

A Love Supreme—Riffing on the Standards: Placing Ideas at the Center of High Stakes Schooling

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A Musical Backdrop

In the 1940s and early 1950s every Saturday after my accordion lessons I used to wander around Times Square and up Sixth Avenue. One of my favorite things was to run into one of the dozens of older men wearing long gray raincoats and ask them what they were selling. If there were no cops around they would open up their coats and show their goods: stolen watches and rings, pornographic postcards, switch blade knives, and fake id's.

I was reminded of that when my wife and I took our son, Joshua, to the Berkeley School of Music where he was going to be a freshman majoring in jazz guitar. A young guy with long scraggly hair, wearing a gray raincoat, pulled Josh to the side and opened up the coat. "Want a fake book?" he said with that same conspiratorial whisper I remembered from my adolescence.

Josh didn't know what he was talking about then but a few weeks later he called and told me he needed money for the fake book and knew where he could get one in good shape. I was out of my depth and asked him what it was all about and he explained it quite simply. The Fake Book is a square spiral bound Xeroxed book, about 7" by 7", maybe 250 pages long. It's all music—the notes, usually in C or B minor, of hundreds of standard tunes, jazz, pop, and every once in a while, classical. Most of the tunes are copyrighted but the book is purely underground, no copyright, no royalties, continually updated, changing from city to city and year to year, no official list of what has to be included. All tunes are fair game.

To quote one of the tunes included

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in most Fake books, "The moon belongs to everyone ... the best things in life are free," or at least available for anyone who knows where to find one and can negotiate a satisfactory price.

Fake Books have, not surprisingly, become formalized and commercialized. Recently for \$60 I bought a copy of a book titled *The Ultimate Fake Book* which contains over 1,200 songs, all transposed to the key of C, lyrics included No orchestrations or elaborations, just bare bones straight ahead music to play with. For an amateur accordionist like me, it's pure heaven.

For jazz musicians it represents something deeper. The book contains tunes like these that I've chosen to memorize while I'm beginning to relearn how to play the accordion at 70: *I'm Always Chasing Rainbows, With a Song in My Heart, Heart and Soul, I'll Be Seeing You, These Foolish Things (Remind me of you), September Song, Smoke Gets in Your Eyes, Lili Marlene, and Lost in the Stars*. I want to memorize the tunes, improvise on them, and be prepared when my son Josh and his wife Haruko, both of whom are professional musicians, come to visit so I can jam with them. They know the Fake Book and know how to use it.

The Fake Book and all of its variants provide an evolving canon of tunes that defines a set of common standards for jazz improvisation. For example, the main theme of John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* was not in the old fake books but it is there now just as the works of Toni Morrison and June Jordan have entered the canon of American literature. To play well you have to know the standards—not because they make you a better performer but because they provide a common language that allows you to collaborate with other musicians and take off on the tradition and go where your imagination leads you.

People who don't understand contem-

porary jazz hear it as confusing, unstructured, free form, if they listen at all. They prefer an old tune played in a familiar way with comfortable harmonies and tempos. Yet what is comfortable now was probably once uncomfortable and the expanding repertoire of standards provides points of orientation to help people navigate a complex evolving music.

The Fake Book in Education

I think about the Fake Book when I force myself to read documents like the *Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools* and the *History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools Updated Edition with Content Standards*. At their worst they are proscriptive documents that suffocate innovative education. At their best they are the Fake Books that can facilitate creative teaching.

So how does a fake book or a taxonomy of educational standards get made? Who adds or rejects a tune or a standard? What is the decision-making process that leads to a common language for learning and improvisation? Given that we still don't know how children learn to read or what significant knowledge is, much guessing is involved and much simply incorporates other attempts at providing lists of standards in order to frame curriculum and determine how we want to shape children's lives.

I got some insight into the process about fifteen years ago while staying at a motel in St. Paul, Minnesota. I was scheduled to give a talk at the University of Minnesota and got up early and went to breakfast with my notes and a few books. Since there was work to do on my talk, I wanted to sit in a corner in a restaurant and think through and plan the evening's speech.

However, all of the breakfast rooms

were taken up by teachers, school administrators, and state education officials drinking gallons of coffee and eating Danish pastries. They sat at tables piled high with stacks and stacks of books and spiral bound curriculum notebooks. As it turned out they were the “task force” for developing outcomes based learning objectives for the state of Minnesota.

“Outcome based objectives” was a prior version of the current “educational standards” movement and a successor to Benjamin Bloom’s *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (1984). The book was the foundation of a system called Mastery Learning, conceived by John Carroll in 1963 and developed by Bloom. It is based on the assumption that all students can master tasks and materials if given enough time.

Taxonomy and Testing

There are two themes that are central here: first that “all” students can achieve these goals, and second that students must be given enough time to master these goals. The assumption was that educators could actually articulate all the goals needed for learning and that 100% of the students could achieve all these goals. This was not a prescription for a lock step curriculum but an attempt to articulate learning objectives which could be used as students’ programs were shaped and their progress measured. Nevertheless it set up the 100% standard which is currently an obsession of the *No Child Left Behind* mantra.

Bloom’s *Taxonomy* reads a bit like Linnaeus’ classification system for all plant and animal life. The goal was to categorize the levels of abstraction of questions that commonly occur in educational settings. It provided a structure that could be used to develop tests that would accompany teaching to the objectives. The taxonomy and the testing were bound together from the beginning.

Here is a sample of the structure of the taxonomy that presages the current lists of standards that states throughout the country are imposing on the schools and which the federal government, through *No Child Left Behind*, is trying to shape into national standards tied directly to mandated high stakes testing.

Partial Structure of Bloom’s Behavioral Objectives—Competence and Skills To Be Demonstrated

Knowledge

- ◆ observation and recall of information
- ◆ knowledge of dates, events, places
- ◆ knowledge of major ideas
- ◆ mastery of subject matter

Specific learning objectives: list, define, tell, describe, identify, show, label, collect, examine, tabulate, quote, name, who, when, where, etc.

Comprehension

- ◆ understanding information
- ◆ grasp meaning
- ◆ translate knowledge into new context
- ◆ interpret facts, compare, contrast
- ◆ order, group, infer causes
- ◆ predict consequences

Specific learning objectives: summarize, describe, interpret, contrast, predict, associate, distinguish, estimate, differentiate, discuss, extend

Application

- ◆ use information
- ◆ use methods, concepts, theories in new situations
- ◆ solve problems using required skills or knowledge

Specific learning objectives: apply, demonstrate, calculate, complete, illustrate, show, solve, examine, modify, relate, change, classify, experiment, discover

Evaluation

- ◆ compare and discriminate between ideas
- ◆ assess value of theories, presentations
- ◆ make choices based on reasoned argument
- ◆ verify value of evidence
- ◆ recognize subjectivity
- ◆ question cues

Specific learning objectives: assess, decide, rank, grade, test, measure, recommend, convince, select, judge, explain, discriminate, support, conclude, compare, summarize

The list of behavioral objectives is much more specific than this brief sampling. However there is no way it is possible to know if it is comprehensive or if all of the specific objectives are distinct. It’s also quite possible there is a complex

interaction that leads to mastery of the skills implied by the objectives. Nevertheless, Bloom tried to create a map of the cognitive skills needed for learning and got many educators to focus on specific ways of articulating their teaching objectives and build curriculum around these objectives.

Missing Culture, Content, and Ideas

This approach did not deal at all with culture, content, or ideas. It was a first draft of a map that would presumably lay out guidelines into which all of the substance and content of learning could be fitted.

When I first encountered it I found it interesting but useless when it came to building a community of learning in my classroom; though it did provide some aspects of learning, it did not seem useful for everyday practice. For me and my colleagues the objectives looked like academically-developed lists built on lists and formulas built on formulas that had nothing to do with the reality of working in the classroom or understanding how children went about learning.

What the educators in the breakfast room in St. Paul were doing was looking at Bloom, looking at other state’s behavioral objectives, and then retranslating them into outcomes: turning objectives into outcomes. I wandered around the room. Nobody paid any attention to me—for all they could discern I was one of them, just from a district they weren’t familiar with. There were copies of the *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* at each table as well as stacks and stacks of objectives articulated by school districts throughout the state of Minnesota. The objectives were being translated into “outcomes” given that the State Department of Education decided to move from objectives to outcomes.

The people in the room were translators although occasionally someone added an outcome that they particularly wanted to see happen in the classroom. There was no overall pedagogy or theory driving the process. The process suggested that these educators were going about their classifications and specifications much in the way that early naturalists went about developing classification systems—hit and miss based on the samples they already had and some they speculated might be discovered in the future.

The primary difference between objectives and outcomes is that the objectives were organized hierarchically according to Bloom’s organization of what he and his

colleagues considered necessary cognitive skills that could be taught at appropriate developmental stages in students' lives. The outcomes, on the other hand, were organized according the rituals of schooling—by grade and subject level. Though they took advantage of many of Bloom's ideas, they were primarily directed towards developing a flexible system of specific goals for teaching and evaluating student performance.

Loss of Flexibility

Central to the outcome-based education movement is the idea that goals for learning should be clearly articulated but that there should be flexibility in the way in which the goals are achieved. Thus schools that adopted outcomes did not become locked into specific preplanned and packaged curriculum materials and teachers who worked with the outcomes had a great deal of freedom, within the system, to design a way to achieve the outcomes for their students. Different students were expected to master the same outcomes, but not all in the same way.

Thus some students could learn to read through writing, others through theater, yet others through a phonics approach. As long as the outcome was achieved in a reasonable amount of time a student was considered successful. The outcome approach was non-punitive but at the same time very organized. It articulated specific, challenging, and often over-parsed goals.

That's what the educators in Minnesota were doing—creating lists and lists of outcomes, and ending up with enormous documents that very few teachers could work with much less internalize as they went about building their curriculum. A more condensed, thoughtful, and crafted list of outcomes might have been useful, but the momentum of most public education systems is to expand demands on teachers rather than clarify and focus them and make them directly relevant to work in the classroom. New programs usually are ways of creating new experts and new domains of administration. They rarely completely replace older programs and basically leave the structure of school systems intact no matter how dismally the systems are performing.

Nevertheless, there were some very important education ideas embodied in outcome-based education. First of all was the idea that all children could master specified goals if given the time. Second was the idea that, once a goal is articulat-

ed, there has to be flexibility in instruction to allow for students to achieve the goals through a variety of different routes. Third, that there can be many different ways (above and beyond standardized tests) to evaluate whether the goals have been achieved.

Standards Movement as Stepchild

The problems that developed in the attempt to develop outcomes had to do with the definitions of the outcomes. Who decides on them and how do they relate to behavioral objects, or more importantly to the standard curriculum used prior to both objectives and outcomes? In my experience the standard, textbook, and testing curriculum basically infiltrated itself into both these attempts at school reform so what we ended up with was a pastiche, a patching together of schemes coming from educational researchers, state and Federal education school officials, and school-based people with little or no input from classroom teachers. The standards movement is a stepchild of the marriage between behavioral objectives and outcome based learning.

However, the standards movement deviated in a few major ways from these other attempts to provide learning options for achieving educational goals. Both of the earlier movements were committed to 100% achievement, a mantra adopted by the standards movements and by *No Child Left Behind*. The earlier attempts of developing education programs that provided all children with the opportunity to master educational skills posited that there were many routes to mastery and that children learn at different rates and in different ways. The standards movement stole the structure and placed completely different expectations and moral values on how children should learn and how teachers should teach. In fact, they tied standards (nothing but revised versions of outcomes and objectives) more closely into the school curriculum, eliminated the idea that different students learn at different rates, and abandoned the idea that there are many routes to achieving skills, opening the way for so-called "teacher proof" and scripted curriculum such as Open Court and Success for All.

The idea that all children can learn has been replaced by the idea that all children must learn in one way; that all teachers must deliver instruction that is programmed for them; and that students who don't succeed must be punished and

teachers who do not conform should be marginalized and silenced.

From Humane to Harsh

The educational fake books, the objectives and the outcomes, are currently in the process of revision: a humane way to transform schools has been morphed into a harsh and punitive standardization of learning. The irony is the standards used by many states were intended for flexible learning and teaching but have become cynical, obsessive ways of trying to impose uniformity and rigidity on schools throughout the nation. This is done with pious pronouncements about 100% of students learning and 100% of students succeeding, but it is hard to draw any conclusion from what is coming out of Washington these days other than that the actual agenda behind all this criminalization of schooling is either the desire to eliminate public education as an entitlement or to privatize public education and farm it out to "independent contractors."

To be more specific, here, for example, is a selection of some recent standards taken from the California Language Arts Standards manual. Just think of them as tunes in an educational fake book that could either be riffed on or played in a boring and mechanical way:

Grade Six

English-language Arts Content Standards

Reading

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Students use their knowledge of word origins and word relationships, as well as historical and literary context clues, to determine the meaning of specialized vocabulary and to understand the precise meaning of grade-level-appropriate words.

Word Recognition

1.1 Read aloud narrative and expository text fluently and accurately and with appropriate pacing, intonation, and expression.

Vocabulary and Concept Development

1.2 Identify and interpret figurative language and words with multiple meanings.

1.3 Recognize the origins and meanings of frequently used foreign words in English and use these words accurately in speaking and writing.

1.4 Monitor expository text for unknown words or words with novel

meanings by using word, sentence, and paragraph clues to determine meaning.

1.5 Understand and explain “shades of meaning” in related words (e.g., softly and quietly).

2.0 Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials)

Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They describe and connect the essential ideas, arguments, and perspectives of the text by using their knowledge of text structure, organization, and purpose. The selections in Recommended Literature, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students. In addition, by grade eight, students read one million words annually on their own, including a good representation of grade-level-appropriate narrative and expository text (e.g., classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, online information). In grade six, students continue to make progress toward this goal.

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

2.3 Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to other sources and related topics.

2.4 Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, logical notes, summaries, or reports.

2.5 Follow multiple-step instructions for preparing applications (e.g., for a public library card, bank savings account, sports club, league membership).

Beyond the question of whether it makes any sense to expect all of the skills and intellectual challenges articulated in these standards to be mastered by sixth graders is the question of whether their teachers and the experts who articulate these standards can actually master them themselves. One of my fantasies is to insist that the politicians, educators, members of the media, and parents pass all the standards before they impose them on students. Given the current state of reading, writing, and thinking in the United States, it may be that we need standards for the adults before we are so arrogant as to impose on young people what we cannot do ourselves.

A few comments on these standards seem to be in order here. Notice the phrase “grade appropriate” when it comes

to mandating teaching to the standards. Bloom’s behavioral objectives referred to developmentally appropriate learning. It assumed that educators had to be sensitive to how different students learn. The current standards movement and the *No Child Left Behind* testing obsession make no concession to individual differences, even to the point of sometimes refusing to exempt severely handicapped students from the humiliation of assured failure.

These particular sixth grade standards require that all sixth graders will be called upon to master sixth grade material whether they speak English or not, whether they can actually read with any skill approaching the expectations for sixth grade reading. Think of the demand as one analogous to expecting that every member of a state department of education be required to read and be tested on an advanced placement physics textbook before they can approve advanced placement physics classes.

Another thing to consider is the million-page-a-year requirement. Given the closing of school and public libraries in California and the fact that some schools do not have enough textbooks, much less supplementary reading books, how can anyone have the arrogance to demand of students what they have no capacity to do even if they might have the ability to do it. (Of course, if text messaging was counted, it is likely many more students would qualify.)

Getting to the Heart of It

This gets to the heart of the obscenities underlying *No Child Left Behind* and many of the attempts to impose rigid standards on all schools and all teachers and all children. The imposition of demands without providing the time, resources, and the opportunity to learn in a more than adequate educational setting is simply setting students and schools up for failure. It does not take much intellectual sophistication to understand this, but it does take a large capacity for hypocrisy to support such demands.

So what do we do about this when anyone who opposes the standards movement or *No Child Left Behind* is likely to be accused of wanting low standards for students and supporting ineffective teaching. The most cynical version of this is the accusation that if you don’t support tests and standards you don’t care about the performance of poor students and particularly students of color.

However, it is possible to support and in fact have high standards for one’s students and at the same time understand that it is often necessary to personalize education and adjust the substance and content of the curriculum to the particular skills and interests students bring with them and which shape their responses to the schooling provided for them.

In addition, teachers need to develop what Gloria Ladson-Billings calls culturally-appropriate learning so that students can see themselves and their cultures in the community. Basically there is more to quality teaching than following a single road in a mechanical way in the service of trying to improve test scores.

The irony of a lot of current educational rhetoric about standards and having qualified teachers for all children is that *NCLB* and the standardized programs that have developed to insure measured obedience to the testing regime constitute an ideology that drives good teachers away from education. Many of the excellent and qualified young teachers I have worked with over the past ten years have simply quit and found other professions or gone to private schools or charter schools. They simply refuse to put up with the trivialization of learning and teaching that is at the core of *NCLB* and the standards movement.

A Subversive Riffing

So far as I can make out, the best ways to respond are reasoned and determined political opposition coming from the educational research and teacher education community as well as teachers unions and administrators and parent groups—a conscious and thoughtful subversion of the system from within. Neil Postman wrote a book in the 1960s titled *Teaching as Subversive Activity*. It is definitely time to revive the idea of creative subversion and I’ll explore this first.

It is a question of riffing on the fake book of standards within the classroom despite the demands of conforming to scripted curriculum and test obsession. It takes courageous teachers and administrators willing to take risks with their jobs to do this, but fortunately there are many such people who work in public schools.

In jazz a riff is a short phrase repeated and inserted in the whole composition, usually as a way of reference to an old standard from the fake book while changing it and incorporating it into a larger musical structure. A riff is an elaborated

musical idea. One theory about the origins of the word “riff” is that it comes from its use in comedy where a riff is a short clever remark on a subject that is extended into a “bit” or “routine.”

Another possible origin is from the word “riffle,” which according to the *Chambers Dictionary* (1994) has the following meanings: a shallow section in the water where the river flows quickly; to turn or stir lightly and rapidly (e.g., the pages of a book) often in a cursory search for something; to shuffle, to allow corner of a card from one part of the pack to fall alternately on that of a card in the other

In any case, the notion of riffing on the standards implies developing an interesting or powerful idea or theme and then tying it to a learning standard. For me it implies creating curriculum that embodies one of more standards but is not designed because of the standards but because of the power of the idea.

Powerful Ideas

A powerful idea can change the way people look at the world and lead to inventions and discoveries that transform people’s lives. The idea of a machine that can function as if it had a brain, that is, of a thinking computer, has led to the development of powerful electronic computers. The idea that the world is composed of invisible particles such as electrons and neutrons has transformed the way people think about energy and released nuclear energy upon the world. Democracy is a powerful idea that, when it was invented, gave many people an idea that they could have a say in who governed them and led to struggles to create such governments.

Some powerful ideas have direct relationships to everyday life and lead to immediate practical applications. Others are not so directly tied to everyday life. They appeal to the pleasure people get playing with their minds—the kind of pleasure provided by playing chess, checkers, or Go; figuring out a way to play tic tac toe so that they can never lose; or solving a crossword puzzle or an acrostic. Powerful ideas are simple ideas that lead to complex results.

For example there are powerful ideas embodied in single words like “conscience,” “respect,” “culture,” “race,” and “gender.” Understanding and considering many of these ideas is essential to intellectual and emotional growth, and to push them aside in order to get students to pass tests and develop standards-based humanly-neutral skills makes the mind and people smaller

and more confused when trying to understand the complexities of their own lives and the events going on in the world that affect them. Creative teaching is engagement with the world, not a retreat from it into a small, confined, scripted universe.

Sometimes some simple challenges, which can be related to many different standards and justified because they develop critical and strategic thinking, can be slipped into the classroom and be put on the center of one’s teaching no matter how oppressive the system is (former students who now teach refer to the Open Court Police who enter their classrooms to insure that they are on the right page and doing the right lesson in the Open Court scripted program that many school districts have adopted in despair over their own capacity to educate their students). I know it is a strain on the teachers and a challenge for the students to live within a subversive environment, but ideas have to be snuck into the curriculum—they are necessary if we are to develop well-educated students.

Some Subversive Examples

For example, there are many powerful mathematical ideas which are not touched on at all when calculation and memorization are put at the center of the mathematics curriculum. Here’s a simple example of a subversive activity that can be insinuated into the classroom and tied to language arts and math standards. It is not subversive because it is political, but rather because it is thought-based and participatory without any necessarily direct tie-in to what students will be tested on. It is also subversive because most students find it fun, a truly subversive idea in these cynical days of dishonoring the very idea of being young, and instead thinking of young people as future workers in a global economy in which they will be objects rather than subjects.

The Topology of Alphabets

Consider the following letters in the English alphabet from a topological point of view. That means that they should be looked at as forms and not as signs that stand for particular sounds.

C G I J L M N S U V Z

These ten letters can all be unbent into an I, that is into a straight line. All eleven are topologically equivalent. The topological character of these letters is that they are equivalent to a single unattached line.

Here is the rest of the English alphabet:

A B D E F H K O P Q R T W X Y

Now try these challenges: Which of the letters that are left are topologically equivalent to T? Which other letters are topologically equivalent to each other? How many topologically different groupings can you find in the whole alphabet?

Use a pencil and paper and try to solve these challenges before reading on. Sketch your answers in addition to working them out solely in your head. Paper and pencil sketches are useful problem solving tools in mathematics and are used by creative mathematicians to summarize the information they have to work with and draw a picture of possible solutions.

Getting back to the T challenge, it is pretty easy to see how the arms of Y can be bent to form a T. However the following transformations may be less obvious:

Here are all of the nine topological groupings that can be found in this English alphabet typeface, which is called Chicago:

C G I J L M N S U V Z
E F T W Y
A R
D O
K X
P Q
B
H

What are the characteristics of each grouping of letters?

It is important to note that topological equivalences in the alphabet will differ from typeface to typeface even though the letters, when looked on as signs, represent the same sounds. For example here is the upper case English alphabet in another type font, Zapf Chancery:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

I for example, is equivalent to H because of the lines that cross it at the top and bottom.

Now try your hand at organizing the letters in the following alphabets from around the world according to different topological groupings. Then, for each alphabet list the following:

(1) grouping or groupings with the with most letters.

(2) the rest of the groupings.

(3) a description of the topological characteristics of the group listed in 1.

You may want to make string or wire models of the letters and try twisting as a technique for solving these challenges.

Learning To Survive

Here's another though very different powerful idea that can lead to substantial learning. I was inspired to develop it when I read this paragraph in the *New York Review of Books* (Oct. 7, 2004 p.33):

Vitruvius declares that the most important possessions we have are the ones that can survive a shipwreck, and gives the example of a clever castaway washed up on the shore of Rhodes who, through his ingenuity, found friends, a job, wealth, and position in his new home. Abruptly, then Vitruvius says, "And so I thank my parents for giving me an education."

Examine some of the possibilities the idea of being taken away from their worlds but bringing skills and knowledge and culture with them: for example, a consideration, not of slavery but of the experience of being enslaved and a study of the skills, ideas, and culture people bring with them. This has to do with stories, building and planting techniques, family wisdom and survival skills, and music, culture, and religion. The need to fit these ideas into the curriculum is obvious. The space to

find the time to do them well and in depth is these days often an act of subversion.

Turning the World Upside Down

I want to provide, quite briefly, two more powerful ideas that can be riffed on and referred to the standards. I heard them in a talk at the Ashland Shakespeare Festival which had to do with central themes in Shakespeare's plays. They were "the world turned upside down," and "the wheel of life, the cycle of destruction and restoration." Think of these themes in the context of 9/11 and Iraq.

Where is the place for consideration of these ideas in Shakespeare's plays and in the current world in a closed classroom environment? Fortunately, most creative teachers are experts at resistance and subversion. I encourage it in the service of the children. It is an expression of "The Love Supreme" that John Coltrane expressed in his standard melody and his marvelous riffs on it.

Nevertheless I am aware that this type of subversion is not going to change the whole system nor threaten the *NCLB* educational politicians or the people whose careers are tied up with writing and revising standards. Nor will it defuse the movements to privatize, nationalize, or disenfranchise public education. It is up to educators, and in particular educational researchers, to become political in the service of the schools and the children.

There are allies in the teachers unions,

in parent groups, in community-based organizations. But without a large voice in intelligent opposition coming from educational "authorities," it is unlikely that a solid enough case will be made to develop and maintain strong, culturally respectful, effective, and vibrant public education in the United States at a time when old prejudices are taking new forms, class divisions are increasing, and slippage is happening in the idea that the United States is the only world power.

The crucial thing to understand is that the standards are only fake books and everything important comes with their use; with riffing in the classroom with a heightened attention to the needs, desires, and dreams of students. This is the Love Supreme, the best gift we can give to our students.

References

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