

Alternative education and school programs at risk of failure

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Institution: Alternative Education and School Programs at Risk of Failure

Overview Primarily, Zhao's book, *Catching up or Leading the Way: American Education in the Age of Globalization*, talks about the education system in America and shows its relation to that in China. The reason why Zhao highlights the education system in China is that America is trying to emulate it. Zhao discusses the foremost challenges facing the Chinese education system with intent of discouraging America from doing the same. The Chinese education system seems a model of excellence, an object of admiration, one that molds students to become competent in their respective fields. However, Zhao maintains that this system is contrary to these views.

Zhao identifies the key elements of the American education system as well as their possible effect on education leaders and students. He concludes that there is considerable cynicism about the integrity and quality of the alternative school and program for students. This calls for increased authenticity and credibility in education management (Zhao, 2009). In this regard, Zhao identifies, describes, and discusses the various challenges facing alternative education systems. The challenges highlighted are mainly directed to daily work of school leaders. Ultimately, Zhao hopes that these challenges will be acknowledged widely, and he prompts policymakers to reconsider standards of wisdom, accountability, and equate the quality of education to the performance of students.

Purpose Yong Zhao uses a number of points to bring the purpose of his book to the fore. The book 'Catching Up or Leading the Way' leads the reader to believe that the US is neither leading the way nor catching up to leading countries in the education system. Indeed, America is not catching up since it is doing fairly well in the education sector and has features that suggest it does not need to catch (Sowell, 2010). Nevertheless, America is not the leader in this sector since other countries are doing better with their education systems. Consequently, the United States education system needs to undergo necessary reform to address its respective problems. Another purpose of Zhao's book is to point out the current trend the US education system is taking. According to Zhao, the United States has been trying to implement an education system that China is working to eradicate.

The federal government and a number of states are dictating what learners are supposed to learn, and measure their learning through curriculum standards measured by the state. These features call for more standardized and centralization through national testing and standards (Zhao, 2009).

Additionally, Zhao states that schools or teachers need to be rewarded based on how students perform. Ultimately, Zhao directs this book to authorities managing the American education system.

This book can also be useful to nations with education systems struggling to achieve their objectives. New Learning Concisely, Zhao's book is an information resource that I found useful. Upon reading it, I learnt a number of points regarding the aspect of education and its influence on human resource.

Among them, I was also able to learn that the current state of the American education system is in jeopardy and risks failure if certain amends are not. Primarily, its objectives are not centered on developing a generation breed that exhibits distinct and unique skills and talents (Sowell, 2010). In this regard, education in the United States should be inclined on helping children realize their potential rather than developing them into working beings. Additionally, I was able to learn that adopting such standards will develop a homogenous generation with similar knowledge, skills, and abilities. Ultimately, this will foster a disastrous America and its citizens because as technology and globalization continue to change worldwide, America needs creative people with a vast range of skills to sustain tradition and innovation.

Americans need abilities and talents that cannot be easily found elsewhere. Despite its problems, American education at least has basics that support the development of a wide range of talents. Regardless, these basics are being discarded by various applied measures such as the No Child Left Behind policy. I was also able to learn that centralization and standardization of assessment and curriculum are essential solutions to the US education system. All schools in the nation or a state are looking to uphold the same curriculum, and the same tests are used to assess students, it is not possible to compare the extent to which students are taught, or to differentiate exemplary teachers and schools from poor ones.

For this reason, the US education reforms should have standards as their most enthusiastically embraced concepts (Zhao, 2009). This new learning has proven relevant to me as a master teacher. I now understand that the

world is going through significant development in terms of globalization and technology. Hence, being a master teacher requires me to develop competitive and relevant skills and talents within my students. As the world continues to evolve, we are not sure what talent or skill will be useful or obsolete in the future.

However, teaching students with school of thought will not be possible because policies and rules in the US education system will be dictating how I perform my duties. For instance, policies such as the no child left behind are centered on developing children with similar skills, knowledge, and talents (Sowell, 2010). However, continuing teaching using standardized tests focused on limited skills will only lead to failure and economic problems for the American nation. Concisely, this issue raises a number of questions. Other countries such as China are striving to become innovative societies. Various ways include scrapping their education system and replacing it with another. One question, therefore, is why does the United States want to employ a system other countries are eager to let go. Secondly, why would American citizens, who are people known for their influence on social matters, allow their government to dictate how their children should be evaluated and taught? Thirdly, with the negative implications associated with this particular education system, why does the US government feel inclined to uphold it rather than reform it? Content Framework Technology and globalization are going through dramatic change; reforms regarding the education system have raised concern particularly in the United States.

Yong Zhao's book regarding this issue has addressed matters regarding the state of American education. In particular, Zhao talks about alternative schools and their ability to emphasize skills and knowledge that students require in order to be competitive in a global society. The current state of education in America and other nations is at the risk of failure (Katz, 2007). Its objectives are not based on best interests of students. According to Zhao, education should be inclined on helping children realize their potential rather than developing them into working beings. The content of Zhao's book manages to fit into the aspect of school reform. In this book, Zhao highlights the key challenges revolving around the US education system.

From his research, the reader can understand that technology and globalization are two factors that will always be under continuous change. Hence, skills and talents that are relevant today will be obsolete in the future. Nevertheless, the US education system does not function to develop students with competent skills and talents necessary to tackle future challenges. Instead, it is inclined on developing students with similar skills and talents. With this in mind, this system only spells failure in the future. Ultimately, this warrants reform on this system into one that will have the best interests of students keeping the future in mind. I feel that Zhao creates a credible case for reforming or reducing the inclination on standardized tests.

He also provides sufficient evidence to acknowledge the essence of diverse education centered on beneficial concepts and skills. For example, Zhao states that what we need is currently and in the years to come is diverse

talents instead of individuals with similar competency. Because we lack the knowledge and skills needed in the future, we should then accept the fact that all individuals and talents are worthwhile (Zhao, 2009). Conclusion In conclusion, as a qualified teacher, I have a similar view to that of Yong Zhao for the re-evaluation of the US education system. It is crucial to shift emphasis from standardized testing towards the development of knowledge and skills. This decision will ensure professional survival for these individuals in global civilization.

However, while Zhao presents an informed examination of education systems, particularly in China, he fails to address the current and historical inequalities that have limited the United States education system.

Highlighting these inequalities would have added more credibility to his argument. References Coleman, J. S. (2007). Redesigning American education. Boulder, Colo: Westview Press.

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