



Ed Leaf

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THE GIVING TREE
Educational Consultants



Spring 2009

A New Direction in Education

By Bridgett Scarborough, M. Ed.

Austin Polytechnical Academy is Chicago's first high school dedicated to educating the next generation of leaders in high-tech manufacturing. The school is located in the far West Side community of Austin.

Austin is an African-American community, one hardest hit by globalization and the deindustrialization of the city. This once stable working-class community now breeds poverty due to the closing of manufacturing companies over the last 25 years. Major job losses have left 30% of the population living below the poverty line.

Austin Polytech, which opened its doors in Fall of 2007, has a rich curriculum including a nationally-recognized, four-year pre-engineering course called Project Lead the Way. The school prepares students in the Austin community for college and/or a career in modern hi-tech manufacturing. In addition to standard English, Math and Social studies classes, students build leadership and teamwork skills through

required sports activities. Business management and ownership skills are also woven throughout the curriculum.

Upon graduation students will have earned at least two industry-recognized credentials from the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS). Students will be prepared for an entry-level position in a manufacturing company making \$15-\$20 an hour, a significantly higher-wages than what big-box retailers offer. Austin Polytech also offers an after-school program that teaches students how to start a manufacturing company. Forty-six companies have partnered with the school to provide general support, work exposure, internships, summer jobs and full-time employment upon graduation.

O.K. now let's take a look at the bigger picture. Austin Polytech is just one step in a 20-year strategic plan outlined by the Center for Labor and Community Research (CLCR). In this global economy Illinois will continue to lose low-skilled jobs to developing countries such as China, Mexico and India. Due to the Baby Boom era dying off or retiring, manufacturing companies stand to lose 40% of their work force over the next 10 years. Some manufacturing companies are large firms that have the ability to move around the world and recruit replacement workers. However, 85% of the Illinois manufacturing companies are small, privately held companies with



Ingrid Goncalves

limited resources. These companies will go belly up if they do not have a sufficient pool of skilled workers to pull from.

So who are the players? Dan Swinney, truly a renaissance man, has been a key figure in this proactive endeavor to solve some of Chicago's economic woes. Dan Swinney, is the Executive Director of CLCR. Swinney, Glen Johnson of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association, and Commissioner David Hanson of the Chicago's Mayor's Office of Workforce Development spearheaded the Chicago Manufacturing Renaissance Council (CMRC). The Chicago Manufacturing Renaissance Council is a partnership of companies, manufacturing associations, labor, government, educators and community-based organizations working to make Chicago the global leader in high-performance manufacturing. The Executive Committee includes our very own Arne Duncan, CEO of Chicago Public Schools. One of CMRC's first accomplishments was the approval from the Chicago Board of Education to open Austin Polytechnical Academy.

In the Next Issue:

Government Throws a Bone for Teachers' Student Loans

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teachers
Habit Two: Begin with the End in Mind



Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teachers Series

Habit One: Be Proactive

By Bridgett Scarborough, M. Ed.

When I asked Swinney why, in recent years, he thought this type of vocational education has diminished in high schools he stated, “Some people perceive vocational education, rightly and wrongly, as tracking, particularly in minority communities. You know, a lot of times vocational institutions were used to put minority populations in menial jobs. So people reacted against that and said you know we have a right to go to college like everybody else.”

Through a series of open houses and community forums, Swinney and his team began to educate the community on the benefits of the school, ease the concern that the children will not be prepared for college and discredit urban myths such as ‘manufacturing is dead’. “The reality is that we have 6,000 manufacturing companies in Chicago alone and they employ a quarter of a million people. The average wage is \$64,000 a year including benefits. Most of the menial jobs have gone overseas and the remaining companies make complex products that require high-level performance skills, including critical thinking,” says Swinney. So schools like Austin Polytechnical Academy address three main problems: (1) the shortage of skilled manufacturing workers in our economy (2) the need for better educational options for students, and (3) community economic development.

To find out more about Austin Polytechnic Academy and other related projects visit the following websites:
www.austinpolytech.com
www.chicagomanufacturing.org
www.clcr.org

Want to be proactive and start your own school? Review the process:
www.ren2010.cps.k12.il.us/

Have opinion about this article and want to share? Email me at:
bscarborough@givingtreechicago.org

To be a proactive teacher is to be in control of yourself and your classroom. The proactive teacher works out of a set of core values and spirit that are not easily broken.

Too often teachers feel as though they are ‘fighting a losing battle’ or they become easily overwhelmed. This is probably the result of a reactionary attitude and disposition. When reading the book “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People” by Stephen R. Covey, I began to explore specific ways principles discussed in the book are applicable to teachers. The first principle is “Be Proactive.”

There are three main points to illustrate on the subject of being proactive. You must make or break habits, develop a circle of influence and take responsibility for your teaching.

Making or Breaking Habits

There is a philosophical proposition called determinism. Determinism states that your attitudes, morals and behavior are a product of your circumstances. There are three categories of deterministic thinking; genetic, psychic and environmental.

Genetic determinism suggests that you are who you are because it’s in your genes; your grandparents were that way. Psychic determinism suggests that your personality is a result of up-bringing; your parents raised you that way. Environmental determinism suggests that someone or something in your physical or social environment is the cause of your situation; this may include principals, co-teachers or students.

One thing that separates human beings from animals is that we have the ability to step out side of ourselves, our training and look at our own behavior. Metecognition is the act of thinking about our thinking. Human beings can write their own programs, we can make or break habits.

The proactive teacher can analyze her own behavior before, during and after her sessions in the classroom. The proactive teacher can ask herself the following questions: “What went wrong today? Do I need to take a different approach? Do I need to adjust my temperament? After this reflection period the teacher can go back into the classroom and handle a certain situation differently.

You must use an inside-out approach to teaching because you cannot change or influence a student until you master changing yourself. Much of your effectiveness as a teacher depends on your ability to influence your own behavior.

Develop a Circle of Influence

Teaching is very rewarding at the end of the year when you see how much you students have achieved. However, the year-long process of scaffolding can prove stressful.

Proactive teachers must develop both a circle of influence and a circle of concern. Your circle of influence consists of the things that you can control. Your circle of concern consists of the things you are concerned about but are not able to control. Most, if not all, of your daily energy needs to be dedicated to expanding your circle of influence and



reducing your circle of concern. For example, you cannot change the way your students are being raised at home, however, you do have some influential power. You can send newsletters home with parenting advice, you can give your students different perspectives when in the classroom, or you may conduct parenting workshops. Your measure of effectiveness should be measured by your appropriate response to a given situation.

Take Responsibility

Responsibility simply means responsible. You have the ability to respond to your circumstances. Proactive teachers do not blame their difficulties in the classroom on circumstances; lack of resources, a non-supportive principal, or a highly special needs classroom. Instead the proactive teacher finds power in the ability to respond to a problematic situation with wisdom, resourcefulness, knowledge of their circle of influence and set of core values.

Proactive people are driven by values. When a person decides to start a not-for-profit organization they determine a mission and core set of values. The mission is what they are trying to achieve and the core values are a set of principles that guide their decisions. Successful schools have a value-based system and so should the classroom teacher.

The proactive teacher does not make comments such as “my students _____ therefore I have to ____.” Instead, the proactive teacher may say “my students _____ therefore I am taking the following approach, _____.” Between every stimulus and response there is the freedom to choose. A teacher’s decision to respond to a given circumstance should be well thought out and value-based, not emotional and reactionary. If one of your values is, children need to be respected, then whether or not you feel

that your students are respecting you, you will continue to treat them with respect. You will need to sit down and think about how you can approach a particular behavior problem with a student and still treat that student with ‘respect.’

Regardless of whether or not you agree with the No Child Left Behind Accountability Act, the truth is that there needs to be personal accountability. Successfully holding yourself accountable to your values as an educator gives you a sense of personal achievement. Personal achievement helps boost your confidence when relating to others, particularly your students.

Proactive Exercises

For the next thirty days try one or more of the following exercises:

- (1) Decide what your values are as an educator. Write down at least three. Begin to make decisions using your value-system as a guide.
- (2) Change your language from reactive to proactive. Own your thoughts, behavior and choices. Eliminate phrases like ‘I can’t’ or ‘I have to.’ Substitute them with phrases like ‘I will’, ‘I choose not to’, ‘Here’s what I can do.’
- (3) Make one small commitment to yourself and keep it. Choose a habit you have been attempting to break for a long time but have made numerous excuses as to why you have not done it. Make the commitment to yourself priority over anyone else’s problems, influence, and/or opinions.
- (4) Select a problem you are having in the classroom or school environment and determine whether it is a direct, indirect or no control problem. Take one step in your circle of influence.

It may be helpful to keep a journal during this time. Jot down how well you did with your objectives each day.

The Giving Tree is interested in your reaction to this article and how effective the exercises were. Please e-mail me your feedback at bscarborough@givingtreechicago.org. In our Fall-09 issue we will explore habit two: Begin with the End in Mind.

Teacher Resource List

Websites:

The Giving Tree Educational Consultants
www.givetreechicago.org

Renaissance 2010 Official Site
www.ren2010.cps.k12.il.us

Books:

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
By Stephen R. Covey

Credits

Special thanks to the following talented creatives:

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"We reach out"

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Executive Director's Bio

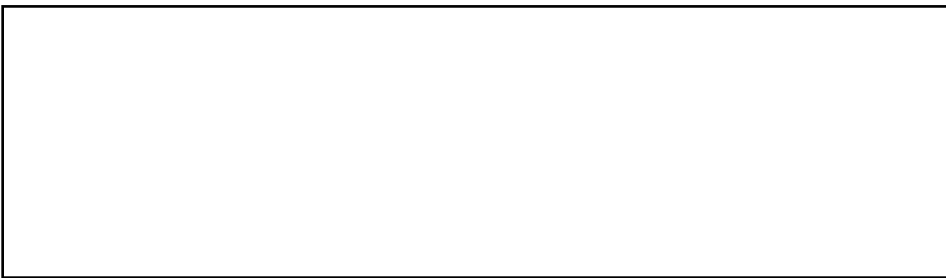
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Introducing a woman who has truly taken Shell Silverstein's book "The Giving Tree" and made it her own. She is the Director and co-founder of The Giving Tree Educational Consultants. The Giving Tree is dedicated to providing administrators, teachers and students with the continued resources they need to grow in their profession.

Bridgett Scarborough earned her Master's Degree in Education from DePaul University in Chicago. This creative thinker has worked in early childhood education for 13 years in the capacities of Lead Teacher, Center Director, Educational Consultant and Philanthropist. This educator has also been active in creating and implementing character education programming for students of all ages. She worked with

the Chicago Urban League developing curriculum for the 2nd and 3rd graders of the former "Boys Leadership" program.

Throughout her life, she has always been very active in planning events that inform and educate the public. Bridgett has currently dedicated her life to developing The Giving Tree and continuing to make a personal contribution to the world of education.



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