

CHALLENGE TO THE HUMANITIES

CONFERENCE

REMARKS BY

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CHALLENGE TO THE
HUMANITIES CONFERENCE ON EXCELLENCE
IN EDUCATION SPONSORED BY VANDERBILT
UNIVERSITY AND
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

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I WAS EAGER TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS CONFERENCE BECAUSE I AM SO
MUCH IN AGREEMENT WITH THE
CONCEPT UPON WHICH IT IS BASED.

LIKE ALL CONFERENCES, YOU ARE FOCUSING ON SOME SPECIFIC AND
RELATED ISSUES WITHIN AN OVERALL THEME, BUT YOU HAVE DONE
SOMETHING ELSE. You

HAVE PLACED YOUR CONCERNS WITHIN A BROAD HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL
FRAMEWORK THAT VIEWS EDUCATION AS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR SOCIETY,
THE PROCESS THAT PROVIDES US WITH OUR ROOTS AND OUR REFERENCE
POINTS, OUR COMMON GOALS AND PURPOSES, OUR SENSE OF COMMUNITY
AND CONTINUITY,

IN THIS OVERLY PRACTICAL WORLD OF OURS, IN WHICH A LONG-TERM TREND SEEMS TO LAST ABOUT A MONTH AND A HALF AFTER THE LATEST TELEVISION MINI-SERIES HAS BEEN COMPLETED, THIS KIND OF HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL GROUNDING OFTEN SEEMS ABSTRACT AND OUT OF TOUCH---MILDLY INTERESTING PERHAPS, BUT IMPRACTICAL AND IRRELEVANT TO THE FAST-PACED WORLD OF THE 1980'S.

I SUBMIT TO YOU, THOUGH, THAT THE "CHALLENGE
TO HUMANITIES" IS BOTH A PRACTICAL AND
RELEVANT ISSUE TO CONSIDER, DURING THE PAST
SEVERAL YEARS, THE AMERICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM
HAS BEEN EXAMINED FROM EVERY CONCEIVABLE POINT
OF VIEW, WE HAVE ANALYZED THE CURRICULUM, THE
ACADEMIC YEAR, AND THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE.
WE HAVE STUDIED WAYS OF IMPROVING TEACHERS,
TEACHING METHODS AND TEACHER TRAINING. WE
HAVE INVESTIGATED THE WAYS WE ORGANIZE, MANAGE
AND FINANCE EDUCATION, WE HAVE LOOKED AT
ELEMENTARY SECONDARY AND COLLEGE EDUCATION.
WE ARE DEBATING ALL DAY KINDERGARTENS, TRYING
TO STRENGTHEN NURSERY SCHOOL AND SEEKING TO
DEVELOP NEW COURSES OF POST-GRADUATE STUDY,

WE NOW HAVE A VERITABLE SMORGASBORD OF
RECOMMENDATIONS AT OUR FINGERTIPS. THERE IS SO
MUCH TO CHOOSE FROM THAT EVERYONE,

REGARDLESS OF PHILOSOPHY, OUTLOOK OR SPECIFIC
INTEREST, CAN COME AWAY WITH A PLATE THAT
MATCHES THEIR APPETITE OR LACK OF APPETITE FOR
CHANGE AND REDIRECTION.

IN ONE SENSE, I HAVE ENJOYED WATCHING THAT
PROCESS UNFOLD, AS I AM SURE YOU HAVE. IT IS
ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE LOOSELY ORGANIZED
CHAOS, THE CHURNING AND STIRRING THAT
REPRESENTS THE WAY WE MAKE SOCIAL POLICY
CHOICES IN THIS COUNTRY--WHAT ROBERT DAHL,
MANY YEARS AGO, CALLED "THE SCIENCE OF
MUDDLING THROUGH".

IN ANOTHER SENSE, THOUGH, I AM CONCERNED THAT
IF WE DO NOT DEVELOP THE WIDESPREAD
RECOGNITION OF THE BASIC PURPOSE OF EDUCATION,
THE REASON EDUCATION IS SO CENTRAL TO THE
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, THAT WE MAY AT THE END OF
ALL THIS ACTIVITY, FIND OURSELVES IN THE
POSITION OF HAVING MISSED THE FOREST FOR THE
TREES,

AND NOW THAT I HAVE PRAISED YOU FOR
PROVIDING US A MUCH-NEEDED VIEW OF THE
FOREST, LET US
LOOK AT A FEW OF THE TREES YOU HAVE ASKED
ME TO EXAMINE WITH YOU,

FIRST, THOUGH, LET ME BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE
CONTEXT IN WHICH I FEEL I AM SPEAKING,

I THINK WE CAN IDENTIFY IN GENERAL TERMS THE NATURE OF THE
CONCERNS THAT DRAW US TOGETHER, WE ARE AT THE BEGINNING, NOT
THE END, OF A DIALOGUE, IT IS FAR TOO SOON TO KNOW WHICH
ANSWERS ARE "RIGHT" AND WHICH ARE "WRONG", I AM NOT SURE WE
WILL EVER KNOW, OR THAT THESE DISTINCTIONS ARE EVEN APPROPRIATE
TO THE SUBJECT AT HAND, IT MAY EVEN BE TOO SOON TO KNOW IF WE
HAVE IDENTIFIED THE ISSUES ACCURATELY,

So I HOPE YOU WILL ACCEPT MY COMMENTS IN THE
SPIRIT IN WHICH THEY ARE PRESENTED. I AM HERE
AS A BUSINESS EXECUTIVE,⁴
NOT AN EDUCATOR. I AM NOT
HESITANT ABOUT STATING MY
VIEWS, BUT I PRESENT THEM
NOT AS ANSWERS OR SOLUTIONS
BUT MERELY AS TALKING
POINTS FOR THE DISCUSSIONS
THAT WILL FOLLOW, I WANT
TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION
NOT CUT IT OFF. I HAVE
COME HERE TODAY WITH THE
EXPECTATION THAT I WILL
LEAVE WITH SOME NEW IDEAS
AND SOME NEW INSIGHTS, I
HOPE MY COMMENTS WILL ALLOW
YOU TO DO THE
SAME,

LIKE YOU, I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE DECLINE OF
THE HUMANITIES IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, WHEN
ATTENDED PUBLIC SCHOOL MANY YEARS AGO IN THE
CITY OF BALTIMORE, THE HUMANITIES WERE THE
CORE OF OUR COURSE OF STUDY, AS A RESULT,
WAS ON THE RECEIVING END OF AN EDUCATION THAT
PROVIDED ME WITH MANY ENRICHING, IMPORTANT AND
LASTING EXPERIENCES, MY EDUCATION IN THE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROVIDED ME WITH THE
INTELLECTUAL TOOLS AND INSIGHTS I MIGHT NOT
HAVE OTHERWISE ACQUIRED AND WITH THE SKILLS
AND VALUES THAT HAVE SERVED ME WELL BOTH AS A
PRIVATE CITIZEN AND A BUSINESSMAN.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE NOW HAVE A DIFFERENT SITUATION IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS. HUMANITIES COURSES ARE AVAILABLE, BUT THEY ARE REGARDED AS LESS IMPORTANT, LESS NECESSARY, AND LESS RELEVANT. THE DOMINANT TREND TODAY IS TO GEAR THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE TO THE WORLD OF WORK, TO EMPHASIZE THOSE COURSES, ACTIVITIES AND SKILLS THAT WILL ALLOW A STUDENT TO MOVE DIRECTLY INTO A SPECIFIC JOB OR ALONG A SPECIFIC CAREER PATH WHEN THEY LEAVE SCHOOL.

THERE IS AN INCREASING SENSE THAT THE PURPOSE
OF SCHOOL IS TO TRAIN, RATHER THAN EDUCATE,
TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH MARKETABLE SKILLS
RATHER THAN WITH THE ABILITY TO LEARN AND TO
THINK,

IN OTHER WORDS, ACCORDING TO SOME
PRAGMATISTS, GENERAL EDUCATION! HAS HAD ITS
MOMENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT, AND IT IS NOW TIME
TO RELATE EDUCATION MUCH MORE DIRECTLY TO
THE HIGHLY
TECHNOLOGICAL AND FAST-CHANGING WORLD OF
TODAY AND TOMORROW,

I HAVE NO OBJECTION TO A SCHOOL OR
SCHOOL SYSTEM TRYING TO UNDERSTAND
THE WORLD AS IT CURRENTLY EXISTS AND
HELPING STUDENTS FIND A PLACE FOR
THEMSELVES IN THAT WORLD, THAT IS
ONE OF THE BASIC GOALS OF EDUCATION,
I ALSO HAVE NO OBJECTION TO WELL-
CONCEIVED

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT ARE ORIENTED
TOWARD VOCATIONAL TRAINING OR
VOCATIONAL CHOICES, WITHOUT SUCH
PROGRAMS, DROPOUT RATES WOULD BE
HIGHER AND SO WOULD UNEMPLOYMENT
RATES.

I HAVE SERIOUS RESERVATIONS, THOUGH, ABOUT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT STRESS VOCATIONAL TRAINING TO SUCH AN OVERWHELMING EXTENT THAT STUDENTS ARE PRESSURED TO MAKE CAREER OR JOB CHOICES MUCH SOONER THAN THEY NEED TO, AND WHICH FORECLOSE THEIR EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT,

I QUESTION THESE PROGRAMS FOR A

NUMBER OF REASONS,

THE FIRST IS OBVIOUS. I BELIEVE THE PURPOSE

OF EDUCATION IS TO EXPAND THE OPTIONS

AVAILABLE TO YOUNG PEOPLE, NOT TO LIMIT THEM.

THE SECOND IS MORE PRACTICAL, AS AN EMPLOYER,
I KNOW THAT EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS AND JOB REQUIRE
MENTS ARE CONSTANTLY CHANGING, VERY FEW PEOPLE
WORK IN THE SAME JOB ALL THEIR LIFE ANYMORE,
MOST PEOPLE NOW CHANGE JOBS THREE, FOUR,
PERHAPS FIVE TIMES DURING THEIR WORK CAREER,
MOREOVER, AS WE HAVE ALL LEARNED DURING THE
ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS AND UPHEAVALS OF THE
LAST SEVERAL YEARS, EVEN TECHNICALLY-ORIENTED
JOBS CAN BE RENDERED USELESS OVERNIGHT, THUS,
I HAVE TO QUESTION PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION
PROGRAMS IN WHICH THE PRIMARY GOAL IS TO TRAIN
PEOPLE FOR A SPECIFIC JOB OR TYPE OF JOB,
I HAVE TO QUESTION PROGRAMS WHICH TEND TO
EXCLUDE FROM THAT TRAINING, OR WHICH INCLUDE
IN ONLY THE MOST PERFUNCTORY
MANNER, THOSE COURSES, SKILLS,
AND IDEAS THAT FALL OUTSIDE
THE IMMEDIATE JOB DESCRIPTION,
MY THIRD RESERVATION IS A COMBINATION OF THE
PRACTICAL AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL, I CAN

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UNDERSTAND WHY SCHOOL OFFICIALS FEEL THE NEED TO PLACE A HEAVY EMPHASIS ON VOCATIONALISM IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS. You THINK THIS IS WHAT BUSINESS WANTS YOU TO DO, LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, YOU HAVE READ THE NEWS STORIES ABOUT THE AMERICAN ECONOMY LOSING ITS COMPETITIVE EDGE, ABOUT OUR DROP IN PRODUCTIVITY, You HAVE SEEN THE SURVEYS REPORTING THAT BUSINESS LEADERS WANT MORE TRADE AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS, THAT THEY WANT PEOPLE TO BE COMPUTER LITERATE WHEN THEY LEAVE THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

You MAY NOT, HOWEVER, BE FAMILIAR WITH SOME OTHER SURVEYS, SUCH AS THE ONE LAST FALL IN WHICH THREE OUT OF EVERY FOUR BUSINESS EXECUTIVES SAID THEY WANTED STUDENTS TO LEARN "HOW TO THINK" INSTEAD OF SIMPLY MEMORIZING FACTS AND FIGURES, OR THE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE REPORT OF LAST DECEMBER WHICH URGED OUR SCHOOLS TO "STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE, NOT MERE ADEQUACY",

You MIGHT ALSO BE INTERESTED TO KNOW A RECENT NEW YORK CITY PARTNERSHIP ANALYSIS CONCLUDED THAT "OVER 90 PERCENT OF THE PROJECTED JOB OPENINGS BETWEEN 1982 AND 1985 IN NEW YORK CITY WILL REQUIRE A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA",

THESE EXAMPLES SOUND TO ME LIKE A PRESCRIPTION FOR OUR SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH A BROAD-BASED EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION SO THEY CAN ADJUST TO, AND BE SUCCESSFUL AT, NEW LEARNING EXPERIENCES THROUGHOUT THEIR ADULT LIVES.

BUT EVEN IF BUSINESSES WERE TELLING YOU TO PREPARE
PEOPLE ALONG LIMITED, NARROW AND PRACTICAL LINES, I
WOULD URGE YOU TO RESIST, STAND YOUR GROUND AND HOLD
FAST, I **CAN THINK** OF NOTHING MORE UNHEALTHY OR MORE
DAMAGING TO OUR SOCIETY THAN FOR THE INSTITUTIONS OF
EDUCATION TO TAILOR THEIR PROGRAM TO THE NEEDS OF A SINGLE
SECTOR, YOUR JOB IS NOT TO DO OUR BIDDING, YOUR JOB IS
TO SET STANDARDS, TO DETERMINE WHAT EDUCATION SHOULD
BE TO HELP SHAPE THE GOALS AND DIRECTION OF THIS NATION,
ENGAGE US IN A DIALOGUE, BUT REMEMBER THAT WE ARE ONLY
ONE OF MANY PARTICIPANTS IN THAT DIALOGUE.

SO FAR I HAVE TALKED ABOUT
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION BUT HAVE BEEN
RELATIVELY SILENT ABOUT THE
HUMANITIES.

SO, AS THEY MIGHT SAY IN CERTAIN
VOCATIONAL COURSES, IT'S TIME TO SHIFT
GEARS,

LET ME BEGIN THE TRANSITION BY DRAWING
AN ANALOGY BETWEEN THE POSITION MY OWN
COMPANY

WAS IN 15 YEARS AGO AND THE POSITION IN
WHICH YOU SEEM TO FIND YOURSELVES TODAY.

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, AMERICAN CAN WAS ONE OF THE
GREAT SMOKESTACK INDUSTRIES OF AMERICA. LIKE
STEEL, RUBBER AND GLASS, WE HELPED SHAPE
AMERICAN ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR DECADES, TODAY
WE ARE A DIFFERENT COMPANY, WE HAVE

REORGANIZED AND DIVERSIFIED, WE NOW HAVE
THREE PRINCIPLE BUSINESSES INSTEAD OF ONE,
WHAT WE ARE AND HOW WE GOT THERE IS NOT
IMPORTANT, THE IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT 15
YEARS AGO WE FOUND OURSELVES IN A POSITION
WHERE WE HAD TO LOOK AT THE WORLD AS IT WAS,
NOT AS WE WISHED IT COULD BE, WE HAD TO

ACCEPT THE WORLD ON ITS OWN TERMS AND BEGIN TO
FIND OUR PLACE IN THAT WORLD WITHOUT LOSING
THE VALUES, THE IDEAS AND TRADITIONS THAT WERE
AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR IDENTITY AND OUR
PURPOSE AS AN ORGANIZATION,

THAT, I SUBMIT TO YOU, IS THE POSITION
IN WHICH THE HUMANITIES ARE TODAY, IT IS NO
LONGER ENOUGH TO RECALL WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN
OR WHAT SHOULD BE, IT IS NO LONGER ENOUGH TO
RECITE THE IMPORTANCE OF. HISTORY AND

LITERATURE, OR TO SAY, ALBEIT WITH
GREAT ACCURACY, THAT UNDERSTANDING
THE GREAT PHILOSOPHERS HELPS YOU
UNDERSTAND MORE OF TODAY'S WORLD THAN
YOU MIGHT IMAGINE, IT IS NOT EVEN
ENOUGH TO POINT OUT HOW MUCH
DEMOCRACY DEPENDS UPON AN
ENLIGHTENED CITIZENRY - PEOPLE WITH
OPEN, INQUIRING MINDS WHO HAVE THE
CAPACITY TO REASON AND THINK
INDEPENDENTLY.

THE CENTRAL ISSUE FOR THE HUMANITIES TODAY--
THE CHALLENGE TO THE HUMANITIES, TO USE THE
TITLE OF THIS CONFERENCE--IS TO LOOK AT OUR
SOCIETY AS IT CURRENTLY EXISTS AND TO
DETERMINE A ROLE FOR YOURSELF THAT ALLOWS YOU
TO PRESERVE YOUR FUNDAMENTAL VALUES, IDEAS AND
PURPOSES BUT WHICH ALSO ALLOWS YOU TO APPLY
THOSE VALUES IN A WAY THAT IS PRACTICAL AND
RELEVANT TO THE NEEDS OF TODAY'S YOUNG PEOPLE.

WE HAVE AN INTOLERABLY HIGH DROP OUT RATE IN
OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, THE REASON IS NOT THAT
THIS GENERATION OF STUDENTS IS LESS BRIGHT
THAN STUDENTS OF PREVIOUS GENERATIONS, THE
PROBLEM, I THINK, IS THAT MANY OF TODAY'S
STUDENTS DO NOT PERCEIVE SCHOOL AS BEING
RELEVANT TO THEIR ADULT LIVES, NO HIGH SCHOOL
COURSE CAN BE CONSIDERED VALUABLE IF THE
CLASSROOM IS EMPTY, THE CHALLENGE TO THE
HUMANITIES, INDEED TO PUBLIC EDUCATION, IS TO
SHAPE YOUR PROGRAMS SO THEY FIT MODERN DAY
REALITIES BETTER WITHOUT COMPROMISING
THE INTRINSIC VALUES WHICH HAVE MADE YOU
A BEDROCK OF OUR NATION'S HERITAGE,

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PRECISELY HOW YOU DO THIS IS A MORE DIFFICULT
UNDERTAKING, I THOUGHT ABOUT PROVIDING YOU
WITH A SET OF GUIDELINES, A FRAMEWORK WITHIN
WHICH YOU COULD CONSIDER YOUR CHOICES, BUT
WHILE I ENJOY A STIFF INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE
EVERY NOW AND THEN, I ALSO LIKE TO THINK OF
MYSELF AS A PERSON WHO IS SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW
HIS OWN LIMITS, SO I WILL CONCLUDE ON A MORE
MODEST NOTE BY DRAWING UPON SOME RECENT
EXPERIENCE TO GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF WHAT I HAVE
IN MIND,

FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, AMERICAN CAN HAS
BEEN VERY CLOSELY INVOLVED WITH MARTIN
LUTHER KING HIGH SCHOOL IN MANHATTAN, OUR
PARTICIPATION BEGAN THROUGH A PROGRAM
CALLED JOIN-A-SCHOOL, JOIN-A-SCHOOL MATCHES
UP CORPORATIONS

CONCERNED ABOUT PUBLIC EDUCATION WITH
SCHOOLS THAT NEED SOME HELP, TOGETHER,
THE

CORPORATION AND THE SCHOOL WORK TO DEVELOP
AN AGENDA AND A SERIES OF ACTIVITIES, THE
IDEA IS FOR THE CORPORATION AND THE SCHOOL
TO DEVELOP A RELATIONSHIP THAT CAN GROW
INTO A LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP, YOU MAY HAVE
SIMILAR PROGRAMS IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITIES.

WE WERE REALISTIC ABOUT THIS PROGRAM, WE
KNEW WE WERE WORKING IN A MIDTOWN
MANHATTAN HIGH SCHOOL, NOT A SCHOOL
LOCATED ON THE OLYMPIAN PLAINS, WE KNEW
THERE WOULD BE DIFFICULT DAYS AND
DIFFICULT PROBLEMS. WE KNEW WE WOULD
HAVE TO START SMALL AND EARN THE TRUST
AND

ACCEPTANCE OF BOTH STUDENTS AND THE
ADMINISTRATION,

SOME OF THE STUDENTS AT MARTIN LUTHER
KING ARE GOING ON TO COLLEGE, MOST ARE
NOT, THEY ARE GOING DIRECTLY INTO JOBS,
AND OFTEN INTO JOBS WITH VERY LITTLE
PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE.

MORE PROMISING, HOWEVER, IS THAT WE FOUND
TEACHERS AT MARTIN LUTHER KING WHO ARE
INVOLVED AND DEDICATED; WE FOUND MANY STUDENTS
WHO ARE ABLE, INTERESTED AND AMBITIOUS, WE
LEARNED THAT WHEN YOU APPROACH YOUNG PEOPLE
WITH CARE AND RESPECT, THEY RESPOND WITH CARE
AND RESPECT, WE LEARNED THAT YOUNG PEOPLE
CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO GROW AND LEARN IF THEY
ARE NOT GIVEN A FAIR AND A REAL OPPORTUNITY.

I KEEP TRYING TO RELATE THE ISSUE YOU ARE
CONSIDERING TODAY TO OUR OBSERVATIONS AND
EXPERIENCES AT MARTIN LUTHER KING HIGH SCHOOL ,

As I DO SO, I INVARIABLY COME BACK TO A VERY
TROUBLING NOTION, I WONDER, AND I ASK YOU,

WHETHER THIS GROWING TREND TO DISTINGUISH SO

SHARPLY BETWEEN THE HUMANITIES ON THE ONE HAND
AND VOCATIONALISM OR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ON

THE OTHER CONTRIBUTES TO THE POLARIZATION THAT
ALREADY EXISTS WITHIN OUR SCHOOLS? DOES THIS
DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS THAT EMPHASIZE

LEARNING HOW TO THINK AND SCHOOLS THAT
EMPHASIZE HOW TO PREPARE FOR A JOB PUSH US
CLOSER TO A TWO-TIERED SYSTEM IN WHICH THOSE
WHOSE EDUCATION IS LESS INTELLECTUALLY OR
BROADLY-ORIENTED RECEIVE SCHOOLING THAT IS
CONSIDERED LESS WORTHY, LESS VALUABLE?

DOES THAT IN TURN CONVEY TO THOSE STUDENTS A MESSAGE THAT THEY ARE LESS WORTHY, LESS VALUABLE? ARE WE IN FACT TRACKING DOWN A PATH THAT WILL INCREASINGLY SEPARATE THE THINKERS FROM THE WORKERS AT EARLIER AND EARLIER AGES IN THEIR LIVES?

I DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWERS, BUT IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE BETTER BEGIN TO THINK IN TERMS OF SYSTEMS OF EDUCATION IN WHICH EACH STUDENT CAN FIND A PLACE FOR HIMSELF OR HERSELF, IN WHICH WE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FIT OR JUDGE STUDENTS IN TERMS OF OUR OWN INTELLECTUAL STANDARDS AND PREFERENCES; ONE TEACHER PUT IT VERY WELL WHEN HE TALKED OF AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM THAT, "GIVES THESE KIDS A PLACE IN LIFE TO THINK AND SPEAK WHERE THEIR CONFIDENCE WON'T BE SHATTERED".

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, FOR EXAMPLE, NEEDS AN
INFUSION OF THE BROAD IDEAS AND VALUES

CONTAINED IN THE HUMANITIES, BECAUSE THE GOAL
OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SHOULD BE TO PREPARE
YOUNG PEOPLE FOR A LIFETIME OF WORK AND
LIVING, NOT JUST HELP THEM FIND A JOB IN THE
SKILL THAT WAS STUDIED LAST IN HIGH SCHOOL,

AND THE HUMANITIES COULD USE A GOOD STRONG
DOSE OF THE MORE PRACTICAL, SOMETIMES MORE
APPEALING ORIENTATION ONE FINDS IN VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION,

THAT MEANS FINDING SOME NEW WAYS TO BRING THE
HUMANITIES TO LIFE FOR STUDENTS, IT MEANS
REACHING OUT TO STUDENTS INSTEAD OF WAITING
FOR THEM TO COME TO YOU, IT MEANS TRYING THE
UNUSUAL AND THE UNORTHODOX,

THERE ALREADY IS MOVEMENT IN THIS DIRECTION.

A LEARNING TO READ THROUGH THE ARTS PROGRAM IS
IN OPERATION IN NEW YORK CITY, THE DRAMATISTS
FOUNDATION HAS DEVELOPED A YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS
FESTIVAL THAT IS TAPPING THE CREATIVITY OF
YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAD LITTLE OR NO CONTACT WITH
THE THEATER BEFORE,

THE PHILADELPHIA ALLIANCE FOR TEACHING
HUMANITIES IN THE SCHOOLS IS A PROGRAM
AIMED AT CHANGING TEACHING STYLES AND
METHODS IN THE HOPE THAT STUDENTS WHO ONCE
WERE TURNED OFF BY THE HUMANITIES WILL
COME TO REALIZE THAT THE HUMANITIES AND
SCHOOL AS A WHOLE DOES HAVE SOMETHING TO
SAY TO THEM,

THERE ARE OTHER EXAMPLES I COULD CITE,
BUT THE OVERRIDING MESSAGE I WANT TO
LEAVE HERE TODAY IS THIS: IT'S TIME
FOR ALL OF US TO COME DOWN FROM THE
TOWER, IF WE ARE NOT WILLING TO MAKE
THE EFFORT, IF OUR SENSE OF
INTELLECTUAL PURITY SUPERSEDES THE
VERY REAL AND PRESSING NEED TO DEAL
WITH THE WORLD AS WE FIND IT, THEN I
AM AFRAID WE WILL NOT BE IN MUCH OF A
POSITION TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THE THE
SYSTEM OF EDUCATION WE EVENTUALLY WIND
UP WITH,

AND TO SHOW YOU HOW MUCH TIMES HAVE CHANGED, I
JUST ENDED THAT LAST SENTENCE WITH A
PREPOSITION.