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ABSTRACT

An overview is provided of the challenges facing community colleges due to the shift from a global society shaped by political philosophies to a society shaped by economic powers. Introductory comments are followed by a description of recent changes in the world community, including the rise of Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Hong Kong as economic powers; the economic potential of newly industrialized nations like Mexico and Brazil; and the impact of the national debt on the United States economy. The next section discusses how the shift from objective/scientific to subjective/humanistic decision making affects three major job classifications as termed by Robert Reich: "routine producers," who must have a fundamental education, be reliable and loyal, and be able to follow directions; "in-person servers," who perform repetitive tasks in a person-to-person setting, and whose work is not directly influenced by the global economy; and "symbolic-analytic servers," who trade in the manipulation of symbols and who identify and solve problems. The next section suggests that a shift from "teaching," a teacher-centered process, to "learning," a student-centered process, is required of community colleges to educate students for full employment opportunities. The final section suggests that college presidents must lead by focusing only of the ends of education, leaving the managers to concentrate on the means. (MAB)

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF THE FUTURE

Submitted
by

John N. Terrey

(A speech presented to the Seminar in Community College Education, September 8-11, Port Townsend, Washington.)

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I. **INTRODUCTION** There is an old saying which declares prophetically that all planners are optimistic. I am not a planner, and I am not optimistic. I am retired and forthright. No one can fire me.

This nation and its community colleges confront serious problems in the decade ahead. At issue is whether the United States can sustain its experiment in democracy and whether it can revitalize its economy by restructuring the workplace so that our citizens can enjoy a decent standard of living in a society with social justice for all. Only a supreme act of will can change the present course of our economy and of our society. I single out the economy because the economy, and not political philosophy, is now the shaping force on a worldwide basis as well as on the domestic front.

To compound an already dire situation I want to say that it is not enough to make the next transition in the evolution of an industrial society. We must undergo a major transformation into a post-industrial society -- a society with more technology, more knowledge, more emphasis and dependence on human resources rather than physical resources, more social and economic volatility. In other words, the changes we face are dramatic and traumatic. The changes we must undergo will impact every aspect of our lives in fundamental ways, just as the advent of the industrial revolution altered the way of life in England and subsequently in the world. We are re-creating, not merely changing, our society, our values, our ethics, our morals. Re-creating is not easy. Ask the loggers or the auto workers. And, most painful of all, we are being forced into this new, cataclysmic, all-embracing shift in our social and economic structures without vision or leadership.

I have time to touch on only two of the myriad of forces now restructuring our society. Both of these have been identified by Peter Drucker (The New Realities)..

II. The oil crises of 1973 and 1978 ushered in a major worldwide shift which is only now being fully recognized. The shift has been from a global society shaped by conflicting political philosophies, viz., communism and democracy. After the oil crises, the world left political philosophies and embraced economic forces by creating a global economy which weakened political and military power while strengthening economic power and economic competition.

In this drama were sown the seeds which saw the liberation of the Warsaw Pact nations, the end of the Berlin Wall, and now the collapse of the Soviet Union. At root, these historic events have been economic. Marxist communism was designed for an industrial society which sought to maximize production while

providing social and economic equity. This society is now inadequate. The great failure on economic grounds made its political philosophy intolerable. This shift was hastened by the decision on the part of the Soviet Union to support its power position by investing its limited economic resources in military power. There is an unwritten law which contends that finite money can be spent but once; therefore, money spent on military power cannot be spent on research and development, on training and retraining its work force, on developing and improving its infrastructure.

In the rest of the world, a resource poor nation with no military force became the greatest economic power in the world. Japan more than any other power demonstrated the new world order in operation. It benefited from its culture and its work ethic. It also benefited from the emphasis it placed on developing its human resources and by stressing quality in production over quantity. Its economic resources went into human resources, into research and development, and into revitalizing its infrastructure.

South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Hong Kong have followed Japan by gaining economic power through production with quality and with exports that were competitive in the world's markets. Europe, tormented since the Dark Ages by national and ethnic conflict, has been forced into an economic community out of a sense of survival. Europe '92 will become a powerful economic bloc which will, in time, include the former Warsaw Pact nations and perhaps the republics of the USSR.

In terms of manufacturing only, there are the newly industrialized nations like Mexico and Brazil. Within another generation they, too, will become major players in a new world with an economic paradigm which will be driven by knowledge, not by mass production. Knowledge as a culture will replace the Postwar Petroleum Culture. In the Knowledge Culture, success will be predicated upon the fullest possible development of human resources. Specifically, I mean the abilities to think, to communicate, to negotiate through ideas, to work in groups, to envision, to translate dreams into reality, to possess the ability to change because the emerging culture will be characterized by volatile changes.

Where does the United States stand in this worldwide cauldron of change? Anyone looking objectively at the United States today would see a nation in anguish where its institutions are not working, where its political forces are impotent, and where its resolve and vision are in short supply. Greed is the truest measure of the wealthy. The rich are getting richer; the poor are getting poorer. Our American dream is being lost in a myriad of faltering social institutions. The sense of community which Alexis de Tocqueville termed "habits of the heart" has been lost through the excessive growth of individualism and the accompanying loss of community. Greed and indifference have replaced concern and compassion.

In no sector is the disintegration of institutions more evident than in the political and governmental realm. The Congress cannot respond to social needs when

it is constricted by a $362 billion annual budget deficit. No one need look beyond the recent episode in which the Congress extended unemployment benefits for 20 weeks, but the law which President Bush cynically signed cannot become operative unless the President also declares an emergency, which he refused to do. The harsh result is that the deficit makes it impossible for the Congress to respond to a human need. This makes human hurt due to unemployment less important than the S&L bail-out or the Gulf War. The impotency of our Congress reflects the faltering of our economy, but it also reflects the folly of our priorities which have been shaped by the political process.

Our companies like our government are burdened with debt - the result of takeovers and mergers which bought and sold debt instead of creating jobs and producing goods and services. What expansion we have had has come from the rush of foreign capital, especially from the Japanese. Enfeebled companies in an effort to manage their debts lay off workers, which, in turn, subtracts from their ability to produce goods and services. The result is that 1.6 million jobs have been lost in the last 13 months. Note, for example, that 804,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector have been lost in the last 13 months, and many of those workers will not return to that sector. In our own backyard, Bank America has acquired Security Pacific for $4.5 billion. As a consequence, 10,000 white collar jobs (11% of the merged workforce) will lose their jobs. These "minor" structural changes have a large impact in human despair.

Debt strangles the federal government also. Interest payments on the debt have increased 295% since 1980, while the size of the debt has jumped to over $3 trillion. Debt does not create jobs. It does not produce goods and services. It is forcing the federal government to push needed social services, including educational costs, back to the states which, facing some of the same problems as the federal government, push the costs out to underfunded local communities. My concern in this all too lengthy analysis is to put the dismal science of economics in essentially human and futuristic terms. The sputtering of the economy is rendering governmental services impossible, thereby causing our citizens to lose confidence in their government. The unfortunate consequence is that people are not voting. (See E.J. Dionne, Jr.'s Why Americans Hate Politics.)

By way of a digression, the term "community college" is derived from the Truman Commission Report of 1947. Ironically, the title of that report was Higher Education for American Democracy. Higher education has failed in its responsibility to sustain Thomas Jefferson's dream. Our political, economic, and educational institutions form a dynamic, integrated whole. Making this triad function well under mutual circumstances is an imperative.

We also need to remind ourselves that we are self-governing, that we are social and economic creatures, and that bending our institutions solely to economic purposes cannot preserve our American dream. As Jane Addams said early in this century:

" We have to say that the good must be extended to all of society before it

can be held secure by any one person or any one class; but we have not yet learned to add to that statement, that unless all men and all classes contribute to a good, we cannot even be sure that it is worth having. "

III. The industrial society in which big is better, in which more is better is dying in the United States. We are shifting to small, less, and diverse. Ironically, we are also shifting from objective (scientific) decision-making to subjective (humanistic) decision-making. This is seen clearly in the dichotomy between management (quantity) and leadership (quality). An inventory is managed; people are led.

Thus, the shift is from things to people. All of the changes have made the Dictionary of Occupational Titles obsolete. Robert Reich in his new book - The Work of Nations - contends that work is coalescing by function around three major classifications: (1) routine producers, (2) in-person servers, and (3) symbolic analysts.

Routine Producers must have a fundamental education - be able to read and to perform simple computations. They must be reliable and loyal; they must be able to follow directions. Their fortunes are on the decline. Competition, especially from developing countries, is keen. They comprise about 25 percent of the workforce. Their future is not bright. Males have suffered the most.

The second classification is in-person servers. Most of these people perform simple, repetitive tasks. The big difference between the in-person server and the routine producer is that the services of the former are provided person-to-person. Unlike the routine producer, these people are not directly impacted by the global economy. We cannot send our heads to Ireland to have our hair cut! Most of the people in this classification work for near minimum wages. In-person servers perform about 30 percent of the jobs, and their number is growing rapidly. Of the 2.98 million routine producers (manufacturing) who lost their jobs in the 1980's, one-third were rehired in service jobs at 20 percent less pay. Most new entrants to the job market will be in the service sector, and they will be Black or Hispanic men or women.

The third classification is the rising tide of symbolic-analytic servers. Their services are traded worldwide in competition with foreign providers at home and abroad. They trade the manipulation of symbols - data, words, oral and visual representations. Symbolic analysts identify, solve, and broker problems. They are engineers, public relations executives, investment bankers, lawyers, real estate developers, consultants of all types, planners, and systems analysts. They are art directors, journalists, musicians, film producers, and professors.

They rarely come into direct contact with the ultimate beneficiaries of their work. They work with associates or partners, not bosses or supervisors. Their careers are not linear or hierarchical. Teamwork is critical. The bulk of their time is spent conceptualizing the problem, devising a solution, and planning its execution. They account presently for about 20 percent of the American jobs - and are increasing rapidly.

IBM is a good illustration of the modern corporation which utilizes all three classifications but is dominated by the symbol analyst. IBM does not export many machines. Big Blue makes the machines and services them all over the globe. Its prime exports are symbolic and analytic in the form of brokering and redeveloping products. A few years ago 80 percent of the cost of computer operations was in hardware. Today 80 percent of the costs are in software.

One of the surprising factors is that with all the uncertainties which go hand-in-hand with symbolic-analytical work these workers enjoy their work.

IV. If you have been paying attention, you may recall that at the outset I spoke about two "new realities" mentioned by Peter Drucker. His second "new reality" is the shift from teaching to learning. Before examining the differences between teaching and learning, I want to recall with you an observation by Pat Cross (Accent on Learning): "Having provided an opportunity for all, we must now provide an education for each." How is this goal to be met? What are some of the better ways to "provide an education for each"?

John Dewey once remarked that "the aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education." How do we "enable individuals to continue their education"?

Teaching focuses on the teacher. The teacher is the center of the process. Learning focuses on the learner. The student is the center of the process. Where should the focus be?

- Teaching is telling.
- Knowledge is facts.
- Learning is recall.

As a process, teaching works as follows:
Teachers are responsible for delivering content in the form of factual information. Students are responsible for receiving the factual information. The relationship between teacher and student is satisfactorily completed when the student has successfully transferred factual information back to the teacher in the required format at the required time.

Albert Shanker, the independent-minded president of the American Federation of Teachers, has a sign in his office. Line one reads: "I taught the material, but the students didn't learn it." The second line is provocative: "Define the meaning of 'teach' in that sentence."

Of the four steps in teaching -- presenting, receiving, reciting, and grading -- the teacher is responsible for two of the steps -- presenting and grading. Is this too limited? Does this process effectively lay the foundation for an education? Does it effectively enable students to continue their education on an independent basis? From the perspective of the learner, isn't the process essentially passive?

Learning as a process assumes a reciprocity agreement between the students and the teacher -- sometimes in the form of a learning contract. The underlying assumptions are more concrete -- less abstract than those in the teaching process. Students learn to the degree to which they can actively manipulate facts within some general framework and in which they can relate general ideas to specific events within their experience. We have knowledge only as we actively participate in the construction. Students actively participate by engaging, with other students and with the teacher, in a process of inquiry, critical discourse and problem-solving. The teacher's role is to foster those conditions under which students are encouraged to construct knowledge. The roles of the students and the teacher are often reversed. Both become active learners in the process. Students teach each other, and they teach the teacher by revealing their understandings of the subject. Teachers learn by steadily accumulating a body of knowledge about the practice of teaching. Teaching, in this context, is enabling, knowledge is understanding, and learning is the active construction of subject matter. Numbers are actively used. Data are used. Writing is inherent to the process. Thinking is critical. Working with others through writing and speaking is imperative. These are the skills which are being utilized in the workplace by the knowledge workers. These are the skills which are useful in other classes and in other situations beyond the school. For the teacher the psychology of learning is at work. The teacher has a grasp of the subject matter as well as a knowledge of how students learn and how students are transformed into active learners.

Stated clearly, the mission of the community colleges is to provide learning. Teachers, counselors, librarians, staff - including presidents - are role players in providing learning for students. Every venture, every expenditure must meet satisfactorily one test: Does the venture or expenditure advance the mission of providing learning for students?

V. My final topic is leadership. The principal player in leadership is the president. I am suspect of charismatic leaders. Too often, they sinfully stifle initiative and growth. They tend to egotism. It is the college and its mission in providing learning that is the primary goal. We grow students, not presidents. Leaders are persons. Leadership is a process involving many people. The president cannot waste his/her leadership responsibilities by being lustfully seduced by business, buildings, budgets, bonds, and bids. These are means, not ends. The president must focus on ends, not means. Managers, not leaders, focus on means. Managers are vitally important in making the mission operable. Leaders create the mission and implement it though a shared vision. There are four basic strategies in leadership:

- Vision (thinking big and new)
- Reality (having no illusions)
- Ethics (providing service)
- Courage (acting with substantial initiative)

Above all, the leader is a servant -- a servant first -- a servant to the mission of providing learning for students.

VI. CONCLUSION As we confront the future, our problems are many, massive and complex. Our world is ceaselessly and painfully changing. Despair and fear and anxiety are plentiful. But I elect to focus on hope and opportunity, to sustain vision and will. I continue to believe that our democratic dream will be sustained. I believe the community college - the greatest educational invention of the 20th Century - will not only endure, it will prevail in this nation because it resides in our hearts and our minds. In the final analysis, the community college as a part of its humanity is flawed but indestructible. As Carl Sandburg, that great poet of democracy, said: "The people, yes."