

Education— the 2066 key to success

by Scott Lebin

There are many universal principles that apply to a well-rounded education and that should also apply to the core elements of providing a quality curriculum and experience for students. These elements were true when I taught for 21 years and were currently evident when I visited an international school for grades K through 12 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The campus of the school I just visited last month is using the Cambridge Curriculum as the essential core curriculum. What I am very impressed with is the scope of material and the in-depth exposure to a quality education. The students are all taught three languages and some can take a fourth language. They have a science lab, shop classes, sewing classes, dance classes, art classes, music classes, along with the core math, physics, chemistry, and history classes. In addition, there is a large pool for swimming competition, tennis courts, and soccer fields.

Why will all these elements of a sound curriculum be as important 50 years from now? The current trending, fast-paced world will probably not slow as we are exposed to a communication and technology driven society. In this kind of world, a fast-changing world, it becomes very difficult to predict what jobs will be present in the four years from the beginning of a high school or advanced degree program. Thus we need to prepare life-long-learners with the skills to adapt and learn any new information that may be needed.

Why are the arts so important

in the scheme of developing a productive member of society? First, if the jobs of the future are going to depend on a creative work force, there is no better background to develop such talents than design, culture, and the artistic and performing arts. All of those expose a learner to esthetics, empathy, sensitivity, diversity, and creativity. It makes no sense that these are the very first experiences and curricula that are dropped from a public school system when funding is low. In a society that is going to rely on service and creative development, these disciplines should be as important as any subject and should be an equally significant part of a core curriculum.

Fifty years from now there will be some massive changes in the technology students use to access information and to develop their intellectual curiosity. We will have desks that consist of electronic screens that can connect a student with a vast array of subjects, opinions, and facts. We will have world cultures making electronic connections into communities for which there is no planned educational and universal connection today. We will use hologram models for science and history that take students directly into the environments they are studying. We will use mathematics to create similar three dimensional models as students learn about geometry and use algebra to calculate formulas to solve problems that are in a three-dimensional form. It was evident at the international school in Kuala Lumpur that school is and should be “fun.”

The true exposure to the world of information will require students to become more discerning and more critical about the nature of the information being processed. Just being able to find information will not determine the intellectual capacity of the student. The ability to make connections, reject faulty information, separate fact from fiction and develop sound analysis from the mass information provided on the internet, through the media, are all useful skills that will be the outcomes of a comprehensive education. Yes, 50 years from now there will be an even greater need to search for the answers to solve the great problems and uncover the great opportunities with which civilization has always been confronted.

The hope for the success of the generation 50 years from now will be based on the fact that society will not be in the shadows of the Dark Age but that the Renaissance and the Enlightenment of the age will come from the inclusion of the arts, science and humanity all taught in a balanced learning experience. These core subjects will be a vital force in a world seeking to understand itself and build a better world of acceptance of their history and their variety of cultures. It will foster empathy for all people not only 50 years from now but for their next generation too. ●

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