

Preventive Education: A North American Perspective

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This paper was prepared for the International Scientific-Practical Conference, "Preventive means of psychological manipulations, mind control and development of critical thinking for youth." The conference took place May 27-28, 2004, Kiev, Ukraine, at the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine.

In my presentation I will touch on three areas: (1) A description of AFF (American Family Foundation) and Info-Cult, (2) the controversy that surrounds the "cult" issue and a perspective from which the aforementioned two organizations view this issue, and (3) a discussion of some education programs and suggestions for future programming.

AFF

The American Family Foundation (AFF) was founded in Massachusetts in 1979 by Mr. Kay Barney, an engineer and business executive whose daughter had become involved with the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon. During the late 1970s several dozen parents' groups had formed around the United States. Other countries also had parents' groups, although there was little international communication at that time

Mr. Barney believed in the cause that united the diverse people involved in secular and religious cult education organizations, namely, the necessity to warn people about and free people from the destructive controls wielded by certain new groups that were mostly, but not always, religious. He also believed, however, that it was necessary to take a professional perspective, that is, to study the field scientifically and to apply these findings in a balanced, responsible manner. He also wanted to avoid the internal political debates that took so much time from the parents' groups, which were moving toward a national membership organization.

Therefore, he founded AFF as a nonprofit, tax-exempt research and educational organization that did NOT have a membership base. AFF's funding has always come from individuals, foundations, and the sale of resources.

In 1981 grants from foundations enabled AFF to produce a monograph entitled, *Destructive Cult Conversion: Theory, Research, and Treatment*, in which they proposed a person-situation model of cult conversion. This model, based more on the psychology of social influence than so-called "brainwashing" models, laid the groundwork for AFF's future theoretical developments.

The grants also enabled AFF to set up systems for responding to the mounting number of information requests from families, former group members, helping professionals, and the media. Today, most of AFF's communications occur through e-mail, although the effectiveness of telephone consultations should not be underestimated.

Since its inception AFF has had a three-tiered mission: research, education, and victim assistance

In 1984 AFF markedly advanced the quality of its publishing efforts by founding the *Cult Observer* and *Cultic Studies Journal* (CSJ) which in 2002 were merged into *Cultic Studies Review* (CSR), an online journal that is also available in an abridged print format.

Many of the articles that appeared in the aforementioned journals provide practical help for families, ex-members, and helping professionals, while others report on scientific research, legal issues, theoretical speculations, and other subjects. Several issues were special collections, including *Women Under the Influence* (edited by Dr. Janja Lalich), published in 1997. An early issue (Volume 2, Number 2 – 1985) illustrates AFF's mission of bringing together diverse parties interested in cultic abuses. This special issue was entitled, *Cults, Evangelicals, and the Ethics of Social Influence*.

In 1985 AFF organized, in conjunction with the Neuropsychiatric Institute of the University of California at Los Angeles and the Johnson Foundation, a conference that brought together 40 individuals, including representatives from England and Germany. Among the participants were mental health professionals, clergy, academicians, journalists, the president of the National Parent Teachers Association (PTA), attorneys, campus administrators, and the Head of the Private Office of Richard Cottrell, Member of the European Parliament from Bath, England. The goals of the conference and its recommendations continue to guide AFF to this day. The goals were to:

1. examine our level of knowledge about cultic groups and their effects on individuals, families, and society;
2. identify areas in which scientific studies of cults have been inadequate; and
3. consider ways in which social policy regarding cults might, without violating fundamental civil liberties, be changed for the greater protection of the public.

Resources for Families

Recognizing that families needed practical, hands-on books to help them deal with loved ones in cultic groups, AFF in the mid-1980s began to work on the first of a series of resources aimed at families. I will just mention a few of the early ones to give you an idea of the resources they have developed: *Cults: What Parents Should Know*, published in 1988, in 1992 the first *Exit Counseling: A Family Intervention*, which provided practical details and advice for families considering an exit counseling. This publication was a landmark event in the supplanting of deprogramming by non-coercive exit counseling approaches. In 2000 *Coping with Cult Involvement: A Handbook for Families and Friends* was published. This book helps families achieve a level of understanding far deeper than that provided by other written resources.

Resources for Ex-Members

In 1990 AFF turned its research focus from families to former group members, for it had become clear that the majority of former members approaching AFF for help had left their groups on their own without any parental intervention. Many of these individuals were seriously distressed and needed guidance and support. In response to this need AFF initiated a series of study groups, composed of AFF's volunteer professionals (i.e., members of its advisory board, which numbered about 120 by 1990) under the rubric "Project Recovery."

The following are merely the more noteworthy assistance-oriented achievements that resulted from the work of these study groups (see http://csj.org/infoserv_aff/aff_researchplan1.htm for information on AFF's research plans):

- In 1992 AFF conducted its first weekend workshop for former group members at the Stony Point Retreat Center, Stony Point, New York. At least one

weekend workshop has been held every year since and one-day ex-member workshops are typically held prior to AFF's annual conference.

- In 1992 in Arlington, Virginia, AFF conducted a conference, "Cult Victims and Their Families: Therapeutic Issues." In 1995 AFF conducted a joint conference with Denver Seminary: "Recovery from Cults: A Pastoral/Psychological Dialogue." And in 1996, AFF, in conjunction with Iona College's pastoral and family counseling department, conducted a conference, "Recovery from Cults and Other Abusive Groups: Psychological and Spiritual Dimensions."
- Under Project Recovery, AFF published *AFF News*, a free outreach newsletter directed toward ex-members. This periodical's function is now fulfilled through AFF's Web sites and its free Internet newsletter, *AFF News Briefs*.
- In 1993 Norton Professional Books published AFF's *Recovery from Cults*, edited by Dr. Michael Langone, a book that the Behavioral Science Book Service chose as an alternate selection. This edited book consisted of chapters written by members of the Project Recovery study groups.
- In 1993 AFF published Wendy Ford's book, *Recovery from Abusive Groups*, which provides practical guidelines for individuals struggling with post-group adjustment issues.
- In 1994 Hunter House published *Captive Hearts, Captive Minds*, written by AFF advisors Madeleine Tobais and Janja Lalich.

Education

AFF initiated a preventive educational program, the International Cult Education Program (ICEP), in 1987. Its goals were to develop educational resources for young people, educators, and clergy, to encourage educational programs for youth, and to provide support and guidance to those conducting such programs. ICEP produced two videotapes, *Cults: Saying "No" Under Pressure* and *After the Cult: Recovering Together*, a book, *Cultism on Campus: Commentaries and Guidelines for College and University Administrators* (revised in 1996 under the title, *Cults on Campus: Continuing Challenge*), a lesson plan, a collection of pseudoscience fact sheets, four educational flyers, and the semi-annual newsletter, *Young People and Cults*. Funding cuts prevent AFF from maintaining ICEP as a distinct program today, although its functions continue to the extent resources permit.

Throughout its history AFF staff and advisors have given talks at universities and professional associations in order to educate academicians, students, and helping professionals.

Conferences

AFF has organized conferences since its founding. In recent years AFF's conferences have become increasingly international in scope and larger with respect to the number of programs available to attendees. An example of a recent conference was the one in 2001 that had approximately 270 attendees and nearly 70 speakers. Attendees came from two dozen countries, including China, South Africa, Russia, and Brazil. Approximately 40 attendees came from foreign countries.

The Web

AFF's website has over 1000 pages of material and won a number of awards. Web site statistics reveals that during a typical week the site will be visited by more than 10,000 people from about 70 countries.

Although AFF's mission has remained constant, the methods it employs to fulfill that mission have changed with the times.

AFF began as one man's vision to apply scientific methods to the problems of people hurt by groups that deceive, manipulate, and exploit in the name "love." This has been and will continue to be a difficult task, for the problems that motivate us to action are not easy to define with precision and are difficult to study scientifically. But AFF's history demonstrates that this task is not impossible, however difficult. Much has been learned; many people have been helped. Nevertheless, much work remains, and many more people will need help.

Info-Cult

Info-Cult, a resource centre on cultic thinking, was founded in 1980 in Montreal, Canada following my brief experience with the Unification Church (UC) in 1977 and specifically that involving a very close friend. After the story of my friend's kidnapping and deprogramming from the Unification Church was featured in a series of newspaper articles in 1977 (the *Montreal Star*: Freed, 1977 December, 1978 January), his close friends and I organized a part-time volunteer public information service.

After obtaining funding in April 1980 a full-time center called the Cult Project was started.

The center's contention was that not all cults were problematic; hence, a distinction between "cults" and "destructive cults" was made.

The center's activities included providing information programs to high schools, colleges, universities, community centers, and professional organizations principally in and around the Montreal region. These programs were geared towards sensitizing and educating the community to the issue of destructive cults and the techniques of mind control.

A documentation center was made available to the public containing books, newspaper and journal articles, and audio-visual materials. In the beginning, information focused on the experiences of families and ex-members. However, it soon became apparent that the collection must be diversified to include other perspectives.

During the first ten years, the majority of our clients were parents of cult members, ex-members, students, and teachers. Contacts with groups perceived as "cults", "destructive cults", or those with opposing points of view were minimal.

In 1990 the Cult Project changed its name to Info-Cult ("Info-Secte" in French). The objectives of Info-Cult are:

1. To promote the study of cultic phenomena;
2. To sensitize, inform and educate the public to these phenomena;
3. To assist those with problems related to these phenomena.

Info-Cult's funding comes in the form of an annual grant from the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services, discretionary funds from different Provincial Ministers, foundations, private groups, and individual donations, as well as fees for certain services. Info-Cult is the only organization in North America that receives government support.

Info-Cult's clientele has greatly expanded through the years. Besides parents, ex-members, students and teachers, clientele now includes members of different new

religions, academics, mental health professionals, attorneys, law enforcement, media and others.

From 1990 to the present Info-Cult has had numerous contacts and meetings with members and representatives of "cult" groups, spiritual organizations, and new religious movements. Increasing interest and communication from academics with varying viewpoints has helped to broaden Info-Cult's analysis and perspective on the issue.

Info-Cult is the only full-time organization of its kind in Canada. It houses a documentation center that is one of the largest in the world with over 2,500 books, 9,000 files, academic reports, journals, newsletters, government and legal documents and more than 1,500 programs on audio and video cassettes. The material, mostly in English and French, is collected from sources around the world and includes group-generated and critical literature.

The documentation center is open on a restricted basis until opening to the public is considered feasible.

Info-Cult is widely regarded as a major source of information and assistance for dealing with "cults," new religions, Satanism, the Occult and other non-traditional and secretive groups.

With this reputation comes enormous responsibility to respond to individual and family concerns in a nuanced and balanced way. Info-Cult, as well as AFF, avoids simplistic "yes" or "no" responses to complex questions such as "Is Group X a cult?" or "Is the group my loved-one joined dangerous?"

Although Info-Cult has evolved over the years, certain positions on accessibility, kidnapping, and legislation have remained constant:

- Info-Cult has always operated out of a known location and is easily reachable by phone.
- Contrary to a popular belief concerning "anti-cult" groups, Info-Cult has not supported or assisted in the use of coercive measures to remove someone from a group (see Kropveld, 2003). In situations where we have been asked about that option, we have consistently counseled against it and have suggested non-coercive alternatives
- Existing laws are sufficient in dealing with the multiple problems associated with "cults" and cultic groups

Though the beginnings of AFF and Info-Cult are different, at present both organizations have positions that are very similar concerning how to respond to the multiple concerns raised by the issue of "cults."

Use of terminology

Even though Info-Cult and AFF have each studied cults and educated people about this subject for a quarter of a century, neither organization has ever felt comfortable with the term "cult" (see Web-articles of Rosedale & Langone and Langone for more information on definitional issues).

We do not produce an official list of "cults," even though some people mistakenly interpret any list as a list of "cults." Such a list would have little utility because there are thousands of groups about which people have expressed concern, yet scientific research has been conducted on few groups. A list could even be misleading because some people might mistakenly think that the label "cult" implies that the

group in question has all the significant attributes of the hypothetical type "cult," when in fact it has only some of those attributes or possibly none. Conversely, some people may mistakenly assume that because a group is not on the list, they need not be concerned. Our goal is to help inquirers make more informed judgments and decisions, not to dictate those judgments and decisions.

Thus, we advocate a nuanced, evidence-based approach to definition and classification. We do not ignore or disparage evidence indicating that some groups may closely approach the theoretical type, "cult." Nor do we deny the necessity to make expert judgments about whether or not a particular set of group processes harmed a specific person or persons. We do, however, advocate that these kinds of judgments should rest on careful analyses of structure and behavior within a specific context, rather than a superficial classification decision.

Such analyses sometimes result in the conclusion that some groups that harm some people are not necessarily "cults". A new age group that is neither manipulative nor authoritarian might harm some people because it advocates a medically dangerous diet. A church may harm some believers because its pastor is domineering and abusive. A psychotherapist may harm some patients because she or he doesn't adequately understand how memory works and may, with the best of intentions, induce false memories in clients. These are all examples of individual harm related to interpersonal influence. They are all examples of situations that might understandably arouse the concern of the harmed person's family and our organizations. But these situations are not necessarily "cult" situations, even though they may have a family resemblance to the concept "cult." On the other hand, because appearances can deceive, especially in "cults", further investigation of such cases may reveal the presence of cultic dynamics. The important point to keep in mind is that classification decisions should be based on the best available evidence and should always be subject to reevaluation.

Even though the term "cult" has limited utility, it is so embedded in popular culture that those of us concerned about helping people harmed by group involvements or preventing people from being so harmed cannot avoid using it. Whatever the term's limitations, it can point us in a meaningful direction. And no other term relevant to group psychological manipulation (e.g., coercive persuasion, undue influence, and exploitative manipulation) has ever been able to capture and sustain public interest. If, however, we cannot realistically avoid the term, let us at least strive to use it prudently.

Preventive Education Programs (PEPS)

When discussing PEPS, it is important, first and foremost, to consider the social, cultural, political and legal differences that exist among countries. These differences will influence **how and why** institutions and organizations react to this issue, and subsequently **what** kinds of programs are developed. It is important to note that what is acceptable in one country may not be acceptable in another country.

Some influencing factors to consider include:

- The historical context (i.e. whether cult-related tragedies have occurred in the country);
- The relationship between state and religion
- The privileges (if applicable) given to certain religious groups;
- The presence or not of a state religion;

- The state financing of certain religions ;
- The government's position regarding the cult phenomenon (For example, after the tragic deaths of members of the Order of the Solar Temple, government commissions were set up in France and Switzerland, while in Canada, there was only a coroner's report from the province of Quebec. Furthermore, France subsequently created MIVILUDES (mission interministérielle de vigilance et de lutte contre les dérives sectaires) while in Canada, no Government involvement has occurred.)
- The impact of public and/or political pressure.

Regardless of the kind of PEP that is developed or where, careful consideration should be given beforehand to ensure that the **content** is factual and that the **manner** in which the program is presented respects basic rights and freedoms.

This includes:

- The right to believe whatever one wishes in the religious realm;
- The right to express one's beliefs through worship and practice;
- The right to propagate one's beliefs.

It is also very important to consider that religious freedom has two dimensions:

- A positive dimension: individuals are free to believe what they wish and to profess those beliefs;
- A negative dimension: no one can be forced to embrace a religious idea or to act contrary to what he or she believes.

Who Implements PEPs

Within a country, the mandate, agenda, and type of PEP will vary according to the group or individual who develops it.

PEPs have been developed by:

- Government (courses in schools)
- Private schools (religious and secular)
- Colleges or universities (courses offered within different departments)
- Cult awareness groups
- Community groups
- Religious groups
- Youth groups
- Individuals

Types of Programs

Courses

PEPs are usually offered as a course that takes place over a period of weeks or months and is usually given in academic institutions (high schools, colleges and universities)

High School Course

Here is an example of a six-hour high school course that was developed for high schools in Quebec by the Quebec Ministry of Education (1987), and offered under what was called a moral education class. It is interesting to note that until recently the school system in Quebec was split along religious lines; there used to be a Catholic School Board for Catholics and a Protestant School Board for everyone else. This has changed and the confessional school boards have been replaced by linguistic school boards. We now have a French School Board for Francophones and English school Boards for Anglophones.

The course was entitled "Take up the Challenge: The Cults" and consisted of four classes. The purpose of the course was:

- To understand the phenomenon of new religious groups and the reasons for their proliferation in Quebec.
- To become aware of the questions that this phenomenon provokes.

The objectives of the classes were:

- Present the phenomenon of new religious groups and the reasons for their proliferation in Quebec.
- Describe the problem of the proliferation of new religious groups.
- Present the viewpoints of some of the new religious movements and of those who belong to them.
- Develop concrete actions to deal with new religious groups.

This program reflected the realities of a predominantly French-speaking province in Canada, namely Quebec. Quebec, where I come from, is seen by many observers of cults and new religious movements, as one of the most fertile areas in the world for the emergence of new religious movements, spiritual, new age, esoteric and other groups. This phenomenon is a result of many factors, the most significant one being the historic role that the Catholic Church played in all aspects of life—religious, social, political and cultural—and its subsequent dramatic decline, beginning in the 1960s.

College and University Courses

Example of a course offered at Concordia University in Montreal by a sociologist: "Cults and Religious Controversy in North America."

The aim of this course is to provide students with the tools and conceptual approaches useful to understanding the complex issues arising from the presence of new, unfamiliar religions in our social midst—and their host societies' allergic reactions to what are perceived as "cults", "sects" or "heresies." The major theories in the "microsociology" of new religions will be studied and applied to specific groups. We will attempt a sociological analysis of some of the more controversial NRMs (new religious movements) that emerged between the 1960s and 1980s, and address the following questions:

- What is the appeal of NRMs for North American youth?
- What role do the media play in shaping public attitudes towards "cults"?
- Why do some NRMs turn into orthodox religions, yet others disappear?
- Are apocalyptic "cults" intrinsically dangerous?
- Do cults brainwash?

Guest speakers from various groups will present their own spiritual perspectives. Topics will range from close-up ethnographic studies of several groups to larger topics like sexuality and gender, apocalypticism, racialism, and conversion. The psychological legal and constitutional questions raised by these alternative societies, and youth's sudden radical conversion to a "totalistic" worldview will be addressed, particularly the brainwashing/mind control debate.

A strong focus in the course will be on current conflicts involving minority religions and on their controversial status within a global context of religious pluralism, nationalism, and racial tensions. Finally, we will address the social significance of the "cult controversy" within the history of church-state conflicts in Canadian and American history.

Example of a course offered at Vanier College in Montreal by a psychologist:
"Psychology of Cults."

This course will study cultic groups and why certain individuals are attracted to them. We will identify social-psychological techniques used to recruit, convert and train obedient members. Students will evaluate the controversial concept of "brainwashing" and discuss the importance of using critical thinking, personal morality and ethics in making life decisions. Groups such as The Solar Temple, Scientology, People's Temple, Branch Davidians, Transcendental Meditation, Hare Krishna and Rajneesh, among others, will be discussed.

Example of a course offered at Vanier College in Montreal in the religion department:
"Modern Religions and Cults."

This course will explore cultural groups in North America that are labeled as "Cults" or "New Religious Movements" (NRM). These groups have been the focus of a great deal of media attention following the Waco massacres of the Branch Davidians and the mass suicide of the Solar Temple. The course will also analyze elements of popular culture that exhibit religious characteristics such as pilgrimage and initiation rites.

The course will be divided into six sections which will answer the following questions:

- What are New Religious Movements?
- Why do New Religious Movements Emerge?
- Who Joins New Religious Movements and Why?
- Are Converts to New Religious Movements Brainwashed?
- Why do some New Religious Movements become violent?
- What is the Cultural Significance of the New Religious Movement?

The groups that will be analyzed in relationship to these questions will include the following:

- The Branch Davidians
- The Church of Scientology
- People's Temple
- Solar Temple
- Heaven's Gate

- Ravers
- Sports Fans

Religious-Type Program

Example of a course offered at a private religious school in South Carolina (Ben Lippen School):

This course, entitled "Religion, Cults and the New Age", provides an overview of some of the major world religions and cults that Christians confront daily. Many Americans are being swept up into the web of these false religions and cults because they do not know the truth of Christianity. It is the purpose of this course to analyze what is false by contrasting it with true biblical Christianity. In this way we will be able to not only avoid the pitfalls ourselves, but we will also be prepared to help others out of the "sinking sand."

Formats of Programs

PEPs can also be offered in the form of a presentation, workshop or conference and are designed for students, community groups, religious groups, professional groups, etc.

A **presentation** might include personal testimonials from ex-members or educational films/documentaries, and address some of the following issues:

- Why cults represent a problem.
- The extent of the problem—number of groups and members
- Who is recruited and why do people join.
- Definition of a cult—categories of cults.
- Cult techniques of psychological coercion, mind control. or brainwashing.
- Harmful effects of cult involvement.
- What can be done.

Conferences usually address the issue of cults and new religious movements from different perspectives and may or may not be open to the general public. The annual AFF conferences are a good example of one style of conference, which is open to the public and offers practical assistance, research findings, and information on cults, new religious movements, and other groups. Attendees and speakers are diverse, including academicians, helping professionals, former group members, current group members, families, clergy, educators, and others.

Workshops are usually geared to professional audiences and provide specific information (e.g., for social workers, psychologists, etc., on how to work with former members or working with families). Some workshops, e.g., AFF's annual workshop in Colorado, are aimed at former group members dealing with recovery issues.

Analysis of PEPs

Whereas PEPs aim to sensitize and educate people, sometimes emphasis on a particular group (i.e., reliance on ex-member experiences) or a religious perspective can lead to misconceptions, misunderstandings, and a biased view of the cult phenomenon.

The area of cults and new religious movements is controversial, and the goal of most PEPs is hopefully motivated by the aim of alerting the public to the harm caused by

certain groups and of preventing harm. However, programs that are not monitored can drift towards portraying groups in a solely negative perspective. In that regard a helpful reminder is a quote I frequently use by Michael Langone the Executive Director of AFF: "Some groups may harm some people sometimes, and some groups may be more likely to harm people than other groups."

I would add that, some contributing factors are:

- Location of the group;
- Leadership of the group;
- The period in the group's history that is being observed.

In my view, courses in high schools, colleges, and universities are effective, and I would prefer to see more of them. The only stumbling block, based on my own observations, is the level of knowledge and competency of those who teach the course. **Teacher training would be an important element.**

Many of the "one-shot" programs (i.e., talks, presentations) tend to focus on specific groups and often describe group affiliation using terms such as "brainwashing" or "mind control." Not many look at **group dynamics** as a process of socialization and/or manipulation.

Some recommendations/suggestions:

PEPs must address the issue of consumer protection. It is important to be aware that groups and their leaders may not be what they appear to be and their goals and methods can, to say the least, be questionable.

PEPs must address the issue of vulnerability: We are all potentially vulnerable to being "manipulated."

PEPs must encourage people to question more and to develop critical thinking skills. For short programs, we should be asking what is our goal and how do we best achieve it.

I would strongly recommend that the book I recently coauthored (*Le Phenomene des Sects: l'Etude du Fonctionnement des Groupes - The cult phenomenon: The study of group functioning*) serve as the basis for developing PEPs

Ideas for Activities within a PEP

Course

1. Divide the class into small groups. Each group either picks or is assigned a group to study: The group chosen can be from personal involvement or from information obtained from available literature on the group.

Examples: (Depending on age of students – high school, college, university – groups used will vary):

Sports Team (Amateur or professional) or a team they are on

Youth Group (Religious and non-religious)

A family unit

Scouts or guides

Their social group

A more extreme group (Solar Temple or Heaven's Gate)

A Group such as the Raelians
Small business (family run and not family run)
Large Business (i.e. Ben & Jerrys, Walmarts)
Local political party
Religious Group
Therapy group
School Class (high school, university)

2. Evaluate each group with regard to its leader (history, experiences, style of leadership), the role of the members and their interactions, the rules and regulations of the group, time involved with group activities, punishments, and contact with non-members (how are they viewed)
3. Discuss in class and place each group on a continuum:
open, democratic, tolerant ←-----→ *closed, authoritarian, rigid*
4. Each group prior to the last class is to study their own work group.
5. Evaluate their group according to the above criteria.

One-Shot Program

Condense the above by looking at group processes and giving examples of different situations and individual needs without mentioning the names of specific groups.

Some Dos and Don'ts When Preparing a PEP

- Don't assume there is only one approach. Try different approaches and adapt them to your audience (students, teachers, adults, professionals, etc.).
- Don't use "scare" programs. They may have a reverse effect on those most susceptible to cult enticements. The old anti-marijuana film, "Reefer Madness," for example, is treated as a comedy by many pot-smoking young people.
- Don't rely solely on a film or testimonial to get the message across. A film or former member may prove very popular but it will probably have more impact if it is followed by a structured discussion.
- Promote dialogue & debate
- Share your educational experiences with others and keep up-to-date on what they are doing.

Conclusion

One of the goals of any PEP should be to help people become informed consumers who make informed choices. The only way to achieve this is to design programs that develop critical thinking skills and invite questions, dialogue, and debate.

And so in closing, if you have more questions than you did before I started speaking, then I think I have accomplished in part what I had set out to do.

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