US Peace Corps. A team of consultants has worked with host staff to develop policies and approach, while parents have contributed their time and leadership. This has resulted in each group meeting being a "learning community." In addition to individuals, LDS Charities, the Seabury Foundation, Georgia high school students, the Hogg Foundation, and the Benedictine Sisters have funded the project. With Laubach Literacy and others, the ICA is developing a training series that will enable staff who implement the project to take the Learning Basket™ beyond the pilot phase.

When the Learning Basket™ approach was first conceived, collaborators named it with the acronym, ABCD:EFG — A Basket of Child Development: Every Family Gains. That promise is fast being realized. ☸



LYNN CURTIS

Children in Utah's Migrant Headstart Project using family puppets from the Learning Basket as part of their curriculum.



Keith Packard's pioneering work in early childhood education has taken place in communities in the USA, Chile, Peru and Kenya. She is an ICA Chicago staff member. Call her (773) 769-6363, Ext. 291.

The Project Approach by Tina Valdes

This article is based on Tina's unpublished master's research document, "An historical and philosophical context for adopting a project approach to teaching and learning." (1998).

It's project work time in Mrs. Elliot's kindergarten classroom. One group of children is exploring the behavior of hamsters by constructing a hamster playground of wooden blocks, paper tubes and other materials. A second group is learning about insects by drawing poster-size images of bugs found on the playground. A third group is painting clay model replicas of their favorite birds. When Mrs. Elliot noticed how this class was fascinated with animals, she had them pursue their interest through hand-on learning.

These children are involved in "the project approach" to learning, a classroom strategy proving increasingly popular among teachers who are aware of the value of lifelong learning and the need to encourage students to be self-directed learners.

dictatorship to a democracy. A huge obstacle to change is the outmoded, deeply held, traditional image of a teacher and unexamined beliefs and values about learning which support that image. Consequently, many classrooms still reflect the factory model of education where teachers dictate information in compartmentalized subjects and students sit passively in rows waiting anxiously for the bell to ring.

Project-based learning has its roots in the education reform efforts of the early 1900s. Reformers such as John Dewey criticized traditional approaches that saw education as the transmission of a predetermined set of knowledge, skills and behavior from one generation to the next. They advocated an active, child-centered learning that:

- addressed the whole child's needs
- is a life-long, natural process
- is experiential and creative
- begins with and follows the interests of the learner
- results from making connections to prior knowledge
- is a joyful experience that involves meaningful activities
- is tailored to students' needs and strength
- which happens in an atmosphere of mutual sharing and participation.

These progressive ideas dominated educational theory between the 1920s and the 1950s, but lost momentum due to a number of factors. They re-emerged in the 1960s with the "open education"

movement when the project approach became recognized as an effective pedagogical method. In the 1980s and 1990s, progressive principles have been reaffirmed by early childhood educators and psychologists.

The project approach is even more relevant in today's information-exploding society than it was in the 1920s. Educators still face the challenge of acquiring the facilitative skills and experience for project-based learning. To meet this challenge, teachers must confront traditional practices, re-examine their images and beliefs about teaching and learning, and seek support from colleagues. Excellent resources exist to help them in this work, including the ICA's *Technology of Participation*™ methods and Learning Lab program, as well as several Internet listserves and websites. ☎

Once children are helped to perceive themselves as authors or inventors, once they are helped to discover the pleasure of inquiry, their motivation and interest explode.

Loris Malaguzzi



Kindergarten students investigate the topic of birds by painting clay models of birds they have constructed.

The project approach is a flexible learning method that enables students of all ages to investigate a topic of interest using available resources. Projects may be carried out by individuals or groups, and emphasize interaction and exchange of information with others. Project work allows students to actively determine the content of the work and the manner in which it is investigated, analyzed, presented and shared with others.

The project approach represents a radical shift in the role of the classroom teacher from "curriculum director" to "curriculum facilitator." Teachers experience difficulty making this shift in spite of all they know about "best practices." This change is like a society shifting from a benevolent



Tina Valdes has an MA in education and certification in early childhood. She has taught kindergarten in Chicago and volunteered with the ICA in Venezuela and Chicago. Call her at (773) 283-6222.

A Humble, Gentle Giant

by Dr. Cecil Gray

In the area of Wholistic Lifelong Learning (WLL), Dr. Vincent Harding is a humble, living legend. To know him, is to know Wholistic Lifelong Learning.

Raised and educated by American African churchgoers in Harlem, NY, he went on to earn an M.A. and Ph.D. in history at the University of Chicago. His experiential education came from the legendary civil rights leader, Ella Baker, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party trio of Fannie Lou Hamer, Victoria Gray (Adams) and Annie Devine, Dr. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Sonia Sanchez, and hundreds of people in the South during the Civil Rights Movement.

As a participant in the "Civil Rights/Human Rights/Black Power/Black Arts/Anti-War/Peace"

Movement, Dr. Harding was tested and refined by arguably the most humanizing and truly democratic social movement in our country's history. He went on to become a veteran teacher-negotiator of that movement. Today, Dr. Harding continues to share in classrooms, at conferences and gatherings, as well as any opportunity that presents itself — between classes, between flights, and in train stations!

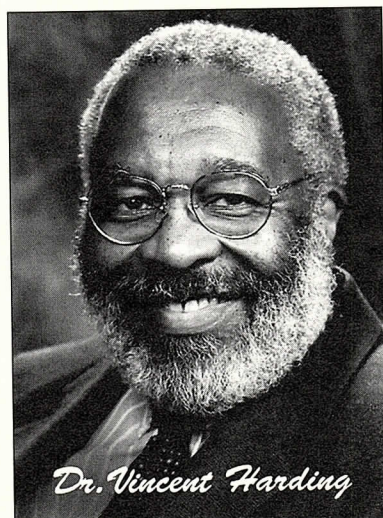
Dr. Harding's gifts and talents are many and varied — an internationally respected professor and facilitator of history, religion, democracy and social transformation; a prolific author and advisor; and a gentle, courageous and thoughtful man whose life has struck that fine balance between the theoretical and the practical. Along with his wife, he is Co-Chair of the Gandhi-Hamer-King Center for the Study of Religion and Democratic Renewal, as well as Professor of Religion and Social Transformation at The Iliff School of Theology, University of Denver. He was Senior Academic Advisor to the award-winning television series, "Eyes on the Prize."

Dr. Harding embodies and personifies WLL. Long before "Wholistic Lifelong Learning"

had emerged as a term and a movement, he had been a formulator and practitioner of its core principles — that learning can and should occur throughout life, inside as well as outside classrooms, in formal and informal settings; and the purpose of all constructive learning is to help human beings grow so they can make the world a better place for all.

Many people have understood learning to culminate at some point, usually after high school or college. Such an understanding is no longer adequate. With information being discovered and delivered at an impossible pace, it is essential for all people to learn throughout their lives. Indeed, everyone

already learns throughout life but a great deal of what we learn doesn't really matter. At least two major questions confront people today: "What will we learn?" and "How will we learn?" WLL attempts to answer these questions in constructive, creative ways. In the WLL Stream of the Millennium Connection conference, we are concerned with catalyzing *intentional* wholistic, lifelong learning. We strive to learn what will make the world an authentic local-global community for all.



Dr. Harding's life has been devoted to creating that community. It is reflected in his publications — *There Is A River, Why We Must Share The Story of The Movement*, and *Martin Luther King: The Inconvenient Hero*. That thread contains a simple, yet serious message — we must and can build a humane national and global community; we can learn much by studying the history and contribution to democracy of the American African community, and we can more quickly realize authentic community by examining and embodying the final years of Dr. King's life.

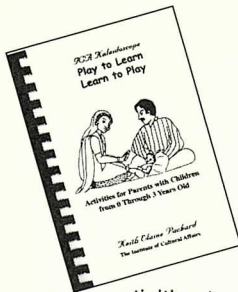
In Dr. Harding, we see someone who is a wholistic, lifelong learner and who, therefore, is well qualified to be a teacher of WLL. We are delighted he will join us in the Millennium Connection conference in Denver. Come and meet him, learn with him, and share with him. It will be a profound treat. ☸

At its deepest levels, the river moves toward a freedom that liberates the whole person and humanizes the entire society.

— Vincent Harding
*There Is A River:
The Black Struggle for
Freedom in America*



AN ICA USA board member, Dr. Cecil Gray is Chair of African American Studies and Assistant Professor of Religion, Gettysburg College, as well as co-coordinator of the "Wholistic Lifelong Learning" stream of the Millennium Connection Conference. Phone (717) 337-6297.



Play To Learn Learn to Play

by Keith Packard

An activity book for parents and teachers of infants and toddlers aged 0-3. With more than 100 playful activities to stimulate learning — each illustrated with multicultural drawings — the book is designed for use in Healthy Families, Even Start, Early Head Start, Migrant Head Start and teen parenting programs. It is also effective with parents and children at home.

Written by the ICA's Keith Packard, the book includes the input of 35 children, parents and grandparents, as well as child development and literacy specialists. Keith draws from more than 30 years research and experience in early learning in the USA, the Philippines, Peru, Chile, Kenya, Israel and Iran.

Published by ICA Kaleidoscope. English and Spanish. 180 pages.

Retail price \$15.00. Bulk prices available for programs and projects. Order from ICA Chicago (773) 769-6363, Ext. 291 or e-mail icachicago@igc.org.

Two
great
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books!

The Change Handbook

Peggy Holman, Tom Devane (Eds.)

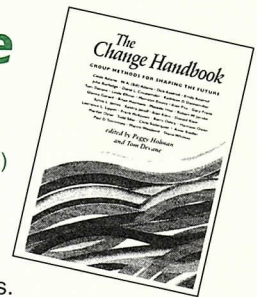
A one-stop guide to 18 proven change strategies for tapping human potential in organizations and communities.

Chapters by well-known change facilitators including Marvin Weisbord, Harrison Owen, Kathie Dannemiller, David Cooperrider AND ... the ICA's *Participatory Strategic Planning* process by our own team of Marilyn Oyler and John Burbidge.

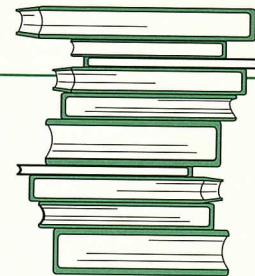
The Change Handbook is designed to help readers select the best method for meeting their objectives. It includes a comprehensive resource section and a comparative matrix as a lift-out poster.

Published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. 450 pages. Available July 1999.

Retail price \$49.95. Limited copies available at a special one-time price of \$39.95. Contact ICA Phoenix, (602) 955-4811 or e-mail icaphoenix@igc.org.



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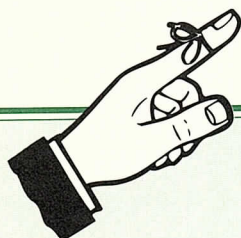
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Have you checked out the ICA web sites lately? Log in at ...

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