The One-Room School: Unlocking the Future from the Past

The mention of the one-room school likely conjures up memories of Laura Ingalls Wilder and the "Little House on the Prairie" television series. Today's educators and youth would express concern for those who attended. When in fact many students who attended one-room schools are now leaders of counties, company executives, successful professionals, inventors, leaders of school reform in the 21st Century, and other major contributors to life as we know it today. Are there lessons to be learned from the one-room school model? In this chapter we will explore the, one-room school model with a specific focus on the rural south model, and its usefulness as we examine school reform models.

Though thoughts of one-room schools are often associated with fascinating stories in literature by such writers as Walt Whitman, W.E. B. Dubois, Washington Irving and Stephen Crane, and are associated with well-known tales such as the Legend of Sleepy Hollow, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The Hoosier Schoolmaster, and the Goosepond School, these schools were real. They existed throughout history internationally and many schools remain scattered throughout the world today. The impact of the one-room schools on our country is recognized by the US government. In April of 2002, the U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige unveiled the new look of the U. S. Department of Education in Washington D.C. Both entrances to the building host a façade of a one-room school. Dr. Paige (CSAA, 2006) explain that the entrances "…are a reminder that we do not serve a faceless bureaucracy or an unchangeable system. We serve an ideal. We serve the ideal of the little red schoolhouse. It [one room school] is one of the greatest symbols of America—a symbol that every child must be taught and every child must learn, that every community was involved and every parent's input valued. Those little schools were built to serve a need: to equip children for the future as citizens and workers."

Though the schools have diminished in number, their impact remains. Such schools still operate in the United States, Australia, China and many other countries, primarily in isolated rural or mountainous areas, the outback, and on the open plains areas.

World-wide one-room schools share some common characteristics—poorly funded, limited teaching resources, and one teacher who serves as the principal, teacher, janitor and community liaison (Cordier, 1998). Examples of this sameness could be included from many countries, however the authors chose to provide examples from two very different countries—United States and China. In the rural areas of China, there are three types of elementary schools: Centre School, Village School, and Teaching-Point school (Li, 2005). A 'Centre school' is often located in the township that consists of 10 – 15 several villages. Centre schools are generally not one-room schools. They include all elementary grades—1 to 6. They also have access to additional resources so that Village schools and Teaching Points (in its catchment area) can be supported. For some small villages and especially those in mountainous, remote, or extremely poor areas, one alternative for education is a 'Teaching Point' catering to the younger children and providing for the lower grades – generally Grades 1-3. For Grade 4 onwards children will travel further to a larger village with a 'Village School' that offers all primary grades. Below are pictures of some of the one-room schools in operation today. As with the one-room schools in the US and other parts of the world, the 'teacher' is responsible for all the roles necessary to operate a school—the principal, teacher, leader of the social and cultural experiences for the area, and often the janitorial and maintenance staff (Lin, 2003)

Figure 001, Mr. Li, Xiaofeng and his students on the playground

This school below in Guizhou Province might make students and educators of today wonder about the community's commitment to education. However its existence reflects the same advocacy for education exhibited by poor Black and white families in

the rural South after the Civil War. The Chinese characters on the building say: “Basic education is the foundation for the realization of the goal of developing a nation by science and education” (Deng, 2003).

Though one-room schools are still scattered nationally and internationally, in order to relive the life span of the one-room school model it is necessary to focus our discussion on one very limited area—one-room schools in the state of Georgia, USA. This narrowing of the focus will allow us to examine this lifespan through a research lens. Noted researchers Johnson and Christensen (2004) state, “for research participants to explore their experience, they must be able to relive it in their minds, and they must be able to focus on the experience and nothing else” (p. 367). The authors will assist the reader to relive the one-room school history in Georgia. This will allow us to reflect on possible lessons learned or “take aways” from this early educational model created to provide all citizens with the experiences and understandings necessary to be a productive member of a democracy, and to succeed personally and as a nation.

The one-room schoolhouse was a ubiquitous feature of the rural Georgia countryside from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. It was the

mainstay of the state's public education system. They stood at crossroads and in groves dotted across the counties. At their peak, there were more than 7,000 one-room schools in the state of Georgia. As consolidation and funding grew dramatically after 1950, the buildings began to disappear quickly. Most were allowed to simply collapse from neglect and disuse. Others were converted and expanded to other uses including homes, churches, or most often storage buildings for farms, since most were very rudimentary buildings in the first place. Today, only a handful of one-room schools are preserved across the state of Georgia.

They were established to serve rural areas and the remaining structures are still in rural areas far from the preservation funds and public incentive to preserve them. All of the current structures preserved for interpretation have been moved to more convenient locations, including the Oak Grove School preserved by Ms. Jan Anderson as a project in celebration of the centennial of Georgia Southern University. The Oak Grove School of Tattnall County, Georgia is an archetypical example of these once numerous structures. It is being preserved to interpret this unique era of Georgia's educational history and celebrate the centennial of Georgia Southern University. The University was established in 1906 as the First District Agricultural and Mechanical School. It was established to serve as a general high school for area students who had completed schooling equivalent of an eighth grade education, most of whom had been taught in one-room schools throughout southeast Georgia. By 1920, the administration of the First District A & M School realized that the counties were beginning to finally organize their own high schools and a more important mission for A&M would be to provide young men and women with teacher education courses. Ultimately, the school would become a teachers

college many of its graduates following careers teaching in one-room schools across Georgia.

The one-room school, where a single teacher taught students of multiple ages and abilities, is a concept that dates back to the earliest days of Georgia. These earliest schools were established to provide education to specific communities or families and often lasted no longer than the tenure of the teacher. Georgia had no public education until after the Civil War (1861-1865).

The first school to be established in the new colony was created for the settlement of Salzburgers at Ebenezer, Georgia. The Salzburgers were German-speaking Protestants expelled from their homes in the Catholic province of Salzburg in present-day Austria. In 1734 they were resettled in Georgia with the support of the British crown and the colonies Trustees. Christopher Ortman arrived with the first Salzburgers in 1734. He performed both the duties of catechist and schoolmaster to teach the English language to the new immigrants. The community continued to support schools for these very purposes of religious instruction and teaching English as they adapted to their new home (Orr, 1950). Only a year after Ortman's arrival, the Moravian community in Georgia established another school. The Moravians in the early eighteenth century were committed to sending hundreds of missionaries throughout the world, including Georgia, the first Moravian settlement in North America. Their school was established for the conversion and education of the Creek Indians, but their settlement in Georgia lasted only ten years.

The vast majority of Georgia's eighteenth-century population received little or no schooling. In some populated areas, schools were established for those who could afford

an education and in the rural areas wealthy plantation owners hired tutors for their children or sent them to England for an education, but free public education for the masses was unknown. The revolutionary fervor of American War for Independence stirred many ideas of egalitarianism across the former colonies and a promising start toward public education was mandated in Georgia's new state Constitution of 1777. It required that "schools shall be erected in each county and supported at the general expense of the state as the legislature shall hereafter point out and direct." However, that direction never materialized and when the State Constitution was revised in 1789, any mention of schools was deleted. Georgia's Constitution was again revised in 1798. This time a clause concerning schools was reintroduced. Under the 1798 language the state was no longer required, but rather, permitted to establish schools. The weak language resulted in weak policy for the next 70 years. Georgia throughout most of the nineteenth century had no public school system.

Instead, a movement to establish private academies throughout the state chartered by the legislature gained momentum especially in the 1820s and 1830s, so that by mid-century, there were 219 academies in the state serving just over 9,000 students. These academies were generally established in the state's larger towns and often accepted or arranged accommodations for boarding students from elsewhere. The academies were affordable only to the state's wealthier citizens and what little money the state legislature dedicated to education went primarily to these academies (Joiner, 1979).

Outside of these towns that supported academies, lived the vast majority of Georgia's population as rural farmers. While the state could boast some of the south's largest and most productive plantations, the average rural Georgian lived modestly. For

the independent farmer hoping to provide a rudimentary education for his children, and especially his sons who would someday inherit or purchase a farm of their own, there was but one option. Throughout the state, small groups of citizens gathered enough children and contributed enough money to employ someone as a teacher, and created "field schools." The field school was truly the ‘parent-model’ of the one-room public school of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They generally met in a crude one-room building in a fallow or abandoned field convenient to as many children whose parents were willing and able to contribute to the effort. Teachers were either members of the community who had enough education themselves to serve, or hired itinerants, both of which often proved to be poor teachers. The schools taught the rudiments of English, reading, spelling, writing, and arithmetic to students who might attend for 4-6 weeks out of the year when duties on the farm allowed. The field schools were transitory at best, either relocating or reestablishing themselves almost annually, but they provided a model for the first public schools established after the Civil War.

The American Civil War devastated Georgia economically, politically, and socially. There was little of the pre-war infrastructure left and tens of thousands of Georgians had been killed or relocated during the conflict. From 1865 to 1871 the state was governed by a Reconstruction government and military occupation unwanted by most of the white population. Nearly half of the state's population was newly freed slaves, both hopeful and wary of their future.

Ironically, it was this latter group that helped to spur the development of a public school system in Georgia. In antebellum Georgia, teaching slaves to read and write had been prohibited since legislation passed in 1829. The education denied them was one of

the advantages former slaves demanded immediately. Literate black men and women established schools around the state. Additional financial and organizational support came from private charitable organizations in the North, the Freedman's Bureau, and other sectors of the federal government. For a brief period after the War, many of the black children of the state had better access to an education than whites. A group of progressive educational leaders organized as the Georgia Teachers Association in 1867 began to lobby and promote for a state supported school system available to all and in 1868 Georgia's Constitution was again rewritten by the Reconstruction government, or the "Negro-Carpetbag Convention" as it was known by its detractors. Among the goals the new Constitution sought to address was the education of all the citizens of the state, black and white.

The Georgia Teachers Association heavily influenced the drafting of the education portion of the new Constitution and subsequent laws. The new Constitution mandated the establishment of "a thorough system of general education to be free to all children of the state to be paid from taxation or otherwise." It also provided for the appointment of a state commissioner of education and designated taxes to be directed toward the funding of a school system. However, no concrete action was taken for several years, in part because the general population was so suspicious of the motives and men of the Reconstruction government.

In 1877 the Constitution was rewritten for the sixth time. The 1877 Constitution, known as the "Home Rule Constitution," was a reaction to the corruption of the Reconstruction government as well as their perceived extravagance. The 1877 Constitution limited the progressivism of the public school system, as described in the

preceding Constitution. State funding was restricted to elementary schools only. It was strictly prohibited to provide tax dollars for high schools. More importantly, the Constitution limited how local taxes could be raised to support schools. Only cities were allowed to levy a tax for high schools based on the idea that they had more property to tax. Finally, local taxes could only be created with the approval of 2/3 of the voters rather than a simple majority. For the next fifty years, the public school system continued to be hampered by deeply rooted suspicions of and an aversion to taxes in the rural majority of the state.

Progress was slowed as well by suspicions of the white population of a system that educated blacks, too. Many considered blacks uneducable or undeserving. Others argued that only tax dollars collected from black taxpayers should be spent on black schools. The reality of black education in Georgia was an amalgamation. All of the state's public schools were segregated and black schools were supported by general tax dollars, but not at the same level as white schools. However, until the Great Depression of the 1930s, when the economic crisis became so bad as to require the state to step in with greater support or the system would have collapsed, the experiences of black and white students in the rural one-room schools across the state were not significantly different. Simple wooden buildings with blackboards were served by teachers with vastly varying ability and education and few if any books or instructional equipment.

Until the 1937 Equalization of Education Act, which began to address the disparity between urban and rural schools, the public education system was mainly supported by local, not statewide, taxation. These meager funds primarily supported very modest buildings and salaries for teachers. In 1895, the Georgia Department of

Education's Annual Report recorded that each county had an average of 60 schoolhouses. The total value of all the structures in each of the counties, though, only averaged $2,000. The State Department of Education considered most to be unsuitable for the purpose of a school (Georgia Dept of Education, 1895). In Banks County, Georgia, district officials seeking a school building were instructed to find a building "good enough to winter a cow" (Joiner, 1979). Recognizing the problem of providing suitable buildings for schools, the State Commissioner in 1896 requested an Atlanta firm of architects to prepare simple plans for rural schoolhouses to be made available to county boards as examples of adequate buildings. Some effort was made to encourage better grounds around schools as well when an 1890 law required schools to observe Arbor Day with plantings in the schoolyard (Joiner, 1979).

Improvements were made to the worst situations and by 1911 the State Board of Education was legally empowered to formulate rules and regulations for all public schools and to distribute greater funding to the districts. Thereafter, school buildings continued to vary greatly according to the relative wealth of the area, but a basic vernacular form developed. These one-room schools were simple wooden clapboard structures approximately 15' X 30' with a gable roof. There were usually one or two doors on the gable end often covered by a porch or shed roof. The only lighting was provided by 2, 3, or 4 windows on the sides. A small chimney or stovepipe on the ridgeline of the roof was evidence of the single potbelly stove inside. These simple structures were as simply furnished. Most had either homemade or patent desks, a great improvement over the half log seats with peg legs and dirt floor of the old field schools of the antebellum period. A teacher's desk and blackboards were the extent of other

furnishings. Educational supplies might include some maps, usually state or county soil maps or a U.S. history map, and a few pictures, and perhaps a dictionary. That was the extent for most, though the better schools might have had a globe, a small library, or occasionally an organ for music lessons.

The Oak Grove School of Tattnall County restored by Ms. Anderson for the University's Centennial is a typical example of this vernacular. A survey of Tattnall County schools made in 1916 recorded the value of the Oak Grove School at $250. It had one classroom with no cloakroom. It was well lit and “fairly well kept,” but the building had no ceiling and was unpainted inside and out. The desks were homemade and the blackboards were poor. It had county and county soil survey maps, but no other educational equipment. One teacher taught 32 pupils in 7 grades and met for five and a half months of the year (Tattnal County, 1916).

The survey of the Tattnall County schools was an early project completed under a statewide survey completed in 1923 to assess the conditions of school facilities and programs. It was followed by a number of legislative acts to reform and improve public education. In 1926 an act was passed providing additional funds to help poorer areas provide education. In 1937 the Equalization of Education Act guaranteed students and teachers a 7-month school term; provided minimum salaries for teachers; and provided the state with the power to address minimum qualifications and certification for teachers; as well as providing funding for transportation. The ability to provide transportation for students was the beginning of the end of the one-room school. Within the first year of the legislation, 246 schools across the state were eliminated. Over the next decade the movement for better schools through consolidation would gain momentum over the

interest of a local school. In 1949, the legislature passed the Minimum Foundation Program for Education. This legislation provided a $200,000,000 building program of school consolidation. By 1959 the total number of schools in the state declined from 3,906 to 1,930. Attendance on the other hand rose by 230,798 (Joiner, 1979). The one-room school in Georgia was no longer of use and the once common buildings languished and disappeared.

Though the segregated one-room schools served as bastions of hope, the cultural centers, the gathering places for political decisions and voting information, and the social gathering places for poor whites and black in the South, they were particularly critical to Blacks in the south. In James D. Anderson's seminal book on education of Blacks in the south, he shares a history of black schooling within a political, cultural, and economic context. For example, Anderson (1988) writes that in 1865 John W. Alford, who had been national superintendent of schools for the Freedmen's Bureau, was reappointed to inspector of schools for the bureau. In his January 1866 report, Alford documented the practice of "self-teaching" among freed blacks. During his travels throughout the south, he discovered a system of what he called "native schools" or common schools founded and maintained by former slaves in places that had not been visited by the Freedman's Bureau or missionaries. Anderson notes that "Alford realized his finding did not square with existing perceptions of the character of the Negro" (p.7). For example, a black school in Savannah, Georgia, had existed unknown to the slave regime from 1833 to 1865. Blacks were victims of taxation without representation; they resorted to making private contributions to finance public schools. But to have their privately financed

schools recognized black southerners had to deed to the state their contributions of money, land, and school equipment (Anderson, 1988).

Historical, cultural, and economic circumstances created distinct settings for rural education. In addition to learning centers, many one-room schools were social gathering places, such as a public meeting space, that strengthened cultural, political and social identities. Communities were tied together via local histories and collective values. Though excited about the ‘new brick school era’ that emmerged with the funding of school transportation and new consolidated schools, many Black families and poor white families experienced a social and cultural loss as one-room schools disappeared. No longer did each community have its own ‘gathering place’, its social, political, and cultural center. This, many believe, was the beginning of efforts, to involve parents in the schooling of their children. The effort to involve the entire community in the commitment once associated with the one-room school—that education is the responsibility of the entire community, not just the parents—are an ever increasing challenge to education and educators.

As most one-room schools disappeared from the landscape in Georgia, a few Black leaders fought to maintain the historically Black one-room schools. These historic sites remind us of a community-wide commitment to the education of all youth, of the social pride and responsibility, and of political might that once existed against all odds. One such school that is restored and maintained is the Old Midway School in Thomasville, Georgia. (Hadley, 2001). Community leaders point with pride to the school, now located on Board of Education property, as a successful historical model that produced many Black leaders and scholars. Likewise some one-room schools that once

educated the poor white children in Georgia are being preserved. One such preservation is the project sponsored by Ms. Jan Anderson in conjunction with the Georgia Southern University centennial celebration.

In summary, an enduring symbol of American education, the one-room school invokes images of democracy, morality, and traditional values as the nation's rural heritage. One of the founders of the young republic of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, believed that public education was essential to the survival of democracy. Intelligent participation in the enterprise of good government meant people had to be educated. By the 1830's public education replaced private instruction in most cities in the East. However, the rural South and expanding frontier of the Midwest built their own schoolhouses. Sessions lasted only a few months due to the farm-based economy and teachers were either traveling schoolmasters or boarding teachers. The South's one-room schools were places where communities shared a common interest in education, promoted democratic values, and opened the imagination of their students beyond the limitations of their lives. Wooden desks, slate blackboards, kerosene lamps, and potbelly stoves, were austere furnishings in a vernacular structure. Teachers arrived early to prepare for children by building a fire in wood burning stoves, refilling inkwells, and oil lamps. Children walked along dirt roads or rode horses to one-room schools where they learned lessons and played games.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, set against the backdrop of Southern planters' ideas of the role of education as charity to poor whites and ex-slaves desire to learn to read and write, one-room schools emerged as local centers of learning. The social class problem persists in American education. The campaign to wipe out

illiteracy for rural white children was an aspiration for many local counties in the south. These early district schools were often scarce on resources. Having few books and classrooms comprised of children at different grade levels; lessons were learned most notably by recitation. Older students applied their learning by helping younger learners and schoolmates even shared their meals. A one-room school attendee tells the story that his sister would pack a little extra in her tin lunch pale to share with a schoolmate from a poor family. This was a time when education was the business of the whole community.

These characteristics of one-room schools offer models needed in education today. In an August 6, 2000 article in *The New York Times* titled “The One-Room School,” Bloomfield, which opened in 1908, is noted as one of the 400 remaining public one-room schoolhouses in the United States. Fundamental characteristics of one-room schools such as aspects of teaching, multi-age classrooms, peer support, and interdisciplinary projects are identified as educational approaches being copied in large systems across the country. General curriculum studies and character education are noted as important features of rural schools missing from today’s education.

What are the take-aways that the authors suggest from this chapter? How does this apply to international efforts at school reform and renewal? As we look at the one-room school, there is no intent to imply its effectiveness for today’s world. However, there are recurring themes and models that parallel many current research-based recommendations to address challenges linked to present-day need for increased student achievement. These themes include not only those in the New York Times article—multi-age grouping, peer support, and interdisciplinary projects—but also school improvement initiatives such as non-graded schools, projects based instruction, character

education, inclusion of all learners into regular classrooms, curricula aligned with testing and job opportunities, social and educational responsibility for self and one's learning, and content mastery.

Educators are beginning to question scripted curricula and mandated teaching strategies and models. Most educational reformers are challenging these 'one size fits all' programs imposed on schools. The call for returning to program models that meet the needs of individual students, schools and communities seems to be a call to revisit some of the teaching strategies used in the one-room schools. Out of necessity, not research-based or mandated, teachers in the one-room schools used multi-age groupings, peer tutoring, inclusions of children with special needs, and non-graded models. Present research and common sense, informs us that the best and deepest learning comes from application of learning to real life situations. The teacher in the one-room schools, by necessity used peer tutoring and multi-age grouping in order to cover the content and skills needed for all ages assigned to the school. These sometimes included as many as eight to ten grade levels with ages from four to sixteen. Teaching the content to lesser skilled peers or younger students served as a real-life application of the learning and therefore strengthened learning. The lesser skills readers were 'included' in the daily lessons by single or group recitations, 'blab school' (choral reading), assigning duties to teach the students to be productive member of the group (bringing in water, maintaining the fire, recess duty watching younger children). One of the authors attended such a small rural school and remembers vividly a student with special needs who was assigned such duties. He was likely 15 or 16 years old and still attending the elementary school. He was assigned 'listening to the little ones read' duty, water and [outside] toilet

supervision duty, as well as supervision of the little children on the playground. I don't think any of us really realized his limitations. To us he was a productive and valued member of the school family (who just happened to be younger than the teacher but old enough to experiment with chewing tobacco when the teacher wasn't looking). After the 'red brick new school era' arrived, he was no longer allowed to be a part of the school family. He became lost in a community that no longer needed him.

Project based instruction, hands-on/discovery learning, and interdisciplinary project models are being re-introduced as a school improvement strategy. In the one-room school, these models resulted, not from a research base that supported their use, but from the lack of purchased materials available to the teacher, and a very limited time to teach multiple subjects to multiple age groups. Another factor that supported this interdisciplinary projects model, was the community expectation that the school would prepare young people for life skills and work. The hands-on interdisciplinary projects often focused on applying rote learning of literature, mathematics, etc. to real life problems—understanding of farm plants and animals, financial examples such as predicting yield of farm crops, ability to determine 'board feet' from standing trees, distance and travel time between locations needed for materials and supplies or marketing locally produced products, Bible study related to maintaining social norms and mores, etc. The community expectations for the school focused on producing educated leaders to ensure personal and community growth and prosperity.

Many state and national mandates tout content mastery followed by standardized testing as critical to school renewal/improvement. One-room schools modeled content mastery as its goal, however in most cases followed by authentic assessment methods and

re-teaching, peer tutoring, etc. when needed. These resulted in the one-room school because of the schools' connections between assessment and community involvement and expectations. Parents who made the sacrifice to keep children in school, expected them to learn, that the learning be witnessed by the community, and that the learning would benefit the larger community. Examples included spelling bees, math bees, projects, performances for families, Bible study for the ministry, training of new teachers for growing communities, local political leaders and advisors, etc.

Character education and social responsibility, as suggested by the *New York Times* article for today's schools, were corner stones of the early education system in Georgia and the United States. The primary purpose of public education was to provide citizens the character, social responsibility, skills and understandings necessary to be successful and productive citizens in a democracy. In the nineteenth century the reading text was almost always either moral tales, religious character, or significant works of fiction. This character education and social responsibility was also exhibited through the use of the McGuffey Readers (1934). William Holmes McGuffey, born 1800, spread his educational philosophies to thousands of school children over a number of decades. The readers focused on the fundamental skills of reading and writing, while learning life lessons with religious overtones. The Readers presented a world in which punishment for bad behavior and reward for good behavior was dealt out quickly.

John I. Goodlad (2004), president of the Institute for Educational Inquiry, and author of one of the early books calling for school renewal *A Place Called School,* is recognized as one of the major leaders of education renewal in the United States. In his recent book *Romances with Schools,* he offers a moving account of a life devoted to

teaching and learning including his experiences working in a one-room school. Based on his accounts of his 'romances with schools' from one-room schools to major universities, it is no surprise that Dr. Goodlad's life has been devoted to school renewal that demands a quality education for all children—an education that provides the necessary skills and understandings that produces citizens necessary for a safe and productive democracy. Dr. Goodlad (2004) advocates that to make democracy safe we must have universal schooling and to make schooling safe for education, we must have democracy. This suggests that we re-examine the primary purpose of education and ensure that it is indeed accessible to, and provided with, quality education for everyone.

Last and very significant may be the national questions that are arising about the division of grade levels into different schools. Such questions stem from lower achievement scores and higher drop out rates for students as they transition from one school to another—elementary to middle, middle to secondary, secondary to college. This is particularly evident in middle schools' test scores, drop out rates of student in their first year in secondary school and likewise in the University setting. Would the trend reverse if students were not 'graduated' to another building with different leadership, culture, etc.? Researchers touting data that suggest that private schools are being more successful than public schools, often do not control for variable such as transitioning from school to school, consistency in academic expectations and culture, or other 'soft' variables. Some schools in the United States and the United Kingdom are creating pre-school through secondary school consolidated models that address these soft variables. These models will include all grades that operate as one school (often on a single campus), with one administrative leadership team that sets the expectations and

culture, that provides support for students via ‘knowing’ them and their academic, social and personal needs throughout their academic careers, and that provides well defined and articulated student learning outcomes that are achieved via backwards mapping techniques. These models are worth attention of the authors and other researchers over time as they develop and are implemented.

As we move into the 21st Century, we in education must examine the 'new learners' the ones who can multi-task in ways that other generations cannot even imagine, who have had computers as much a part of their lives as we had telephones and TVs, who view learning and schooling related to information access rather than a single book that must be memorized for future use, and who look at learning not as a finite body of knowledge needed to enter a job/career but things to learn or access when needed. Does the one-room school model hold some secrets to unlocking the future of education? These authors believe so. If we reflect on the successes of the past and the needs of the future, considering how to develop cross-walks, we will be stronger and better for the work. Professionally, we can see much further if we recognize that we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. We must recognize that good teaching, successful and happy students that grow into productive citizens are not new concepts. The changes are the societal ones to which we must adjust. We can learn from the past, project the needs for the present and the future and build a stronger profession. By reflecting on the one-room school educational model of the past we can unlock options for improving education for the now and for the future.

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