

**New Strategies for Educational leaders to Implement  
Postmodern Thinking in Public Education in the United  
States of America: Creating a National Change Strategy**

**Clarence Johnson**

**PhD Student in Educational Leadership**

Prairie View A&M University

College of Education

**Director of Safe and Secure Schools**

Aldine Independent School District

Houston, Texas

**William Allan Kritsonis, PhD**

**Professor and Faculty Mentor**

PhD Program in Educational Leadership

Prairie View A&M University

Member of the Texas A&M University System

**Visiting lecturer (2005)**

Oxford Round Table

University of Oxford, Oxford, England

**Distinguished Alumnus (2004)**

Central Washington University

College of Education and Professional Studies

---

**ABSTRACT**

**Our world today is full of challenges and opportunities. Civilization will survive if, and only if, educational leaders implement postmodern thinking in public education. Postmodernism was originally a critique of modernism. The views of Clarence Johnson in this article support postmodernism as a current state of mind that allows a way of seeing and working together differently. This article will share Johnson's views of postmodern thinking and offer a solution to global communication. Teachers are the main focus in the postmodern world of change. Clarence Johnson believes that we must first connect with the student; then care for**

**the student; and be totally committed to teach the student. Countless hours of extra work with students often separate the certified teachers from the qualified teachers. The postmodern era in technology will not improve without involving the students.**

---

### **Introduction**

As a child, letter writing was a standard way of formal way of communication. I wrote a letter to my friend and the communication process took at least seven days to complete the cycle. As a teenager, I walked to the corner drug store and used the telephone. This was expenses but this was instant communication. Forty years later, I use my cell phone and communicate with my friend regularly. Today, technology will allow me to see and talk with my friend routinely. In forty years, the ability to communicate with friends has improved from seven days to less than seven seconds. We are now approaching the postmodern era in America and our thinking must accompany the changes.

### **Purpose of the Article**

The purpose of this article is to research new strategies for educational leaders to implement postmodern thinking in public education in the United States of America. Effective change is the mean of communication in the future. Research will investigate the paradigm shift in public education. I will focus on the new role of teachers and principals. Educational leaders in America must concentrate on a new paradigm shift for successful teaching and learning. I will share my views as an author of postmodern thinking. I have been an educator for forty years and currently enrolled in the doctoral program at Prairie View A & M University. Being a part of the changes that occurred in America for the past forty years will allow me to share what has been successful. I will research and share the views of Dr. Fenwick English, Dr. Michael Fullan, Dr. William Kritsonis, Ms.Nicole Mockler, and other noted authors in the postmodern era. Fenwick English (2003) found that the alternative to hegemonic modernism is to move toward a multiparadigmatic approach with competing perspectives (centers). Such an approach would require a suspension of the quest for a short term empirical or philosophical metacriterion which supports a line of demarcation defining legitimate “scientific” activity and hence “truth” from “non truth.” Theories can only be judged over an extensive time period.

### **Process of Becoming Postmodern**

The process of becoming postmodern is about teachers, schools and systems moving from a state where education is a black and white issue to one where education is about being truly comfortable about individual differences, the elusive nature of truth and thus what is worthy of education and what is not, and the concept of lifelong learning; that learning occurs at all points throughout an individual’s life and that, by implication, the teacher is as much a learner in the process as the learned. The more comfortable we, as a profession, become with those notions, the more likely we are to educate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, utilizing the best technology has to offer education, pursuing individualized,

negotiated curricula, and encouraging students to become masters of their learning Mockler (2001). Epistemology is the study or theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge especially with reference to its limits and validity. Epistemology concerns itself with what constitutes knowledge and how we arrive at it (Phenix, 1986). Because each individual manifests certain knowledge capabilities, it is within our nature to uncover the best avenue to share that knowledge.

Teachers need to become consummate examples themselves of lifelong learning, collaborative processes and personal mastery, to borrow a concept from Senge (1990). Fullan (1993b) argues the need for teachers to become change agents, arguing that the moral purpose with which he credits the teaching profession directly leads to change agency because moral purpose or making a difference concerns bringing about improvements. Teachers, on the whole, embark on a teaching career at the end of a successful school career themselves, and it could just as easily be said of them that they predominantly do so in order to perpetuate their own good experience of school for their students. Such an aim is not without moral purpose (Lortie's (1975). Discussion of the one side of the teacher's desk experience substantiates this idea. I believe that teachers are chosen and attend higher education to receive certification. Teaching is a gift from God. Dedication is the primary strength of a teacher. Commitment is necessary to perform your duty as a teacher. I believe that you must first connect with the student; then care for the student; and be totally committed to teach the student. Because each individual manifests certain knowledge capabilities, it is within our nature to uncover the best avenue to share that knowledge. Metaphysics is a division of philosophy that is concerned with the fundamental nature of reality and being and that includes ontology, cosmology, and often epistemology. Metaphysic is an attempt to provide theory or groups of rational principles that account for everything that exists. It is the study of the human being as a whole (Kritsonis, 2002). Teachers and teaching should be at the forefront in the postmodern era.

In the classroom, comfortable uncertainty sees teachers working with students to enable them to set their own learning goals and processes, to move from one point to another along the learning continuum at their own pace, and to meet each of the outcomes at the highest possible level along the way. In the discourse of this classroom, just in case learning, along with other aspects of the lock step, teacher directed curriculum has been displaced by just in time, student-centered and directed learning experiences. Students in this classroom are the experts in relation to their own learning. Technology is utilized to the best of it's and the students' capabilities, and metacognition is paramount in providing a framework for every learning experience (English, 2003). This is learning in which there are no givens, no blueprints and no limits imposed by the teacher. This is how educational leaders implement postmodern thinking in public education in the United States of America.

### **National Reform Agenda**

The vision of practice that underlies the nation's reform agenda requires most teachers to rethink their own practice, to construct new classroom roles and expectations about student outcomes, and to teach in ways they have never taught before; and probably never experienced as students. The success of this agenda ultimately turns on

teachers' success in accomplishing the serious and difficult tasks of learning the skills and perspectives assumed by new visions of practice and unlearning the practices and beliefs about students and instruction that have dominated their professional lives to date. Yet few occasions and little support for such professional development exist in teachers' environments.

Because teaching for understanding relies on teachers' abilities to see complex subject matter from the perspectives of diverse students, the know-how necessary to make this vision of practice a reality cannot be prepackaged or conveyed by means of traditional top-down "teacher training" strategies. The policy problem for professional development in this era of reform extends beyond mere support for teachers' acquisition of new skills or knowledge. Professional development today also means providing occasions for teachers to reflect critically on their practice and to fashion new knowledge and beliefs about content, pedagogy, and learners.

### **Professional Development Must Focus on Deepening Understanding**

Beginning with pre-service education and continuing throughout a teacher's career, teacher development must focus on deepening teachers' understanding of the processes of teaching and learning and of the students they teach. Effective professional development involves teachers both as learners and as teachers and allows them to struggle with the uncertainties that accompany each role. It has a number of characteristics. Professional development must:

1. Engage teachers in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection that illuminate the processes of learning and development.
2. Be grounded in inquiry, reflection, and experimentation that are participant-driven.
3. Collaborate by involving a sharing of knowledge among educators and a focus on teachers' communities of practice rather than on individual teachers.
4. Connect to and be derived from teachers' work with their students.
5. Be sustained, ongoing, intensive, and supported by modeling, coaching, and the collective solving of specific problems of practice.
6. Connect to other aspects of school change.

Professional development of this kind signals a departure from old norms and models of "pre-service" or "in-service" training. It creates new images of what, when, and how teachers learn, and these new images require a corresponding shift from policies that seek to control or direct the work of teachers to strategies intended to develop schools' and teachers' capacity to be responsible for student learning. Capacity-building policies view knowledge as constructed by and with practitioners for use in their own contexts, rather than as something conveyed by policy makers as a single solution for top-down implementation. Though the outlines of a new paradigm for professional development policy are emerging, the hard work of developing concrete exemplars of the policies and practices that model "top-down support for bottom-up reform" has only just begun. The changed curriculum and pedagogy of professional development will require new policies that foster new structures and institutional arrangements for teachers' learning. At the

same time, we will need to undertake a strategic assessment of existing policies to determine to what degree they are compatible with a vision of learning as constructed by teachers and students and with a vision of professional development as a lifelong, inquiry-based, and collegial activity.

Both broad policy responses are essential. New approaches to the professional education of teachers are needed, and they require new structures and supports. New initiatives cannot by themselves promote meaningful or long-term change in teachers' practices if they are embedded in a policy structure that is at odds with the visions of student and teacher learning that reforms seek to bring alive.

Efforts to redesign education ultimately require rethinking teachers' preparation and professional development. New course mandates, curriculum guidelines, tests, or texts cannot produce greater student learning and understanding without investments in opportunities that give teachers access to knowledge about the nature of learning, development, and performance in different domains. In addition, teachers need firsthand opportunities to integrate theory with classroom practice.

Teachers learn by doing, reading, and reflecting (just as students do); by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see. This kind of learning enables teachers to make the leap from theory to accomplished practice. In addition to a powerful base of theoretical knowledge, such learning requires settings that support teacher inquiry and collaboration and strategies grounded in teachers' questions and concerns.

### **World, Social, Economic, Political, and Cultural Transformations**

As we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world is undergoing social, economic, political, and cultural transformations. The social geography of postmodernity is one where boundaries between institutions are dissolving, roles are becoming less segregated, and borders are becoming increasingly irrelevant. What's "out there" is now "in here," and this has fundamental implications for teachers and administrators (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). Teaching for example, requires learning to work with more diverse communities and seeing parents as sources of learning and support rather than interference. Not only are the social geographies of schooling changing in ways that blur the boundaries between schools and the world outside, but the social geographies of professional learning are also changing. There is more access to networks of professional learning. The content of professional learning needs to become wider and deeper. It needs to encompass working with parents, becoming assessment literate, keeping up with scientific breakthrough in the pedagogy of learning, rekindling the purpose and passion of teaching, and working with others to bring about positive reforms in education.

We are on the edge of an age of postmodern professionalism, where teachers deal with a diverse clientele and increasing moral uncertainty where many approaches are possible and more and more groups have an influence. Mentoring is embedded and embroiled in these developments. Good mentoring is not accomplished easily. An expanding research literature has addressed the key issues surrounding it; the selection of

mentors, how mentors and protégés are assigned or matched to each other, how formal the relationship should be, how mentors should be rewarded for their contribution, and where the time for mentoring can be found (Little, 1990).

### **Teaching is an Emotional Practice**

Teaching is an emotional practice (Hargreaves, 1998). It arouses and colors feelings in teachers and those they teach. Teaching involves not only instructing students but also caring for and forming relationships with them. With the children of many of today's postmodern families (Elkind, 1997); families that often are fractured, poor, single-parented; this burden of caring is becoming even greater. Teachers are repeatedly putting their selves on the line. Time of rapid change, whether chosen or imposed, can create even greater anxiety and insecurity among teachers as the challenge of learning new strategies calls their competence and confidence into question.

Emotion energizes teaching but can also drain it. Thus, emotional support is one of strongest needs of beginning teachers (Tickle, 1991). In today's demanding classrooms, experienced teachers also need this kind of support; to talk through their emotions, manage their anxieties and frustrations, and be guided and reassured about the limits to the care they can provide when guilt threatens to overwhelm them (Hargreaves, 1994). Mentorship, therefore, involves more than guiding protégés through learning standards and skills sets and extends to providing strong and continuous emotional support for high school students are the responsibility of all teachers, and just one or two guidance counselors, support for teachers should not fail to a few designated mentors but extend across the entire school community.

### **Continuous Professional Development**

Induction and the continuous development of teachers and administrators must build on the efforts of initial teacher education. All of us must be guided by standards of practice aligned with the concepts of good teaching required for what we earlier called emerging realities of the postmodern age. Mentoring, in this sense, is viewed not only as an integral part of development and improvement efforts within the school but part of an entire system of training, development, and improvement beyond the school.

The principal is the gatekeeper of change. There is not an improving school without a leader who is good at leading transformational improvement. Successful principals share leadership, they reach out to their parents and community and work hard to expand the professional capacity of the teachers to develop a coherent professional community. Such leaders are relationship centered, able to develop a clear collegial value framework and individual accountability. Such principals foster the conditions required for school growth and develop a commitment to a mutual purpose and a shared belief in ongoing common actions. By doing this they develop school capacity which in turn affects the quality of the teaching within the school. Such individual and school-wide capacity development combats the fragmentation and curricula incoherence presented by multiple innovations. This new strategy for educational leaders to implement postmodern thinking in public education in America is vital.

## **Education is Shared by Many Groups**

Kritsonis (2002) points out that the control of American education is shared by many groups, informal and formal. No one group controls our schools. Control is shared by many different agencies. To sum it up, control of education in the United States will continue to be shared by multitude of individuals and groups, although the levels of influence may shift among groups, most of the variables influencing education currently will continue to have some impact in the future. I believe that principals in the leadership role will carry the bulk of the influence.

## **Administrative Effectiveness: A Personal Issue**

Clarence Johnson believes that administrative effectiveness is a personal issue. All administrators must commit to being effective. Failure to be effective as an administrator will impact student learning. The entire learning climate is damaged when administrators are not effective. Administrative effectiveness must be earned through acceptable practices and not political mandates. School leaders are held accountable for administrative effectiveness. All students should receive a quality education and administrative effectiveness plays a major role. Educational Mission will give us direction in educating all children. We, as leaders of learning, must develop the proper educational mission. Our learning community will have an educational vision and educational mission. We will assemble and reach consensus on the educational mission of our learning community. The mission will be shared by everyone.

Leadership is a complex art and what is at stake is the reculturing of a school. Effective leaders are energy creators, creating harmony, forging consensus, setting high standards, and developing a 'try this' future orientation. They are forever hopeful. With excellent leaders students are more likely to achieve the power of three good teachers in a row (Fullan, 1993b).

Educational change depends on what teachers do and think; it is as simple and complex as that. The conditions for teaching appear to have deteriorated; stress and alienation and the intensification of teacher's work, is at an all time high. Teachers look first to other teachers in such times for sources of help and their greatest rewards come from, those moments when they feel their students have learnt something, and from respect from their fellow teachers. Too often teachers work in isolation increasingly feeling frustrated and burnt-out with imposed curriculum and accountability demands.

Collegiality provides the best starting point in the process of teacher regeneration. Moving or learning enriched schools are what Fullan calls professional learning communities. Teaching needs to be seen as a collective rather than an individual enterprise. This is the reason why it means it is easier to teach in some schools than others. Successful schools enforce, through moral obligations, consistent standards and they are more likely to trust and value others and ask for and share expertise. This is what makes such schools easier to teach, and learn to teach better in, than others. Teachers in such schools are less likely to uncritically conform to imposed-ideas. They have developed the capacity to self reflect, to examine student performance and act on their own understandings.

## **Effective Change**

Effective teachers, Fullan states, account for 30% of the variance of student progress. There are three areas of importance to be effective: teaching skills; classroom climate; and professional characteristics such as, holding high expectations, a passion for improving, holding people accountable and team work.

A real pupil improvement Fullan states comes from the power of having 'three good teachers in a row'. To achieve such change requires reculturing the teaching profession as Fullan believes that there are few schools that currently could be called true learning communities.

Where school have been left to the vagaries of self-management it is over to each school to ensure its own development. If a district presence is part of the system they can play an important role in school transformation. Success however requires the difficult art of balancing top down and bottom up change. Districts that are a powerful force for change can share and develop the ideas of moving schools but to be successful plans for successful implementation must be left up to local schools.

## **Implementation of Postmodern Thinking**

Educational leaders must continue to implement postmodern thinking in education through a common language. All cultures and religions must discuss issues and make adjustments in the classroom as well as the work-place to survive the postmodern thinking of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. My views of postmodern thinking will offer a viable solution to global communication. In order to achieve student success, a clear language must exist between the teacher and the learner. A language that will allow knowledge to be transferred from teacher to student is the gateway to student achievement. In the realms of meaning, ordinary language is one of the building blocks of the educational process. All educators must decide to establish ordinary language as part of the decision making process. This will give all students the opportunity to achieve. A student may be able to speak words and recite grammatical rules but he cannot actually organize the words into intelligible discourse, he does not understand the language. Language is a form of human behavior, and language teaching is a mode of modifying human behavior (Phenix, 1986). Establish universal symbols that express language in a meaningful content. Once the process is established by the realms of meaning and mandated by the learning community, then and only then, the decision process is on target to achieve student success.

## **Solving the Language Challenge**

Clarence Johnson encountered and solved the language barrier as a junior high school mathematics teacher. We, teacher and students, established ground rules for language and communication during the learning cycle. I wrote instructions that gave the students the confidence to stop me whenever I used language that did not communicate with their vocabulary or their language. Teaching is the transfer of knowledge to the students in a timely manner. We learned junior high mathematics with the symbols of

plus sign, minus sign, multiplication sign, and a division sign. These symbols had meaning to me and the students. My language was established in sync with the students' learning process. Each day was a review of the signs and how they function separately and how they function together. We spoke the language of mathematics. Therefore, the first realm, symbolics must be the foundation of the educational process. Forty years later, my students can identify the signs of multiplication and the signs of addition. We used symbols that will remain constant throughout their lifetime. This is how I recommend that you implement the realms of meaning as a decision making process to improve student achievement in the postmodern era.

### **Successful Leaders Implement Postmodern Thinking**

Educational leaders must construct educational facilities that will implement postmodern thinking. My views support postmodernism as a current state of mind that allows a way of seeing and working together differently. We have moved from the technology phase of society into a complex day-to-day global communication. Curriculum must be taught by skilled bilingual teachers. I envision a school plant as a facility that combines technology and many languages as the norm for the postmodern era. Curriculum is taught by certified bilingual teachers in all areas. A staff of qualified teachers will deliver the technology rich curriculum. Mathematics, science, English, social studies, and technology teachers must be fluent in English and Spanish. The current enrollment trends indicate a large population of Hispanic students will attend American schools in the next 50 years. Spanish speaking students will be the norm at postmodern high school. Non-Spanish speaking students must have equal opportunity in the learning community as well as the employment community. Also, core courses teachers must be fluent in English and another language. German, French, and Vietnamese are the other languages that will be taught at the postmodern high school. Today's schools have signs of tremendous growth in the Vietnamese culture. Many refugees from recent wars in Vietnam have traveled to America. Vietnamese will be taught in core courses. With French being the language of choice in many areas in Canada, it is necessary to teach French in core courses. French speaking students will have job opportunities in North America, Europe, and Africa. Educational leaders will empower graduating seniors to have above adequate job skills for North America and South America. This educational objective will allow our students to live, work, and trade with our nearby neighbors (Johnson, 2006). Consequently, educational leaders will utilize this strategy to implement postmodern thinking in public education in America.

### **Curriculum Needs to Prepare Students for the Future Challenges**

A major objective of the curriculum is to prepare students to attend college or seek employment after graduating from high school. Each student will have job skills and communication skills to study or work on seven continents. Spanish and English speaking students will have opportunities on all continents preferably North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia respectively. The physical plant will

be constructed with the state of the art technology (Johnson, 2006). It is my beliefs that students in the postmodern era will cater to leaders with technology expertise.

### **School as Learning Organizations**

Schools should be learning organizations and they should be places where novel patterns of thinking are encouraged and the organization expands its capacity for innovation and problem solving.

Postmodern High School is classified as a learning organization because of its unique innovations. They are:

1. nine-period school days are in place;
2. bi-lingual teachers instruct core courses;
3. mandated homework is completed at school;
4. duty-free daily planning time is allocated for teachers;
5. technology link with the job market is accessible;
6. state of the art physical fitness centers for students are on site;
7. post graduation accountability sanctions are mandated; and
8. designated time for parent conferences every day and Saturdays are part of the infrastructure.

These unique innovations will meet the demands of our fast growing America multilingual population (Johnson, 2006).

### **The Postmodern High School: A Normal Day**

The normal school day for the Postmodern High School can began as early as 7:00A.M., and end as late as 9:10P.M. Students are required to attend classes beginning at 9:00A.M., and ending at 5:35P.M. Homework will be completed on site. Century-old homework issue is addressed. No longer will some parents lack the guidance and technical skills to help their children with homework. Teachers will reteach the child, mom, and dad in the same setting. This will increase the quality and quantity of students' performance outcomes, and student achievement. All daily assignments will receive top priority. Students' schedules will allow hands on assistance after 5:35P.M. Parents are permitted to attend the homework and tutorial sessions. Participation in class assignments by parents will be the norm. This concept will strengthen the organization climate and the school culture. A mandatory library period is scheduled twice daily. Students will operate in a safe after-school learning environment. Travel time to the off-campus library has been reduced significantly. Furthermore, class projects can be completed in a timely manner. Family budgets can be discussed appropriately during the class project assignments. Mandatory support from community partners will be in place at the beginning of school year. A list of potential donors will be posted in the area where class projects are assigned. In the Postmodern High School Model, four professional librarians

provide expertise that will impact student learning tremendously. Parents will have opportunities to study along with the students. This model fosters nurturing and sustains a school culture. This ensures management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. Parents working with family members will improve the quality of life. Present and future generations will increase their capacity to function in the fast moving technology-rich environment. Professional librarians will constantly update trends in education with both parent and student simultaneously. Tutorial sessions for parents are in place by the professional librarians. Update of current educational practices in on-going. Training on new software will be given to parents and students in a timely manner (Johnson, 2006). Parents play a major role in postmodern thinking in public education. Involving parents is important because the closer parents are to the educator the greater the educational impact. This is another case of Fullan's power of three, teachers, parents and students aligned make all the difference. Schools need to reach out to parents but to do this will require shifts of power and influence. Parents, and the wider community, have largely untapped expertise essential to the partnership. However well or badly parents do, they are the students' first educators. Schools need to develop an invitational attitude towards parents and do more to help parents assist their children. Moving schools involve parents in a range of innovatory ways.

Most parents do not want to run the school but they do want their children to do better. There is little evidence to indicate over the years that schools and parents have become closer. Parent involvement cannot be left to individual teachers it must involve a school wide emphasis. Parent involvement must be seen as a crucial and alterable variable. This power of three too often remains an unleashed force. School Boards and teachers need to take the first steps. Involving the wider community is future challenge. Too many schools still operate in isolation from their community. Schools belong to the community they reside in and moving schools acknowledge this.

After we train the teachers, develop the facility, involve the parents; we must involve the students in the process. The postmodern era in technology will not improve without involving the students. Fullan believes that most people do not develop new understanding until they are involved in the process. Ownership, in the sense of clarity and commitment, is a progressive process achieved individual by individual until a 'critical mass' is achieved. This developmental process applies as much to an individual or a class as to a school. Educational change Fullan says is very much the science of muddling through a process of trying things out and keeping what is best. Student views often get lost in the shuffle of school change. They are rarely thought of as participants in the process. Students to be successful need to be provided with relevant, engaging and worthwhile experiences. Disengaged students lack meaningful connections with teachers. Few students report that teachers ask them for their opinions, many find lessons boring, and a great majority of student comments reflect an alienation theme.

Student learning is enhanced when they understand what is expected of them, when they get recognition for their work, learn quickly from their errors, and receive guidance in improving their performance. Too many students, particularly at the secondary level, are disengaged from their learning - and a growing number feel alienated. Some thing needs to be done. More of the same will not work. Professional

communities work hard on the problem of relevance. Teachers work hard on expanding and refining their teaching repertoire. And students notice.

Effective teachers give students a voice in their classrooms. Such teachers invite students to talk about what makes learning difficult, what diminishes their motivation, makes them give up, or settle for a minimum effort position. They expose students to an atmosphere of hope. Students have ideas about how schools should be. Students in recognition for a safe and caring environment where their efforts are rewarded will work hard. Children, Fullan believes, are vastly under-utilized resources. Not only must they be part of the solution, but also, in many cases, they may even have better ideas for solutions.

### **Philosophical Beliefs**

Clarence Johnson's beliefs in educating students have not changed for the past forty years. For these beliefs, Johnson selected Realism as his philosophy. Realism gives teachers an approach on how to teach students. It is important for teachers to understand what kind of assumptions lie behind education and educational goals. We present materials to students so they may become acquainted with the subject matter. Teaching techniques consist of approaches that most effectively acquaint students with what they are to know.

Achievement is determined by comparing evidences of what has been learned with what should have been learned. Students who have learned the most material with the fewest errors receive the highest grades. This is concrete and this is real. The students identified with me as a caring educator. Realism is a philosophy that identifies God as the Supreme Being. Clarence Johnson believes he is part of Western civilization and believes in God. As a realist, Johnson believes that the family and the church were the primary agencies of education. The mother is the child's first teacher and she should set the moral tone. The church should be the source for understanding God's law. The state should formulate and enforce laws concerning education. Once again, this is evidence of what is real. God is the Master of all creation and the realist supports this position. Anything less than belief in God is not real.

As a minority leader in the postmodern era, Clarence Johnson believes that curriculum should be developed to meet the needs of every child. The curriculum must be broad-based to encompass special needs, average, and gifted-talented students. Appropriate language, including foreign language, will be an integral component of my curriculum. Flexibility in the framework is critical for the delivery of the appropriate curriculum. The curriculum must include vocational training, college preparation, athletics, and labor force skills preparation. Field trips, on-the-job training, print-rich facilities, and technology will integrate all concepts of the curriculum. Organize the logic of sequence in the curriculum through the realms of meaning. Through my journey in education, a minority leader is associated with what is right in the curriculum. I am identified as a minority leader in education. Hence, the curriculum must include vocational training.

## **Philosophy of Clarence Johnson**

Clarence Johnson believes that student achievement is vital to the survival of civilization. Student achievement is a top priority in every learning community. Educators must continue to rank student achievement, along with security, as the priorities for every child. Hire qualified teachers, develop the appropriate curriculum, and construct the state-of-the-art facilities to deliver the highest level of student achievement. Student achievement is the ultimate standard of education.

The success of the reculturing model relies also on a major change in the nature of the average teacher/school-parent relationship. The notion of reculturing developed by Hargreaves (1991) and Fullan (1993a) is about the breakdown of culture of individualism and balkanization which prevail within schools and the development of relationships that form the culture of the school (Hargreaves, 1995). It could be argued that such reculturing needs to move beyond the walls of the school, to involve parents and the wider community in an understanding of schooling in the age of uncertainty. For such a model to succeed, parents need to be brought to the point where they understand the changes in pedagogy and praxis which have occurred since their own time at school, how the ways in which their children will be challenged will differ from their own experience and why this is so.

Once we have all of the key players totally involved, discipline must be addressed. Discipline is a key factor in the learning environment. Allocate time for all stakeholders to meet, discuss, and develop the appropriate discipline guidelines for all students. Students must arrive at school with the proper mentality in the area of discipline. Teachers must teach in an environment that has strict discipline. Discipline is an attitude that must be shared by students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Teamwork is necessary to maintain strict discipline in the learning environment. Poor discipline is unacceptable. This is not a new strategy but an important one. Educational leaders must include discipline in their postmodern thinking in public education.

English (2003) found postmodernism has many implications for the theory and practice of educational administration. The controversies and struggles of this moment in time punctuate the priority and importance of postmodernism for educational administration. It should be rather obvious that the implications are sharply at odds with many current concepts of what the profession “needs” according to other voices and agencies advancing their agendas at the present time.

Postmodernism is a combination of method of critique and a way of looking at things (English, 2003). Both are interconnected. The way one looks at things also determines how one critiques. The postmodernist is distrustful of boundaries and hierarchies, especially those that are arbitrary and merely conventions, and especially if they are passed off as being supported by empirical evidence. It isn't that the postmodernist doesn't also doubt empiricism, it is rather that so much of what passes in the world as being supportable empirically is neither supportable or could be equally supported by a contradictory position based on the same data.

Dr. English states, “However, my past experience in debates with modernists indicates that not all of them play by the same rules, that is, the postmodernism. Some even resort to “power politics” trying to bury any opposition in the smothering blanket of

consensus, even when that consensus is revealed as non-existent, shallow, or fails to provide a sound epistemological foundation to their own position.”

Many modernists cannot extricate themselves from their own conceptual “box” in considering the potential of postmodernism for educational administration. The postmodern position challenges the modernistic conceptual box and its continued efficacy for theory and practice. Many modernists are neither used to such controversy, nor have thought very much about the boundaries of their own discourse. It should be noted that theory is the mother of all practice and we have paid too little attention to improving practice by changing the nature of our theories. By ignoring the theoretical side of any efforts to improving schooling and learning, we have insured that we will continue to refine the status quo (English, 2003).

### **Concluding Remarks**

In conclusion, I have researched and identified several new strategies for educational leaders to implement postmodern thinking in public education in the United States of America. I personally believe that a common language is mandatory in the postmodern era. Also, students, parents, and leaders must speak at least two different languages. A technology rich physical plant is mandatory in the postmodern era. Dr. Fullan and Dr. English agree that teachers’ preparation must experience a change. Teachers need to become consummate examples themselves of lifelong learning. Teachers need firsthand opportunities to integrate theory with classroom practice. The postmodern era in technology will not improve without involving the students. Dr. Phenix and Dr. Kritsonis believe that epistemology concerns itself with what constitutes knowledge and how we arrive at it. Because each individual manifests certain knowledge capabilities, it is within our nature to uncover the best avenue to share that knowledge. I believe that the noted authors agree that science is one way to go about seeking truths, but only one way and not always superior to other forms of knowing. Feyerabend (1993) perhaps said it best, “Without chaos no knowledge. Without a frequent dismissal of reason, no progress” (p. 158).

### **References**

- Elkind, D. (1997). Schooling in the postmodern world. In A. Hargreaves (Ed.), *Rethinking educational change with heart and mind* (pp. 27-42). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- English, F. W. (2003). *The post modern challenge to the theory and practice of educational administration*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, LTD.
- Feyerabend, P. (1993). *Against method*. London, England: Verso.
- Fullan, M. (1993a). *Change forces*. New York: Falmer Press.
- Fullan, M. (1993b). Why teachers must become change agents. *Educational Leadership*, 50(6), 12-13.
- Hargreaves, A. (1991). Restructuring restructuring: Postmodernity and the prospects for educational change. *Journal of Education Policy*, 9(1), 47-65.

- Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times: Teachers work and culture in the postmodern age*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hargreaves, A. (1995). Renewal in the age of paradox. *Educational Leadership*, 52(7), 14-19.
- Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (1998). *What's worth fighting for out there?* New York: Teachers College Press.
- Johnson, C. (2006). *Immigration and student success: Communication journey as a learning organization*. Retrieved May 4, 2006, from [http://dept.lamar.edu/lustudentjnl/prairie\\_cohort%20II.htm](http://dept.lamar.edu/lustudentjnl/prairie_cohort%20II.htm)
- Kritsonis, W. A. (2002). *William Kritsonis, PhD on schooling*. Mansfield, OH: BookMasters, Incorporated.
- Little, J. W. (1990). The mentor phenomenon and the social organization of teaching. In C. Cazden (Ed.), *Review of research in education* (pp. 297-351). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mockler, N. (2000). *Becoming postmodern: schools in the age of uncertainty*. Retrieved May 3, 2006, from <http://www.cybertext.net.au/tipd/papers/week2/mockler.htm>
- Phenix, P. (1986). *Realms of meaning* (8th Ed.). Ventura, CA: Irving S. Sato Printcraft, Incorporated.
- Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.
- Tickle, L. (1991). New teachers and the emotions of learning teaching. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 21, 319-329.

---

Formatted by Dr. Mary Alice Kritsonis, National Research and Manuscript Preparation Editor, NATIONAL FORUM JOURNALS, Houston, Texas. [www.nationalforum.com](http://www.nationalforum.com)







