GUILD.9

WORKING PAPER ON EDUCATION

The past ten years in education has been marked by a shifting financial, political, and theoretical base. Within the decade a rapid increase and then decrease in funding produced and then dissolved massive demonstration projects. Many of these new programs fed by new monies were traditional responses to broad social mandates designed to remedy major social ills such as segregation and equal economic participation for minorities and the handicapped. The residue has been disillusionment. A common understanding of quality education no longer exists either within or outside the educational community. The world continues to demand access to current educational opportunities and simultaneously to change its technologies, which form the very bases of literacy, now including computer skills. The plethora of materials and delivery arrangements have not produced the desired outcomes; rather they have generated debate within the profession which in turn has further eroded community support and esteem for those who educate. The confusion regarding the process of education is rapidly giving way to the fear of losing control.

The vision can be stated in five dimensions. The first stems from the realization that education is not separate from life and that it will take place more and more outside the traditional formal classroom setting and will include such basic skills as problem solving and critical thinking. Second, the teacher will take on a role as a journey person, one who manages the education of charges as well as one who instills special content knowledge in the traditional sense. Third, education will take place in the broader environment, such as outside the classroom on university treks and home computer assignments. Fourth, the best mechanics available will be used optimally to human uses so that the human dimension of education is not victimized by technology. Fifth, the willingness of the community (certain governmental structures, private businesses) to take responsibility for liaison support of education will be enhanced as imaginal possibilities, methods, and directions are presented to them.

There are many current blocks to achieving the vision for education. The use of existing resources is not directed toward the most appropriate demands and the generation of additional resources lacks creativity. Professional educators are overly concerned with maintaining current bureau-cratic, authoritarian structures. Present decision-making policies do not allow for input from affected parties toward bringing about changes but rather tend to come from the top down and result in ineffectivity. Teacher self-images related to their role seems tied to specific content and what the teacher does rather than to the learning processes and what happens to the students. The need to provide education to all ages, cultures and types of people is seen as a nuisance rather than as gold to be mined. Relevance with respect to real-life experience, now as well as in the future, is lacking. The image of broad community participation in the educational process is limited both in amount and breadth of such involvement. Finally it is very difficult to measure effectiveness in the quality of education especially in the non-cognitive areas even though there is a greater demand for such things as values to be a self-concious part of the curriculum.

Therefore our strategic direction will be toward facilitating and integrating educational inputs from the community, parents, professional and students. This infusion will release professionals trapped by current educational issues. The creation and sustenance of pedagogy as a corporate style will be recaptured as a foundational skill. An understanding of teaching as a systematic process will release learner and teacher from focusing on content and containment as a perspective for viewing the world. New evaluation procedures must be invented to measure intended programmatic outcomes.

The intent is to experiment with and model the proven methods of Imaginal Education. A guild network will be established in order to interchange information regarding local efforts.