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~~EDUCATION FOR A COMPLETE LIFE~~  
SOCIETY & THE SCHOOLS

University of Iowa

WHEN I RECEIVED THIS ~~invitation~~ Generous invitation

I was asked to talk about  
Education in the 1980's

that especially the personal opinions of  
Ernie Boyer

It is of course a very risky business  
to try to predict what will happen  
in Education in the days ahead

And it is risky still  
- as a matter of public need  
to say what should happen.

Several years ago the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies convened a seminar on the topic: What is an Educated Person?

Twenty or so of the world's best thinkers came together to talk about the goals of education and within five days some of the panelists were hardly speaking to each other.

Everyone agreed in principle that education is a splendid thing but when it got right down to the specific battles raged.

This "intense feeling of tension is not surprising.

After all the purposes of education are inextricably related to the purposes of life itself. And when we're asked to think about what we mean by "education", we are forced to think about the meaning of existence.

*we are asked to explore*  
~~About~~ what we think about the purpose of women and men on earth.

I simply state the obvious: Our <sup>thoughts</sup> ~~view~~ <sup>position about education in the future</sup> of education does reflect to a considerable degree the priorities we assign to living.

Jerome Kagan of Harvard University said that when searching for the <sup>role of education in society</sup> ~~meaning of an educated~~ ~~person~~--one has to make decisions about what Kagan called--the transcendent human qualities--to which we are committed.

In the ancient days, <sup>of course</sup> education was--  
 what some would perjoratively call--elitist.

The goal was to prepare the priveleged for their  
 "god-given" position in the world.

Chaucer's knight--who epitomized this special status--  
 learned not only the use of arms  
 but he learned music  
 he learned dancing  
 he learned drawing  
 and the acts of speech.

The educated "man" in Chaucer's terms  
 was to live a priveleged life--  
 and dominate the rest.

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In the Aristocratic view of education--reflected best  
 in the 18th century society in which it flourished--

- o The mind was not just to be trained  
~~it was to be~~  
 polished.
- o The educated person learned the art of  
 "getting along."  
 --not just in the public assemblies,  
 --but in the private clubs and drawing rooms.

--A process beautifully reflected  
 in Lord Chesterfield's Letter,  
 --and in the generous civility of Tom Jones.

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A rather different view of education ~~for complete living~~  
 was the Civic ideal.

The notion that the educated man

- o was a "model citizen"
- o a "servant of the state".

u Education for citizenship v

- o appeared first in the Greek "polis".
- o It reappeared in Rome,
- o again during the Renaissance,
- o and it has remained a prominent strain  
 in modern thought as well.
- o Indeed--during the first half of the 20th century--  
 one of the central justifications for public  
 schools ~~in my country~~ was education for  
 democracy.

In this view of education men were seen as <sup>and women</sup> ~~potential~~ <sup>political</sup> animals

- o whose potentialities are realized as  
 they are socialized--
- o and as they participate in the life of their  
 community.

In this view of education ~~for a complete life--~~

- o individual talents are subordinated to collective needs.
- o Or better said perhaps are directed toward the common good.

A sharply contrasting view of education--

- o focused not on the state but on the "perfection of the individual".

Plato--for example--urged the wise men of his day to "renounce politics"

- o and to turn instead to what he called "the city" within yourself.

The educated person Plato argued was

- o "to cultivate his own garden."
- o Education was self-directed.

Seneca urged that public affairs should be avoided--

- o favoring instead what he called
- o "the ~~savied and~~ sublime studies which will teach you
  - the substance
  - the will
  - the environment
  - and the shape of God.

Education ~~for complete life~~ will teach you the destiny that awaits your soul.

Curiously however it was the Christian influence that shifted the ideal of education--

○ away from self-nurturing,  
soul refining process

○ to a more utilitarian,  
a more pragmatic view.

In the Christian view a clear distinction was drawn between

○ the aims of education

○ and the ends of man.

Cardinal Newman made this distinction crystal clear

when he wrote:

"Knowledge is one thing.

Virtue is another.

Good sense is not conscience

Refinement is not humility

Philosophy--however profound--

gives no command over the passions,

~~no influential motives,~~

~~no vivifying principles."~~

~~Education~~ Cardinal Newman argued--may help you get along in life--but it would not lead to virtue or salvation.

I have indulged myself in this "breathless" jump

- o through education history to make one central point.

Education has always reflected the

- o mood and vision of the time

and man's view of the purpose of education has always been closely tied to man's view of the purpose of life itself.

And therefore, it clearly follows that--this <sup>is known</sup> ~~is known~~ at this ~~Education Conference~~ ~~ACER conference~~ we cannot talk about "Education ~~for~~ a ~~Complete Life~~" in the 1980s and beyond/without trying to discover the emerging values and the social forces that are at work today.

Follow Professor Halsey's suggestion:

- o Imagine the future we want.
- o Mix in the realism of today.

Therefore--in the remaining moments--I should like to identify 4 conditions in the contemporary context

- o which I believe will have a powerful impact on the future of formal education, and on the way we run our schools
- o and will inevitably share our own definition of what we mean by an education for a complete life.

First, I suggest that because of the changing populations in America - the school will become a very different place -

We hear a lot of talk these days about the demographic shift

- and how ~~much~~ <sup>gone</sup> in just ten years from a baby boom to a baby bust.

All that is true of course.

- The youth cohort has drop by more than 25%.

- And many school districts are now going through the struggle of retrenchment

But I believe <sup>However that</sup> there is a more unusual more dramatic population story just below the surface (10)

The truth is that there is not just a shift in numbers but there is a shift in composition, too.

Today - in the United States

26% of all whites (Caucasians) are 18 years of age and under

33% of all blacks are in that age group

49% of all Hispanics are 18 years of age and under.

Today - <sup>(Dutton in this return)</sup> the immigration ~~both legal & illegal~~ has shifted dramatically <sup>away</sup> from Europe to Latin America and the Pacific

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Today - America is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest <sup>(11)</sup>  
Spanish speaking nation in the world

And you fall  
50% of all children who enroll  
in kindergarten in L.A. County  
are Hispanic.

The point I make is this:

The face of young America is changing

And yet your minutes

which are fast becoming the major problem

in many schools is our present

the students who have not been

well served by the educational

institutions in the past

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20%	whites	above
30%	Black	
50%	Hispanic	



## IV

I have a second notion to propose--

I suggest that because of "changing life styles" <sup>in the future</sup> ~~in the future~~ the length of education will increase and educational structure will become more varied.

Traditionally, the span of human life has been chopped up into slices like a great salami with each section having a special flavor all its won.

First, there was the thin slice of early childhood--

the time of happy play.

Then came a somewhat thicker slice-- devoted almost exclusively to full-time learning.

Next, we had the still thicker chunk of full-time work.

And finally, the little nubbin at the end--characterized by some as "dignified decline."

In this "traditional" life cycle of the past, the stages of existence were kept rigidly apart, each clanking along behind the other like a string of freight cars behind an engine. We moved from stage to stage, never looking back.

Today in most developed countries this life cycle has begun to change.

*The United States*  
 In ~~my own country~~ about 40 percent of all boys and girls enroll in preschool programs before they go to kindergarten.

o Thousands now watch Sesame Street and the rigid, brittle line between the so-called "play years" and the "years of school" is now completely blurred.

o Children now mature physically two full years earlier than did their grandparents 50 years ago.

o And, increasingly, university students stop out or enroll for only part-time study, trying to break out of what seems to them a time of endless incubation.

Incidentally, in the United States over 55 percent of all those enrolled in what we call post-secondary education are part-time students. Clearly, the so-called college-going years are less well defined.

And, to add to the confusion, the neat and tidy adult world is also beginning to break up.

In 1900, the average work week in America was 62 hours long; in 1945, it dropped to 43, and today it's 37½ hours.

Life expectancy has increased from 47 years in 1900 to 71 years in 1973 and, by the year 2000, it is estimated that nearly 30 percent of the American population will be over 50.

It seems quite clear that traditional life patterns are beginning to break up.

Older people now retire early, live longer, have more free time, and are socially unattached.

For the first time in history, education may now be viewed not only as a pre-work ritual but also as a process to be pursued from 5 to 85.

The point I wish to make is this. For years, we've just assumed that life was neatly programmed. There were

- the early days of freedom,
- then came formal education,
- after that work,
- then abrupt decline.

And we built formal education to fit this rigid cycle, serving principally the young and unattached.

That pattern will no longer hold. In the days ahead education ~~for a complete life~~ will mean--education throughout life and this will require more flexibility both in the content and the structure of formal education.

In Moby Dick, Ismael says of himself "I have an everlasting itch for things remote." And it seems quite clear that increasingly education will mean learning how to scratch the everlasting itch.

One important footnote to add to this discussion about life-long education.

As we move toward life-long education -- I believe the first 12 years of formal education could and should be redesigned.

Several years ago -- I proposed that the elementary & secondary school be redesigned

3 tiers

4-5 Basic School

"Tools of Education"

4-5 Common School

Core Curriculum

New Kind of school

2-3 years - Transition School

School apprentice

Jointly planned

- schools
- business
- parents
- community

- begin to let them own special skills. develop some degree of independence

I repeat in the future

The length of education will increase and I suspect

The sequence of education will ~~change~~ be redesigned

I have a third suggestion to propose.

I suggest that

because of technology

because of mass communication

students will--increasingly be taught by non traditional teachers <sup>outside classroom & the</sup> beyond the school.

When I marched off to school over 40 years ago

◦ We had no television.

◦ We had no radio.

◦ We had a model A Ford that took us 100 miles from home.

I was in awe of Mrs. Rice--my first grade teacher--

◦ She was my walking encyclopedia

◦ and the classroom was my window to the world.

◦ There was no competition.

Today--in America--students watch television

◦ 4½ hours every day

◦ 6000 hours before they ever go to school.

By the time they graduate from secondary school

they would have watched television

16,000 hours

compared to 11,000 spent with their teachers.

And Christopher Evans--in his new book The Micro Millenium talks about the impact of yet another form of language-- the computer.

He says that during the 1980s the book will begin

"A slow and steady slide into oblivion."

Computers will take over--he declares--

because they store more information

and because their information can be

more readily retrieved.

Evans says that--in the future--

books will be "tiny silicon chips"

which can be slipped into small projectors,

And read from viewing screens

against the wall.

Or on the ceiling if you like to read in bed.

My point is not to worship the machine.

Rather it is to suggest that we confront a communications revolution. The flow of information has dramatically increased.

And I believe that non traditional "teachers" in our culture ~~are having~~ <sup>will have</sup> an impact on students and on our schools in ways we hardly understand.

A recent survey revealed that

Twenty years ago--in 1960 teenagers in America reported that they were influenced

- 1) most by their parents
- 2) and second by their teachers
- 3) and third by their peers.

Today--1980

young people report that they are influenced

- 1) most by their peers
  - 2) next by their parents
  - 3) and third by television
- which jumped from 8th to 3rd.

Classroom teachers--in turn--dropped from number 2 to number 4.

They have lost both authority and prestige.

In my view the strengths of the traditional and the non traditional teachers in our culture must somehow be combined.

Television can take students to the moon and to the bottom of the sea.

Calculators can solve problems faster than the human brain.

And computers can retrieve instantly million of information units.

But television

calculators, and

computers

cannot--or will not--make discriminatory judgments.

They cannot--or will not--teach the students wisdom.

And I'm convinced we must have schools--

where priorities <sup>are</sup> must be set.

We must have classrooms--

where group learning can be enjoyed.

We must have teachers--

to serve as models and

to demonstrate--first hand--

what scholarship is all about.

The challenge of the future is <sup>1</sup> not to fight technology

- o not is it to coopt technology and bring it into the school.

Rather the challenge is to "teach about" technology

- o and to build a partnership between traditional and non traditional education
- o letting each do what it can do best.

One footnote--

The challenge also is to make sure that "technology does not increase discrimination.

- o Cable TV - 60 separate channels
- o By-pass Harlem.

How - How nets by Kradly

I have explored this matter in some depth to make one point.

- o Communication is increasing the central source of power.
- o And students are being "taught by teachers" far beyond the school.

And we cannot talk about education for ~~a complete life~~ in the days ahead without finding ways better to relate traditional and non traditional education.

Thus far--

I have spoken of education.

① in the context of ~~rising expectations.~~ *the changing face of schools*

② I have suggested that education increasingly--  
will be viewed as a process that never ends.

③ And I have predicted that the "teachers of tomorrow"  
will be both traditional and non traditional.

But what about ~~the~~ substance?

Can education--in fact--lead to ~~something~~ *a good and worthwhile life* called  
"completeness" not just in a societal sense--but  
in a personal sense as well?

And this brings me to my final point.

I suspect that in the days ahead--~~the~~ *There will be renewed interest in* "core curriculum"  
in the schools, *the debate* will move beyond the traditional academic  
subjects. *and* ~~the~~

*the core curriculum will focus on*  
Increasingly the central, integrating purpose,

*SPECIFICALLY, I suggest that the core curriculum will be a core course of study that*  
~~will be to~~ helps all students

- ~~gain perspective~~
- *ways students* and see themselves in relation to other people

~~other times~~  
~~other forms of life,~~

The harsh truth is that we confront a world where all actions are inextricably interlocked and yet many students do not see these connections.

Children's Television workshop science series.

Research--where does water come from--  
the faucet.

Where does light come from--  
the switch.

Where does garbage go--  
down the shute.

~~Today at many colleges & schools~~ ~~we have lots of subjects but there is no integrative theme.~~ *very little integrative*

Today at many educational institutions'

① the only thing students seem to have in common are these differences.

o There is no agreement about

② what it means to be an educated person.

o And many teachers are 'more confident' of the length of education than they are about its substance.

Today the commitment to "individualism" in education is far stronger than the commitment to coherence.

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*we offer ~~it~~ - at many colleges & schools we have ~~many courses~~ but too little integrative*

In 1972 a Stanford University faculty committee proposed a core education for all students after having dropped all requirements several years before.

The student newspaper--in a bitter attack on the faculty proposal--said in a front page editorial that the new requirements proposed to remove from students the right to choose for themselves.

This is not to deny that courses in Western Culture are valuable and that most students could benefit from them. To require such a course, however, carries a strong illiberal connotation. It imposes "uniform standards" on non uniform people.

Frankly, I was startled by that statement.

I was startled to discover that one of the nation's most gifted students failed to understand that while we are indeed--non uniform--we do have a common heritage:

~~a common contemporary agenda and a common future~~

we simply cannot afford a generation that fails to see or care about connections.

Students are very different people and they should be free to make ~~some~~ independent choices on their own.

But students also share some things in common.

I suggest that <sup>in the core curriculum</sup> all students should come to understand that they are not only autonomous self-centered individuals

- o but that they are also members of a larger group of living things to which they are ~~also~~ accountable and connected.

There is, of course, no single set of courses by which this notion of shared relationship can be conveyed.

However

through the study of our common need for language,

through a study of our common heritage,

through a study of our social institutions,

through a study of common activities such as work and leisure,

through a study of our prospects for the future,

through these narrow specific <sup>fields</sup> ~~studies~~, we can convey the larger truth of our connectedness on earth.

Lewis Thomas at the Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York wrote on one occasion that these are not the best of times for the human mind.

All sorts of things seem to be turning out wrong, and the century seems to be slipping through our fingers here at the end, with almost all promises unfilled.

I cannot begin to guess (he said) at all the causes of our cultural sadness, not even the most important ones, but I can think of one thing that is wrong with us and eats away at us: we do not know enough about ourselves.

We are ignorant about how we work, about where we fit in, and (most of all) about the enormous, imponderable system of life in which we are embedded as working parts. . .

I suggest that--in the future--the core curriculum should have one central integrative goal:

To help students better understand the enormous--imponderable system of life in which we are all embedded as working parts.

Mass communication can introduce students vividly to information and ideas. Calculators can solve problems more rapidly than the human brain. Computers can store and retrieve information in ways that would have been judged impossible only a decade or two ago and travel can help us experience first-hand what our grandparents could only imagine vaguely.

Still this is not enough. I'm convinced that we must have schools where priorities can be set. We must have classrooms where students can experience the joy of group learning. We must have teachers to serve as models and demonstrate first-hand what scholarship is all about.

By keeping alive an institution called the school, we affirm that education is not just a random, individual process. We affirm that education is a value laden process, <sup>we depend on school & college as</sup> an essential social <sup>function</sup> with an <sup>integrity</sup> ~~of its own~~ whose purpose <sup>which</sup> must be preserved and strengthened

I do believe that if we can combine formal and informal teachers in education in the year 2000, it could be dramatically effective.

These to me are some of the issues confronting public education as we move into the dangerous & challenging decade of the 1980's

Thank you for inviting me here today.

As I look ahead

I see a risk more damped  
grazy students

I see  
An idealist sequence that will  
be hard life long

I see  
Dra more in our good health

I see  
And a move to link the curriculum  
more directly to the common agenda of several  
we all share in common <sup>of several</sup> <sub>civily</sub>

There to me - or some of the issues

Conjuncty public education -

As we move into the what  
Miss Thatcher recently called

The dog years decade of the 1980's

Thank you