



Reason, Individualism, Freedom Institute

Issue 13

October 2006

Contents

"First We Must Inspire, Not Just Inform"

Advisor Stan Broitman on "Today"

501(c)(3) Status Granted September 22nd!

Any College Will Do?

Marsha Familiaro Enright's Montessori School Selected as One of Top in Chicago

"First We Must Inspire, Not Just Inform" continued from left

"First We Must Inspire, Not Just Inform"



Last month we explored what it

We're featuring news on our advisor Stan Broitman this month in our highlights, as well as the honor accorded Marsha Familiaro Enright's [Council Oak Montessori School](#), by [Chicago Magazine](#). Marsha continues her article on education with a discussion of the importance of teaching.

• **Advisor Stan Broitman on "Today"**

Saturday morning September 16th, our advisor Stan Broitman was on the "Today" show, in a discussion about the 'new' retirement. Baby Boomers are retiring with more money and health than any previous generation. Consequently, many are looking for new pursuits of great interest and meaning for the many years ahead of them. A career banker, Stan now runs a retirement coaching business, [The Retirement Network](#) helping retirees find new, meaningful directions in life.

The show featured a couple who had gone back to school at [St. John's College](#) in Sante Fe, a liberal arts college, with an intensive, unusual program.

The new retirees search for meaning bodes well for our College program, which will excel in helping individuals do just that. Frequently at my presentations on the college, attendees comment to me that they would love to go to a college such as I describe. We're listening! We plan to provide programs for older adults.

• **501(c)(3) Status Granted September 22nd!**

takes to be a creative 'Versatilist,' capable of constantly adapting and changing in our new global economy, and how the new College's curriculum will nurture this trait. This month, we turn to the fundamental importance of teachers for the best results.

Maria Montessori (pictured above) said: Teachers "have to conquer minds stirring up the great emotions of life," to achieve real learning in students. The teacher's role in motivating students cannot be underestimated. Curiosity is a human species trait, a kind of mental ambition: "All men by nature desire to know." But it can be squashed through ridicule or sapped through boredom by teachers – or coaxed into riotous flowering. The student is a 'spiritual embryo,' delicate and amazing in his or her potential for growth.

Great teachers are often *transformative* to the student, helping him or her learn to love knowledge and serious work, to acquire heightened reasoning skills, to look at many sides of a problem, to gather information from far-reaching domains in order to find solutions, and to be self-reflective and reasonable – all important ingredients to future success. Although it is possible to be competent long distance, in person interaction is the most compellingly effective.

Warren Buffet, who did not want to go to college, said of his time achieving a Masters at Columbia University: "But I didn't go there for a degree, I went for two teachers, who were already my heroes." While actively seeking technology of all kinds to creatively facilitate learning and make scholars and public intellectuals from around the world accessible to our students,

The Reason, Individualism, Freedom Institute received notice that it had been granted tax exempt status from the IRS on September 22nd. We can now accept tax deductible donations towards founding the new College. Please send them to: Reason, Individualism, Freedom Institute, 9400 S. Damen Avenue, Chicago, IL 60620.

• Any College Will Do?

Recounted in this article, *Wall Street Journal* research found that the nation's top executives tend to go to state universities and lesser known small colleges, not top ranked schools. I was fascinated to read these results, especially because they mirrored so exactly results of research I did in 1979 on the top 40 executives of Chase Manhattan Bank Corporation.

Chase annually spent over \$100,000 (equal to about \$250,000 today) recruiting graduates of Ivy League schools, encouraged by then-chairman David Rockefeller who was fond of his alma mater, Harvard.

Working as the assistant of the VP in charge of Human Resources for the top corporation executives, I wondered about this strategy. Consequently, I studied the backgrounds, characteristics and careers of the 40 top executives in the corporation and found that the Ivy League was not their source. Two percent had graduated from 'top tier' schools as defined by *Barron's Guide to Colleges and Universities*, 1979 edition, and they tended to stay at Chase a mere two years. Of the remainder, 48% had graduated from 'second tier' schools and 48% from local night schools and state universities, often while working their way up Chase's organization. Finally, 2% had never gone to college. Harvard Business Historian Richard Tedlow says "A lot of people who earn degrees from tier-one universities and business schools aren't willing to start at the bottom of a huge company" and spend years scaling layers of management and hoping to reach the top.

I thought the findings implied a different

classes at the new College will be in person with its skilled, specially trained teachers. Let's examine some ways teachers influence students.

Teachers and 'Activation Energy'

Teachers can make a difference in one's choice of profession. Often, a passionate teacher triggers an individual's interest in a new subject, or a previously boring or distasteful one, frequently a field that becomes the person's area of professional interest. The teacher fuels what research psychologist Csikszentmihalyi calls 'activation energy.'

Many complex and deeply engaging areas of knowledge and skill require an enormous amount of unrewarding work before they become enjoyable. Initially, the learner must expend intense mental energy in order to focus on the learning: this is the 'activation energy.' Learning a musical instrument is a good example: the student spends hours practicing the physical movements and enduring awful sonic productions before acquiring enough skill to make enjoyable music!

In the early 20th century, Montessori noted the same phenomena and realized its connection to teaching: "I believed that at the start the teaching material had to be associated with the voice of the teacher which called and roused the [students] and induced them to use the material and educate themselves," Maria Montessori.

A great teacher like Edward James Olmos' character in ["or Robin Williams' in "Dead Poets Society"](#) helps students through difficult

recruiting strategy to me, but some dismissed the data as 'out of date' because the top execs had graduated in the '50's. Apparently not, given the *Wall Street Journal's* recent data, and I'm not surprised. The *WSJ* article hints at some of the reasons:

"Bill Green, CEO of Accenture, never planned to go to college because he didn't think he had the ability to pursue more education. He changed his mind when he visited friends at Dean College, a two-year community school near Boston. 'Walking around campus, listening to my friends talk, I realized they were being exposed to a big world -- and I had a chance to take another shot at learning,' he says.

At Dean, he got help from faculty members who devoted themselves to their students, not "doing research and writing books like professors at four- year schools," he says. Rather than post student- meeting times on their office doors, they posted their class schedules. 'All the other time, they were available to any student who needed help,' says Mr. Green, who worked part-time to pay for part of his tuition."

Mr. Green's experience fits with [Millionaire Mind](#) author Thomas J. Stanley's findings that many millionaires are outside the high-academic-achievement mold. They're mavericks who follow their own judgment and often do middling to poorly at school, like John D. Rockefeller. Perhaps that's because most schools expect students to feed back what the teacher says and provide no opportunities to do real work?

Other research had surprising findings in regard to the undergraduate colleges of top scientists. Loren Pope in [Looking Beyond the Ivy League](#), cites the Carrier/Davis-VanAtta study done in the '80's which showed that "fifty small colleges outdo twenty top-rated research universities—most of them big—in producing scientists," with small liberal arts colleges being six of the ten institutions producing the most top-ranked scientists. Further, "top universities didn't even produce many of their own faculty. Only 18 percent were undergraduates of one of the top twenty. But 30 percent of them had gone to one of the fifty [small liberal arts] colleges." These results are even more amazing when you consider

material with contagious excitement and the ability to make it dramatically interesting and well-related to their deepest needs and values. Long time Montessori teacher Pat Schaefer summed it up: "First: we must inspire, not just inform. Second: It is in relationship that the secret of [human learning] power is released."

Teachers and Great Questions

On the precipice of full adult life, the college student needs answers to the great questions: 'Why am I here?' 'How should I live?' 'How should I deal with other people,' 'What should I do with my life?' If the student is not already asking these of himself, it is his teachers' job to show him how to ask them and how to find good answers.

Knowing how to pose the right questions can lead to such awakening, with unforeseen, amazing consequences. Forestry Consultant Charles Tomlinson often regaled friends and family with stories of his experience at [The University of the South at Sewanee](#) with 'Abbo.' Charles claimed himself a rather complacent product of a middle class Southern family when he encountered "Abbo," English Professor Abbott Cotton Martin. Abbo spent considerable hours poking holes in everything Charles took for granted, from football to religion, with some English literature thrown in for good measure. This was Abbo's stock-in-trade.

Abbo taught Charles to thoroughly question and examine what he thought he knew, as well as his beliefs, while making himself available to talk all during the week, not just at Sunday office hours. Charles learned to 'check his

small liberal arts colleges range from 500 to 1500 students in population, while major universities' undergraduate colleges run from 5000 to 20,000 students.

Bottom Line: Question conventional wisdom that top school attendance is tied to success in business or science, but *not* any college will do; those where teaching is king make a difference.

[Read the Wall Street Journal editorial](#)

• [Marsha Familiaro Enright's Montessori School Selected as One of Top in Chicago](#)



The October, 2006 issue of *Chicago Magazine* lists the Montessori school founded by Reason, Individualism, Freedom Institute Team

Leader Marsha Familiaro Enright, as one of the top 25 elementary schools in the city. The school provides a classic Montessori program for children ages 3 to 14. Marsha also has a forthcoming article in the November 2006 of [Montessori Leadership](#) on Ayn Rand's influence in the Montessori movement.

[Read More](#)

• ["First We Must Inspire, Not Just Inform" continued from left](#)

percentile to the 85th by the end of four months. While more work is needed to fully validate his results, they were consistent from school to school. Any teacher would be proud to so deeply help students learn to think well.

Teachers at the New College

premises' through Abbo's prodding as well as reading Ayn Rand, as well as the help of other wonderful teachers at Sewanee. They inspired him to demand more of himself, leading to a long, creatively productive, exciting life, which included deeply influencing [Jaroslav Romanchuk](#), a major figure in the opposition to Belarus' authoritarian government.

The Habit of Thought

Questions and questioning of a special type are central to great education. The evidence that the methods of Socratic Practice, consistently applied, increase cognitive skills is clear. [Michael Strong](#), extensively discusses these methods in [The Habit of Thought: From Socratic Seminars to Socratic Practice](#).

Mr. Strong established remarkable programs in four high schools around the country. He measured program outcomes with the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal, a cognitive skills test correlated with performance on intelligence tests and college entrance exams such as the SAT and ACT. Administering this instrument before, during and after a year at school, he found cognitive skill gains ranging, for example, from 30% to 84%. The mean of one school's 9th grade group moved from below the national 9th grade mean to above the 12th grade mean in one year, while an inner city student moved from the 1st

Continued in right column

[Quick Links...](#)

highly educated individuals, willing to consistently engage in discussions of the great questions inside and outside their domains of expertise, through the methods of Socratic Seminars. An excellent seminar leader asks intriguing, deep questions respectfully, keeps discussion on important topics but lets students diverge from the set topic if it means exploring something important and meaningful to them. Clearly, much art and judgment is involved, which is why extensive training is necessary.

The College training program will challenge the prospective teacher to develop his or her best attributes: commitment to clearly knowing what he or she knows and doesn't know (the first step on the path of objectivity); passion for learning new material and integrating it with other knowledge; commitment to modeling the highest virtues of the free person, including honesty, responsibility and respect for the rights of others; commitment to the restless pursuit of personal improvement and growth; willingness to submit to careful investigation and evaluation in order to improve. Through embodying these virtues, the teachers will inspire students to the highest ends of the free man and woman.

As Scott Buchanan, architect of the Great Books program at St. John's College said: "Have you allowed adverse evidence to pile up and force you to conclude that you are not mathematical, not linguistic, not poetic, not scientific, not philosophical? If you have allowed this to happen, you have arbitrarily imposed limits on your intellectual freedom, and you have smothered the fires from which all other freedoms arise."

Next month we will discuss how teachers teach best by listening.

To be continued next month.

- [Our Website](#)
- [Mission](#)
- [Executive Summary](#)
- [More About Us](#)

Marsha Familiaro Enright
marsha.enright@collegeunitedstates.org
<http://www.collegeunitedstates.org>

9400 S. Damen Avenue Chicago, IL
60620 Phone: 773-677-6418