

Common Sense

A New Conversation about Public Education

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A New Conversation for Public Education

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Common Sense

A New Conversation for Public Education

Note to the Reader

Several years ago I was struck by the realization that public education was first established in America with a clearly understood *purpose*. However, I was hard pressed to define exactly what the well understood purpose was today. I began to ask friends, relatives, colleagues and even educators what they thought. But a coherent definition did not quickly roll from their tongues. In the end, after compiling hundreds of responses from people of all walks of life and from different regions of the country, there did seem to be a common denominator. Synthesized, the consensus was that “it is to create well-rounded individuals who will be able to make a contribution to society, be active in civic and community affairs and go on to lead healthy, happy lives.” It sounded pretty good.

The problem was that, upon reflection, much of it did not quite seem to square with reality. For example, few schools today even offer a course in civics (and when they become eligible, our youth do not vote); “well-rounded” had very different and subjective meanings for everyone; “healthy” appeared to be a disconnect based upon studies that indicate over 20% of our children start the school day hungry; and more broadly, since compulsory physical education has been dropped from the curricula in more than 50% of the public schools, our nation’s children are ranked among the most sedentary and least fit of any in the industrial countries.

When pressed for clarification, a second and very different “consensus” began to emerge. Again, synthesized, it seems what parents really wanted for *their* children, was a school that would prepare them to test out well so that they could get into the best college possible in order to get a really great job that would earn them enough money so that they could begin consuming the planet faster than their parents and their future neighbors. To my ear, this fit much better with reality than the first consensus. Not so incidentally, the adult perception of “happy” appeared to be their own view of what would constitute happiness for their offspring. For example, I found that almost nobody wanted their kid to go on to major in philosophy, history or English literature—even if the son or daughter felt that this would be his or her personal road toward happiness.

As a result of this informal survey, I began to understand the reason why the general public never initiates conversations addressing what the purpose of education is, or should be, in America. (Also, why parents don’t want their offspring to major in English literature.) This is simply because everyone already “knows” what the purpose is. Across the land, there is a pervasive kind of background noise as ubiquitous as it is virtually inaudible. The second consensus model just identified never actually needs to be articulated because the background noise keeps saying to us that education is essentially about money. In fact, in our society education has just about become a synonym for a ticket to money. This national belief, because it borders on absolute certainty, requires no discussion, no examination and, of course, no debate. But, in fact, what we most desperately need is a national debate right now before we suddenly discover that it is too late; too late for the nation, too late for humanity. It should be kept

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in mind that if we could somehow magically reform the educational system tomorrow, we would not begin to reap much of the beneficial results for at least a generation. We must raise our national level of awareness to finally admit that what actually drives our educational system today is the prospect of money and the concomitant power to consume. This must be challenged and it must be changed.

A preliminary but critical step may be for us to recognize that we actually do not have a nationally understood and nationally embraced purpose for public education that makes any sense at all if we expect the country and the planet to survive. The next step might then be to initiate a debate different from any that has gone on before. For without defining a new objective, understandable and accepted by all (and, most importantly, understood and accepted by our children), there is little real hope to develop a viable, long-term solution to our most daunting crisis.

However, by examining the historical record we can uncover the original objective for public education and follow how and why that objective (or purpose) has changed over the centuries. Tracking the evolution of public education could allow us to see the problem in a new and different context. Then, with the issue redefined, new strategies and tactics might begin to emerge and other practices that have been time-tested could be retooled and integrated into a truly new paradigm for this high-tech 21st century—not only for America but also for the world.

INTRODUCTION

“In the following pages is offered no thing more than simple facts, plain arguments and common sense; and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, then that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves...”

Thomas Paine

Common Sense, 1776

We usually do not think of our educational system in evolutionary terms, probably because so little has been written for public consumption about the history of public education in America. Actually, the average person has a rather narrow basis for forming an opinion on the matter. For example, much of our understanding of public education is usually limited to our own personal K-12 experience, stories from our parents, involvement with our children’s school experiences and of course what is reported by the media. But a three-generational sampling of a 365 year old continuum (limited to a handful of schools and perhaps only two or three dozen teachers) may not provide enough information or insight to voice a very informed opinion. Moreover, making generalizations based only upon one’s own personal experience is always a dangerous exercise at best. Additionally, because the process of evolution is so slow and tedious, a very small slice of such a long history may not readily reveal the significant changes that have in fact occurred along the way.

In addition to being slow, no form of evolution ever progresses in a clear and linear fashion. Evolution has a tendency to meander—moving in fits and starts, not moving at all for long periods of time with an occasional burst of creativity only after which significant, meaningful change takes place. A longer view may actually illuminate a pattern that has not yet been seriously considered by education theorists. Nevertheless, even with a limited historical perspective, none of us is without very strong opinions on the subject.

Through an historical lens, however, the perspective can be lengthened to reveal that this institution has indeed been evolving and that it was energized, at least twice, by the infusion of something truly new and creative. Though this lens we can assess the profound effects that these evolutionary leaps forward in the educational arena had on this country and, ultimately, upon the entire world. Santayana admonished that “he who forgets the past is condemned to repeat it.” But if, presumably, the past can teach us how not to repeat our mistakes, it can also demonstrate how we achieved our (even more abundant) successes. Some can still remember that for over a century (Circa 1850-1950) our public schools were the envy of the world. It behooves us to determine how we reached such a remarkable pinnacle yet now find ourselves in today’s unenviable state of confusion. An historical, evolutionary view may prove to be very valuable in demystifying what has vexed even the experts for decades.

For the purpose of this exercise, evolution is defined to simply mean going beyond what went before. Not so simply, perhaps, that evolution is, in part, a process that incorporates what went before and then adds new and novel components. To quote Ken Wilber, “healthy evolution must not only transcend what went before but also it must include the essence of what got it to the higher level in the first place... The general

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point of evolution (phylogenic as well as ontogenic) is that when the wisdom of a previous stage is forgotten, a pathology results.” More importantly, when a pathology does result and it is not corrected, the system will stagnate. And, ultimately, if still not fixed, the system will always end in dissolution. It can be argued that the dissolution of our public education system has already started. Today almost two million children are being home-schooled. There is an increasing demand for school vouchers for private school attendance, an increasing number of charter schools and proposed on-line cyber-schools (none of which are subject to prevailing public school rules), not to mention the alarming increase in the national dropout rate. This growing trend of abandoning public education in and of itself may be one of the most important reasons that the current direction of our public school system must be reversed very soon.

I had naively believed that a theory I began to develop a few years ago had been essentially completed. The work identified the original purpose for public education and the evolution of this first purpose was traced through (actually, teased out of) the historical record. The root cause for a relatively healthy evolutionary process going wrong was postulated with supporting arguments. Without getting too far ahead of the narrative, this was the theory presented: America had to identify and embrace a totally new purpose than what had gone before—that this new objective should simply be to teach our children to learn how to learn so that they could continue to do so for the rest of their lives. With this as the established objective it was hoped that we could finally begin to profitably debate the necessary building blocks, the essential strategies and tactics needed in order to meet the new goal. This could constitute a reasoned plan that everyone might understand and support, a new and exciting purpose that would begin to resolve the public education crisis. Soon, however, I realized that the premise was somehow incomplete but could not figure out why. Eventually, I put the work away and did not look at it for several years.

During that period my reading preferences changed from history (my first book was a modest work on Boston’s history) to philosophy. In delving into this new domain, I discovered Ken Wilber who inspired me more through his prodigious writings than all of my previous teachers, professors and additional studies combined. In fact, in just one sentence, Wilber resolved my personal dilemma with the incomplete manuscript. He wrote, “What does it profit us if we successfully create an entire nation of geniuses if they all turn out to be Nazis?” (from A Brief History of Everything) That single sentence alone made it clear that the new purpose for public education could not simply be to teach our children to learn how to learn. Rather, it suggested that the new purpose must be to teach them to learn how to learn and, simultaneously, to teach them to learn how to live so that they will be equipped to do *both* for the rest of their lives.

The first and longest section of this essay will explore how we got to where we are. The original purpose for education will be identified and how that purpose changed over the centuries will be presented. Many of the remarkable results will be reviewed. Then, the reason for a healthy growth trajectory rather suddenly turning pathological will be proposed.

The middle part will assess what damage this pathology has already caused and suggest where this direction may ultimately lead us if we do not effect a profound course correction soon.

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The final section will offer a solution, admittedly with broad parameters. There will be many, many dots to be connected within. It must be emphasized that if this new purpose were to be adopted, countless new strategies and tactics must be developed before the objective can be achieved. Some strategies are already known and have proven successful over the ages. Others are just now being devised. Most, however, are yet to be invented. First, though, we must have a clearly defined objective—one that is not only understood by everyone but also supported by the majority. As with any problem, applying various strategies and tactics without first having a coherent objective is an exercise in futility. But this is exactly what we have been doing for the past 50 years in attempting to solve our education crisis.

Let us begin with an historical perspective and track the evolution of the purpose for public education in America. One very major intent of this review is to reveal how wisdom of a previous stage has been forgotten and in so doing, show that leaving behind these wisdoms contributed significantly to producing the pathology that we must find a cure for very soon.

PART ONE:
THE PAST
CHAPTER I
The Original Purpose

What distinguished the Puritans from the other English settlers who preceded them to the New World, and from those who later followed, were two deeply held convictions. The first was their unalterable belief that God had specifically chosen them, as he had once chosen the Jews, to form a shining example of a righteous community. The Puritans' dominant motive to migrate across a vast and dangerous ocean to settle in a harsh and treacherous wilderness was to have the religious freedom, as their leader John Winthrop put it, "to build a citie on a hill and a beacon of light for all to see." The means to this end was to be a disciplined warfare against sin. The second strong conviction was their firm belief that the primary defense was education.

The Puritans came to the New World in 1629, with leaders who were highly educated for their day and came from well-to-do stock. Most of the leaders had gone to Oxford or Cambridge University but virtually all of the flock had the advantage of having had some education. Together they brought with them from England an educational ideal that was to develop the whole man—his body and soul as well as his intellect. But before they could begin addressing the issue of education, they had to build houses, provide for their livelihoods, construct places for worship and establish a government. Not quite six years later, on April 13, 1635, at a general town meeting the citizens of Boston established the Latin Grammar School (today called the Boston Latin School). In doing so, the Puritans not only created the first free public school in the Colonies, but also laid the foundation for what was to become the public school system of America. It is for this reason that a visit to the beginnings of our first public school is indispensable for an understanding of the roots and of the development of American education.

The free Latin Grammar School had a well understood and singular *purpose*. The Puritans proposed instruction in the classics to prepare young men for college and "to secure a body of learned scholars and ministers who, by acquaintance with Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Syriac, could obtain a knowledge of the Scriptures in their original languages."

With regard to laying the foundation for what was eventually to become our public school system, the Puritans went even further. In 1642, the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed an act that required the elementary education of all white children, noting that "one chief project of the old deluder, Satan, [is] to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures--by keeping them in an unknown tongue." This was the first time in the entire English speaking world that the State ordered that all her children be taught to read. In 1647, the General Court then mandated that every township of 50 householders appoint a Master "to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read" (in what was later to be called a common school). The following year, in 1648, the Court decreed that every township of 100 households establish a grammar school (a college preparatory "Latin" school).

The significance of the laws of 1642, 1647 and 1648 is that they constitute the foundation for a system that, today, we all take for granted. Certainly the Puritans' objective was to perpetuate their own distinctive ideas and do it by means of education and indoctrination. And just as clearly, they established a system of education that was

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founded upon their religious beliefs. But in doing so, the Puritans established principles that, ultimately, resonated for better or for worse in classrooms across the nation (and elsewhere) for more than 300 years.

Although this essay addresses the primary and secondary public education crisis in America, it is important to shift our attention for a moment to the arena of higher education. More specifically, to examine the genesis of Harvard College which was established by these same Puritans in 1637. The reasons for this are several. The number one reason that our first public school was established in 1635 was specifically to attack sin and to generate scholars to attend an institution of higher learning. It is no surprise then that the Puritans would move quickly to establish a college to continue that process.

Secondly, Harvard was the *one and only* college in the Colonies for 57 years--until William and Mary was established. As a result, Harvard's existence actually became the *raison d'être* for most of the colleges that followed, as we shall see. Finally, this Puritan Harvard played a most powerful and profound role in shaping the curricula and standards of secondary education in America for more than three centuries.

Although the Harvard College Charter nowhere specifically mentions the training of ministers, a learned clergy was clearly the immediate and pressing need that it was expected to remedy. The broader and long-term purpose was the advancement of learning and to develop the whole man. The Charter states that the "purposes of the college are the advancement of all good literature and arts and sciences and making all other necessary provisions that may conduce to the education of the English and Indian youth of this country in knowledge and godliness." However, New England's First Fruits, a pamphlet of 1643, (usually attributed to Henry Dunster, the first president of Harvard) stresses as the purpose of the college "to advance learning and perpetuate it to Posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the Churches, when our present ministers shall lie in the dust."

The admission standards were not complicated. In fact there were only two basic requirements. First was that the applicant have a sound knowledge of Classical Latin and Greek. Second was that every applicant "consider the main end of his life and studies, to know God and Jesus Christ which is Eternal Life." (If a student's family was unable to pay the tuition in cash, barter was an acceptable alternative.)

The daily regimen of our first college is also illustrative. Every day began and ended with a prayer. Holy Scripture was read to the students and expounded upon by the college president--also on a daily basis. Saturday was reserved for catechizing to prepare for the Sabbath which was wholly devoted to worship.

Although the motto, or college seal, "Veritas" (Truth) was adopted in 1643, it was supplanted in 1650 by "in Christi Gloriam" (in the Glory of Christ). In 1693, it was changed to "Christo et Ecclesia" (Christ and the Church) and remained that for over one hundred fifty years. Finally, in 1850, the original motto, "Veritas" was resurrected through the efforts of Oliver Wendell Holmes and is the current seal of the college.

There is absolutely no way for anyone to misinterpret the purpose of the first college in America. It was not to train physicians--in the 17th century, medicine had not

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as yet become a “learned” profession. The Harvard Medical School was established in 1782. Nor was the purpose to train lawyers--law was not even a profession at that time. The Harvard Law School was finally chaired in 1815. Although the first Chair of Divinity was not to be endowed until 1721, up to nearly the end of the 17th century the ablest young men of the graduating class proceeded on to a “Masters” degree and then entered the Puritan, and later the Congregational Ministry.

It was the power of the Puritans’ faith and their Judeo-Christian morality that enabled them to establish a thriving community in what they saw as a vast and inhospitable wilderness. It was also the power of their faith that led to the founding of two institutions of learning which today survive as international models of excellence. (The Boston Latin School and Harvard College).

For the next 57 years, Harvard was the only college and the undisputed intellectual center of the Colonies. With such a tremendous head start, Harvard’s theological influence and power was felt in every corner of the American Colonies. This eventually caused major concerns for leaders of other Protestant sects. The first direct response was in 1691 when a charter was obtained by James Blair, the Bishop of London’s Commissary in Virginia, to establish the College of William and Mary. It was finally time for the Church of England to begin preserving and promoting her dogma in the Colonies. Yale was to follow in 1701, more or less along the lines of Harvard. In fact, until 1717, Yale’s classes were held in various Congregational parsonages in or around New Haven.

But with only three colleges in the business of training scholars and ministers, there was a growing consensus that the guardians of the faith had become too formal in their practices. The response was, from 1740 to 1766, that six additional colleges were established.

1740--The Charity School of Pennsylvania (now called the University of Pennsylvania). Although officially non-sectarian, the first provost was the Reverend William Smith.

1746--The College of New Jersey (now called Princeton). The first instruction was at the home of the Presbyterian Minister, Jonathan Dickerson.

1754--King’s College (now called Columbia). The grant was obtained from King George II by Anglican, Sam Johnson.

1754--The Moors Indian Charity School (now called Dartmouth) was founded by the Reverend Eleazar Wheelock.

1764--Rhode Island College (now called Brown) was Baptist in origin.

1766--Queen’s College (now called Rutgers) was started from a grant from King George III and was originally Reformed Dutch.

(Additional early colleges and their religious affiliations appear at the end of this chapter.)

Clearly the original legacy of Harvard was evident if only by the response of the other Protestant sects that answered a perceived threat by establishing their own religious

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training grounds—albeit administered with somewhat more liberal policies than did Harvard.

Early American Education, on every level, was dominated by Protestantism. The purpose clearly was religious indoctrination. However, outside Massachusetts, where school was not mandatory, most individual colonists were essentially indifferent to, if not suspicious of, formal education. Nevertheless, there was still a purpose for teaching their children to read, which was so that they could read the Holy Bible. Any other or additional education was considered by many to be impractical. Throughout the Colonies, most learning was of the “hands-on” variety such as learning how to farm, or by apprenticing to a trade.

There were only a handful of “grammar schools” scattered throughout the Colonies. So few, in fact, that some wealthy colonists actually boarded their boys in Boston from as far away as Maryland and Virginia, paying tuition for them to attend the Latin Grammar School and then to attend Harvard. (In the Southern Colonies there existed so-called “plantation schools” or “petty schools,” but they were relatively few in number. Wealthy plantation owners or various families who hired a tutor for their children might invite their neighbors’ children to attend the lessons in a private house.)

Both within the Massachusetts Bay Colony where school attendance was mandatory and free, as well as in the other Colonies where schools were not required, there were a surprising number of private schools and academies. In fact they far outnumbered public schools. These included: dame schools (conducted by women in their own homes); elementary schools of reading, writing and arithmetic; advanced schools (specializing in law, medicine, languages and philosophy); vocational schools for bookkeeping and accounting; as well as schools for special accomplishments such as fencing, music, arts and manners.

The public schools, the private schools and the academies that could afford them used schoolbooks such as The Hornbook, The Protestant Tutor, The Battledove, The English School Master and The New England Primer. Common to all was their Biblical doctrine, religious references and their catechismic lessons.

Although schools actually played a relatively small role outside of New England in early America (besides Boston, school laws were passed during the 17th century only in Plymouth, Massachusetts and in New Haven, Connecticut), the essential *purpose* for all of them was to perpetuate the Protestant morality.

APPENDIX

Some Early Colleges with Their Religious Affiliations

- 1789 Georgetown -- Roman Catholic
- 1819 Colgate --originally The Hamilton Library and Theological Institute
- 1835 Albion -- Protestant
- 1836 Wesleyan -- Methodist
- 1838 Duke -- (Trinity College) Methodist and Friends

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- 1839 Boston University --Methodist
- 1845 Baylor -- Baptist
- 1846 Bucknell --(University of Lewisburg) Baptist
- 1853 Cornell --Quaker
- 1863 Boston College -- Roman Catholic
- 1870 Wellesley -- originally The Theological School for Women
- 1875 Brigham Young -- Mormon
- 1887 Bethel -- originally Bethel College and Seminary

The overwhelming majority of our earliest colleges were established to promote one flavor or another of Christianity. The notable exceptions were colleges of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry and other Land Grant Colleges, as well as the Normal Schools which were chartered in the 19th Century to train teachers, and colleges specifically chartered for women who otherwise would have had little or no access to higher education.

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The Founding Fathers were all Christians (the majority were Episcopalians) but they were also children of the Enlightenment. As such, they all entertained the hope of progress through reason. On the one hand, they held to the doctrine of original sin--that man had an innate tendency toward wickedness. On the other hand, many wanted to embrace Rousseau's dictum that the voice of the people was the voice of God. This dichotomy was manifest not only in their attitudes regarding democracy and how to draft the constitution, but also in their attitudes about education. Ron Miller in What Are Schools For? points out that "Most of them agreed that a republican society simply could not survive unless the public was sufficiently educated; the liberals held that education was vital for citizens to appreciate their liberties under natural law, while the more conservative republicans, concerned with restraining the people's more impulsive tendencies, thought schooling should teach them to choose, and then obey, the most qualified leaders."

Dr. Benjamin Rush, Surgeon General in the Continental Army and signer to the Declaration of Independence, was a strong advocate of the conservative view. He was interested not only in the education of the youth of the new republic but also in shaping the direction that this education would take. Unlike the view of John Adams, for example, a Harvard College graduate who espoused the traditional classical education with an emphasis on Latin and Greek and "adherence to the principles, practices and institutions of our fathers," Rush argued for a more "practical" education. He believed that elementary and secondary education must be compulsory with the goal "to render the mass of the people more homogeneous and thereby fit them more easily for uniform and peaceable government." Rush, more importantly, also believed that religion was necessary to correct the effects of learning! "I believe," he wrote, "learning does real mischief to the morals and principles of mankind."

Noah Webster, father of the American dictionary and one of the first professional authors of schoolbooks in the United States, was another of the many advocates of a practical education and one which would help to foster a participatory democracy. "Education," wrote Webster, "should implant in the minds of the American youth, the principles of virtue and liberty; and inspire them with just and liberal ideas of government."

Miller notes that self-sacrifice, patriotism, loyalty and a solid religious foundation would soon become the four supporting legs of a new nationalism--imparted through free and soon to become mandatory public education. Latin and Greek were of little value in building a new nation, especially a nation that was wholly committed to a free market, capitalistic system.

The conservative republican view first emerged in concrete form in Massachusetts. Around Boston the severe Puritan ethic had gradually mellowed into a much more benign Congregationalism and local leaders adopted the conservatives' argument for teaching the ideals of liberty, democracy, and virtue in addition to the Protestant Ethic. The youth of Massachusetts would now be offered a more practical

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education than had ever been envisioned by the Puritans. This was a *huge* philosophical shift from the strictly religious indoctrination of the past and a major evolutionary leap forward. To insure the survival of the new republic, the youth, in accordance with Rush's dictum would be "rendered more uniform and homogeneous" to establish a peaceable government. Rush's admonition that religion was necessary to correct the effects of learning was simultaneously adopted. As a point of fact, in Massachusetts it was actually enacted into law. (Although Massachusetts was never actually a theocracy, there had been from the very beginning, a "shadow government" which consisted of the church and its ministers—and it was still a very powerful force.)

In 1789, as one of the provisions of The System of Public Education, it was voted by the Massachusetts legislature "that it be the indispensable duty of the schoolmasters daily to commence the duties of their offices by prayer and a reading of a portion of Sacred Scriptures at the opening of School and in the evening with a prayer." Moreover, the masters were required "to instruct the children in their care in the Assemblies' catechism every Saturday unless the parents request that they may be taught any particular catechism of the religious society to which they belong."

Under this same act, the first school committee in the United States was authorized. From 1789 through 1822 the members of the Boston School Committee included 64 names. It is especially noteworthy that of that number, 22 were leading ministers of Boston.

We see that a profound shift regarding the purpose of education had now taken place in Boston, the birthplace and the vanguard of public education in America. The purpose was no longer simply to secure a body of learned scholars and to train ministers. The new purpose of education was to secure a body of moral, loyal and productive citizens—citizens trained in practical matters who would also be active participants in building the business of America to insure the success of a new republic.

This first evolutionary leap forward that changed the *purpose* of education was 152 years in the making and took a Revolution to effect.

Now, and for the first time, the purpose of education was clearly being defined by the state. And the Protestant Ethic that had previously defined the purpose was relegated to a secondary role. But it must be emphasized that this role was still an extremely powerful one. Unquestionably, the Judeo-Christian ethic was still a very integral part of the overall purpose of public education throughout America.

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Chapter III
The Second Great Leap Forward

Clearly, Massachusetts was a leader when it came to public education. But, outside of Massachusetts, school systems were very slow in developing. And now, the dinner plate of the new government of the new United States of America was not only full--it was overflowing. First the national economy had to be expanded and fortified after the Revolution. In addition, the new Congress was attempting to define and balance the powers of the Federal government and the relationship between it and the States. Treaties had to be negotiated with other countries, and a Navy had to be built to protect the country against other potential invasions from Europe. The matter of public education was clearly the responsibility of the States and the States, in turn, were delegating that responsibility as well as the nuts and bolts decisions to the local districts. In fact, as individual States began to draft their own Constitutions, only three of them made any reference whatsoever to public education in their original ratifications. (Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Connecticut). With another war (the War of 1812), significant territorial expansion and population shifts into newly explored lands, it took more than four decades for State and local governments to even begin to develop their public school systems in earnest. *But for the first time since 1635, a new purpose (to secure a body of moral, loyal and productive citizens) had been identified and accepted.*

There were, of course, schools prior to the start of the Revolution and new schools continued to be established at its conclusion. But as we began the 19th century, American education was largely private and most teachers were trained (those who were “trained” at all) in private academies. Most of the emerging “common” schools (specifically for teaching the three “R’s”) were set up in rural America and throughout the expanding frontier. Some were established and taught by missionaries while others were taught by recent college graduates. Most, however were headed by women trained in private academies. Some teachers had absolutely no training at all. But most of these schools did have one thing in common. They were one-room schoolhouses with a single instructor teaching students of all ages, simultaneously.

During this transitional period (1789-1820) of our new nation, public education was rudimentary, sporadic and certainly not uniform. In 1830, however, Alexis de Tocqueville noted, in *Democracy in America*, that “I do not believe there is a country in the world where, in proportion to the population, there are so few ignorant and, at the same time, so few learned individuals. Primary instruction is within reach of everybody; superior instruction is scarcely to be obtained by any.”

De Tocqueville further noted that “America had produced few writers of distinction, no great historians and not a single eminent poet.” He went on to add that there were second-rate towns in Europe where more literary works were published annually than in the 24 States of the Union put together. Finally, he observed that “the science of manufacture had very few inventors.”

What was clear to Alexis de Tocqueville was becoming increasingly clear to many Americans as well. By 1830, it was already evident that the United States was rapidly joining the Industrial Revolution that had begun in Europe several decades

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before. (In many ways that recognition parallels our current great awakening to the fact that we must now compete in the so called “global economy.”)

As a result of industrialization, a tremendous transformation of American society was taking place on all levels and very swiftly. More than any other one thing, industrialization meant even greater urbanization. As the cities in the north began new explosive growth, they quickly assumed a totally different character. Where once upper middle and middle classes had lived side by side with the least affluent, residential areas now became separate and distinct according to status. Unskilled workers from rural areas and an ever-increasing number of immigrants exacerbated social problems: overcrowding, deteriorating sanitary conditions and stress. Generally, the south was spared most of this experience due to the resistance to industrialization by its agriculture-based economy. In the north, though, leaders in all of the major cities were becoming increasingly alarmed. The political and cultural pressures had never been greater, even during the War of Independence.

Once again, we visit the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which now had America’s first State Board of Education. The Secretary of the Board was a former State legislator by the name of Horace Mann, who would later become the first president of Antioch College in Ohio. Mann was very concerned with the state of the cities, as well as the state of the nation, and, consequently, he became one of the country’s greatest crusaders for educational reform.

Very simply put, Mann believed that education was the vehicle “to create a full personal life.” Moreover, his conception of the “good society” could come about only if schools created a common set of beliefs and attitudes. Mann and others held that the school systems across the land such as they were (one-room rural schoolhouses, untrained or poorly trained teachers, a jumble of private schools and no organized “system” of public schooling) was totally inadequate. As Secretary of the Massachusetts Board, Mann traveled to Europe seeking solutions.

Upon his return, he presented to the legislators what they considered to be “a most stimulating report.” As part of his proposed reforms, Mann re-emphasized that all primary and secondary education must be free, public and overseen by the state. (Already included in the Massachusetts State Constitution authored by John Adams.) He further argued that teacher training had to be professional and uniform. Perhaps equally important, he suggested the construction of large buildings with many rooms and the separation of children by age and by grades. Increasing urban populations and school enrollments had made one-room schoolhouses impractical. (Although doing away with the one-room schoolhouse was, in rural areas especially, a reform that would take decades to accomplish.) Initially, Mann was successful in gaining the support of only a few education reformers in other states such as Henry Bernard, the new School Commissioner in Connecticut. The reformers, meager in number, immediately recognized that their goals would not be achieved without the moral and financial support of the then most powerful segment of society—the industrialists.

Their appeal to the capitalists was that public schooling would benefit industry: that a reformed and unified system of public education would contribute dependable

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workers with disciplined work habits and that a more educated worker would be more respectful of authority. These were no small issues to industrialists who now expected workers to live by a time clock rather than by the rhythms of the sun, the moon and the seasons. Furthermore, the reformers pointed out that with such workers, productivity was bound to increase and so too would profits. The industrialists were receptive to these arguments recognizing that what Mann and his supporters were proposing was essentially what they, themselves, were attempting to master. Were not large buildings with many rooms, separating and moving students along by age and by classes not unlike mass production on an assembly-line basis? Mann, Bernard and their followers ultimately won the support of industry.

By 1838, the High School System was just beginning. The Central High School of Philadelphia was established out of the republican concern in Philadelphia to develop a community of public spirited citizens, the need for moral education and the desire that children obtain a practical education. The obvious social and economic need was to provide quality workers for the new Revolution--ones who would be obedient to authority and loyal to the State.

In 1839, the first public "Normal" School was opened in Lexington, Massachusetts, to train teachers. (While abroad, Horace Mann became aware of schools in France and Prussia that prepared teachers to instruct pupils but did not necessarily confer degrees. *Normal* is derived from the Latin *normalis*, meaning model or rule. The purpose of a normal school was to impart rules for teaching.) As the concern for public education grew, there was a far greater need for better-trained teachers than ever before. Although still considered to be extremely important, merely instilling religious and moral values was no longer enough. Certain basic skills had to be taught in order to generate a steady stream of suitably trained workers. By the 1870's, most states had established tax-supported public school systems and unprecedented sums of money were being appropriated for buildings, equipment, textbooks and teacher training. Almost overnight there was a palpable new *hope* spreading throughout the land. Free public education was fast becoming what Mann called "the great equalizer," offering opportunity not based upon class or social standing—a meritocracy rather than an aristocracy through this remarkable vehicle of systematized public education.

Although there would be an ongoing debate over the philosophy of public education, it is clear that a second and very major evolutionary step was now occurring in the 19th century regarding the purpose of education. According to The Report of the Committee of Ten (the nation's first blue ribbon committee of professional educators chaired by Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard), dated July 9, 1892,

"The secondary schools of the United States, taken as a whole, do not exist for the purpose of preparing boys and girls for colleges...their main function is to prepare them for the duties of life."

The purpose of education was being defined by the state, but it was also being shaped by both society and the economy. The entire country was now formally in the business of training a new kind of qualified worker for the Industrial Revolution that was in high gear.

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The reason for tracing a brief outline of the history of education in America is twofold. The first has to do with human nature. As humans, we all tend to generalize based upon our own personal experiences. So when we begin to address an issue, the issue of public education for example, our frame of reference is usually a very personal and narrow one. We make assessments and ground our opinions based upon our own individual experience within the public school system. Our historical overview rarely goes beyond what our parents may have told us about their personal experiences. Having left the public school system ten or more years earlier, we may be re-introduced to it when we have school age children. In any event, our generalizations are typically grounded over no more than three generations. However, in order to understand where we are—and more importantly where we must go—requires that we go back to the beginning; that we find out what education’s original purpose was, and how it slowly changed over the centuries to meet the changing needs of government, industry and society. These needs continue to change today, and will tomorrow and through the future. This is critically important if only to recognize that the institution of public education can evolve and that, in fact, it has evolved and it must continue to evolve.

Without a longer historical perspective than our personal experience gives us, we are easily seduced by education professionals who, themselves, frequently have little or no historical overview. Over the past several years this observer has spoken with scores of college students who are Education majors, with career and former teachers, with school administrators and with professors. When each was asked what the original purpose of public and higher education was in America, only one of them knew.

When we do discuss the public education crisis, we believe that we enter the fray all speaking a common language and wrongly assume that we share a universal foundation and grounding. But the personal experiences of each of us are too varied. Moreover, our historical frame of reference is far too narrow. So the first reason for this review is to remind Americans that public education has been going on here, and changing, since 1635, and to demonstrate that there was always a well understood purpose. This purpose has evolved, however slowly, over many years. The second reason is to underscore a fact that may now be just a bit clearer. The architects who were responsible for introducing what was “new and novel” into the stream of educational evolution (First, the Founding Fathers, then Horace Mann and the industrialists) were very careful not to leave out “wisdom of a previous stage.” Judeo-Christian morality was still a very major component of the educational process. In both evolutionary leaps forward, the system was able to transcend what had gone before but did not forget to include the wisdom of the principles and practices that had gotten it to that point in the first place. A more practical education, free, mandatory, overseen and paid for by the state did not lessen the necessity to teach our children how to live a moral life. The results of this healthy evolutionary process were nothing less than profound

Within just a few decades, many of de Tocqueville’s earlier criticisms of America previously referred to were literally demolished by this new and increasingly powerful engine of education. This had now become an engine which would, ultimately, create the most literate, the wealthiest and the most influential society in the history of the world.

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Over this relatively short period, almost everybody it seems was learning to read and to write and to reason. Very few, of course, went on to college (and most never completed high school—by the year 1900, America’s high school graduation rate was only 6%), but there was an ever-growing hunger for learning and for improvement. Through this “great equalizer” of public education, parents could see the very real possibility of upward mobility (as could immigrants who flocked to America in ever increasing numbers). More importantly, if for some reason it was too late for them, at least their children’s future would inevitably be better than their own. Perhaps the most powerful human concept is expressed in English by a four-letter word—*love*; if so, the second most powerful four-letter word must be *hope*. And the new hope that was spreading all across the land had become so pervasive that it was almost tangible.

Almost overnight there was an explosion of newspapers, magazines, authors, book publishers, artists, poets, photographers, inventors and entrepreneurs. Clearly there was a synergy between this new purpose of free and mandatory public education and the *hope* that was sweeping the nation and making this revolution much, much, more than *just* an Industrial Revolution. (Not so incidentally, free and mandatory public education was not implemented in England until the 1880’s.) The British Industrial Revolution had begun decades before but Great Britain had a class system incompatible with meritocracy. The British lacked the most important catalyst that would quickly propel America past England in virtually every field. And that was the catalyst of optimism and hope: the individual’s belief that he had the opportunity to make something better of himself, regardless of his status at birth.

Consider just a few of our new writers who emerged during this remarkable period: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, John Greenleaf Whittier, Edgar Allen Poe, Louisa May Alcott, James Fenimore Cooper, Richard Henry Dana, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Samuel Clemens and Booker T. Washington. De Tocqueville must have been pleased to learn before he died in 1859, that America had at least one (eminent) poet--Walt Whitman, whose first edition of Leaves of Grass was published in 1857. (An open copy of that book was found in de Tocqueville’s study when he died.)

This was becoming known as the era of the Progressives and of Professionalism. New scientific techniques and inventions began to further fuel the imagination and hope of America. Charles Goodyear, Samuel F. B. Morse, Thomas Edison, Elias Howe and Alexander Graham Bell were inventing and creating entire new industries.

It was also becoming the age of specialization and professionalism not only in industry but also in education. The Normal School system for training teachers was giving way to specialized graduate school programs. Education was quickly becoming more centralized and bureaucratic. Professional associations were being formed everywhere, including among the educators. Schooling had become mandatory across the nation and laws restricting child labor were finally being enacted. A powerful notion was becoming embedded in the hearts and the psyches of Americans—that they or their children could aspire to and become almost anything that they wanted to become if they studied, worked hard enough and had a firm belief in the Almighty. Possibilities now

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appeared to be boundless. Their child might grow up to be president of the company, or even the President of the United States!

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The 20th Century began as a wondrous age full of optimism and hope. Americans were quick to apply the profusion of recent scientific discoveries and technological inventions to improving their quality of life in all arenas. With the harnessing of electricity and the country's ample natural resources, bold entrepreneurs turned the United States into the world's foremost modern industrial state. Electric light bulbs turned night into day. Telephone lines were connecting people, home to home and business to business, over great distances in real-time. The Wright Brothers were pioneering aviation. New corporations and conglomerates were being established by capitalists such as J. Pierpont Morgan who bought out the steel interests of Andrew Carnegie and formed U.S. Steel Corporation. Carnegie, a Scott immigrant, retired and spent the rest of his life giving away most of his millions to foster education and peace.

Similarly, oil magnate John D. Rockefeller retired in 1911 and devoted himself to philanthropy—ultimately contributing \$550 million to education and public welfare organizations. (The equivalent of several billions today.) Truly a new spirit was developing across the land.

Subway systems and surface trolleys were being built in order to cheaply and efficiently transport working people within major metropolitan areas, and Henry Ford had started to put America on wheels. He saw that with his new assembly line process he could produce a million Model T Fords a year. But Ford also realized that he would soon end up with a lot of unsold cars when he ran out of wealthy people to buy them. It was clear to him that if the workers had no leisure time an automobile certainly would be of no practical use to them. At the same time he knew that even his relatively well paid workers could not afford to purchase the cars that they were laboring so efficiently to produce. Ford's remarkable solution to this dilemma was to double the wages of his workers so they could acquire a Model T and, simultaneously, to reduce the workday to 8 hours so that the workers would have some leisure time to enjoy their new purchase.

A new middle class was coming of age. Many skilled laborers as well as professionals now had increasing access to middle class comforts. Technology had made work and daily living easier and more complicated at the same time. The technological complexities of life were both the result of and the impetus for an even more thorough public education. In 1918, Missouri became the last state in the nation to ratify a compulsory school attendance law. Child labor laws finally were being enacted and enforced. Trade unions had been born, and by 1916, The American Federation of Teachers was formed to improve the salaries and working conditions of its members, and to improve school education generally. Tensions that led eventually to World War I spurred increased spending on inventive, applied research directed towards improving military capabilities. As a result, many new materials, products and processes of production were developed that found non-military uses as well. Companies sought out scientists and engineers who might give them a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The more demand there was for specialty expertise, the more interest there was in education.

In 1930 the United States boasted the highest percentage of industrial production in the world (34% in the U.S. vs. 10% for Great Britain—the previous world leader).

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Even the harsh conditions suffered by many people during the Great Depression did not crush the new spirit of America. By 1940, the economy had already started to rebound. The Gross National Product had finally surpassed the 1929 level and by more than 10%. By 1941, US involvement and ultimately entry into World War II, and subsequent Allied victory, propelled the economy to new heights. It was this new vehicle of public education that had fostered a hope, indeed, now a resolute belief that everything was possible and just as importantly, through the power of our faith, we were unconquerable.

The country was embracing the culture of technology. “Technocracy,” the absolute domination of technology, was becoming a major national goal. In retrospect, this was the beginning of an era where very soon everyone would have to reach at least a minimum level of technical competence or run the risk of being left behind. Some educators were placing an increasing emphasis on the problem of the individual learning to live in a very complex society. Francis Parker and John Dewey were beginning to create what would later be called the “Theory of Progressive Education.” From the early 19th Century until World War I, the philosophy of education was, as we have seen, “industry and society” centered. Now a new philosophy was being offered: “child-centered education.” One of its major arguments was that if children are denied the experience of democracy in the classroom, we could not expect them to practice democracy as adults.

By the end of World War II we had the Atomic Bomb. MIT had developed the first computer—“the differential analyzer” and Harvard had produced the first automatic digital computer. Few at the time realized that yet a new revolution was beginning. No more than people were, at first, conscious of entering the Industrial Revolution more than a century earlier. In 1947, the scientists at the Bell Laboratory invented the transistor. By 1950, America was successfully experimenting with guided missiles. A college education had been made possible for qualified World War II GI’s. And, by 1950, illiteracy in America was estimated to be less than 3.2%—the lowest in the world.

America had become a nation of readers during this century and everyone was hungry to learn. Literary works by Ernest Hemingway, John dos Passos, Jack London, William Faulkner, Upton Sinclair, John Steinbeck and other popular new authors were published first in hard copy, which were then followed by much less expensive paperback editions. Populations in major cities supported both morning and evening newspapers. There was a proliferation of both general interest magazines and trade publications. We had also become a nation of listeners. Virtually every household across America had a radio. Americans had mastered at least two forms of communication—reading and listening. By 1951, however, this attribute would begin to change dramatically. Television sets proliferated--from 1.5 million to 15 million in just one year. We were laying the foundation for a future America of non-readers and sound-bytes. (Radio had the wonderful attribute of engaging one’s imagination—as did reading. Both encouraged one to pause and to reflect, which television very rarely does.)

Nonetheless, the Industrial Revolution paradigm of public education had propelled the United States into becoming the most literate, the wealthiest and the most powerful nation on the planet.

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Way back in the 1920's, there had been a small but passionate counter-culture arguing for a different model for education. Later, Ron Miller, in What Are Schools For? pointed out that five themes had supported the foundation for the Industrial Revolution model of public education: Protestant Christianity, Scientific Reductionism, Restrained Democratic Ideology, Capitalism and Nationalism. Whatever its flaws, the system “worked,” though it became more and more centralized and bureaucratic. As a result, holistic educators such as Johan Pestalozzi, Friedrich Froebel, the Transcendentalists, Ralph Waldo Emerson, David Thoreau, Francis Parker and others proved to be of less and less consequence over the decades. The Montessori and the Waldorf schools were not widely accepted, though they would be re-discovered in the early 1960's.

All the while, John Dewey continued to promote his ideology and gained pockets of support, not only in America but also in China through Hu Shi. Although Dewey's philosophy was not always holistic, it was labeled “progressive education.” But it was not until post World War II that his pedagogy, albeit in a diluted form, began to enjoy more widespread support. It seems that some part of the nation's “collective unconscious” was sensing that we had already been moving to a new and different revolution and that the Industrial Revolution model was no longer going to suffice: there had to be a fundamental shift in the *purpose* of education in order to prepare America for what was rapidly becoming a High Tech, Knowledge and Information Revolution.

By 1957, Dr Seuss had published The Cat In The Hat, while B.F. Skinner was perfecting a box in which to raise his daughter and (he hoped) the country's, children (the infamous Skinner Box). Here were two diametrically opposed philosophies regarding how to raise and educate children.

A new age was dawning as it had during the Renaissance when Copernicus and Galileo courageously challenged conventional wisdom. Unfortunately, though, neither Seuss, nor the progressives, nor Skinner and the Behaviorists were courageously tackling the fundamental, and already obsolete, premise of public education. Both these adversarial camps were tinkering with a model that had been in existence nearly for 120 years. In fact, neither group ever even asked the most fundamental of questions which should have been: “What, today, should be the new purpose of public education?” As a result, what might have become a useful debate simply became an example of “*ad-hocism*” —endless tinkering with the existing Industrial Revolution model. And in the middle sat the American public, at once fascinated and repulsed by the incredible notion of, literally, raising our children in a box and charmed by the softer self-driven model of Seuss and the progressives.

Whether or not this debate still might have ultimately evolved to a point where someone, finally, would have asked the key question, we will never know. This is because the debate was interrupted, then sidetracked, by a single international event.

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Hopefully the day shall never arrive when we have to acknowledge that October 4, 1957, was the date that the USSR launched an “attack” that was the catalyst that eventually led to the destruction of the United States of America. Today we all know that the USSR has already fragmented and is in a state of disarray, if not chaos, and we are pretty sanguine about it, too. We are convinced that nothing, especially an “Evil Empire,” could ever bring the United States to her knees.

When the Russians launched Sputnik I, it set off a long chain of events that was never planned, nor could it have been foreseen by their leaders. For the USSR, this course actually culminated in her own destruction. But it also started a process that has been slowly, but inexorably, destroying the United States of America. It is ironic that the experts predicted this calamitous fate for both nations would be the result of nuclear war. The Soviet Union, however, has already disintegrated and the United States is also beginning to deteriorate from within without a nuclear weapon ever having been fired by or at either country.

Historians agree that the most difficult period of history for anyone to scrutinize is always the one the person happens to be living in. This is, undoubtedly, for two reasons. The first is that we are oblivious to minute, incremental changes—seemingly unrelated—that ultimately have a profound effect upon the whole. The second is the tendency that we humans have of generalizing based only upon our own personal experiences. Ultimately, and unfortunately, this leaves us not with the perspective of a wise old owl. Rather, it leaves us with a “worm hole” view of the past as well as the present.

So it is today that most people have missed the profound and pervasive effect that a single and fairly recent international event has had on this country, particularly with regard to education. The initial Sputnik threat continues to have an insidious effect on our nation because of the intensity of the original response to it, and of all of the subsequent decisions made by our leaders (and by all of us) as a consequence of our initial and, at the time, justified panic.

Just months after Sputnik was launched, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was established. Then the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) superseded the National Intelligence Authority and was given broad, surreptitious powers. Quickly, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) was passed. Moreover, as soon as John F. Kennedy was elected President in 1960, he promised the nation that the United States would not lose the space race to the Russians. Furthermore, he vowed that we would be the first to put a man on the moon. Simultaneously, the greatest and costliest arms race ever conceived by man was escalated—it was so costly that it ultimately bankrupted the USSR.

Today we have all but forgotten that all across the entire country Americans were building bomb shelters in their backyards. State and local Civil Defense agencies designated certain public and private buildings as Defense Shelters and stockpiled them with the means to survive the almost inevitable nuclear attack. John F. Kennedy galvanized both these measures into the psyches of the citizens in a letter to the American public, published by Life Magazine on September 7, 1961. In this message, Kennedy

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told the country that the US way of life was under threat, and citizens needed to prepare for all eventualities. Standard fire drills at public schools gave way to nuclear attack drills. Evacuation routes for major urban areas were publicized. Now, however, because the perceived nuclear threat has greatly diminished, we give little thought to, or assign little lasting import to this incredible period of history--relieved and thankful that Armageddon is less imminent. We no longer recall that once ubiquitous nuclear clock warning all of us that we were a mere three ticks away from global nuclear destruction.

A profoundly important aspect of this period of our recent history was our national response to this Soviet threat with respect to public (and higher) education. A new strategy was hurriedly conceived in Washington. With tremendous energy and rhetoric President Kennedy inspired the youth of America to join an heroic effort not only to save America but also to save the world. A number of specific and concerted tactics were officially formulated, and many others simply evolved as an ongoing extension of the original strategy.

Fundamental to the new strategy was to convince as many high school students as possible to go on to college. This was going to be no mean feat since, prior to 1960, less than 18% of American high schoolers were on a "college track." Powerful tactics were invented to accomplish this objective.

For example, public service announcements regularly appeared on television sets across the nation. The first line of a graphic depicted how little a high school dropout would earn in a lifetime. The following line would contrast those meager earnings with that of a high school graduate. (And in 1960, for the first time in the history of the country, the majority of those who attended high school actually graduated.) The final line would show how *very* much more a college graduate would earn in a lifetime. These announcements were meant to be dramatic and they were incessant. Everyone had it drilled into them that without a college degree, failure, or at the very least, mediocrity would be their inevitable lot. Also implicit in this message was that it was one's patriotic duty to go on to college and become a professional--preferably a scientist or an engineer--in order to meet and defeat this very real and horrendous Russian threat.

After all, had not Nikita Khrushchev said in 1959, in the "Kitchen Debate" (at the US exhibit in Moscow) with then Vice President Richard Nixon, "We will bury you!" Frequently, Khrushchev told Americans that their grandchildren would live under communism. In September of that same year Khrushchev came to the United Nations where he took off his shoe and pounded it on the table while threatening the United States again. Most Americans took these threats quite literally.

As demonstrated earlier, in the beginning education was meant to instill religious, moral and ethical ideals, and to prepare many for the clergy. Later, it was to train moral, loyal, productive and participatory citizens to help build a new nation and then to produce a moral yet new and higher level of trained, obedient and even more productive workers for the Industrial Revolution. Now, however, the government's objective was to produce as many scientists and engineers as possible. One of the tactics, as suggested earlier, was the appeal to patriotism. Even more seductive for many was the prospect of earning

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almost a million dollars in a working lifetime. This was the *first time in our history* that we were equating, as a matter of public policy, education with the making of money.

In order to encourage those who were bright enough but who lacked the financial means to attend college, the government expanded and then invented new state and Federal educational loan programs. Expanded as well were public universities, two-year junior colleges and alternative education programs (particularly evening and summer programs to accommodate older, employed students). Those who recalled the Depression and were reluctant to assume significant debt to finance the higher education of their children had their fears assuaged. Constantly, they were reminded how much money a college degree would ultimately mean to the recipient. Always implied was that as a member of the professional class, loan payback would be easy. In any case, temporary financial sacrifice would be a small price to pay to save the country. President Kennedy then devised the Peace Corps, yet another tactic to further encourage the youth of America to appreciate that it was their moral obligation not only to save America, but all of humanity as well. Most of the Peace Corps volunteers served for two years and went on to complete their college education or went on to graduate school. Our youth were being primed to become the scientists, engineers, teachers and public servants of America like never before, particularly relying upon public education as an alternative to the traditional private college route.

The results of this strategy, the tactics and the policies that evolved from it must have shocked even their most optimistic architects. All across the country, students shifted from vocational tracts to college prep in unprecedented numbers. College admissions exploded. Less than two years after Sputnik, the Harvard Summer School reported a 25% leap in enrollment--their highest ever--fueled by high school seniors who wanted to get a head start on saving the country. Government loans and grants doubled and then re-doubled. Research grants to colleges and universities were astronomical and were never challenged. Everyone was convinced that all of this was essential to save us from the Communists and their repeated threats to annihilate us. As more and more of our students got on the college track, we gradually closed down our trade and vocational schools. What parent or student would settle for a non-professional track, one that would never lead to the new American Dream, one infused with new promise: science and technology that would increase leisure time and financial wherewithal that now had captured the hearts and minds of all Americans? This was a dream best realized by going to college.

Powered by government funds, public, private and community colleges started on an explosive growth cycle that still has not abated some forty years later. The subliminal, if not stated, message of the decades beginning in 1960 was that almost anybody could--and therefore *should*--go to college. The dominant implication was, of course, that it was only at the end of this particular rainbow that one would find the true pot of gold.

It was also the start of an era when the education bureaucracy would initiate then justify the sad and immoral practice of tracking, i.e., pre-selecting, public school students according to their estimates of who was most likely to succeed or fail. Perhaps now many, many more students, regardless of their family's financial means, *could* go to

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college, but the earlier those who were definitely not college material were identified, the better. Why waste time, money and other resources on anyone who experts determined early on were earmarked for mediocrity, or even worse, destined to failure? But what hope was being offered for students not channeled into professional tracks as the trade and vocational schools across America were being watered down or shut down? The demise of trade schools was a major factor that led to the greatest decline in union membership in US history. Today, only 11% of the private sector workforce is unionized.

As cataclysmic shifts were rapidly occurring in the public education system, an unanticipated trend that had started as a ripple culminated in a tidal wave of grave importance. The changes just described, combined with other societal events, threatened the nation and, in particular, the very foundation of our national corps of public school teachers.

With respect to our teaching corps, professionalism had over the decades led to a certain conservatism. (Not in the political sense.) All of this sudden change was unnerving to teachers, if not truly frightening, and what the future held in store for them was unclear. One thing, however, was clear to all teachers. They saw that their historical role was profoundly changing in ways that gave them less control over their professional work and their workplaces. The response was not unpredictable and very human--they moved to protect themselves by joining teachers' unions.

For the first time in American history every public school teacher felt escalating pressure to join a union. As more and more teachers became union members, the unforeseen and very unfortunate result was that the public interpreted this decision as a declaration by our teachers that they were making a change in their public status—from professional to something else. As such, they could no longer expect to be held in the high esteem that they had worked so hard for and that had taken them so long to achieve. The majority of the population came to view (unconsciously no doubt) our teachers as just another group of “blue collar” workers attempting to protect their jobs and their turf, just like most everyone else. Almost a century of so much hard work to professionalize the teaching corps and almost overnight society began to regard them more as wage workers than professionals.

On their part, the public school teachers demanded better working conditions and fought for arbitration that had long been enjoyed by trade unions. Teacher unions employed traditional labor union tactics—strikes, grievance boards, and media and public relations stories to achieve their goals. As the nation pressed for more highly trained elementary and secondary teachers in response to the Russian threat, the teachers unions lobbied in turn for raises for their members who in turn improved themselves through extra college courses. Previously, teachers had continued to educate themselves as did doctors, lawyers and other professionals simply because it was the proper and professional thing to do. It is ironic that today the largest single block of union members in America is our teachers.

The chances of elaborating a new *purpose* of education were now diminishing rapidly. With this brief review of the history of education, it should be clear that to

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change a model that *worked* takes either a revolution; great social, political or economic unrest; and perhaps even more importantly, the time must be ripe for change. Prior to Sputnik we see the Progressives, the Behaviorists and others tinkering around the edges of the Industrial Revolution model as a new, high tech revolution was beginning. But World War II was over; we were victorious, and economically the times had never been better for so many.

At this pivotal point in our history, a new series of crises should have opened a window of opportunity for us to finally challenge the prevailing paradigm. Instead, most educators resorted to tinkering. In 1959, Dr. Max Rafferty reminded the country that the Industrial Revolution model had been the most successful form of public education ever. He asserted that “the purpose of an educational institution is not to make students popular or well adjusted.” (This was a slap at the Progressives.) “It is to make them learned... Schools exist to teach organized, systematic, disciplined subject matter.” Rafferty also said, “Education’s first duty is to make possible the survival of our country.”

By 1961, the Senate of the State of California produced a report stating it was clear that “the attention of parents, educators and legislators was suddenly and sharply focused on the competition between Russia and the USA in the field of education.” Further, that “it was immediately apparent that the future of the free world was largely dependent upon the excellence of its educational system versus that of the Iron Curtain nations.”

The United States was not merely in a Cold War with the Soviet Union. The future of the entire free world, we were reminded, again and again, was clearly at stake. Fulfilling a Soviet promise, Yuri Gagarin had just orbited the earth in a six-ton satellite. The following year we had the Cuban Missile Crisis. Tensions ran high. President Kennedy made many public addresses to justify the government’s response. Then in 1963, John F. Kennedy, a cherished inspirational leader for so many, was assassinated. America was thrown into turmoil.

Meanwhile, the National Education Association in Washington, D.C. adopted a somewhat less aggressive tone than those who were focusing curricula on strategies specifically geared to win the Cold War, arguing that the central purpose of education is to develop in students the ability to *think*. The California State Committee on Public Education went even further (and fuzzier!). This august assemblage announced that the purpose of public education should be threefold:

- 1) To bring every child to his highest capacity
- 2) To help him to gain his rightful place as a fully participating member of society
- 3) To train him to think for himself

Also, another unforeseen but immensely important scenario was playing out in academia as a result of US involvement in Vietnam. The National Draft had been reinstated, but there was a draft deferment for college students. Professors with anti-Vietnam War sentiments began a strategy of grade inflation as a means to keep students in college and therefore out of the draft pool. Many men who could not continue their deferment after graduating by gaining admission to post-graduate schools and did not

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wish to be sent off to a jungle in Southeast Asia and be killed in a war they did not believe in, found an honorable way out. Because of the baby boom, school populations were way up and there was a shortage of teachers. So the government offered a teacher's deferment from the draft. For many, this was an option too good to pass up. So a significant number of our male college graduates began teaching careers even though they may have had little or no particular passion for teaching.

This, coupled with the union mind-set that had recently replaced the professional mind-set painstakingly built up for over a century, began the sad and shameful diminution of our national teaching corps. Today, it is well documented that the average education major in our colleges today comes from the bottom half of his or her college class ranking and that their SAT scores are more than 100 points below their class averages.

At some point in the 1950's, we should have had some inkling that we were exiting the Industrial Age. We had harnessed the power of the atom. Color TV was increasingly popular and affordable to many. "Computers" were found to be of importance to the business world, and no longer tools for just the military and academic communities. Large corporations were beginning to realize the potential of computers for expanding their businesses and a new industry was born.

But there was no one focused on preparing our teachers, and consequently their students and society-at-large, to transition gradually from the Industrial Revolution model of education into a High Tech/Information one. This necessary step to insure our very survival should have been a paramount concern. In order to do this, it would have required the courage to challenge the existing paradigm that had been successful for so long but was no longer working. Instead, most of our educators honestly believed that they were, in fact, working creatively to make the system work better.

And throughout the decade of the 60's, few pressed to critically examine the existing purpose, let alone reinvent a new purpose of education. By now, the new information era was no longer in an amorphous, amoeba stage. The high tech train was already leaving the station and few of our teachers and students were aboard. And while it continued to pick up speed, educators and politicians were re-hashing and debating theories of education which were no longer working and could not prepare us for America's future. Many went back to Dewey's goal of organizing society so that each member would develop his personality "...for the well-being of society as a whole." Opponents on the other side of this unproductive debate argued that the answer lay simply in modifying the existing model. The opportunity for real and meaningful change had become hopelessly stuck. A process of heretofore healthy, albeit slow, evolutionary growth had stagnated.

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Even though the purpose of public education should have been seriously questioned and debated in the 1950's, it was still America's most optimistic and hopeful period. Early in the decade the country saw the end of the scourge of McCarthyism. Court ordered school desegregation in the South and the Russian launch of Sputnik were to come later. In between, the US exploded the world's first hydrogen bomb, lessening the nation's angst somewhat by establishing that we were still ahead of the USSR in nuclear technology. By 1954, only 6% of the world's population lived in America but the country boasted 60% of the automobiles. Eisenhower was in the White House and he projected a grandfatherly persona that had a calming effect on the nation. He improved and expanded the Federal Interstate highway program. The country was more mobile than ever and gasoline only cost 25 cents per gallon. Suburbia was invented. Americans owned 58% of the world's telephones and 45% of all radios. For most, the future could not have looked more promising.

When Jack Kerouac published On The Road, in 1957, a "Beatnik" lifestyle practiced at the time by only a handful, began to resonate with many of the young. In retrospect, it is clear that many of them were our best and brightest who were giving us an early warning signal that something was definitely going wrong in, among other places, our schoolhouses. This small rebellion, however, so shocked the sensibilities of the country that even today those who came of age in the 50's are referred to as the "Beatnik Generation."

The first half of the decade of the 60's was more alarming. The reality and the potential ramifications of Sputnik had had time to sink in. Francis Gary Powers was shot down flying a U-2 spy plane over Russia in 1960. Although this was very disconcerting, hope particularly in the young, the poor and minority groups had soared when the nation elected John F. Kennedy president. Suddenly, however, we had to face the Cuban Missile Crisis. One year later, Kennedy was assassinated. The unbridled hope and optimism of America began to falter. An escalating war in Vietnam exacerbated the pessimism, as the cost and futility of this war of containment became ludicrous to older as well as younger Americans.

By the middle of the decade, the mood of the country had started to shift significantly. Court ordered school desegregation was being enforced in the South and another debate was focusing on civil rights. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was leading marchers in Selma and Birmingham, culminating with the Freedom Fighters' March on Washington, DC. Together, Blacks and Whites were joining hands to demand freedom and justice for all Americans. The conflict in Vietnam was escalating rapidly and the war's brutality was brought home every night on television. Anti-war demonstrations broke out on college campuses across the country and protest rallies were taking place on a regular basis in many major cities. The nation was polarizing and not just on the Vietnam issue.

Many whites, including some who had considered themselves to be liberal on the issue of race, were becoming restless and uneasy with a growing Black militancy. "Black Power" was being promoted by, among others, the Honorable Elijah Mohammed through his spokesman, Malcolm X. Black Muslims demanding that Blacks, and only Blacks,

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had the right to control their own destinies was a new and threatening economic, social and moral concept to many Whites. Then, suddenly, two of the foremost leaders of their respective races, men who were anchors of hope to millions of every race, creed and color, were murdered. In 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were assassinated within two months of each other. America's spirit of hope was now being very severely tested with these losses and race-focused domestic blow-ups were occurring at the same time as the escalation of the Vietnam War.

The young, especially, were becoming disillusioned at a very rapid rate. The Industrial Revolution paradigm of education had continued the mission to indoctrinate students with patriotism, obedience to authority, and the historic American sense of justice. But now they were bewildered and confused by the catastrophic events that invaded their lives on a daily basis and threatened to actually destroy them and their generation. What did patriotism really mean when they had come to truly believe that their political leaders were sending them off to die in an unjust war? Even academic leaders were no longer blindly trusted. The personification of excellence, Professor Charles Van Doren of Columbia University, the toast of the entire nation for his display of knowledge and recall on the most popular TV quiz show of the 1950's, Twenty-One, had been arrested for perjury in 1961. He admitted he had been given the questions in advance. James Meredith had been denied admission no less than three times to the University of Mississippi just because of the color of his skin. Julian Bond, a Black who was the newly elected state representative from Georgia, was not allowed to take his seat in the State Assembly because he was publicly against the Vietnam War.

A once blindly obedient student population, now in ever increasing numbers, was inclined to distrust Authority or Establishment in any form. Students were beginning to suspect that what schools were teaching them was in large part bogus and, in any event, irrelevant to their lives and to their futures. By way of response, the Establishment had a very powerful statistic to support its theory of public education. This was that 77% of all 17 year olds in the country were high school graduates and the literacy rate was the highest in the history of the world. Even as they were making these pronouncements, though, more and more kids were dropping out of school and out of mainstream society. Then a growing sense of confusion, pain and betrayal had to be mitigated and the choice for many was sex, drugs and rock n' roll. The prior decade of Beatniks now had turned into the decade of the Hippies.

A new set of statistics showed that from 1960-69, crimes of violence increased by more than 60%. The offenders were predominantly young and male. The mood at least among our youth was getting angrier. Later, this decade would come to be known as the Counter-cultural Revolution.

As the decade of the 70's began, it was not just the youth who felt that something was going badly wrong. George Gallup asked the public at large their opinion. 70% responded that the ills of the country could be traced to the decline of the influence of religion. Gallup noted that only 40% of US adults were now attending church services on a weekly basis. Roman Catholic church attendance had dropped from 71% in 1963 to just 55% in less than ten years. By 1995, polls revealed that 77% of American Roman

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Catholics would no longer accept much of the Church's dogma and even started to challenge the "infallible" authority of the Pope.

The adults in the 70's were the students of the 50's; adults in the 80's were the students of the 60's, etc. America was now reaping what the educational system had sown. America's technology, capabilities and expectations were changing rapidly. Yet we continued on with the Industrial Revolution model of public education.

By 1971, the country was in an economic recession and President Nixon implemented wage and price controls. There was added turmoil when, at Kent State, four student protesters were killed by the National Guard and none of the perpetrators were found guilty. But Lieutenant Calley was found guilty of the massacre at Mei Lai. By 1975, the unemployment rate had reached 9.2%--the highest since 1941. Scarred by the bloody Asian war, our young soldiers lucky enough to return home had faced traumatizing disrespect and no jobs. Furthermore, the country and especially her impressionable young had to somehow digest the resignation-in-disgrace of Vice President Agnew, then Watergate and finally the forced resignation of President Nixon.

Earlier it was claimed that whatever period of history that we are living through is the most difficult to "see" and to assess. Furthermore, it was argued that one of the reasons for this is because it is extremely difficult for us to notice minute, incremental changes that ultimately effect the whole. By looking back, in this synopsis form, at the history that we have just been by living through, basic underlying themes may become easier to "see." Perhaps it is clearer now that the nation's youth had been slowly but inexorably losing respect for authority in every form at least since the early 1960's. "Streaking" had now become a national fad, as did "mooning." In 1977, during the New York City power blackout, vandals set 500 fires and there was such massive looting and other criminal activity that 3,700 were arrested, mostly young males. The media reported that from 1963 to 1977, SAT scores had been in a long and steady decline. Truancy, dropout rates, and violence continued to escalate.

The minute changes so difficult for adults to see and assess are quite another matter for teenagers. Their life experience has been very brief and the mountains that confront them are almost always, and unfortunately, seen by adults as molehills. Was not the line shouted by James Dean in the film, Rebel Without A Cause, to his father, "*You're not listening to me!*" one of the defining moments of the film that so resonated with teens everywhere? America's youth felt that throughout "their entire lives" they had been witnessing nothing but hypocrisy, corruption, discrimination, lying and cheating in government, industry, the professions, by religious leaders, in homes, schools and throughout society in general. They watched, during the 1970's, as the largest oil companies increase their profits on average by 93% in just the first six months of the Energy Crisis that had by then already cost 100,000 US jobs. Hank Aaron was closing in on the immortal Babe Ruth's home run record and they learned of the mounting death threats against the life of this unassuming, but great Black athlete. They read about the first strike in US history by medical doctors in New York City hospitals. They watched on television as a Federal jury exonerated everyone for the student murders at Kent State. They listened to President Nixon's secret tapings of conversations that revealed his

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contempt for not only his perceived enemies, but also for respected news reporters and citizens who weren't even involved in the political arena. They saw the head of the United Mine Workers sentenced to life imprisonment for ordering the murder of another union official. Jimmy Hoffa disappeared, never to be seen again. And Pope Paul IV issued a strong proclamation asserting the fundamental principle of celibacy for clerics. At the same time the United States continued to escalate the ruthless bombing of Cambodia, Laos and North Vietnam.

Public schools in particular and the Establishment in general were forfeiting the future hope and promise of the nation. Angry, hurt, bewildered and frustrated, many of the young desperately sought comfort, understanding and spiritual fulfillment, and hoped to find this by joining "The Jesus Movement," the "Hari-Krishnas" or by becoming "Moonies" (as followers of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification church were called). For others, the music was no longer Rock n' Roll. It had become louder, angrier and much more cynical. The mood of the 1970's was reflected in Hard Rock, Punk Rock and Acid Rock.

All the while, the school system was continuing to try to produce a no-longer-relevant Industrial Revolution Model student. And it was students who were the first to sense that this was not working for them, even though few of them could properly or effectively articulate this observation. The students of the 50's and 60's had reached, or were ascending to adulthood. Eighteen year olds had been given the vote in 1971, but they were not voting. They were not attending organized religious services. They were no longer reading. A national lack of readership forced Look magazine to fold and, in 1978, The Chicago Daily News shut down its presses after 103 years of publication. This was just one ominous portent of what was not merely to continue but to escalate. The hope and optimism of an entire generation was eroding in a sea change of cynicism fueled by personal experiences that they were unable to reconcile into any meaningful whole. With advances in birth control, sex was a continuously accessible form of escape and entertainment. In 1973, the Supreme Court upheld that abortion within the first six months of a woman's pregnancy was a protected constitutional right. The "pill" was widely available, affordable and effective. The only remaining restraint to promiscuity was individual conscience--a conscience that was less and less under the control or even influence of the traditional keepers of society's mores: the family, the churches and the schools.

The US had finally withdrawn from Vietnam, but without the promised victory. The war had turned into a national embarrassment for the "hawks" and "doves" alike. For the first time in our history, returning warriors were neither hailed nor honored. Hardened in spirit by the murders of Martin Luther King and the two Kennedy brothers, this generation was not even fazed by the two assassination attempts on President Ford. (How many of us today even *remember* these two presidential assassination attempts?)

If the students were the first to sense and then to actually apprehend that the schools were no longer working for them, their parents were the next to notice. Increasingly concerned, they began to demand some kind of change. Exactly and specifically what should be done, however, was not quite within their grasp. Some

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parents were now paying attention to writers and educators who were outside of the Establishment philosophy. Jonathan Kozol wrote Death At An Early Age in 1967, to public acclaim. In 1970, Ivan Illich wrote DeSchooling America, wherein he argued that we should get kids out of the structured school environment entirely. They should be out in the community with adults to learn directly about reality and about society, said he. Other “radicals” pointed out that the public school system was, and always had been, a system whose *raison d’être* was to control large masses of students. Furthermore, that recognizing the needs of the individual and his or her potential for growth had not even been a significant or meaningful part of the public debate since the philosophy of the Holistics of the 19th and early 20th centuries had been effectively silenced. These new radical voices were perceived by the established order to be a direct challenge to the values of American culture. The less strident merely criticized them for being too “romantic and sentimental.” But as Ron Miller pointed out, “The radical literature was not a call for tinkering with the curriculum or seating arrangements, but a profound critique of the traditional conception of schooling itself. [However,] the radical critique[s]...were counterculture--rejected by society and education.” Later, Robert Theobald was to categorize the 1970’s as a decade of denial.

Yet something had to be done. The upheaval of the 60’s had frightened students, parents and even many educators. Not so incidentally, teacher strikes had now reached epic proportions nationally even though a founding precept of the American Federation of Teachers had been a no-strike policy

Public school students were dropping out at increasingly greater rates. Parents were moving their children out of the public system in small, but still disconcerting numbers. Even some non-Roman Catholic families were actually sending their children to parochial schools. Others rediscovered alternative or experimental schools such as Montessori and Waldorf. Many parents even turned to schooling their children at home. Even more alarming to traditionalists, parents were now questioning the school structure of financial support as well. They asked if they had to move their children from an obviously broken public system to one which still seemed to be working (private or parochial schools), why should they have to pay twice? More specifically, why was Federal and state aid not available to pay for, or at least reduce the burdensome costs of tuition, and transportation? These were costs they would never have incurred if the public school system were still working. Parents quickly received their answer in 1971, when the US Supreme Court declared aid to parochial schools to be unconstitutional.

The conservative position within the educational hierarchy was epitomized and personified by James B. Conant, a former president of Harvard. He argued that there was really nothing fundamentally wrong with the public school system in America. Of course problems did exist, he admitted. But they were *not* deep-seated social problems; they could easily be fixed if the educators took a “back to basics” approach. Conant and his colleagues argued that more discipline, better and more challenging curricula, and greater academic efficiency were all that were required. If the public endorsed these principles, then higher test scores would result.

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Many were not convinced, especially minorities and other inner city poor. As mainstream America had continued to prosper, the increasingly affluent middle class had concluded that the “good life” could best be realized in suburbia. For more than two decades they had been moving out, leaving the cities to the poor, the elderly and minorities. Those who remained in the cities could clearly see that the public school system was in dire straits and getting progressively worse. It was impossible for them to miss the fact that, as a consequence of this system of education, their children and grandchildren were being left further and further behind those in more affluent communities. The historical promise of free public schools as “the great equalizer” had already become, for them, no more than a fantasy. The African-American community and poor inner city whites, although separated ethnically and geographically by neighborhoods, independently and simultaneously were raising their voices for a better education for their children.

Education leaders, although somewhat taken aback, still were not about to change their philosophy. Out came new tactics based on their continuing public denial that there was anything intrinsically wrong with the current model of public education—even though parents of all backgrounds had overwhelming evidence that it was failing their children in every conceivable way. But those in power continued to maintain that the overall system was not broken. Perhaps, they suggested, the educational problems of *urban schools* were the result of the troubling escalation of discrimination and racism within the inner city. On the one hand they maintained that the overall public school system was not fundamentally flawed. On the other hand, if there were significant and measurable differences in the performance of urban schools, compared to suburban schools, it *must be* a result of the racial makeup of the city schools. A more “equitable” racial balance in the poorly performing inner city schools would eventually bring them up to standard. The implication was obvious: Blacks, Latinos and other minorities were either intellectually inferior, culturally deprived or both. So, if the inner city minorities were integrated educationally with whites, they would *somehow* perform better. (Some educators crassly believed that test scores within the inner cities would be higher if they had more white students in the pool.) Before the communities of color could react and mobilize in the face of this affront, and before the white inner city districts could even ask, “But how will this improve the schools in *our* communities?” they were pre-empted. Decision after judicial decision pronounced that the basic problem of urban education was a direct result of “de facto segregation.” De facto segregation did exist in almost every big city and was manifest by school buildings that had become run-down and dilapidated, and textbooks, if available at all, that were outdated and worn. Worst of all, some administrators and many teachers had come to believe that the inner-city minorities were unteachable. This form of institutional racism had to be eliminated and it was, as the jurists stated, a basic problem of urban education. But the remedy of the Courts was forced busing to achieve racial balance, not rehabilitation of the schools to make them into schools that worked.

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Racial hot buttons had been pushed, and busing was now to so inflame the communities that the original grievance was all but lost in the confusion of fear, mistrust, and indeed, hatred.

The original honest, legitimate and heartfelt demand of both the Black and the White inner city parents and other residents was that their neighborhood schools and their high schools be not only be rehabilitated, but also made into schools that worked educationally. They wanted to have schools that would again offer hope and opportunity to their children and communities. But the issue and the debate was not to be about the Industrial Revolution paradigm of public education and whether it was long past the time to embrace a new purpose for public education. Rather, the issue became the busing of Blacks into White neighborhoods and schools, and busing Whites into Black neighborhoods and schools. The volcanic ash of the ensuing violence, polarization and social unrest spread rapidly and settled as a wary tension all across our nation.

Originally this was an unintended result of a decision, conscious or otherwise, by leaders not to admit that the public school system was in dire need of fundamental reform. And the diversionary tactic--busing by race--created yet other tangents such as quotas and affirmative action. In 1978, the US Supreme Court required the University of California Medical School to admit Alan Baake who claimed that the school's minority admissions plan had made him a victim of "reverse-discrimination." This type of fallout still continues across our nation.

The only major concession to innovation that was made during this period of Black and White urban outrage was the concept of "Public Schools of Choice." Educators realized that "magnet schools" (schools that may be predicated on a particular premise or theme and accept students from any and all school districts within a city) might help to balance the racial scales without any of the overt consequences of forced busing. The few whose children got into a magnet school felt relieved; the majority, however, felt sold out. Actually, two other concepts were tested. Both were instigated by suburbanites who, although (and probably because) they were insulated from the turmoil of the cities, were beginning to recognize that it was the entire system that was not working. Many argued for, and some actually got, "The Open Classroom" experiment. It was generally a short-lived trial in most areas as the professionals demonstrated, as quickly as they possibly could, that this approach was not showing any "appreciable gains" in standard test scores. They were able to successfully undermine the idea by linking open classrooms to Deweyism. Over the years, professionals had prejudiced the nation--after diluting any useful parts of his theories--to the point where in the public consciousness, Dewey and open classrooms were synonymous with letting children do whatever they wanted to do.

Also, some suburban communities implemented "METCO" type of programs that bused inner city minority students to schools in predominantly white outlying cities and towns where the school systems were not yet quite so sick. This strategy had a two-fold payoff. First, with minimum threat, the Blacks and Latinos would be selected from the most "promising" candidates. Suburbanites could offer "deserving ghetto children" an opportunity to go to what they considered to be a superior school and for their own

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children to be exposed to some cultural diversity. Of course, the students would come in the morning, then return home to their ghettos in the afternoons, would not be around on weekends and certainly would not, could not, move into the neighborhoods of these towns. Second, by voluntarily “integrating” their schools in this manner, suburbia could pre-empt what, by the operative logic of the time, should have been the next petition to the courts. If forced busing in the cities could not (and did not) achieve racial balance, then forced busing *should be extended to include suburbia*--which would mean the busing of suburban children into the inner city!

The system had gone from stagnation to pathological.

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Denial Is No Longer An Option

Since approximately the 1950's our public schools have been producing an increasingly inferior product—intellectually, morally and spiritually. From the relatively benign (dropout) generations of the Beatniks and Hippies, society went on to produce significantly different “Now” and “Me” generations—then the “Yuppies” and the “Gen-Xers,” all now integral cogs of the great consumer machine. During the past half century, greed went from being one of the seven deadly sins to “greed is good” as an accepted doctrine of winning in the business arena. The smartest of our students began to assume (or already had) leadership roles and some invented “derivatives” and “junk bonds” and other worthless investment vehicles that promised quick riches for all. They and others went on to bankrupt the nation's Savings and Loan Associations and the few who were actually tried and convicted honestly believed that they had done nothing immoral. Once respectable “Big Eight” accounting firms were fined billions of dollars during the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's for certifying company reports that showed profits and assets that they knew did not exist. Our new age corporate leaders conspired to fix prices and to hide other wrongdoings, as tobacco executives lied under oath to Congress. These very bright (if immoral) people who undeniable had learned “how to learn” in spite of a failed educational system had not learned “how to live” because of a failed educational system.

Leveraged buyouts were another of their financial creations and American workers were introduced to the new corporate strategy concepts of streamlining and downsizing. Many of these new CEO's no longer believed, as their predecessors had come to believe, that they had equal responsibilities to their shareholders, customers, communities and employees. In 1995, the Economic Policy Institute reported that profit rates hit a 25-year high as real wages continued to decline. Lester Thurow pointed out that “the business community had broken the post-WWII implicit social contract.... In the past, if you were making a lot of money, there was an implicit deal that your employees would get some of it.” The country also witnessed the defrocking and in many instances, the imprisonment of once highly respected clergy for sexual crimes and financial fraud. An unprecedented number of lawyers were convicted of embezzling clients' funds.

Back in 1971, Madeline Murray (O'Hair) must have had the support of many of our emerging decision-makers in her successful quest to drive out “religion” from all our public schoolhouses. But it was not just religious expression that was banished. Also effectively silenced was ethics, morality and any and all recognition that there just might be a power even greater than the self or that the universal human evolutionary drive might be toward a higher and higher level of spirituality. But then almost each and every one of us was complicit in driving even the possibility of this grand aspiration from each and every public marketplace, not just our schools. A wisdom of a previous stage, which was always present in some form throughout the prior 300-plus year history of public education, had been suddenly and brutally wrenched out of the system and out of our society with nothing to replace it—not in the public marketplace nor in the private marketplace.

In 1939, America watched the movie Gone With The Wind, wherein Clark Gable, as Rhett Butler, said “Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn.” At the time, this one line

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shocked and outraged an entire nation by its profanity. Decisions had been made in the interest of “free speech” and the envelope was stretched—allowing the genie out of the bottle. An emergent battle between rights and responsibilities had now been enjoined across the nation. To our shame, in the course of just one generation, rights triumphed overwhelmingly over responsibilities—personal rights conquered personal responsibilities and corporate rights conquered corporate responsibilities. The consequence has been that our society has become coarsened to a point where we face the possibility of its collapse as a result of internal decay. Today, too many of our children are left at home alone to view endless pornography, extreme violence and incessant immorality on TV and the internet. And, of course, there is the onslaught of commercials weaning them into the great consumer society. This is but one example of slow, incremental changes that suddenly surprise us when we finally begin to recognize how they are ultimately affecting the whole. We did not reach the current level of moral turpitude now routinely disseminated by television, movies and radio in one step.

In the late 1980’s, America’s workers who had been downsized and many who were now in fear of losing their jobs were no longer spending. During the 1990’s, no less than five giant retailers declared bankruptcy (Ames, Bradlees, Hills, Caldors and Jamesway). The family of dual wage earners now the norm was rapidly turning into the family of two wage earners with one or both working a second job. Computer manufacturers suffered huge losses that resulted in even more layoffs and bankruptcies. The once Great American Dream for many was turning into a horrible nightmare. By the 1980’s, escalating stress along with an innate spirituality too long denied drove many back to churches, temples and mosques. Some discovered, for the first time, Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism. Others joined encounter groups such as EST, Esalen, Lifespring, or learned to practice Transcendental Meditation.

All the while, decision-makers had been denying that the patient was even sick. In 1995, the Executive Director of The American Association of School Administrators, Paul Houston, stated that “we have not failed. Schools, in fact, are better than they used to be, but the issues around schools are more overwhelming than ever before.” Economist Paul Samuelson argued that “students don’t do well because they don’t work very hard.” Furthermore, he stated that “The education crisis may have been overdone.... The public schools are really doing OK.” Eric Hanushek suggested that “we must start thinking about education as a market in which products are driven by financial incentives.” In other words, if there actually was an illness then the capitalistic profit motive must somehow be the cure.

Many parents who, on the one hand had been slowly becoming convinced that our public schools in general had become sick, on the other hand had to try to reconcile that observation with the ongoing denial of respected leaders. The result was that in 1995, Phi Beta Kappa, a national scholastic organization, reported that 67% of parents graded our public schools nationally as a “C” or a “D.” At the same time, however, they graded their own childrens’ schools as an “A” or a “B.” An incredible, but somewhat understandable paradox of denial under the circumstances.

But as a result of increasing public scrutiny and concern, local controlling authorities suddenly began to implement desperate measures. In 1993, the New York

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Denial Is No Longer An Option

Board of Regents threatened to close and reorganize New York City schools if student achievement scores did not quickly improve. The Massachusetts Board of Education threatened to take over the Boston Public Schools if they did not meet “standards.” The Northern Association of Schools and Colleges, the region’s accreditation body, put 8 of 15 Boston high schools on warning, on probation or in termination. In 1994, the State of New Jersey actually did take over Newark’s entire public school system. Hartford, Connecticut became the first major city to turn over its public school system to a private, for profit company—Education Alternatives, Inc. Baltimore, Maryland was next and then Dade County, Florida also contracted with EAI.

As this continued in school districts across the country, even more alarming statistics were being reported: The Carnegie Council on Adolescent development showed that sexual activity was seen in significant numbers in 13-year olds, and that suicide rates for children aged 10 to 14 had increased by 120% between 1980 and 1992. William Bennett’s Index of Leading Cultural Indicators reported that between 1960 and 1993, the US population grew 41% while violent crimes increased by 555%. The Justice Department reported in 1995, that over 5 million Americans were in prison, on probation or on parole—up from 2 million in 1980. It added that by 1996, the prison population was projected to surpass the number of full-time college students in the US. James Fox then published this chilling statistic in Forecasting Crime Data: 4,000 juveniles were committing murder annually in the US and 48% of all murders were committed by 14 to 18-year olds. (This continues a trend of increasing teenage crime that dates back to the 1950’s.)

Denial had now become impossible simply because the ongoing results were now impossible to ignore. New international comparisons of standardized tests were showing that American students performed more and more poorly in math and science as they advanced in grade level. American students were also near the bottom in language skills and geography. At home, the US Department of Education reported that 57% of high school seniors lacked even a basic understanding of US history. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology acknowledged that only 17% of incoming students who took a two-hour essay examination satisfied the basic freshman writing requirement.

But one of the most incredible statistics was reported in 1994, by the US Department of Education (and has not changed since). The Department’s surveys concluded that 50% of our adult population (90 million people) are now *functionally illiterate*. One half of the adult population in the United States is incapable of balancing a checkbook, reconciling a telephone or utility bill, or reading and understanding a train or bus schedule, and is unable to grasp the point of a newspaper editorial. We continue to reap what we have been sowing and the cumulative effects are getting very frightening.

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A majority of our teachers have always been dedicated, altruistic professionals. Most had been through the system themselves, knew it was broken and were determined to do what they could to fix it. Unfortunately, over the past five decades many confused fixing the system with changing the curricula. Ted Sizer referred to them as engines of social reform in Places for Heroes, Places for Joy. However, in Hidden Danger in the Classroom, Pearl Evans comprehensively listed and then knocked down each of their pedagogical approaches. Some of the new approaches implemented in many school districts that Evans criticized were:

- Person Centered Approach
- Decision-Making Education
- Psychotherapeutic Education
- Non-Directive Education
- Process Education
- Affective or Experiential Education
- Self-Esteem Building
- Value-Free Education

All of these new wave pedagogical strategies were ultimately found wanting, in part because no one of them, separately or combined with others, provided the necessary integrity to support a truly new objective, a new purpose for public education. Moreover, each one of these approaches had been presented to the public as being “value neutral” (completely secular and unattached to any particular belief system)—regrettably, virtue could not even be considered as an essential, integral part of any possible solution.

Throughout the past half-century, many concerned educators and parents had attempted to identify the reason why our schools were performing so badly. More new ideas trickled in—more fundamental, less faddish: magnet schools, theme schools, more money for Headstart, higher teacher salaries, smaller class size and parental involvement were suggested and debated as the solution(s). But even when many of these strategies were implemented, the overall results were not measurably better. As national concern continued to escalate, more and more well-intentioned proposals were offered. A flood of proposals turned into a tidal wave. Individuals and groups each had their own hot-button issues and argued for implementing their favorites. Many suggested that it would take a combination of several of these proposals to effect a cure. But almost all agreed that the solution(s) could be found somewhere in the following approaches (in addition to the six aforementioned ones):

- School based management
- Professional development for teachers
- Longer school days
- School uniforms/dress codes
- Longer school year
- More State funding
- More Federal funding
- Smaller class size
- Tenure (or no tenure)
- Mentoring

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- Community/Business involvement
- Safe learning environment
- Higher expectations
- Outcome-based education
- Tracking (or not)
- Mainstreaming
- Forced busing
- Voluntary busing
- High academic standards
- World-class standards
- IQ testing (or not)
- School-to-Work programs
- Experimental schools
- Alternative schools
- Charter schools
- Vouchers
- Long-distance learning
- Core curriculum
- National certification
- National report cards
- National goals and standards

A thoughtful review of each of these ideas—separately or in any combination—reveal them for what they actually are. They are all potentially valuable (in some cases, critical) strategies that might help support a new purpose for public education. However none of these strategies even purported to challenge a now vague, perhaps even non-existent fundamental premise for public education. No one of them (alone or combined) represents a new purpose. More and more of these strategies were implemented in various school districts across the country but nothing seemed to change the results in any long-term, meaningful way. These uncoordinated efforts were not addressing the fundamental, underlying problem. We were trying numerous prescriptions but still, no cure.

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Chapter III

Congress to The Rescue

Historically, states exercised oversight but delegated the nuts-and-bolts decisions regarding public education to local governments (where that control has always resided—since the Colonial Era). Over the years, however, the Federal government had established many programs through the Department of Education in an effort to assist the states in that oversight. Congress got involved in so many that by 1994, it was funding 220 separate programs at a total cost of \$20 billion per annum. Because it was so costly and with so little measurable return, many within the Republican party actually argued for the abolishment of the Department of Education. But the state of our schools was in such crisis across America, that Congress was not about to abdicate any responsibility at this point. Its response to a now-acknowledged crisis was to pass The Educate America Schools Act of 1994.

This Act became commonly known as “Goals 2000.” The statement of purpose was “to improve learning and teaching by producing a national framework for education reform.” Finally, “to measure and report to the public the results.” The following were the goals for every school in the nation which was to be achieved by the year 2000.

1. All children in America will start school ready to learn.
2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
3. All students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, the arts, history, and geography, and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation’s modern economy.
4. US students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.
5. Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
6. Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol, and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.
7. The nation’s teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.
8. Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

All laudable goals as far as they went. However, nowhere was it even suggested as to how these goals were to be achieved. Most importantly, an overall goal of learning how to learn and how to live was not mentioned or even alluded to. One wisdom of America’s past educational history (actually it’s a wisdom going back to the oldest philosophy of western education, which derives from Plato and Aristotle: the teaching of

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what is the Good, the True and the Beautiful) had been only partially remembered. That wisdom of equally honoring the Good, the True and the Beautiful had not only been lost but also it had been, in effect, now “officially” purged by this Federal Act of 1994. It was made clear that, according to the U.S. government, the public schools exist primarily for the purpose of dealing with what is the True: the teaching of subject matter, of things, of facts, of stuff. Primarily, it is now most important that our kids to test out better on stuff, especially science and technology stuff, than the rest of the world’s kids so that our graduates will be able to compete more vigorously and aggressively and successfully in the global economy.

The implementation of the self-centered curriculum referred to in the previous chapter had been a failure. The teaching of the Beautiful, or the “I” or the self, is or course, an essential component of learning how to learn. As the teaching of what is True, of facts, of “stuff” is also a critical component. But a third component is just as critical as the other two are. It is what we call the Good—the “us,” the “we”(the “I” and the “you” together which we call society). Emphasizing only one, or only two, has always led to a disconnect. And the teaching of all three as separate and distinct realms will also fail. All three have to be not only equally honored but also completely integrated. Without the necessary balance of the Good, the True and the Beautiful we have little hope in teaching our children to learn how to live. (As Wilbur asked, what good is it if we teach our youth to learn how to learn and we create a nation of geniuses if they in the end turn out to be Nazi’s?)

The year 2000 has come and gone. Not one of the declared goals had been met. No state came even close. In several areas we actually lost ground.

The Educate America Act was successful, though, for the birthing of numerous state versions such as The Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Learning, The Common Core of Learning, and The Annual Report Card. The states, now coming under more and more parental pressure coupled with this new Federal mandate decided that reform could only result from “tougher standards” and “increased accountability.” A new, tough, back-to-basics approach was quickly adopted in more than 30 States. Students would be accountable through high-stakes tests and the teachers, principals and school districts would be measured by their students’ results. The Massachusetts Legislature enacted the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and made it so high stakes that by 2003, a student who fails is not to be graduated from high school. Other states have followed suit.

When the first test was given statewide in Massachusetts in 1998, more than 50% of the students failed. Parents panicked. Administrative and political spin flooded the media. Teachers changed focus to spend most of their time and energy teaching to the tests in anticipation of the rapidly approaching next test date. Students came under unbearable psychological pressure even though the passing score for the tests was drastically lowered. The second round of testing resulted in another 50% failure rate. Panic was now accompanied by the threat of parental lawsuits if their children were denied a diploma as a result of this one test. The third test results were not much better. In Massachusetts, the Year 2000 tests showed 45% failing math and 34% failing English. (In Boston, 74

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(% of 10th graders failed the English portion of MCAS and 84% failed the math section.) Tough administrators such as Dr. John Silber, President Emeritus of Boston University, who became the Chairman of the Massachusetts Board of Education, and who had been in the vanguard for tougher standards and increased accountability, now fought for the testing of all public school teachers. Dr. Silber got half of his wish. The State of Massachusetts implemented a basic examination which had to be passed before an education major could become certified to teach. On the first exam, 61% of the candidates failed. Immediately, the schools of education began teaching to the test. On the second try, 50% failed the test. Yet another prescription and these patients were not getting much better. (In the Spring of 2001, 41% failed the test.)

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Chapter IV
Testing Students and Teachers

One problem with tests is that all of us have been exposed to them for most of our lives so we think that we “know” precisely what tests are all about.

However, little can ever be measured without a well-defined objective to measure against. Only when a new *purpose* for education in today’s society is finally accepted can we begin to determine the necessary building blocks to achieve this new purpose. Then, and only then, can we begin to identify, invent and implement appropriate strategies and tactics to insure that the purpose is achieved. When we recognize that we must first define the purpose, determine the necessary building blocks and then implement strategies and tactics to achieve the stated goal, can we then properly assess the specific issues and implications with respect to testing.

A test is not an objective, no matter how “objective” the test itself may be. Nor is it a building block or a strategy. Testing falls into the category of *tactics*. We test in order to measure how a student is doing in achieving the objective in accord with specific strategies. Testing at any level in the education process is a tactic that can measure at least four fundamental areas of great significance. First, it can demonstrate a student’s knowledge and retention of content at any specific point in time. A test also indicates a student’s ability to communicate an understanding of abstract concepts. Thirdly, testing can show how well or poorly a student is integrating context and concept in the journey to learn how to learn. And finally, it can suggest that the student is (or has become) capable of both critical and creative thinking. Few would disagree that testing must include at least these four basic measures. (Testing actually can be an innovative tool in teaching students to learn how to learn. For example, after studying the material, students should be encouraged to devise a test of their own based on the subject matter. This process alone can force them to a higher level of understanding and critical thinking.)

An essential corollary to the testing process, however, is almost always overlooked. The testing of students can indicate that the instructor may not be applying effective strategies with those students who are not evidencing mastery over content material, abstract concepts and critical thinking. The definition of testing then must be “a tactical tool to determine how well the student and the instructor are doing in achieving set goals within defined timeframes to attain the stated overall objective.” Together, as a team.

The testing of students, in and of itself, however, is seldom the most accurate measure and is never a complete measure of progress. Tests can and should be utilized with other measurement tools. Assessments of oral presentations, assigned projects and ongoing portfolios are necessary in order to obtain a more complete evaluation of a student’s capabilities. Testing alone is rarely a good measure of a student’s insight and ability to translate or adapt material when a context or a need changes.

The testing of teacher candidates, especially, must be an ongoing practice of measurement and feedback during the active, formal schooling process to determine how both the student and the professor are doing vis à vis the commonly understood objective and standards for learning so that each has the opportunity to improve their work. If done with integrity, a student who is deficient with respect to content should not and would not go on to the next level before the content is satisfactorily mastered. And that next level is

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On Testing of Students and Teachers

practice teaching while being observed and mentored by a “master teacher” in a live classroom setting. Here is where the student’s work from portfolios, projects, and presentations and other pedagogical training and theory are demonstrated and integrated with the subject content. Master teachers must be selected with the greatest care and deliberation. This most important step in the training of our teachers cannot be left simply to seniority or to whichever teacher the student happens to have, and often assigned at random. Outstanding “coaches” who have themselves demonstrated mastery of content and the unique ability to inspire prospective members of our teaching corps must be identified, supported by administrators and well rewarded by society. Master teachers should be the master sergeants of our ED corps but must be compensated as generals. Let every student who has aspired to the noblest of all professions ultimately aspire to become a master teacher.

The testing of *existing teachers* is an effort in futility. Who would design the tests and what, presumably, would they be testing? Content? Would the inquisitors go into each classroom to determine each and every teacher’s effectiveness in instructing their charges in mastering the current content of a particular subject? Of course, the inquisitors would themselves have to be tested. Which inquisitors would have tested those inquisitors? What would any of these tests tell us about how well the public school students are being prepared for a future whose shape, feel and rules will likely be reinvented before those students matriculate? What if, by some miracle, we were able to produce a universal test that everyone agreed with, as to what constitutes “good teaching” for each subject matter—necessary so that the results would be accepted by one and by all. And, what if the results were that a significant percent of those teachers were found lacking. Would we then fire a substantial portion of our teaching corps? What happens then? Many school districts are already hiring teacher substitutes who have never had any teacher training at all, because they have found that there is a shortage of trained teachers. Moreover, through the recent testing of teacher candidates, we have determined that many of them are unqualified to be teachers. Where, then, would we go to find our replacement teachers? Would we double the number of students assigned to the remaining “good” teachers? The only workable strategy regarding current teachers is to accept that what we have is what we have, and to build up from where we find ourselves.

A far better path would be to change the requirements for maintaining a teaching certification. We must re-assess exactly what kind of professional development is necessary for teachers to be the most effective motivators and instructors for insuring student learning. Professional development for teachers should certainly include getting teachers together, led by “exemplar teachers,” to share and learn “best practices,” to evaluate building blocks, and to assess the effectiveness of the operational strategies and tactics in reaching the objective.

Finally, and most importantly, we must immediately insure that unqualified students are not admitted to become part of our public school teaching corps. And that mission must be the obligation of the teachers’ colleges. Their feet must be vigilantly and relentlessly held to the fire.

By implementing a new national purpose for public education, we would be able to develop, over time, a body of teaching candidates who are literate, well-grounded in the content of their particular majors, and, themselves, have learned how to learn and learned how to live.

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Chapter I

Learning How to Learn

In the second century of the Christian era, Ptolemy postulated a geocentric theory of the universe—that the earth was the center of everything. For a number of reasons this thesis was not seriously challenged for more than 1300 years. It was not until the Age of Discovery when exploration, astronomy, philosophy, mathematics and more precise scientific instruments advanced dramatically that Copernicus concluded that the old model of the universe simply did not work. For years Copernicus had been changing and modifying his mathematical equations in a futile attempt to make them fit the prevailing model. Finally in 1507, he admitted to himself that there was nothing wrong with the math and that fudging the equations had been intellectually dishonest. Common sense left him with one final option which was to question the fundamental premise. He did. And when Galileo later confirmed with his telescope that the earth was not the center of the universe, it began to change everything, quite literally.

We do not have 1300 years, as Thomas Paine put it, to “divest ourselves of (the) prejudice and the prepossession” that too many of us hold. It is time for each of us to let go of our favorite “prepossession” to fix a model that no longer works and cannot be repaired. We must conclude that we have been attempting to fix an Industrial Revolution paradigm for education which is no longer valid in a 21st Century, high-tech universe. It is common sense that we must invent a new purpose that can lay the foundation to heal an increasingly serious pathology and simultaneously begin to change everything as did a courageous Copernicus and Galileo four hundred years ago.

It was actually once possible to study very hard and, perhaps, master one body of knowledge or another. Now, however, every discipline is so complex that it must be divided into numerous specialties which continue to expand. Today, if one spent a lifetime in an attempt to master any single body of knowledge, it could not be done—both the context and the information itself would have changed several times before the original goal was accomplished. Information which formerly took generations to accumulate and slowly gives way to change now is doubling in less than four years.

However, by our very language, we reveal that we still regard education in essentially the same old way. Everyone wants their children to *get* a good education so as, if possible, to send them to an Ivy League school where they can *get* the best education that money can buy. We tenaciously cling to the belief that education consists essentially of stuff that one must get and store—the filling of the pail. If we fill our kids with enough stuff and they test out well on it then it means college, wealth, status and a guaranteed path to the “good life.” The learning of stuff, learning what is true is, of course, very important—but only as far as it goes. Learning how to learn, rather than the storing of information which may quickly be superceded, is more important: it will lead to the understanding of relationships between facts rather than as individual, isolated bits—to the discovery of how to integrate new knowledge and apply it to a constantly changing template.

If part of the solution, part of the prescription to change the pathological direction of our school system is to teach our children to learn how to learn, we may then begin to give honest and understandable answers to difficult questions which we have been so uncomfortable with. For example, we know that Latin was originally an essential in the Puritan curricula—to read Holy Scripture in early forms, then to read Cicero, Horace,

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Pliny, *et alia* in order to develop the intellect as well as the soul. Eventually most secondary school educators recognized that Latin was no longer needed and eventually Harvard dropped it as an entrance requirement. Other languages were substituted although Latin is still offered in some of our schools. When presented with a choice of selecting a language, students frequently seek parental counsel. We tell them that Latin is a good choice as it will help them throughout their lives with English (never mind that we all know that to master English we should study English, not Latin).

Regarding other language possibilities, we presume to predict which one is most likely to benefit them ten or twenty years later. We may say, for example, that Spanish is an excellent choice because of the growing socio-economic emergence of Spanish speaking nations, and that this language will be very important to succeed in the new global economy. We give essentially the same guidance with respect to Japanese, French, etc. (in the 1960's the fad was Russian).

Would it not be wonderful, as well as more honest, to be able to say that with a new purpose for education, the best reason to learn another language is simply to learn how to learn another language? That it does not truly matter which language. What is important is that once a person has learned how to learn another language that person is forever empowered to know that if and when it may ever be important, or simply be of interest, he or she can learn any other language, any time.

The question for parents as to why it is a requirement to study algebra is always one of the most daunting to answer. With a new statement of purpose, we could finally give a believable answer that our children could understand and respect: one must learn elementary math simply to function in society. But basic mathematics is also a fundamental and necessary building block for greater understanding, accomplishments and discoveries. Without a facility in math one cannot learn algebra. Without algebra one cannot learn calculus—invented in the 17th Century by Isaac Newton and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz specifically as a new language: a new language to describe flow and change—to explain the continuous changes in nature (and now computers and the internet). And, more than just a language, it is another system of logic which allows one not only to look at the universe in a new and different way, but also to do things that could not have been done before.

With a new purpose we could explain that we read history so that we do not go through life making generalizations and important decisions based only upon our own personal experiences. That the past can be a prologue to the future—that studying history is a lifelong quest in the journey in mastering to learn how to learn. Such honest, believable and understandable answers will inevitably motivate and inspire our children far more than the answers we have always given and never even believed ourselves.

Our common sense tells us that every baby is genetically programmed to learn. Each is born with an innate curiosity and, from the very beginning, attempts to make sense out of the world and the universe. Our now pathological system is doing everything possible to drive that instinct of curiosity out of our children as early as possible. William Butler Yeats observed that “education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” Cognitive researchers such as Noam Chomsky and Steven Pinker

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have demonstrated that the spark to light the fire is instinctive but rather than nurture it we do everything possible to extinguish it.

As we continue to stifle curiosity, creativity and imagination with a pedagogy based upon regimentation and obedience with the goal of teaching “facts” that may soon be discredited (or already have been), we are losing more and more of our students. In a study released at a Harvard University conference in January, 2001, researchers from Johns Hopkins University indicated that the national dropout rate was increasing and was a much bigger problem than people have known. High-stakes tests, and especially those required for graduation, will, undoubtedly, aggravate this problem.

Donald M. Murray pointed out that “we have been preparing our children with an education that prepares them to live in the past...we train them for jobs that no longer exist. We must prepare and train our children for change.”

For Thomas H. Huxley, “the secret of genius is to carry the spark of childhood into maturity.” What parent has not witnessed with joy her child’s first solo recitation of the ABC’s and that child’s obvious and incessant delight in demonstrating this new ability? Part of the glorious wonder that a parent experiences comes from actually seeing a transformation that has suddenly resulted in the literal creation of a new and different person. They marvel in recognizing that this child is conscious of its newly found personhood and all of this due to just one spark in the life-long process of learning how to learn. Ken Wilbur points out that all learning involves a self-transformation whereby one becomes a new whole—a new whole that is capable of yet another self-transformation, and that without this process transcendence is not possible.

New and ongoing research by Noam Chomsky, Howard Gardner, Humberto Maturana, Fernando Flores, Jacques Derrida, Steven Pinker, Daniel Goleman et al., is beginning to establish, among other things, that significant and extremely important learning takes place long before the formal educational process even starts. Such research must be encouraged, validated and then incorporated into the new models of how we actually go about the process of learning how to learn as these models continue to develop. But there are some things that we already know, so we must capitalize on this knowledge.

Ken Wilbur teaches that all learning literally creates something even higher and greater than what existed before, and that it does so through a universal process of transcendence and inclusion. Nothing ultimately survives without this process, including a system of educating. For example, for written phonetic language to develop, an alphabet obviously must be invented based upon the sounds that the human voice makes. An alphabet then must be learned and this is usually done by rote. Learning the letters allows us to create words, which transcend, but include, letters. Sentences can now be structured which transcend but yet include words. Paragraphs then transcend but also include sentences, etc. There are historically proven, basic, fundamental building blocks that must be mastered on the road to learning how to learn (arithmetic is the foundation for algebra, geometry and calculus, then trigonometry, etc., as each level transcends and includes its predecessor).

Learning to write, to read, to listen, to observe and to think are all grounded in language. The ancient Greeks claimed that the art of rhetoric was essential to

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maintaining a democracy. Over the centuries, we have learned that language is the most basic, fundamental building block and must be mastered as the foundation for learning how to learn.

Cognitive psychologist Howard Gardner, who has presented a very compelling case for his theory of multiple intelligences, is staggered by the fact that the arts are essentially ignored in our schools. Daniel Goleman cites studies that demonstrate that children who study the violin before age ten develop a stronger, more powerful link between their right and left brain. It is this neurology that facilitates the switch between critical and creative thinking. The ancients considered music and art to be primary and essential building blocks. This wisdom of the past, once an integral part of our children's learning experience, has been systematically eliminated from the curricula (or deemed superfluous by making them extra-curricular).

All of our children are born with the predisposition to learn how to learn wired in. Some have been able to develop this ability in spite of a failed system. Far too many have not, because of a failed system. Some educators, unfortunately, have come to conclude that those born into poverty, relegated to living in urban ghettos, many without fathers and lacking any overall family support system are incapable of clearing any educational bar. Kay Tolwer thoroughly disproved that false premise. At Public School 72, in East Harlem, her kids loved math. Her success came from hard work, deep commitment and actually daring to make math fun. She challenged her students to learn how to learn by allowing them to make mistakes. She never embarrassed one of them for making an error.

Marva Collins taught fourth and fifth grade at West-Side Prep in Chicago. Her kids not only were taught to read but also to understand Shakespeare, Chaucer, Thoreau, Emerson, B.T. Washington, Charlotte Bronte, Hans Christian Andersen and Dante Alighieri. Her "secret" was that she recognized *every child* to be brilliant. Then she reinforced that conviction with her students at every possible opportunity. Marva Collins always placed the heaviest emphasis on literature and composition.

Jerry Howland motivated his students at Boston English High School with his Mock Trial Teams. His teams won several first place state, regional and national competitions in this forum. His students mastered the skills of expository writing, logic, rhetoric, researching and teamwork. Inner-city students, all; none privileged. These and other wonderful educators are proving, on a daily basis, that geographic location, culture and poverty are not as relevant as some argue. Moreover, the successful strategies that they employ can be studied and repeated everywhere.

Eleanor Duckworth of Harvard University always taught her education students to *trust the youngsters to learn*. Duckworth wants to nurture the sense of wonder that each of us was born with. Chet Raymo of Stonehill College would organize the primary school science curriculum around key concepts that also would foster the child's innate sense of wonder.

Many of our teachers have discovered the national program, "Chess in the Schools" sponsored by Intel and the American Chess Association. Third graders learn strategy skills, memory focus and abstract thinking with just this single tactic. There are many examples of creative, imaginative and dedicated professionals who have identified

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fundamental building blocks that have started their charges on the journey of learning how to learn. Common to all is their emphasis on *depth* over breadth. This common denominator may suggest that one of the most important strategies that can be employed in teaching our children to learn how to learn is simply less curricula but with very intensive emphasis on depth—teaching them to truly understand a subject better and then how to integrate that content across several other disciplines. A more holistic approach to learning, if you will.

Only when we have defined a new national purpose for public education can we begin to seriously debate the fundamental building blocks, the key strategies and the meritorious tactics necessary to accomplish the new objective. But it is also essential to understand our own personal responsibilities as well as the responsibilities of all of the other players in each segment of the entire village (Native Americans who call themselves the Omaha, from what is now Nebraska, have taught for centuries that it takes an entire village to raise just one child). We must understand the roles of our teachers at each level of the process. We must have a collaborative understanding without which we cannot develop a working strategy, make better use of our resources, offer help as needed and hold each and every one of us accountable for insuring that we achieve the goal.

We must define new mission statements for our educators, but not only for them. It must *always* begin with the parents and they must take seriously the responsibilities of parenting. Minimally, their mission must be to prepare their child to learn how to learn by teaching a basic set of life skills necessary to participate in a productive educational environment. Over the millennia we have learned that some of the key elements include taking care of the biological: that a healthy, nutritious diet, and good personal hygiene promote healthy bodies. Instilling a sense of self-confidence is necessary for the esteem each must have to believe that he is capable and worthy of learning. Every child's innate sense of creativity must be nurtured from birth. In any society, it also a responsibility of parents to instill in their child a sense of respect for others. For most people, this respect is founded in the widely held belief that there exists a higher power than the self. But even if this were not to be the case, that a prime charge of being human is service to others throughout their lifetime—that self-gratification is not the primary purpose for being sentient. Consideration for others and respect for the differences that each person has must be human-kind's "prime directive."

Pre-school teachers should have a mission statement that would include teaching the *fundamental* rules and responsibilities of social behavior—of sharing, tolerance and compassion. To begin to visualize taking the place of another—"to walk in someone else's shoes."

Kindergarten teachers should be formulating the essential building blocks necessary to begin the process of learning how to learn. This would include, but not be limited to, the teaching of the alphabet and numbers in addition to the exploration and practice of art and music, as they include and reinforce the lessons taught in pre-school or at home. But the three most important lessons that must be learned in kindergarten are learning to listen, to follow directions and getting along with others.

Primary grade teachers have a pivotal mission. Their tremendous responsibility would include teaching the children to master the foundations necessary to learn how to

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learn. Without solid foundations, future learning will not hold up. This may include, but not be limited to reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, music, art, physical fitness, and service to the community. But it must always include the fundamental values and responsibilities of being human, which must be an ongoing part of learning how to learn.

At both the elementary and high school levels, the mission should be to build upon the foundation created earlier. Now students must be exposed to and taught to master the tools necessary to achieve the ultimate objective. Here begins instruction in another language, history, civics, economics, ethics, logic, rhetoric, literature, and expository writing. These areas cannot be merely intellectual exercises. Each must be integrated with all of the others as well as integrated into daily life. Here is when the community service begun in the primary grades must be elevated to include community responsibilities and true leadership skills. Students will no longer consider academic subjects as meaningless facts to be memorized and regurgitated at test time. Rather they will begin to appreciate that they are actually *their tools*, critical tools necessary to reach their own higher potential. (Perhaps this would also be an excellent level at which to invent and introduce a course that can teach our children the analytical skill of deconstructing advertising messages—an essential defensive weapon for them to avert an almost inevitable seduction into a purely material worldview.)

In Part II, Chapter Two is a list of numerous strategies which many purport to be the solution(s) to our ongoing crisis. These concepts must be seriously examined but as cohesive strategies and tactics many may not be universally applicable. Some may not be useful at all. But others may be useful in certain regions of the country; some for urban areas, others for rural areas or on specific levels of the education process. A brief period of trial and error (and grounded results shared among interested groups) should help each locality to determine what works best for *their* children in learning how to learn. First and foremost, however, an overall objective must be established without which all of these and yet to be invented strategies and tactics will continue to prove futile. And as we continue to go off on tangent after tangent we will inevitably produce an even greater pathology which will ultimately destroy this nation. History clearly demonstrates that no civilization has ever been conquered from without unless it has first undermined itself from within.

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“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.” This, the First Amendment to our Constitution, refers specifically to the United States Congress. The Founders were keen to insure that the new Republic did not end up with a national religion or institutionalized religious intolerance such as many of their ancestors had fled when they left England and came to settle in the Colonies. In 1791, the year in which that amendment was ratified, though, Massachusetts and Connecticut each had an established State religion which was supported by tax dollars. The architects of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights were clearly aware of this fact. And just as clearly, they considered this to be entirely a state matter as they specified in the Tenth Amendment: “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the People.” State government support for Congregational churches did not end in Connecticut until 1818, and in Massachusetts it continued until 1834. These State Churches did not lose government aid because this was considered unconstitutional according to the language of the First Amendment or because in the early 19th Century the U.S. Supreme Court decided to reinterpret what the authors really had intended in 1791. For a variety of reasons, the States, on their own, decided to no longer support a State Church.

In the 17th, the 18th and early in the 19th Century, virtually no one questioned that Judeo-Christian morality was an integral wisdom of the past without which no individual, no society, no nation could achieve its highest potential (as they defined potential at the time).

Quickly, however, we were to become a much more pluralistic society. As different groups of immigrants struggled to make new lives in America, vying with each other for jobs and trying to displace the group on the next rung up, over time we began to focus more and more on rights than on responsibilities. By the middle of the 20th Century, we had gradually abdicated many personal responsibilities to the experts: the doctors, judges, lawyers, politicians, businessmen, the clergy, and finally to our teachers. It was to be their job to fix things that went wrong—things that we individuals were actually culpable of personally, most of which we could have fixed ourselves. We rapidly turned into, unfortunately, the champions of individual rights, neglecting to also elevate individual responsibilities. Little wonder that the Supreme Court, taking the pulse of America in 1963, agreed with Madeline Murray (O’Hair) that school prayer was unconstitutional.

This remarkable interpretation of the First Amendment by the Court led to today’s popular but unfounded mantra of “separation of church and state.” This invocation is so constantly and blindly repeated that the average citizen assumes that the beginning words of the First Amendment are no *State* shall make a law, rather than “Congress shall make no law.” As a result, not only any talk of religion but also any concept of spirituality has been eradicated from all of our publicly funded arenas, including our schools. Spiritual development, which had always been the most defining attribute that sets us apart from

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the rest of the animal kingdom, is no longer allowed in the classroom. A most profound wisdom of the past had been forgotten or at least intentionally allowed to lapse.

When, during Campaign 2000, several candidates in a Republican presidential primary debate responded to a question that their greatest philosopher was Jesus, not only was most of America taken aback, many were even offended. When Senator Joe Lieberman was nominated to be the Vice Presidential candidate on the Democratic side, he made it clear that his Judaic upbringing was what centered his life. Many were shocked at first, or embarrassed. When they discovered that he actually meant it, shock turned to fascination and then to a certain respect. The disparity of a sitting President who had demonstrated that he had most certainly learned how to learn but obviously had never learned how to live was in incredibly vivid contrast to this candidate who had, apparently, learned how to live a moral and spiritual life. For many, the return to an even brief recognition of a spiritual life in just this one public arena was more than just refreshing—it even inspired some to redouble the effort to reintroduce prayer to public schools.

The reinstatement of school prayer, however, is *not* the antidote to our country's moral deficiencies. Moreover, the former in-school practice of recitation of a Christian prayer did not simply have the negative effect of making a significant portion of our pluralistic society feel left out—the fact is that many were left out. Countless Jewish, Mormon, Muslim and other kids as well, who did not recite the Lord's Prayer, were taunted, bullied, abused and frequently ostracized by their Christian peers. Many had the hell kicked out of them at recess—every recess. This became so increasingly repugnant to our national psyche that the Supreme Court reflected this sentiment by decreeing the First Amendment to mean that any expression of faith in any schoolroom was unconstitutional. Ultimately, this was extended to every public venue including courthouses, libraries, and municipal offices; in short, to all Federal, State and local government buildings and land. An integral wisdom of the past, present throughout the evolution of public education, was suddenly and abruptly exorcised from the system with nothing offered to replace it. This wisdom was not simply the daily recitation of a prayer—it was the belief that virtue and morality were essential to appreciating that each individual was part of some larger whole, that there is something even greater than the self. For over 300 years, this philosophy was firmly planted into our students through the medium of Protestant dogma (which was the only way that the establishment at that time knew how to do it).

For millennia what was considered to be the Good had been decided in the Western Tradition by the Christian Church. The Church also had a firm, unyielding hold on what was considered to be True, as well as what was Beautiful. The Church, and the Church alone, defined morality, and what was allowable science and art as well. For the sake of simplicity, we can define the Good as morals and ethics—including justness, rightness, and mutual respect and understanding. The Good may be thought of as society, or as the cultural “we.” The True would be defined as observable, ascertainable and propositional facts: as objective nature, as science and technology. The True can be thought of as the objective “it.” The Beautiful can be defined as the virtues of character, integrity, honesty, sincerity and the consciousness of self, and of self-expression through

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the arts, literature and aesthetics. The Beautiful, then, can be thought of as the subjective “I.”

The Good, the True, and the Beautiful (or the We, the It, and the I), formerly united and controlled under the exclusive domain of the Church, were split apart during the Age of Enlightenment. For the first time in Western history, the Good, the True and the Beautiful were developing along separate and distinct paths. With its crushing embrace broken, the Church exerted less and less sway. No longer would future Galileos be threatened with burning at the stake. The effect was truly profound and resulted in huge leaps forward in every arena of human endeavor: representational government, human and individual rights, artistic license no longer censored by the Church, in addition to the remarkable scientific and technological achievements to cite just a few. That’s the good news. The bad news is that we have come to consider that these three domains have always been completely separate, distinct and sometimes competing arenas, which brings us to the universal dilemma that is adversely affecting every aspect of every society including our schools.

What we define as the True, or the objective “it,” has evolved into the present rational high-technology worldview. In this post-modern, scientific world we have come to believe that the sensory and material world is all that there is; that this is it—the only real world—and that if we do, in fact, have higher potentials as individuals, those will be achievable only and exclusively through technology. The “It” has trumped the “I” and the “We” so soundly that material acquisition and consumption has become America’s national religion. (Could this not be a major reason why we are so obsessed with teaching “It” or “stuff” in our public schools today?) We have been conditioned to accept that the material world and its phenomena are all that exists, and that science and technology constitute the one and only road to knowledge and achievement.

The realm of the Beautiful, or the subjective “I,” has devolved to a self-referencing value system whereby character becomes whatever an individual can live with and by. That lesser form of Beautiful has adversely affected and eroded the Good, or the cultural “We” component of human existence—the social necessity of morals, ethics, justness, and concern for the greater good of the group. The Good and the Beautiful in this post-modern society have been relegated to contemporary relativism. They are now treated as apropos but rather inconsequential to the real world, and their former life-central positions looked upon as myth and social dogma.

Although all of this acutely and forcefully affects our failed educational system, we clearly cannot simply go back to the previous level of Judeo-Christian indoctrination. That stage of the evolutionary process has been so terminally deconstructed that, even if we wished to do so, it could never be put back together again. We need to introduce something that is today exceptional, not only to rescue our public schools from the spiral of devolution but also to propel the system on to yet another higher level. That something has to be (for all of us) to start teaching our children, once again, to learn how to live. But this must be done in a different way than was done in the past, a new way that respects the diversity of faiths throughout our country and the world. We must develop ways in which all of our children can be authentically in tune with the Good, the True and the Beautiful, and can re-integrate these three by honoring and valuing morals,

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science and aesthetics equally. This is humanity's greatest challenge and it most certainly will not be an easy task. That is the bad news.

The good news is that a number of remarkable educators have essentially come to a similar conclusion and are already developing strategies to achieve this inspired objective. Although reintroducing music and art into academic studies may not be the introduction of something new and exceptional to the curricula, it would be an excellent start. The Arts can express universal truths that elude other means of expression. Richard Ortner, President of the Boston Conservatory, sees the “teaching of art as a moral alternative to the marketplace and that art engages artist and audience inescapably.... It takes our breath away, sends a chill up our spine and strikes us mute.” Visual art is not just *a way to communicate*; it actually provides us with a truly universal language. Moreover, art allows students not only to express ideas, but also to manipulate and process information in a different way. With new research on multiple intelligences, it is becoming clearer that there are different ways of learning—both broader and deeper than the traditional focus on intellectual excellence. Acknowledging that there are visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners is a good beginning. For the child who needs to learn kinesthetically, a math concept, for example, may be grasped better and in a more meaningful way when using manipulatives.

M.I.T. professor Jean Bamberger finds that fundamental concepts such as measurement, proportion, and pattern perception are shared among music, mathematics and science. Martin Gardiner of the Center for the Study of Human Development at Brown University demonstrates that music ability and early language skill are positively correlated—that musical studies promote independent work habits, collaboration, and the intrinsic motivation to learn. These are “crossover” or practical reasons for us to reintroduce aesthetics to our children, but perhaps equally important is that art actually has the power to transform each of us. John F. Kennedy stated that “when power corrupts, poetry cleanses; for art establishes the basic human truth which must serve as the touchstone of our judgement.” Howard Gardner points out that there are many entry points on the journey to learn how to learn and how to live, and it is clear that the arts are a very important one of those entry points. As for music specifically, even if it were to do nothing else, it teaches us how to listen.

Our broad vision must include helping our students not only to develop into accomplished individuals, but also to become principled and caring mentors of community and citizens who advocate for social justice. Aesthetics can help them (and all of us) to reconnect with the language of civic virtue, citizenship and community. We are all stewards of our biosphere and we must educate our youth to strive for the deeper good, for all of us and the world we all inhabit. Our modern *laissez-faire* society emphasizes the belief that individuals should be free to do whatever they wish so long as they do not cause serious harm others. This attitude does little, unfortunately, to promote the common good. Unless knowledge (the “True”) is learned with reference to and respect for the universe (the “Good,”), it will inevitably leave the self (the “Beautiful”) in doubt as to the interconnection with the All.

This thesis argues (and hopefully establishes) that education in America has always been, in part, a moral enterprise. Though it can be argued that “character” is

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taught in every school in the country, today the question is whether we are doing it with intention and with purpose. Ethics and moral uprightness must not stand alone, addressed only as a class of one or two periods a week. It must be woven into the fabric of everything that our children do. The greatest fear for most of us in tackling this issue at all is that religious indoctrination will inevitably slip in. To insure that it does not, it is essential that there be a common language between parents, teachers and administrators.

In 1992, Wake County Public Schools in North Carolina appointed a taskforce which established that a common language, indeed, is possible. Through public meetings, surveys and other efforts, it insured that character education would be built on the shared moral values of the community. The higher academic achievement, lower dropout rates, fewer discipline problems and the caring environment that developed dispelled the myth that character education cannot be done without imposing any specific religious commitments. Wake County showed that character education can, indeed, be developed using a common language without religion slipping in, that moral literacy can be integrated as part of the entire educational environment. Wake County's teachers have and are fostering within their charges the unimpeachable traits of respect, caring, honesty, fairness, justice and compassion.

Some school districts have begun to successfully employ a concept called Service Learning. Service Learning blends community service with academic instruction so that students immediately put this knowledge to work helping others. Service Learning links scholarship, citizenship and service to promote and encourage critical thinking, problem solving, communication, teamwork and civic engagement. It is essential to emphasize that Service Learning is not simply volunteerism, not simply fieldwork, not an extracurricular activity and not just community service. Service Learning links scholarship, citizenship and service, and uses community service to meet curriculum objectives. It is different from "community service" which involves no formal academic requirements—reading to children, preparing food for elderly lunches and starting in-school paper and styrofoam recycling programs, for example.

Other schools are experimenting with a strategy that seeks to reduce stress and create an optimal learning environment by teaching students how to practice meditation. Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D. and The Stress Reduction Program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center have developed one such program that they are now testing in schools and other non-medical settings.

Incorporating new and purposeful programs for learning into the stream of the public education continuum is not only essential to its survival, but also is critical to a very necessary evolutionary leap forward to a higher level. The examples just mentioned are just that. In the beginning it was stated that adopting a new purpose for public education was only the first step and that even if America embraced a new objective to teach our children to learn how to learn and how to live, there would be many, many strategies and tactics that had to be invented to accomplish the goal. Moreover, that the new purpose must absolutely be understood by, and totally embraced by, our children. We must trust that they, all of them, are not only ready and capable of this understanding, but also that they are all yearning for it.

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America most certainly has the common sense to see the truth—now all of us must have the courage to act upon it. We can begin by changing the conversation, by challenging ourselves to discuss, debate and to reinvent a new purpose for public education. That purpose can inspire all of our children and renew for us all the hope that a better planet will be our legacy to all future generations.

Epilogue

All of earth's children, every single one, must be taught to play their own instrument because each is an extremely important and integral member of a very special band. This band that knows no boundaries includes every sentient being on our planet. The richness, harmony and even survival of the band depends entirely upon how well all of the senior members motivate, inspire and teach each and every child to become a competent and contributing player. We must all assist the children to find their best particular instrument. This may take some time but, fortunately, the band can include a multitude of possible instruments in its company. For some children, we actually may have to invent new instruments; others may eventually invent their own. Many will go on to master one instrument or another, and a few will master more than one. As they play together, they will come to understand the harmonies of teamwork and the mutual respect it produces.

During this grand journey every child must be raised to know and to believe that he or she is capable of becoming a virtuoso—that each may and should aspire to perform masterfully, in both solo and supporting roles. Each child must be encouraged to develop her unique gifts, and also to understand and appreciate the music of his fellow players. There are as many ways to contribute to the inspired performance of the band as there are players. Proficient composer, masterful player, commanding conductor, skillful instrument-maker, appreciative audience, all are needed to create a worthy performance. No matter whether a child eventually plays with a symphony orchestra, or in a one-man band, that child can, with practice, passion and purpose, learn to make beautiful music that enriches the world.

We must offer a new and revolutionary kind of hope to our children and show them that the reason they are here is not simply to become competent individual performers in the band. If each person who becomes a virtuoso reaches out to help another person become a virtuoso also, the overall quality of music played takes a leap upward. And, as each of those virtuosos develops his own unique character, it adds new life to the music played. In the music of life, musicians influence each other. Each and every band member contributes to the overall quality and level of musical performance.

Whether inspired musicians beautifully and passionately play the compositions of others, or create new, electrifying, thrilling works never before contemplated, they raise their crafts to new heights and bring fresh dimensions into being. To perform with power and joy offers to us all a glimpse into yet unseen portals of our universe and universes still to be discovered.

All this, and so much more, becomes possible for all of our children if only we heed our common sense and adopt a new purpose for public education in America.

Common Sense
A New Conversation for Public Education

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