

Joseph Wright
EDUC 6500
Professor Montgomery Lee
Sept. 11th, 2018
Week 3, Chapter 3 – Article #1 Reflection

1. Title of Article, Author. AT ISSUE: IMPROVING THE PERCEPTION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION, Amy Anderson, Rick Evans, Rich Kozak, and Blair Peterson.

2. Response and Reflection of Article:

The article starts out talking about the many challenges that American Public School Teachers face, and how it really isn't getting any easier. The authors mention that the "negative perception of public schools has a rich history" (Anderson, Evans, Kozak & Peterson, 1997, p. 2), and discuss the reasons that the public feels that public schools are failing or underperforming. They mention that the current 24-hour news cycle demands that stories follow the adage of "if it doesn't bleed, it doesn't lead", thus promoting a "penchant for [focusing on] bad news", because it gets more clicks that way (p. 2).

They argue that although it is certainly a challenge to get good teachers to enter the field, and keep them there, it is a noble goal worth the undertaking. They argue that despite the hurdles to overcome, teachers need to "promote themselves and educate the American public about the real truth" (p. 8), rather than let all the bad news and assumptions go on unchallenged. They need to become "politically savvy", and promote the sharing and spreading of "positive publicity" and accurate data that tells the whole picture—which actually isn't as bad as it may seem (pp. 2-3). Ultimately, they need to promote the reality that "public schools are still the most viable means through which we can best meet the needs of those students least served in American society and schools (p. 9).

3. Synthesis and Application:

As I prepare to be a future administrator, I realize that the challenge to promote public education is a formidable one, but I believe all of us educators are up to the task. We engage in this work because we know that we have a sacred duty to perform, and we toil day in and day out to do so. I believe the article gives me the foresight to see that winning the battle in the public eye is paramount to our success as a school, and myself as an educational leader. We must get out and get visible to the public. Let them see the successes and efforts we make on a daily basis to help their students succeed and live a fulfilling life.

For instance, the article mentions that when compared with Japanese and Korean students, American students fare poorly in comparison. Yet the difference has been proven to be actually quite small, and the price that these students

and their families pay is astronomical. They spend almost all of their spare time studying and in extended tutoring sessions, sometimes till 10 pm, and even attending school on Sundays, with parents spending 20-30% of their income to pay for this drudgery (p.4). For just a “few percentage points [of higher scores than their American counterparts], Korean as well as Japanese children are denied many of the natural joys of their youth (p. 4). I think most American families and parents would agree that scholastic success is admirable, but perhaps the Koreans and Japanese students are getting a raw deal.

4. Implementation:

There will be challenges of course to implementing these efforts in helping the public see what we are doing, and the successes we are indeed having. This has always been the case, but I believe that most educators in the U.S. are prepared and willing to do what it takes to make the case that public education is worth saving, isn't actually drowning quite yet, and that we have the right people to do it.

I think a professional development training to promote ourselves and our school on social media would be well worth the time invested. We could offer suggestions, does and don'ts, and give examples of similar successes that we've had in the past. I believe that the public do want us to be successful, and the complaints that are made are more out of a concern for our future success, and less out of a desire to see us fail.

5. Final Thoughts and Conclusion:

The American Public Education System certainly has its flaws, yet that doesn't diminish the many successes that it holds either. We as educational administrators have a sacred duty to do all that we can to help our students succeed, and that includes winning over public opinion and getting the community, stakeholders and anyone else 100% behind our efforts and goals. Thanks to this article, I know that I'll be redoubling my efforts to help make my school, staff and students live up to our best selves, for all to see. As John Winthrop said in his 1630 speech to the intrepid puritan pioneers, setting out to this great land of ours, "We shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us."

6. Sources:

Anderson, A., Evans, R., Kozak, R., & Peterson, B. (1997). *At Issue: Improving the Perception of Public Education*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina. Retrieved from <http://horizon.unc.edu/projects/issues/papers/Anderson.html>