

## EXPLORING NEW FRONTIERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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I am pleased to be addressing this conference of educational decision makers in West Virginia because I believe that the decisions to be made in the next twenty years will be among the most critical in the history of American higher education. As we look toward the 21st Century, we are genuinely faced with the possibility of new forms of education that are not simple extensions of the past.

My message this evening will be that the mission which brings you together--cooperative planning between public and private higher education in West Virginia--is critically important because it is part of a much larger picture of cooperation among the multiple providers of education. The most useful role I can play in this conference is to urge you to expand your thinking beyond the turf-management questions consuming much of higher education today to consider the changing role of higher education in the society.

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Higher education is on the verge of forging new relationships with society, sharing the educational function with other providers of education services and sharing students and faculty with other demands on their time. Over one-third of today's college teachers are part-time, and that proportion ~~rises to 60 percent in community colleges.~~ *is likely to continue to rise.* There is very little chance that education will be able to compete with industry for full-time teachers in high-demand fields such as computer technology and accounting. Similarly, college students are increasingly likely to regard education as a part-time rather than full-time activity. Forty percent of this fall's entering classes are part-time students, and a third are 25 or older. If the predictions of the National Center for Education Statistics hold true, part-time students will predominate by 1985. Higher education has changed from being a full-time commitment of students for a few years of their lives to being a part-time involvement in a lifetime of learning. This suggests a vastly different role for higher education in the society, and it is this new role that I would like to talk about this evening.

More education for more people for more years of their lives would seem to make education a growth industry. The literature and gloomy prognostications of higher education notwithstanding, education in the broad meaning of that term is of growing importance in the society. We have all heard it said that the railroads failed, not because there

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Almost certainly, Knowledge is power, now and for the foreseeable future -- for individuals, organizations, and soc as a whole  
It is inconceivable that

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education will be less important tomorrow than it is today. From the ancient occupations of agriculture and fishing to the futuristic "high tech" occupations, workers will need to be better educated than ever before. Moreover, the continued expansion of education to previously unserved segments of the population is inevitable. Everyone is going to need more education--women as well as men, minorities as well as majorities, old as well as young, rural as well as urban or suburban, poor as well as rich, handicapped as well as able-bodied, hard-to-teach as well as easy-to-teach. ~~And education is increasingly important because there are simply more things to learn--appreciations to enrich life, knowledge to enhance personal growth, and skills to improve performance.~~

More education for more people for more years of their lives would seem to make education a growth industry. The literature and gloomy prognostications of ~~formal~~<sup>higher</sup> education notwithstanding, education in the broad meaning of that term is of growing importance in the society. ~~PP~~ We have all heard it said that the railroads failed, not because there was ~~no longer a need for their services--indeed the need for~~ transportation was growing at the time--but because the tunnel vision of the railroad operators concentrated on running the railroads instead of exploring the new frontier of the transportation industry.

Many educators within the formal educational establishment today are so consumed with managing their institutions

was no longer a need for their services--indeed, the need for transportation was growing--but because the tunnel vision of the railroad operators concentrated on running the railroads instead of exploring the new frontier of the transportation industry. It is sobering to observe that many college leaders are far more concerned about running the college than they are about providing for the educational needs of society. Such narrow vision could be just as fatal to colleges and universities as the preoccupation with management was to the railroads in an earlier era.

If we looked to the broad future of the education industry rather than to the narrow future of colleges and universities, what would we see?

First, we would see a greatly increased need for learning for more people and for more years of their lives. Second, we would see a wider range of offerings and an explosive increase in the number of organizations providing education. ~~services.~~ Third, we would see some new arrangements among providers and new ways of delivering education. All of these steps into the Learning Society are in progress now, <sup>so</sup> ~~and since they are changing the role of colleges and universities in society,~~ let us look at them ~~more closely.~~ *to see what implications they have for colleges.*

The need for education on the part of both individuals and society is escalating as fast as the world changes--and that is at a heady pace these days. Margaret Mead once remarked that the world in which we are born is not the world in which we live nor is that the world in which we

will die. I was born into a world without television, mass air travel, credit cards, frozen foods, or computers. My parents were born into a world without automobiles, radios, or refrigerators. That is a lot of change in a short span of time, but change has a way of escalating so that each new generation is coping with a faster rate of change than the preceeding generation. The transportation industry serves as a good example. For thousands of years, people transported themselves and their worldly goods by walking from place to place. With the taming of the horse, the distance travelled and the loads transported became a different order of magnitude. With the invention of trains and cars, another quantum leap occured. Then airplanes increased the speed of travel, not just from 20 to 80 miles per hour as improvements in the car had done, but from 80 to 800 miles per hour. Now Voyager II is moving through space not just ten times faster than airplanes, but at the rate of 54 thousand miles per hour; ~~20 times faster than a speeding bullet!~~ *a whole new industry is on the scene.* Once the quantum leap occurs, ~~the old transportation method~~ *may still exist, but trying to improve it to compete with* ~~the new proves frustrating and futile.~~ No amount of careful breeding, attention to diet, or training can make the greatest horse even approach in efficiency the "transportation work" done by the most mediocre car.

Technological change is only part of the reason for the rising demand for adult education. The explosion of knowledge forces almost all professionals to become life-long learners just to keep abreast of new developments. The half-life of knowledge in medicine is now about five years, meaning that within five years of receiving the M.D., half of all a physicians's information and training is obsolete. Social change is another education-demanding phenomenon of the 21st Century. The majority of adults trekking back to school today are women between the ages of twenty-five and forty who need more education to capitalize on new career opportunities opening up in business, law, medicine, and a host of other professional and managerial occupations.

Educators who fail to see the new demands of the education industry--which extends far beyond the running of colleges--are repeating the error of the railroads.

We are becoming a nation of lifelong learners, and <sup>both</sup> the individuals and colleges will need to adjust to that change. For indivs, the route to virtually all upward mobility is through education. For colleges, the education of the full spectrum of workers and citizens is a solemn responsibility.

~~In that statement, "the route to virtually all upward mobility is through education," lies one of our greatest concerns about the potential vitality of the Learning~~

→ ~~Society.~~ Unfortunately ~~(In The emerging Learning Society.~~ Not everyone is a participant. For those who are not, the future holds little promise, not even the faintly reassuring thought that they can retain their present position while the world changes about them. For what the world seems to be doing is leaving the poorly educated sidelined while the already well-educated are taking the fast track to ever more education. One of the most consistent findings of all of the research in adult learning is that the more formal education people have, the more they want, and the more they participate in a wide variety of educational opportunities. A college graduate is seven times as likely to be participating in some form of organized learning as a high school dropout, and the gap between the well-educated and the poorly educated is widening rather than narrowing as the Learning Society picks up speed. The almost certain result is that as opportunities for education grow, so will the gap between the educational "haves" and "have-nots."

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↑ The situation is far easier to understand than to remedy. Everything the college graduate does adds to the probability

of further education, while <sup>almost</sup> everything the high school dropout does militates against further education. The college graduate frequently enters an employee training program and works for a company or in an occupation that is likely not only to support but to require further education. College graduates typically belong to social and professional groups that discuss educational opportunities; spouses and friends are supportive and admiring of educational accomplishment. And finally, those who continued in school long enough to graduate from college were usually happy and successful in school and are familiar with the procedures and people that inhabit educational institutions.

The situation is exactly the reverse for the poorly educated. They enter low-paying jobs with few educational requirements and no educational benefits. They consort with friends and family who know little about education and may even be hostile to it; they lack the information networks to know about opportunities and the skills to take advantage of them. They are on the downward spiral with respect to education, and they become the hard core undereducated, taking up lifestyles and values that spawn new generations of undereducated.

The serious problem facing us now is that the federal government and some states are advocating policies that leave adult education to free-market competition. Such a policy encourages education providers to pitch their services to the most promising and lucrative markets, leaving non-participants



on the fringes of inadequacy.

What is needed, I suggest, is a far wider and more varied system of entrances into the Learning Society. Many colleges have devised special programs such as those for "re-entry" women that give adults who have been out of school for some years the support, self-confidence, and skills that they need to participate fully in college classes. Equally important, however, is the encouragement of what I call low threat learning opportunities that may be offered by other education providers, such as community agencies, television, and employers. In these times when most colleges are beating the bushes for more students, there is a tendency to feel that other providers of educational services are in competition with colleges. There is good reason to think, however, that there is a hierarchy of threat in educational opportunities and that adults will enter the Learning Society at the threat level that is tolerable for them. (See Cross, 1981, Chapter 6). We know, for example, that adults who build self-confidence as learners by taking a televised course at home may soon venture onto the campus to try the on-campus competition. Similarly many employees, introduced to classes on the familiar turf of the workplace, may build enough confidence and interest to venture out on their own to off-campus centers and then to classes on campus.

Higher education, if we are smart, will encourage and help build a wide variety of low-threat entry level opportunities

in the Learning Society. The so-called non-traditional forms of education, far from competing with traditional education, are engaged in the critically important business of making education convenient and attractive, and in some cases, just downright possible, for many adults who are potential college students. Whether the new entry-level opportunities are offered by college departments, such as extension or community education, or by other providers such as television or employers, there is every reason for higher education to take the broad view in developing the Learning Society. Getting more adults introduced to the satisfactions of lifelong learning is of benefit to the adults concerned because it is the essential route to upward mobility and necessary even to keeping abreast of the fast pace of change. It is advantageous to society because the wheels of change and progress are fueled largely by adults learning new ways to accomplish society's work. Finally, higher education itself stands to gain from the fullest possible blooming of the Learning Society because once people have been introduced to the satisfactions of adult learning, they are quite likely to seek new opportunities and to move to ever more advanced and sophisticated levels of learning.

This analysis, plus the past experience of the decline of the railroads because they saw themselves as railroads and not as part of the larger transportation industry, should suggest to higher education that the development of the Learning Society is a long-term investment that is every bit as impor-

tant as the short-term concerns about running the college.

The second characteristic of the future that I mentioned in my introductory remarks is the proliferation of providers of education. Institutions of higher education are not alone on the education frontier of the 21st Century. Industry spends not mere millions but billions of dollars annually on the education and training of employees. Last year, ~~AT&T spent 4½ times as much on the education of its employees as MIT spent on the education of its students (Luxenberg, 1978-79).~~ The modern IBM campus north of New York City has classrooms and residence halls that surpass anything offered in our most exclusive and expensive colleges. Professional associations too are becoming the builders of vast educational networks. The American Management Association, with an annual education budget of 50 million dollars uses 7,500 lecturers and discussion leaders to conduct 2,000 formal education programs each year. The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants offers extensive professional education programs, consisting of individual study and regional workshops that rival the degree-granting monopoly of higher education because licensing boards that determine who is licensed to practice *a profession smile fondly on the programs of their own professional associations.* ~~accounting recognize AICPA education as appropriate to professional practice.~~ INSERT

Educational purists like to make a distinction between the education offered by colleges and the training offered by industry, but such distinctions are difficult to maintain. Non-collegiate organizations have moved into education almost

You have <sup>already</sup> heard a lot <sup>today</sup> about the new providers  
 of education rushing onto what we in h.e. have  
 come to regard as our turf. Having had the advantage  
 of hearing the other speakers ~~today~~, I had the  
 option of deciding you had heard enough --  
 maybe too much -- about the competition and  
 deleting any further reference ~~to~~ <sup>from</sup> my remarks.  
 Or I could try to drive home the point ~~to~~ through  
 repetition. Or I could try to ~~direct~~ <sup>direct</sup> my remarks  
<sup>toward</sup> ~~to~~ try <sup>ing</sup> to show what that very significant national  
 movement has to do with h.e. in W. Va. I opted  
 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> approach, but since it was hatched ~~between~~  
 cocktails + dinner, <sup>it may not be</sup> ~~it will try to~~ articulated ~~may~~ as  
~~concern~~ ~~briefly~~ clearly as I, or you, might desire.

Most <sup>of the</sup> colleges represented here are not  
 located in urban areas where commuting adults or  
 corporate industry pose either significant threat or  
 opportunity -- or so you may believe. But  
 the rule of h.e. <sup>in the</sup> society is defined in large  
 measure by inst that are located in the centers  
 of population. For better or worse what they do  
 affects us all. One <sup>of the things</sup> ~~of the things~~ they are doing is trying to  
 respond to the needs of society <sup>as they see them.</sup> The needs of their  
 society may differ from the needs of your  
 society, but if they are distinctively different,

then you need to define the needs of your society ~~so that~~ in terms recognized by your society. But almost every small town in America has <sup>adults</sup> in need of educ today and almost of every small town has employers in need of human capital.

Educational purists like to make a distinction <sup>between</sup> the educ offered by colleges & the training offered by employers, but such distinctions are difficult to maintain. Non-collegiate organizations have moved into educ almost

as fast as colleges, especially community colleges, have moved into training, and the distinction is now blurred beyond usefulness--at least when applied to providers. Colleges are heavily involved in training as well as in education; and the programs of many corporations contain as much emphasis on theory, research, and personal development as those of any business school.

A related blurring of educational functions occurs in the distinction between credit and non-credit learning. Within commuting distance of my home near Boston are four new degree-granting programs founded by corporations--a hospital, a bank, a consulting firm, and a computer manufacturer. While the image of Bachelor's and Master's degrees offered by non-colleges is still mildly sensational, the movement of collegiate institutions into the realm of non-credit instruction is now commonplace. Between 1968 and 1978, more than a thousand colleges introduced non-credit programs on their campuses. Today it is the norm rather than the exception for degree-granting institutions to be involved in non-degree instruction. But whether a course was originally taken for credit is not especially important today. It is increasingly easy to convert non-credit learning into college degrees. Just a decade ago, only about a third of American colleges granted credit if students could demonstrate on standardized examinations that they knew the material; today 84 percent of all colleges grant credit for CLEP examinations. Ten years ago, only 14 percent of the colleges would consider granting credit for experiential learning; today

41 percent do (Stadtman, 1980).

Historically, colleges have been reasonably generous in accepting credit from other colleges; today they are increasingly likely to endorse learning regardless of its source. The American Council on Education's Office of Education Credit lists over a thousand courses offered by more than a hundred corporations that appear worthy of college credit.

Illustrations of the blurring of once-distinctive functions for higher education could be extended, but my point is that the education frontier is very large, and higher education is not alone out there. There are potential partners, competitors and parallel operators. How we deal with this new phenomenon may determine the future of higher education, as well as have profound implications for the broader Learning Society.

There are three basic ways to work with others on the new frontiers of education. We can compete, cooperate, or run parallel operations. In the beginning, the relationship between collegiate institutions and other providers of education was essentially parallel. Colleges taught the classics, textile mills taught weaving, and butcher shops taught butchering. Each went its own way along well-defined paths. Many educators act as though parallelism still predominates. Plodding along their own path, they keep pretty much to themselves, quite unaware of travelers on other pathways. Occasionally, they are startled to see others on what they thought was their pathway, and the question arises as to whether they should continue on as

though nothing had happened, try to push the others off the path, or stop and have a conversation about where they are going and how best to get there.

It will be increasingly difficult to remain unaware of the traffic on the new frontier for two reasons. The first is that the most promising new market for education from now until the end of the century will be adult learners who are thrown constantly into contact with many education providers, among them employers, professional associations, unions, and community groups. Because these providers are serving roughly the same market, it is going to be almost impossible to remain as unaware as in the past of one another's services.

The second reason for the gradual disappearance of a blissful ignorance of other education providers is the recent emphasis on informing consumers about their options. The federal government has encouraged education information activities in each state; brokerage and advising services for adult learners are springing up everywhere; computers are crammed full of a wide variety of education options; and finally, educators themselves are mailing brochures and advertising in newspapers and on radio and television. And so, the mode of unaware parallelism as an approach to getting along with others on the new frontier is rapidly disappearing as an option.

There is another kind of parallelism, however, that will probably increase in the years ahead. It is the model in which each provider performs a unique function within well-defined



boundaries. Entrepreneurs from education, business, and government interested in launching education programs are beginning to look for the unique service that is not being performed by anyone else. In the jargon of the trade, this is known as seeking the "market niche" which simply means that providers who are potentially competitive will seek the unique service where competition is weak or nonexistent.

Parallelism can be maintained only through conscious and sustained effort and by careful definition of non-overlapping functions. While parallelism is still possible on the new frontier, it calls for a narrowing of function and a steadfast refusal to be seduced by attractive opportunities. Colleges could, for example, reduce overlap with two large competitors, professional associations and industry, by returning to the liberal arts tradition. To do so, however, involves risks that few colleges are willing to take. The new adult clientele, it turns out, are just as career minded as younger students, and despite recent collegiate attention to general education, students are placing more emphasis, not less, on vocational goals. Many formerly "pure" liberal arts colleges are instituting programs in business administration and allied health services as fast as conditions permit. I see few signs that colleges have any intention of reducing potential overlap through narrowing the scope of their functions.

So let us turn now to the third characteristic of the

Learning Society and explore the potential for competition and/or cooperation on the new frontier. *My colleagues and I have* I referred ~~earlier~~ *all day* to the rapid rise of corporate education which has been called the "shadow" educational system. The question now is whether we should cooperate or compete with our shadow, since it seems unlikely that we can escape it.

A giant among corporate educators is AT&T with over a million employees, a fast-changing technology, and an education budget growing at the rate of 35 percent per year. On any given work day, AT&T has 30,000 employees engaged in a half-day or more of instruction at a total cost, including employee salaries, of 6.8 million dollars per day. That's more than the annual budget of many colleges. Understandably, AT&T management is looking for ways to cut those costs. One way to do that is to try to shift some of the educational burden back to colleges. It is far cheaper to contract with organizations that specialize in education than it is to train teachers, build facilities, operate classrooms, and administer programs with industry's own funds. ~~Fortunately, industry's need for help with adult training and higher education's need for students coincide for perhaps the first time in history, so let us look at the situation more carefully.~~

One of the simplest ways to shift responsibilities to colleges is to provide tuition reimbursement. A new study of education policies in five major industries (Gorlin, 1981) found that 90 percent provided tuition aid for full-time white-collar workers, and 80 percent provided it for blue-collar workers. *It is simply far more prevalent than most educators think it is.*

<sup>nationwide</sup>  
However, the average participation rate by eligible employees stands at 5 percent for white collar and 3 percent for blue collar workers. Tuition aid is simple because it permits maximum freedom for all parties and requires almost no coordination or discussion. And that may be the reason for its extremely low rate of utilization. When more than 95 percent of the United Auto Workers ignore \$900 per year in tuition benefits, it is reasonable to conclude that for some not-very-well-studied reasons, the tuition reimbursement plan fails to connect the needs of industry, workers, and colleges. What is needed are some stronger connecting links, and that probably means more conversations, more coordination, and more cooperation between education and industry.

Most colleges still think of individual students as their market--in part, at least because federal policy has put the money in the hands of students--but <sup>including small local businesses,</sup> industry<sub>^</sub> may be the new rich uncle. There is considerable talk these days, even within business, about the obligation and self-interest of business in supporting a stronger educational system. To many college presidents, that suggests a memo to the development office urging a new pitch for gifts and endowments. But for colleges with a mission that includes helping workers and professionals keep abreast of changing demands, the memo might better go to the Business, English, and Math departments. Community colleges have been quick to capitalize on new partnerships with industry. A recent survey found that over 40 percent of the community colleges now report formal agreements with industry, a percentage that has doubled in just five years (Young, 1981).

Such close cooperation seems to be working, largely, I suspect, because it, unlike tuition-aid plans, is specifically designed to address the needs of all parties. Employers stand to benefit from an appropriately trained workforce; employees become eligible for better jobs and promotions because they have skills considered relevant by employers. Whether the arrangement meets the needs of colleges is a question best determined by the mission of the college. Clearly, the needs of a comprehensive community college with a mission to serve the community are being met through the close cooperation with local employers. Similarly a graduate School of Business training corporate executives is fulfilling its mission.

~~Whether a college dedicated to liberal education should use contracts with industry to preserve its campus and faculty without preserving its function is a different matter.~~ It seems obvious that no one wants higher education to become the servant of industry. But it seems equally obvious that education has always served as the major route to the social and scientific progress that are reflected in the work lives of adults.

Granted, talking with industry about their education needs, making arrangements with television stations for the delivery of college courses, and working with professional associations on continuing education in the professions are new ventures for most academics. But our colleagues in the education business are legion today, and cooperation appears

far more productive than competition. Higher education should, I believe, seize the opportunity for leadership in a world that which has become dependent on education and sorely needs vision and direction in planning for the future.

May this meeting ~~be followed by others in West Virginia + elsewhere~~ that take as their basic thesis the need for greater coordination, cooperation, and collaboration among the multiple educators of the Learning Society.

The day when <sup>higher education</sup> ~~in the~~ isolated & Ivory Tower is gone -- if indeed it ever existed. Society has new <sup>educational</sup> ~~educational~~ needs and it is most appropriate for h.e. to assume the mantle of leadership in convening our educational colleagues, wherever they may serve, to meet the educational needs of a nation sorely in need of developed human talent.

May this <sup>consequence</sup> ~~meeting~~ represent a 1<sup>ST</sup> step <sup>meeting the need for</sup> toward cooperation & collaboration. <sup>among the</sup> ~~in meeting~~ multiple providers of <sup>postsecondary education</sup> ~~ps educ.~~ the new needs of 21<sup>ST</sup> Century in W. Va.

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