

The End of School: How a Fundamental Change in the Way We Teach Could Save the World, and How the Internet is Already Making it Happen

Matthew Cooper

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The purpose of this book is to present a vision of how education might be, instead of how we think it has to be. It is written for the millions of people, students, parents, and teachers, who are frustrated and discouraged by the modern system of education, but who never knew what could be done about it. It is offered as a conceptual roadmap out of the labyrinth of well intentioned but misguided restrictions and limitations that have been imposed on the learning process. It describes a simple alternative that can be implemented gradually and democratically anywhere in the world, a new approach to the fundamental question of how to organize the entire structure of public education. It is based on the inner drive and natural genius of the *individual*, released at last from the wasteful regimentation of the group-based methods of teaching which dominate the schools of the world today.

It is not meant to be critical of the current school system merely for the sake of being critical, and it certainly isn't written in a spirit of hostility toward the schools we have now or the people who run them. Rather, it is intended to offer a simple, practical, and politically feasible solution to the growing frustration of teachers and students alike, who are locked into the outmoded and rigid structure of public education on which our schools are based. It is the system, not the people, which is the problem.

The solution to virtually every problem that the world faces in this pivotal age, this epochal turning point in the collective history of humanity, will depend more and more on the rational and informed cooperation of hundreds of millions of individuals. Our generation has seen a more rapid and wide-ranging spread of democracy than any generation in the past. The absolutely essential cornerstone of that democracy is education, and the essence of education, in turn, is the empowerment of the individual. And yet, individualism without responsibility is anarchy. The challenge of modern education is to bring these two elements together in a new structure that returns the freedom of choice and responsibility back to the individual. The way forward lies in taking advantage of the most modern developments in information technology joined with the best features of education as it once was, when it was still in the hands of individuals. This book shows how we can build a new system of education that marries the best of the past with the brightest promise of the future.

Above all, this proposal for a completely new model for public education is designed to . It is not based on any political agenda or social philosophy. It is not a Conservative idea, a Liberal idea, a Democratic idea, or a Republican idea. In fact, one of its main goals is to remove politics from education completely. It is meant to serve everyone equally, regardless of economic condition or cultural background. It has been carefully thought out to provide rational and practical solutions to most of the problems of the current system of education. It is based on the best principals of democracy and individualism, which in turn are based on the combination of *personal liberty* and *responsibility*, which are the cornerstones of modern civilization. Common sense and honesty are the only things one really needs in order to evaluate this proposal. This book is an invitation to the public to consider a revolutionary idea, and yet to consider it with an open mind, with the best interests of everyone in mind.

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