

1999-1 Text 3

1- An invisible border divides those arguing for computers in the classroom on the behalf of students' career prospects and those arguing for computers in the classroom for broader reasons of radical educational reform.

Very few writers on the subject have explored this distinction - indeed, contradiction - which goes to the heart of what is wrong with the campaign to put computers in the classroom.

2- An education that aims at getting a student a certain kind of job is a *technical* education, justified for reasons radically different from why education is universally required by law.

It is not simply to raise everyone's job prospects that all children are legally required to attend school into their teens.

Rather, we have a certain conception of the American citizen, a character who is incomplete if he cannot competently assess how his livelihood and happiness are affected by things outside of himself.

But this was not always the case; before it was legally required for all children to attend school until a certain age, it was widely accepted that some were just not equipped by nature to pursue this kind of education.

With optimism characteristic of all industrialized countries, we came to accept that everyone is fit to be educated.

Computer-education advocates forsake this optimistic notion for a pessimism that betrays their otherwise cheery outlook.

Banking on the confusion between educational and vocational reasons for bringing computers into schools, computered advocates often emphasize the job prospects of graduates over their educational achievement.

3- There are some good arguments for a technical education given the right kind of student.

Many European schools introduce the concept of professional training early on in order to make sure children are properly equipped for the professions they want to join.

It is, however, presumptuous to insist that there will only be so many jobs for so many scientists, so many businessmen, so many accountants.

Besides, this is unlikely to produce the needed number of every kind of professional in a country as large as ours and where the economy is spread over so many states and involves so many international corporations.

4- But, for a small group of students, professional training might be the way to go since well-developed skills, all other factors being equal, can be the difference between having a job and not.

Of course, the basics of using any computer these days are very simple.

It does not take a lifelong acquaintance to pick up various software programs.

If one wanted to become a computer engineer, that is, of course, an entirely different story.

Basic computer skills take - at the very longest - a couple of months to learn.

In any case, basic computer skills are only complementary to the host of real skills that are necessary to becoming any kind of professional.

It should be observed, of course, that no school, vocational or not, is helped by a confusion over its purpose.

19. The author thinks the present rush to put computers in the classroom is _____.

[A] far-reaching

[B] dubiously oriented

[C] self-contradictory

[D] radically reformatory

20. The belief that education is indispensable to all children _____.

[A] is indicative of a pessimism in disguise

[B] came into being along with the arrival of computers

[C] is deeply rooted in the minds of computered advocates

[D] originated from the optimistic attitude of industrialized countries

21. It could be inferred from the passage that in the author's country the European model of professional training is _____.

[A] dependent upon the starting age of candidates

[B] worth trying in various social sections

[C] of little practical value

[D] attractive to every kind of professional

22. According to the author, basic computer skills should be _____.

[A] included as an auxiliary course in school

[B] highlighted in acquisition of professional qualifications

[C] mastered through a life-long course

[D] equally emphasized by any school, vocational or otherwise