

Educating the Whole Person: A Unification Improvement

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I spent ten years as a corporate training manager for community colleges. My job was to go out to industry, large and small, and help design training for manufacturers. Local manufacturing companies are highly prized as economic development engines. Every job created by a medical products company for instance, whose customers are national and international, creates five to six other local jobs — teachers, tire salesman and restaurants owners to name a few. Any improvement in the efficiency or effectiveness of a manufacturing company improves the community around it.



One thing I noticed is that modern companies hire very few people just because they have a strong back or only obey orders. Karl Marx had a theory that people are just economic animals, programmable entities that are interchangeable, like light bulbs. He called it the Labor Theory of Value, and many companies built their success on this model in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Since then, forklifts and robots have replaced a lot of the strong back, quick fingers work that used to characterize American labor. Marxists adjusted their theory to include intellectual labor. They said the brain produces ideas like a gland secretes hormones. This works for engineers, who work with “stuff” and can work alone, but it does not explain the modern creative wave that gave us, for instance, Apple, Inc., or GPS navigation systems. Successful education in the real world includes creating the conditions that allow a continuous flow of “cool” ideas that can be marketed in “cool” ways and make lots of cash and stock options.

In modern companies, workers get promoted if they are responsible and creative and can play well with others. The creative ideas that a team can unleash often overshadow that of a lone genius toiling away in a lab.

So how do you train a worker in the 21st century? There are several elements, most of which align nicely with the predictions of Unification Thought and the Theory of Education.

Unification Philosophy hypothesizes that every person is a unique expression of Divine potential; we are $1/\infty$, a unique creative expression of the many variables in human expression. In 1900 this was considered a bad thing, people had to learn to conform, wear the same clothes, start and stop work according to a bell and clock in and out. In modern corporations, we still do some of that, but most workers also get “Meyer Briggs” training or “Colors Training” to identify their unique working styles.

For instance, I'm an ENTP: "Extroverted, iNtuitive, Thinking, Perceiving." This is neither good nor bad. It just describes why my extroverted joke-telling might annoy a fellow worker who is more serious and reflective. If she realizes I am just expressing part of my gene pool, rather than driving her crazy on purpose, we can give each other a little space and work together well. It is amazing how a little understanding can take the friction out of team meetings and allow each person to bring their best ideas to the table.

Unification Philosophy also postulates that human character or psychological design consists of three primary parts: intellect, emotion and will. The intellect and emotion work together to cause action in the real world. In traditional work environments, action is what the company pays for: a certain number of widgets produced, a number of tons moved or acres plowed. The only interest in the intellect was to show one how to use the shovel, and there was no interest at all in how you felt about it.

In the 1960s, America instituted the "space race" and poured billions into universities to create engineers and scientists. That was a step up from the strong back economy, but currently economic competitiveness also requires style, art and beauty to create the most compelling products. The perfect example of that sought after quality is Apple, Inc. Their products – the iPhone, iPad, MacBook — are pursued worldwide because of their beauty and elegant design, and consumers will pay extra over a simpler product that just functions but looks boring.

How do we educate people for this new workplace? I worked with corporate instructional designers who when analyzing the learning needed for a particular position or task, would break it down into three areas: cognitive, or what you have to know to do your job; affective, or ways you have to behave to be successful (usually sales and customer service); and, psychomotor, or skills like painting, welding or machine operation. Predictably, these skills match up nicely with the Unificationist assumption about human psyche, intellectual skills, emotional skills and "doing" skills (the will).

A young person seeking to make an impact in the world and make a good living will need more than a strong back, and more than a well-stuffed brain. They will need to be the whole package. The integration of a good work ethic, expertise in a field, a practice of continuous learning, excellent professional interpersonal skills (and good hair) will get you a job and probably give you a long term career.

Where do you get education like this? Colleges generally tout their professors and publications rather than their well-rounded education. Students seek to get a good GPA and take courses in their field and graduate with a degree that is worth something. They faithfully do their homework and regurgitate information in their exams and then graduate with a head full of theory and no experience and no social graces to speak of.

To succeed in training the employee of the future, colleges should also grade their students' ability on affective skills and actual results. Perhaps you can get a 3.4 academically and a 3.6 for your social/emotional score, but only a 2.0 for actually doing anything valuable – it could happen.

Right now who teaches one how to listen, contemplate, harmonize with team members, lead teams, and suppress one's ego to create a larger good? Today, many businesses believe they must completely retrain their college hires to make best use of them. If you start now, you can have those skills before you need them and when you hit the job market you will be way ahead of your peers.

In conclusion, the future belongs to the well-rounded, creative individual. It is not just a religious theory, but a fact of business life.