

PRACTICES FOR LEADERS TO ENHANCE ACHIEVEMENT IN MINORITY YOUTH & "AT-RISK" LEARNERS

- **Issue mission and policy statement that indicates high expectations for all students.**
- **Establish an inviting school climate for minority students and parents.**
- **Promote an academically rich environment for all students.**
- **Establish goals to eliminate tracking and ability grouping.**
- **Introduce cooperative learning and heterogeneous grouping.**
- **Provide hands-on materials and opportunities for field experience.**
- **Promote the use of a variety of teaching styles.**
- **Teach teachers to teach persistence.**
- **Use diagnostic evaluation.**

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF LEADERSHIP

- 1) People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered. Love them anyway.
- 2) If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives. Do good anyway.
- 3) If you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies. Succeed anyway.
- 4) The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.
- 5) Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway.
- 6) The biggest person with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest person with the smallest mind. Think big.
- 7) People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs. Fight for a few underdogs anyway.
- 8) What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.
- 9) People really need help, but may attack you if you do help them. Help them anyway.
- 10) Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth. Give the world the best you have anyway.

I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.

Albert Schweitzer

LEARNING STYLES OF CONTEMPORARY LEARNERS

FIELD DEPENDENT LEARNERS LEARN BEST THROUGH
THE USE OF.....

- 1) Group Discussions, sharing, student centered activities, interaction with others.
- 2) Personal examples, anecdotes, stories.
- 3) Activities that reflect their own experiences.
- 4) Use of praise and affirmation.

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE

- 1) Treat students with dignity and respect.
- 2) Teach students to behave responsibly.
- 3) Understand and respond appropriately to habitual behavior.
- 4) Give students more of what they need.
- 5) Model the behavior you expect.

Student Self-Image and Its Impact on Student Performance and Motivation

Self-image in Urban Youth is often based on how they think they are being perceived by significant others in their lives. Numerous studies show that students try harder in school as a result of effects to improve their self-image. (Lazar and Darlington, 1978). Enhanced by praise and acceptance, self-image is lowered by criticism and unwarranted disapproval. It is shaped and molded over and over again by an individual's life experiences and is molded as children derive satisfaction from their ability to do well at something. Perhaps the most important barometer of assessing the probability of future success is the development of a child's self-image.

The building of self-image requires constant renewal and reinforcement for as long as an individual lives. Children often lose self-image when they perceive the loss of love and regain it when they think they have regained it. (Gilmore, 1982). Teachers, schools, parents, peers and significant others have a critical role to play in the development of urban and at-risk youth. Children are known to develop two self-images as they mature into adulthood: a social self-image and an academic self-image. The distinctions between the two are significant.

The Social Self-Image...

Best described in relation to others who are a part of the social environment, the social self-image is reflected most in the home, the playground, the streets, the dance floor, football field, etc. It determines how most individuals feel about their interaction with others. The social self-image is reflected in how individuals carry themselves, how they speak, how they adorn themselves, how they interact in crucial settings and how they develop their social skills. There are three primary influences for the social self-image in urban and at-risk youth: the home/family, the peer group, other social systems.

The Academic Self-Image...

The academic self-image dictates how well children fare in a society which requires higher order thinking skills and other academic competencies. It is molded in our classrooms. It is not unusual for a child to display a positive social self-image within their own families and among their peers and a negative self-image in educational environments.

Research shows that 80% of urban youth have positive self-images when they enter school, 20% still do by the fifth grade, but only 5% so by their senior year in high school. In a 1985 study of the progressively decreasing scores of Black students on comprehensive tests of basic skills in the District of Columbia, Noted psychologist, Carl Bell, found that as children mature, they experience many hostilities imposed by the majority culture with most of these hostilities rooted in the inability of schools to augment the academic self-image (Bell).

The key ingredient for augmenting the academic self-image of urban youth is accomplishment. An academic environment which offers encouragement, praise, the opportunity for achievement will promote the development of a more positive academic self-image (Mitchell & Conn, 1985). Children who are without significant opportunities for in-school success are likely to feel frustrated and inept and more prone to seek accomplishment outside of school even if it means through illegal or unacceptable behavior.

The academic self-image can be enhanced through attempts by teachers to build on the positive social strengths of the child (Martin, 1980). When a child's academic self-image improves, his desire to learn and the motivation to succeed also improve. An understanding of how the social self-image can be used to bolster the academic self-image is critical. Many urban youth may be taught to appreciate certain skills that are not always valued in classrooms because they don't reflect the schools norms (i.e., nonverbal communication, dance, rhythmic movements, learning through cooperation and verbal interplay during instruction). It is important that the duality between the culture of the school and the culture of the home/community be addressed so as not to create conflict and the discrepancy which often exists between academic and social self-image.