

Excellence. NO EXCUSES!

Excerpt:

**EDUCATION
RE-BOOT!**

Tom Peters

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Education RE-BOOT:

Full Ste**A**m Ahead!

Science

Technology

Engineering

Mathematics

Science

Technology

Engineering

Arts

Mathematics

“Human creativity is the ultimate economic resource.”

—Richard Florida

“Every child is born an artist. The trick is to remain an artist.”

—Picasso

“Creativity can no longer be treated as an elective.”

—John Maeda

It is commonplace when discussing education (frequently described as the imperative—though unrealized—National Priority #1) to obsess on math proficiency and, more broadly, STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics). STEM is no doubt significant to a landscape being transformed by technology. Yet I vehemently favor the formulation labeled STEAM. (President John Maeda of RISD/Rhode Island School of Design coined the new flavor.) The “A” that’s added to STEM is for the Arts. “The arts” are not merely about being “well rounded” or some such; they are to some extent “what’s left” as AI/robotics vacuum up traditional high-end “knowledge work” occupations. Consider the world’s most valuable company—Apple. While its “T” and “E” (tech/engineering) are exceptional, it is the “A” that has made all the difference—or, rather, the A ingeniously blended with S, T, E, and M.

“Microsoft never had the humanities or liberal arts in its DNA.”

—Steve Jobs (Okay, he was a smart ass; he nonetheless has a point.)

The (partial) logic behind adding an “A” to STEM:

“I believe that ninety percent of white-collar/“knowledge-work” jobs (which are 80 percent of all jobs) in the U.S. will be either destroyed or altered beyond recognition in the next 10 to 15 years.”

—Cover story/*Time*/22 May 2000/Tom Peters

The **(VERY)** Best and **(VERY)** Brightest

*The very best and the very
brightest and the most
energetic and enthusiastic
and entrepreneurial and
tech-savvy of our university
graduates must—**must,**
not should—be
lured into teaching!*

Finding and educating these new-criteria teachers requires a revolution in both content and the incentive structure needed to attract the best of the best—*and to induce them to experiment boldly once aboard the education train.*

In my opinion, the impact of the new technologies is such that we need a very young teacher corps—one that has the demographics and restless mindset of Facebook or Twitter or Google new-hires.

*(I had no intention of writing anything like this [a short 2013 paper], but as I wrote I found myself almost pounding the keyboard into mush. Like it or not, complex problems call for complex solutions. Yet I am coming to see the “simple” solution of **BBFs/Best & Brightest & Feistiests**, as I am now calling them, becoming the base for a transformed teacher corps as a national necessity on a par with national security; in fact, obviously, it is an issue of national security.)*

Education Manifesto 2014*

(*Good news from a competitiveness standpoint: Nobody's got it right. **YET.**)

RADICAL curricular revision imperative.*

(*STEM/STEAM./Creativity & Entrepreneurialism must be encouraged rather than suppressed.)

RADICAL digital strategy.*

(*There is ... NO WAY TO OVERDO THIS.***) (**Re-read: NO WAY.***)
(***Good news: Kids are doing this on their own.)

REVOLUTIONARY new approach to teacher recruitment/development.* (*BEST of the BEST [for a few years] ... or else.)

RADICAL re-assessment of tertiary education—e.g., “MOOC-ization.”* (*Four-year residential degree not centerpiece.)

RADICAL re-assessment business ed.

RADICAL role re-assessment by corporations.*
(*CORPORATIONS TAKE THE LEAD ON EDUCATION ... or else.)

FYI: I make no apology for nor do I think it is hyperbole to repeatedly use the word

“RADICAL.” **Less than RADICAL**
... “not optional.”

Tertiary Education, “Soft Stuff,” Liberal Arts

A pox on fools who dismiss the power of a college degree, circa 2014, as “so yesterday.” E.g., age 25-32, difference in annual income, degree vs no degree: \$17,500.

Nick Smit: “I agree Dr Tom. I’m however in favor of radically different approach to tertiary learning that keeps depth of learning substance.”

I agree [re re-design] 100%. I am, among other things, a RMOOC/Radical MOOC-ist. BUT ... for now, regardless, basic point re income/job type advantages holds.

AND ... bigger practical point is ...

post-tertiary ed ... i.e., **RADICAL**
commitment to lifelong learning!

Nick Smit: “Degrees should be licensed for 5 yrs. Then re-cert. Booyaaah. Always evolving learning.”

David Spellman: “All best wishes and thanks to tom_peters: you should see the faces of my college students light up when they first hear of MBWA.”

**At “elite” schools they yawn at such “soft bullshit.”
(Now there’s a blast of cynicism.)**

David Spellman: “I was a CEO for 6 years and did MBWA, on all 3 shifts, on all 7 days. ‘Soft bullshit’ was why my tenure was a roaring success.”

Amen, brother: I've spent the last 35 years of my life on selling the power of ... "soft bullshit"!

Todd Hall: "How does MBWA work in a virtual organization?"

Long answer required. One part, as leader, is many many frequent flyer miles!

If you believe application of Big Data to HR is "the breakthrough we've long awaited," you are a sick puppy.

Big Data is invaluable in general—and to HR. Problem occurs when it gravitates invisibly from "useful" to "Gospel"—which, alas, is almost inevitable.

Two "C-level" jobs across the hall from one another: Chief Big Data Officer. **Chief Big Data Cold Water Thrower Officer.** Equal authority.

Clever Trout (Twitter I.D.): "There should be no argument that HR needs to modernize, and using 'data' (big or small) can be helpful."

"Helpful," by all means. But dictatorial is a different kettle of fish.

Re power of "soft stuff": Creating fabulous customer-employee experiences is invaluable. The well-kept secret: 10% big investments, 90% cumulative "little" gestures. (Also note that superb employee experience takes precedence over customer experience. The second doesn't stick unless the first is rock solid.)

Chris Kernaghan: “I can agree; I was bowled over by a nice note from housekeeping who saw our wedding anniversary cards in our room.”

Tim Fargo: “Do you think alternate ‘internship’ idea is viable? If not, why not?”

Tim Fargo: “There’s built-in bias in those [post-college] income numbers & past performance; no guarantees for future.”

No guarantees in life. But [degree] is hell of a start off the blocks. Forget #s per se. Salary numbers are doubtless decent surrogate for job quality.

Lots of alternatives. But for now, if parent, facts is facts--& I’ll stretch myself to the max to support my kid’s college DEGREE.

Emmanuel McDaniel: “I have to agree with Tim [Fargo]. In an age where ‘good enough to pass’ has become the norm, degrees don’t impress me.”

With respect, don’t care if you’re impressed. Big Data say \$25K vs \$17K, which signifies better job/start.

Tim Fargo: “The current system is quickly becoming questionable ROI. Love idea of biz giving top HS students internships. Break the cycle.”

Dan Purdy: “**Don’t be fooled by outliers like yourself Emmanuel. You are 6 sigma; tail of the normal curve & not mean.**”

Dan Purdy: “It’s not just salary. Real show stopper = 3.8% unemployment rate for college grads vs 12.2% without.”

AND: 3.8% college grad unemployment is effectively zero when you take into account average “normal times” share of people between jobs.

If I am a parent, I will **BEG** the kid to get the degree—circa 2014. I’m playin’ the stats, Tim.

Still, at age 71, & pretty secure, I luv luv luv my 2 scraps os paper with “Cornell” at the top & my other 2 with “Stanford” at the top. The credentials per se are still valuable!

**To be perfectly honest, I think the
“there’s little value in a degree”
stuff is elitist bullshit.**

Emmanuel McDaniel: “That being said, medical, law, and engineering degrees still truly valuable. Too many Lib Arts majors at McDonald’s.”

***If God loves me, I’ll never
again hear/read “There are
too many liberal arts
majors.” Nauseates me.***

Stanford's president, an engineer, is moving heaven and earth to revitalize liberal arts. I pray he succeeds.

*Liberal arts/
humanities: What it
means to be civilized.
Humanity's bedrock.
Long live the B.A.*

In an age where algorithms will do a lot of the quant stuff, there's a decent chance there will be a jump in value of liberal arts.

Tim Fargo: "For certain careers, the degree is pretty much essential. But there is an implied promise in a degree which is a lie for many."

Cary Cooper: "Science & tech are useless without social science Behavior change is fundamental 2 get ppl 2 accept sci/tech innovation."

Nick Smit: "I believe MBA BBA Commerce degrees must have subjects like sociology/psychology/geography."

Peter Drucker's response to "most important contribution": *"I focused this discipline on people and power; on values, structure, and constitution; and above all, on responsibilities—**that is, I focused the Discipline of Management on management as a truly liberal art.**"* (18 January 1999)

Kevin Meyer: "Some of my best and broadest thinking (and best speaking) tech managers got their start with a liberal arts degree."

Beyond the starting gate, future success in today's/tomorrow's world demands ...

OBSSESSED- STUDENT- FOR-LIFE!

Please remember in “destroy everything” frenzy, you mess w/ societal bedrock. “The academy” goes back to Greeks; upon it rests civilization.

Bhoopalan Padua: “Great! However just don't stop with only Western Universalism. Look deep at Dharmic and other Eastern paradigms and cultures.”

Amen and [VERY] well said!

“Mr Gandhi, what do you think of Western civilization?” Mr Gandhi: “I think it would be a very good idea.”

Dan Farfan: “IMO, my field, Computer Science, needs an infusion of philosophy to enable a new level to be reached.” :-)

John Grinnell: “So pointed, yet “civics” (short for civilization) is the first to go along with art and PE. W/o civilization science and math??”

Max McKeown: “Life is more than survival, past which point, soft, social, questioning, and beautiful matter.”

*“My wife and I went to a [kindergarten] parent-teacher conference and were informed that our budding refrigerator artist, Christopher, would be receiving a grade of Unsatisfactory in art. We were shocked. How could any child—let alone our child—receive a poor grade in art at such a young age? **His teacher informed us that he had refused to color within the lines, which was a state requirement for demonstrating ‘grade-level motor skills.’”*** —Jordan Ayan, *AHA!*

*“How many artists are there in the room? Would you please raise your hands. **FIRST GRADE:** En masse the children leapt from their seats, arms waving. Every child was an artist. **SECOND GRADE:** About half the kids raised their hands, shoulder high, no higher. The hands were still. **THIRD GRADE:** At best, 10 kids out of 30 would raise a hand, tentatively, self-consciously. By the time I reached **SIXTH GRADE**, no more than one or two kids raised their hands, and then ever so slightly, betraying a fear of being identified by the group as a ‘closet artist.’ The point is:*

Every school I visited was participating in the systematic suppression of creative genius.” —Gordon MacKenzie,

Orbiting the Giant Hairball: A Corporate Fool’s Guide to Surviving With Grace
(GMcK was creative director at Hallmark.)

*“Thomas Stanley [author of The Millionaire Next Door] has not only found no correlation between success in school and an ability to accumulate wealth, he’s actually found a negative correlation. ‘It seems that school-related evaluations are poor predictors of economic success,’ Stanley concluded. What did predict success was a willingness to take risks. Yet the success-failure standards of most schools penalized risk takers. **Most educational systems reward those who play it safe. As a result, those who do well in school find it hard to take risks later on.**”*

—Richard Farson & Ralph Keyes,
Whoever Makes the Most Mistakes Wins

“It is nothing short of a miracle that modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry.”

—Albert Einstein