

LEADERSHIP, EDUCATIONAL REFORM, POWER

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PART I: LEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Technology has moved to prime time. It has become an engine of our economic growth and has fundamentally changed the way we learn, how we do business, and the skills students in America need to flourish in the employment world (Technology Literacy). An educated person has become someone who has learned how to learn, and who continues learning throughout his or her lifetime (Drucker).

It is self-evident that leadership, education, and power have a strong interdependence to each other. Advancing technology and world competition are now demanding major *reform* in the educational sector. President Clinton has well understood this urgency, and has been supplying the vision and leadership for *reform* to take place in our schools. Without his leadership and initiatives at the highest level of government, *reform* would still be on the back burner, waiting for each local school district to work this problem out on their own. Still, for critical transformational *reform* to prevail in our schools, it will be the informed parents of students who must ultimately exercise their power and leadership skills to bring about this reality.

Political Background. In 1992, Bill Clinton won the presidential election, running his campaign on the theme of “people first.” He made it clear that part of what he meant was that the skills of the American worker hold the key to American competitiveness (Marshall, 1992, preface to paperback). Otherwise, Americans were doomed to continue experiencing lower and more unequal real incomes.

It was evident Clinton shared many of the same philosophies expressed in Marshall and Tucker’s book, *Thinking for a Living*, and asked his whole campaign staff to read it. President Clinton even wrote an endorsement for this book which is inserted on its back cover:

This book explains very clearly why our future depends on the skills of our people, who compete in a world where what you can earn depends largely on what you can learn. It explains why not just our schools, but many major institutions, must be rebuilt to accomplish the goals of education, training, and retraining for a lifetime of work and building the consensus to do it.

The thesis of Marshall & Tucker’s book states, “The key to both productivity and competitiveness is the skills of our people and our capacity to use highly educated and trained people to maximum advantage in the workplace (Marshall, p. xvi).” Marshall and Tucker went further to declare America’s *guiding principle* on which our educational and industrial systems were built, for long highly successful, were now outmoded and harmful, and the time had come to change it.

Marshall and Tucker's research revealed a practice of *Tayloristic* management (Callahan, 1962, p. 28) used in America which helped to make our front-line workers the largest and richest middle class the world has ever seen for over 60 years. Be that as it may, that kind of elitist characteristic had a major weakness—ignoring the powerful capabilities and skills of the American workers. As a result of holding on to its *Tayloristic* philosophy of leadership-management too long, America lost their *elitist* position as the world's top producing economy (Marshall, p. 43).

As a result of mass production, no class in history had ever risen faster than the blue-collar worker. And no class in history had ever fallen faster (Drucker, p. 4). Peter Drucker, perhaps the greatest leadership-management consultant of the last century, has recognized a dominant group of *knowledge workers* recently emerging. He understood a great majority of new jobs would require a good deal of formal education and the ability to acquire and apply theoretical and analytical knowledge. *Knowledge workers* would require a different approach to work and a different mind-set. Above all, they would require a habit of continuous learning (Drucker, p. 7).

Some countries saw the paradigm shifting toward *knowledge workers* decades ago, and hence did a better job of preparing for the future world marketplace, which has now arrived. Using the intelligence, imagination, thinking skills, quality control, and self-supervision of the front-line workers (termed *anti-Taylorism*), Germany and Japan became the dual colossi of the new world economic order.

“Unused intelligence,” Japan would say, “is of little value. It is intelligence actually applied that makes the difference (Marshall, p. 52).”

President Clinton prudently comprehended that if America was to be competitive in the 21st century, it was his job to take the lead in bringing about *reform* in industry as well as in our educational institutions. This meant higher academic standards would have to be set—not only for an elite few, but for *all* Americans. In order for this to be done, Clinton saw most to gain in targeting the whole school as a system in need of *reform*. Educators once viewed reform as a one-time event that would make a few improvements and then recede (Lashway, 1999), but today it has become a permanent part of the President's leadership agenda.

In today's knowledge society, for the first time in history, the possibility of leadership is open to all (Drucker, p. 10). But in regards to national education, the person who is in the best position to lead out in *reform* is the President, with the Department of Education within his Executive Branch. Fortunately, in this regards, America currently has a caring President who is dynamically leading us in a very favorable economic and educational direction going into the next century. To launch this technological leadership, immediately upon getting into office, Clinton and Al Gore became the first Executive Branch of government to place their office online (see www.whitehouse.gov).

The Year: 1994. In 1994, the Clinton Administration, with the support of Congress, began the transformation of the Federal role in education by passing the

Improving America's Schools Act. Prior to 1994, the education system had for too long condoned low expectations and low standards for disadvantaged children. The 1994 law established the clear expectation that *all* children can and should reach high standards, closing the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students in high poverty schools and their more fortunate peers (Educational Excellence, 1999, pp. 1,10).

This enactment has overtones of a motto in one of America's largest churches, "People matter to God." Correspondingly, the main initiative of Clinton's *Improving America's Schools Act* was, "All children in America matter to him and to this country." Thus, it was true equality which was at the heart of this Federal Act.

Richard W. Riley, Secretary of Education, said it a little differently, "We vigorously oppose the idea of *dumbing down* American education. Instead of *dumbing down*, we want to *achieve up*" (Riley, U.S. Dept. of Education, 1997).

Also in 1994, Clinton's *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* was passed (amended in 1996). This judicial enactment represented a vast approach for "improving student learning through a long-term, broad-based effort to promote coherent and coordinated improvements in the system of education throughout the Nation at the State and local levels" (Executive Summary, 1998). *Goals 2000* also supported State efforts in developing clear and *rigorous* standards for what *every child should know and be able to do*. In addition, this Act supported State and local school *reform* efforts based on challenging academic standards and assessments linked to those standards (Educational Excellence, p. 10).

These two laws were built on the principle that students and schools rise to the expectations and standards "we [state, local districts] set for them." Even though all the States had been testing the performance skills of their students, many of them were actually cheating by contrasting their results against some of the lowest statistical comparisons available, and then proudly proclaiming their students to be in the top national percentile group.

Seeing through this inequitable logic, the President proposed a national standardized system of curricula and assessments for a more accurate evaluation of how America's students were doing academically (Educational Excellence, p. 10). Its purpose was to produce a more level playing field for schools applying for federal financial aid. While completely voluntary, this national testing was developed to measure the fair and comparable progress of our students (Resource Guide, 1998, p. 4).

The Year: 1996. In 1996, Clinton was responsible for the lead in getting the *Educational Technology Initiative* passed. To ensure public schools in the 21st century had the modern technology to prepare students for the information age, the President unveiled four goals to be accomplished before the year 2000 (America's Challenge, 1996, p. 2):

1. Provide access to modern computers for all teachers and students

2. Connect every school in America to the Information Superhighway
3. Develop effective software in all subject areas
4. Give every teacher the development they need to help students use and learn through technology

To reach those goals President Clinton and Vice-President Gore led out in a national effort to:

- Wire all the nation's classrooms for computer access to the Internet
- Create an *Educational Technology Fund* to help ensure every student has adequate access to a cutting-edge computer, and every teacher has the skills and software to make the best possible use of available technology
- Challenge the educational software and entertainment leaders to produce better educational software to make learning more exciting and interesting.

The Year: 1997. To support the President's educational technology plan, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a unanimous ruling on *Universal Service for Internet Access*—later coined the e-Rate (education rate). This law was passed to help schools afford the large costs of accessing the Internet. For the first time in the history of telecommunications, public schools and libraries were eligible for universal service support totaling up to \$2.25 billion a year (Riley, U.S. Dept. of Education, 1997).

Using a sliding scale of 20-90% for discounts in telecommunications services, the e-Rate was meant to help ensure the end of the digital divide between rich and poor schools and among urban, rural, and suburban schools. The average discount was estimated to be 60%, while the poorest schools were to receive discounts of 80% to 90%. The e-Rate was not set up to cover computers, software, or other unrelated services, whereas the *Educational Technology Fund* was (Discounted Telecommunications Services, 1998).

To make the e-Rate plan work, the government used a "I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine" approach with the telecommunications industry. The telecommunication companies were to "discount" the rate schools and libraries were being charge for Internet access according to a specified discount formula. In return, the government would allow an equal "discount" on the telecommunication company's tax rate.

As further support of President Clinton's call for educational *reform*, in November, 1997, the U.S. Congress allocated \$150 million to support the implementation of research-based *reforms* in schools across the country (Dahlkemper, 1998). This *Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program* (CSRDP) provided schools grants of at least \$450,000 to redesign themselves using whole-school reform models. However, for obvious reasons, the bulk of the money, \$120 million, was designated for Title I schools.

The Year: 1998. The Department of Education made their contribution toward the President's call for educational *reform* by reallocating resources into the *Technology Literacy Challenge Fund*. This was a five-year, \$2 billion fund to provide formula grants

to state education agencies in supporting grassroots efforts at the state and local level, to meet the four national technology goals for schools (Resource Guide to Federal Funding):

- Modern computers
- High-quality educational software
- Trained teachers
- Affordable connections to the Internet

The Year: 1999. Recently, the President announced that he would shortly send to Congress the *Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999*, his proposal to reauthorize the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA). To Clinton, “every child, parent, grandparent, and taxpayer deserved high quality public schools in their communities” (Educational Excellence). One of the core principles of this Act was to encourage disadvantaged children to “achieve up” to the same challenging academic standards as their more fortunate peers.

SUMMARY ON LEADERSHIP

Peter Drucker says the only definition of a *leader* is someone who has followers. “Without followers,” he says, “there can be no leaders” (Hesselbein, 1996). If this is the core determinate of a true leader, does President Clinton qualify?

Measurement of Leadership. With his *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, the President stated support for State’s efforts in developing clear and *rigorous* standards for what every child should know and be able to do (Executive Summary). How have the educational leaders followed Clinton’s lead in this regards?

Department of Education's Response. In his 1999 State of American Education speech this year, the Secretary of Education, Richard W. Riley, said, “The American . . . school experience simply has to become more *rigorous*” (Riley, *New American High Schools Sought*, 1999). Towards that effort the Department of Education co-sponsored the *1999 New American High Schools Site Identification Competition* along with the National Association of Secondary School Principals. This event was established for the purpose of identifying “national showcase” high schools—schools that have undertaken extensive *reform* efforts to make sure all students meet challenging academic standards and are prepared for college and careers.

State Governors' Response. Governor Carper, the chairman of the National Governors Association, launched an initiative—*smartkids4ourfuture*—which focuses on *reforming* education to improve student achievement across the country. He said that the governors know that the future strength of our nation depends on our success in education *reform* (Gregovich, 1999).

Florida Governor Lawton Chiles and Utah Governor Michael O. Leavitt voiced, “States and school districts are in the midst of a major push to put technology in the hands of America’s teachers and students. These efforts seek to equip schools and

classrooms with computers, educational software, school-based computer networks, and links to both statewide and global information networks ” (Chiles, 1997).

Local School-Districts' Response. Trickling down to the local level, a small-town school in Arkansas recently announced the hiring of a new Middle School Principal. She is quoted in a local newspaper as saying she is poised to implement the district’s current emphasis on *rigorous* academics, while at the same time cultivating a positive, hopeful atmosphere at the school (Mero, 1999, sec, 1, p. 1).

A few miles away, the district’s elementary program director spoke of the “unknowns of implementing specific performance standards for students [which] may force administrators to think outside the box.” She goes on to say, “The idea is *all children* must meet these standards, no excuses” (Hemann, 1999, sec. B, p. 1).

Correspondingly, since the President’s call for educational *reform* has taken root, it is distinctly clear he has government officials, administrators, and teachers following his lead all the way down to local school districts. Therefore, it can be confirmed and substantiated that President Clinton powerfully qualifies as a leader according to Drucker’s definition stated above.

Assessment of Leadership. Correspondingly, Drucker submits that the major factor that determines the effectiveness of a leader is whether or not they have followers who produce results (Hesselbein, p. xii). Does Clinton pass this leadership requirement as well?

As a result of the leadership initiatives the President has made regarding improving education in America, how much progress has been made toward his goals for the year marking the new millennium? In regards to schools getting connected to the Internet, there has been an increase every year since 1994, when only 35 percent of public schools were connected. By the fall of 1998, this figure had nearly tripled with 89 percent of the public schools having a connection to the Internet (Issue Brief: Internet Access in Public Schools, 1999).

What proportion of classrooms in public schools are connected? In 1998, 51% of instructional rooms in public schools were connected to the Internet, compared to only 27% the year before. The rate at which classrooms are connected will continue to grow because of the funds which first became available in June, 1998, through the e-Rate program (Issue Brief: Internet Access in Public Schools, 1999, p. 3).

As a result of Clinton’s leadership for school *reform*, in the last seven-years the U.S. charter-school movement has produced about 1100 schools in 29 states and the District of Columbia, enrolling over 120,000 students (Hadderman, 1998). Many people, President Clinton among them, see charter schools, with their emphasis on autonomy and accountability, as a workable political compromise and an alternative to vouchers.

So in regards to assessing the effectiveness of the leadership skills of the President, Clinton again gets a *superior rating* in influencing followers into action.

PART II: EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Reform has been long overdue for America's educational system and its traditional method of classroom instruction. Going into a new century driven by technology and change, it won't be long before comprehensive and extensive global educational instruction will be available for everyone of all ages over the Internet (Campbell, 1997).

A central problem in education has been the failure to adapt teaching to the way children think. From this perspective, many learning disabilities have in fact been created by schools. Children beginning school are especially vulnerable when teachers demand they learn what they cannot understand (DeVries, 1987, p. 18).

Over the past two-hundred years education in the United States has evolved into a centralized passive learning environment. In this *externally* dominated setting, the teacher sets the goals, delivers most of the instruction in lecture form, chooses the textbooks and reading materials for their courses, formulates tests, and instructs using content and fact-driven curriculum where the students are involved by miming or repeating memorized information.

School Reform Models. School *reform* remains at the center of the public agenda even after many years of discussion, legislation, and state and local action. After years of work to improve public education, student achievement is improving but still remains below acceptable levels (CSRM, 1998, p. 1).

Great interest is rising for using proven *reform* models that can be quickly replicated. For example, New American Schools has created seven templates for whole-school *reform*, with the expressed goal of creating "off-the-shelf" models that can be adapted to the needs of many schools (Lashway, p. 1).

The Catalog of School Reform Models (CSRM) was developed at the request of the U. S. Department of Education in direct response to the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program. Its purpose is to help inform schools, school districts, and states as they explore external models to incorporate into their comprehensive school *reform* programs. The catalog provides introductory information on models for comprehensive school *reform* in two categories (CSRM, p. 3):

- **Entire-School** models, which provide schools with a framework for change covering most or all aspects of school operations
- **Skill and Content-Based** models (reading programs, mathematic programs, etc.), which can be used as building blocks for comprehensive *reform*.

In regards to the CSRD, the schools themselves are responsible for developing plans that integrate required components. The CSRD legislation encourages schools to consider adopting *externally* developed research-based *reform* models as a central part of their plan.

Problems with Current Reform Efforts. Even though it is much more complex than this, in essence there are basically two sides of learning dispositions among the student population: *convergent* thinkers and *divergent* thinkers. Both learn in diametrically opposite ways.

Convergent thinkers normally *do not* question or challenge the status quo. *Divergent* thinkers usually *do*, and often get blasted by *convergent* thinkers when their viewpoints oppose their own. *Convergent* thinkers make up roughly 40% or less of the student body, and represent by far the majority of teachers, principals, School Board members, and PTA members (Gallagher, *The Exploratory Learner*, pp. 1-8). *Divergent* thinkers consists of 60% or more of the student body population, and either find a way to adapt to the *convergent* thinker's method of instruction, or drop out of school.

Even though this conflict in academia has always been present in America's educational institutions, the problem has never been addressed on a national level—until now. Since President Clinton has taken the lead at our nation's highest level, opening extraordinary opportunities for radical *reform* to take place in our school districts, *divergent* thinking students and their parents have a chance for the first time ever to create an educational setting where they can finally reach their full potential scholastically. However, there are many roadblocks that will need to be overcome if this is to take place.

As stated earlier, the President's *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* supports state efforts in developing clear and *rigorous* high standards for our nation's students. If *convergent* thinkers are already in the majority of leadership positions in our nation's schools, how will those leaders interpret what educational *reform* means in the President's context? Specifically, what standards are being referred to, and who is going to set those standards?

Are we speaking of entire-school *reform*, or just altering and modifying the current system of instruction to meet the higher demands being formulated? Under the President's new formal appeal, will education become stricter, rougher and more repellent for *divergent* thinking students. This kind of logic was reflected in a local school district director who recently was quoted, "The idea is *all* children [including *divergent* thinkers] must meet these standards, no excuses"(Hemann, sec. B, p. 1).

It should be obvious *convergent* minded thinkers are not capable of entire-school *reform* that devises some kind of *constructivist* method of instruction conducive for *divergent* minded students. It's just not within their temperamental capacity, nor have they had any training in this area. Modify and alter, yes; entire school *reform*, no.

Obviously, the President can't just come right out and say, "Even though the American educational institution has done well at educating children with a *convergent*-thinking mind-sets, they have acutely failed at educating students with *divergent* thinking mind-sets." Even so, Clinton is still giving the local schools a chance to give it their best effort in *reforming* their own organization. However, the best chance for total *reform* to come to pass still remains with the chartered school format.

Leaving it up to each school district to implement their own strategies for total school *reform* might create disastrous problems. One, the *convergent* thinking teachers will develop their own *rigorous* high standards, changing little in their instructional

methods, while demanding an ultimatum that *all* students (including *divergent* thinkers) rise to "their" higher level of learning—or be held back from advancing to the next grade level! If *divergent* thinkers, such as ADD, ADHD, LD, Edison trait, gifted, and creative students were already having problems before, then this kind of action will surely create a larger back door for the school.

Howbeit, this could be just what is needed to turn things around. It could be the rallying call for parents of *divergent* thinking student to plunge them into action, and start many more charter schools where their children can succeed at the highest level. For the *convergent* thinking students, they should continue to perform well in the traditional schools, even with more required out of them.

Maybe there will come a time when both *divergent* minded students and *convergent* thinking students will be able to learn under the same roof. If that happens, teachers in those schools will be using a variety of instructional methods favorable to the temperaments and independent needs of *all* students. But it is preposterous to expect *convergent* thinking teachers and administrators to know how or have the ability to create *constructivist* learning environments—with the primary focus on helping *divergent* thinking students to advance to their highest level of scholarship.

The second possible breakdown for achieving the President's call for higher standards in our schools has to do with the spirit and frustration level of the teachers and principals if their best efforts for academic improvement fail. Principal Robert Dorn of Pasco County, Florida, explains:

Our district has tried numerous strategies: we lifted a school day; we increased our time on task; we increased the graduation requirements; we mandated exit testing; and we put in a no-driver's-license-if-you drop-out provision . . . We have audited our rules for compliance purposes. What needs to be examined now is the unhappy consequence of these efforts; there have been no significant improvements in student achievement patterns. These innovations have failed to eliminate poor instruction and ineffective and redundant curricula (Dorn, 1995, pp. 7-10).

Even though his intentions were meritorious, the President's *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* went awry when it gave states and local school districts the authority to set "their own" higher standards which "*every child should know and be able to do*" (Executive Summary). But this error in the President's plan didn't stop there. It dared to go further by expounding principles [also to be determined by the states and local school districts] for which *all* students and schools must rise to meet expectations and standards "we set for them" (Educational Excellence).

Since many, if not most of the jobs that our youth will be working as adults haven't even been developed yet, *who* dares to determine the standards "which every child should know and be able to do?" How do we know the precise knowledge and skills future workers will need?

Unless these dictums are removed, entire school *reform* will not take place in our present educational systems. These kind of elitist statements demonstrate a policy of going backwards, not forwards. In a *constructivist* world which allows *divergent* thinkers to *construct* knowledge by asking questions, exploring, and making their own discoveries, how can anyone decide what standards *each* of these students should attain beyond the basics?

Before *reform* efforts “within” established schools proceed any further, these questions need to be clearly addressed. And the parents of *divergent* thinkers, representing the majority of our students, ought to be given leadership positions in deciding what these standards should be. However, charter schools, given the latitude to pave their own way, should continue being aggressively forged for the hope of our children who are gifted with *divergent* mind-sets.

SUMMARY ON EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Some day in the not so distant future the schools may come to realize that not all children can be scheduled and routinized—that children, like adults, are fundamentally different in this regard. Perhaps then the school might adapt itself to those children with different learning styles that do not fit conventional curriculum or its methods of instruction. After all, it isn’t so much that these children can’t work as it is they don’t want to work under the mechanized instructional methods used in traditional classrooms (Keirse, p. 5).

A new educational framework for students with different learning dispositions must be created which allows them great freedom to follow trails of self-interest; to make connections on their own; to reformulate ideas; to reach unique conclusions—even if they are non-conventional and non-conforming; to explore and discover new territories of thinking; to question without fear of reprisal; to reshape and transform ideas; and internalize information according to their needs and desires (Brooks, 1993).

NOTE: For a more detailed analysis of my ideas and supporting arguments on educational reform, visit the following online papers:

- ◆ [Educational Reform Proposals](#) (or [Adobe pdf 4.0 format if preferred](#))
- ◆ [How Should We Educate ADHD Children?](#) (or [Adobe pdf 4.0 format if preferred](#))
- ◆ [Freedom of the Learner](#) (or [Adobe pdf 4.0 format if preferred](#))

PART III: POWER

As this paper has cited, a multitude of efforts are in progress to set high standards for student learning at the national and state levels. State policies are being set to challenge, support, and monitor schools as they work to improve learning for all students. Incentives for improvement and sanctions for continued low performance are being established. At the same time, a number of charter school *reform* models across the country are beginning to demonstrate the ability to transform entire schools into high-performing learning centers with challenging academic standards, highly-motivated teachers, and strong parental and community support (CSR, p. 3).

In order for all of our young people to have greater financial security when they become adults, President Clinton has used expert, reward, legitimate, and referent power (Yukl, 1998, pp. 178ff.) in helping us to bring about *reform* in our educational institutions. For the first time in the history of the United States, radical transformation and true democracy in our educational system is being made possible for us to achieve. The President is handing us a golden opportunity which may not come around again in our lifetime if we don't take advantage of this moment.

Power of Parents and Numbers. Back in the 60s the hippie generation used the phrase when fighting the Establishment, "Power with the People!" That statement is still true today.

Radical improvements in education for our children and entire-school *reform* will not be successful without the "power of parents." In this regards, power rests in *taking responsible action* for the educational success of our children. As true democracy endorses— *power is the People!*

The President has placed his faith in the trustworthy adults of America by his claim that all parents should have the opportunity to change schools or start new ones if their child's school is not performing. What's more, Clinton believes that information, competition, and choice among public schools should be the rule, not the exception. According to him, any parent who is dissatisfied with either their own child's or the school's performance should have the opportunity to choose a public school that *will do better*, and called on all 50 states to enact charter school laws toward that end (America's Challenge, p. 3).

The President goes even further by stating that *all* schools must be held accountable for the performance of their students. If not, they should be shut down (Resource Guide, p. 4). When a school opens their doors, they must take responsibility and be held accountable for the job they have applied for. Otherwise, they are not only wasting taxpayer's money, they are also disabling our future workers of tomorrow. Therefore, to aid parents in evaluating the effectiveness of schools in their areas, the President is requisitioning school districts to issue report cards on every school in their district (Resource Guide, p. 5).

Parents also must accept accountability for the educational success of their children. No longer can we simply drop our kids at school, and expect the school system to provide the education they must have for their future security. Parents are and continue to be their child's first and most important teacher. President Clinton is appealing to us as parents to read with our children, see that their homework is done, see that they take the tough courses, know our children's teachers, talk to our children directly about the dangers of drugs and alcohol, and talk to them about the values we want them to have. He reminds us that these conversations could literally save their lives (America's Challenge, p. 3).

For our children who will be following the non-traditional and unconventional path toward their educational pursuits (i.e. charter schools), an *Individualized Educational Plan* (IEP) will need to be formulated and refined over the years. Continuous oversight and modifications will need to be administered until the student gets a self-confident handle in directing their own *construction* of knowledge.

SUMMARY ON POWER

All models of educational *reform* which are currently showing fascinating success have strong parental involvement. PTA is beginning to take on a whole new meaning. Parents will not only have to take the responsibility of forming charter schools when necessary, they will also have to stay involved in their child's academic life until they can "walk on their own" scholastically.

Making sure our children are provided with the knowledge and learning skills tomorrow requires may be the most important thing we as parents do in this next decade. The *power* to make this happen is now being made available to us, thanks largely in part to the President's initiatives. However, if parents remain passive and do not respond, and our children do not attain higher scholastic achievement, this power may revert back to the "hands of a few," meaning governmental educational institutions.

SUMMARY FOR PAPER

Knowledge has become our key resource. But this type of required knowledge can only be acquired through some type of schooling. However, it is not tied to any country. It is portable. It can be created everywhere, fast and cheaply (Drucker, p. 18). In the short future, the possibility of acquiring knowledge will no longer depend upon obtaining a prescribed education by a given age (p. 10).

The essence of management is to make knowledge productive (p. 14). Likewise, the essence of teaching is to make learning productive for every student, whether they be gifted with *divergent* and conceptual mind-sets or gifted with *convergent* and concrete mind-sets.

We will continue to have to think through *education*—its purpose, its values, its content. We will have to learn to define the quality and productivity of education, to measure both and to manage both (Drucker, p. 22).

In the last decade, the changes which technology has provided in our world are mind-boggling. But technological change does not need to be feared, only respected and understood. President Clinton has seen an golden opportunity in his presidential role to take the lead in challenging America to make radical changes in our educational arena. In the long history of humankind, the fundamental direction of education has always been in the hands of a few. Now, with the introgression of the computer and the Internet, this power can be equalized and shared among all individual citizens residing in free countries.

The primary question parents must ask today is, "Should our children be allowed to teach themselves—learning without being taught in the traditional way? Are our children capable of constructing and building their own minds? Who decides the right questions to ask and the right answers that follow, if not the individual?"

Aristotle (383-322 BC) believed that education should be controlled by the state, and that it should have as its main objective the training of its citizens. In *Politics*, Aristotle's last book, he opens with these words:

No one will doubt that the legislator should direct his attention above all to the education of youth The citizen should be molded to suit the form of government under which he lives (History of Education: Higher Education).

In the 12th century, no one but Peter Abelard believed in the freedom of the individual mind. He wrote, "This kind of questioning excites young readers to the maximum effort in inquiring into the truth, and such inquiry sharpens the minds" (Peter Abelard, p. 2). All others in his generation feared this educational freedom to question would only produce heretical ideas and conclusions.

Abelard's new intellectual instructional movement, termed *Scholasticism*, played an important role in the rise of European universities and helped lay the groundwork for the later system of scientific inquiry, which is built upon the free-questioning mind (Saettler, 1990, p. 27).

Can we have as much faith in our children as Abelard had in his students, with the ability to explore, question, discover and create for themselves? Or will we continue to follow in the path of Lombard and Aquinas, students of Abelard, who stymied the minds of their students by supplying the right questions and the right answers?

This is the issue we must respond to, or consciously concur that it be answered by someone else who is perfectly willing to answer it for us and our children.

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