



Windsor, Ma 01270

November, 30, 2010

Mr. Jim Murphy
EPA Community Involvement Coordinator
c/o Weston Solutions
10 Lyman St.
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Dear Mr. Murphy:

We attended the very interesting presentation that you made at the IUE Union Hall in Pittsfield a few weeks ago, concerning the PCB cleanup of the Housatonic River. We also have viewed again the DVD video that you sent to us, *The Housatonic: The Fate of a River*. Considering that the various wildlife are faring quite well with the current concentrations at 15 ppm in the ground, and even less in the flowing water, we are quite convinced that it is best now to have no further procedures, but to leave it to nature's own cures for 10 years or so, then to do a new evaluation – very much as you suggest. Continued excavation of additional lengths of the river, as some writers to the Eagle are insisting, would be like killing someone to eradicate every last vestige of a past illness.

It is most unfortunate that we were not more careful in past years about what could result from loose disposal of PCB waste. It seems that we all felt intuitively that our natural environment was so vast that it would easily assimilate everything that we could discharge into its midst. We are paying dearly for this great mistake, in various ways.

Now, in Climate Change, we are suffering the effects of other vast environmental abuse. We are unable to suddenly alleviate these effects, but to work toward reducing the ongoing abuse to whatever extent we can. Unfortunately we cannot abruptly discontinue the ongoing activities that further aggravate Climate Change (but for one major exception). We cannot *stop* driving our cars to do necessary travels and such, but only minimize as much possible while restructuring our infrastructure to further reduce CO² generation.

The one exception among our major activities that we could discontinue, without loss of essential product, is WAR. It produces nothing of value, but only death and destruction. Again and again, down thru the ages, we have striven to overcome our warring tendencies and establish lasting peace. Now, with Global Warming added so precipitously to the equation, perhaps we can find new resolve. Please see my enclosures, pointing out preliminary steps to these ends, which in themselves also constitute useful economic advancement and the betterment of everyday living.

Enclosures:

A Strategy for Making a Better World
Language and Social Evolution
Enhance Education via Metric Measures
Learning to Read, with Joy
The Cultural Value Of Esperanto

Yours truly,

Allan C. Boschen
Allan C. Boschen,
Engineer & Teacher, Retired.

Retired?

Ardis Nardone

Ardis Nardone, Concerned Citizen.



Language and Social Evolution

Allan C. Boschen

Dr. Albert Einstein, in the aftermath of WW II, thinking about his part in opening the way for the invention of the A-bomb, did an extended anti-war lecture series. His most essential basic message was that the root of our greatest problem(s) lay in the fact that the evolution of our social institutions has not kept pace with technological evolution.

The latter had produced ever more complex and sophisticated devices, for every imaginable application for bettering the pleasures of life – and for making war. And here at last is this ultimate weapon with the capacity to wipe us all out, friend and erstwhile enemy alike.

Why had our systems of law not evolved in step? They had produced peacefully organized society at local and national levels, and even international federations and other empires. Why not also for the whole world?

We had produced the League of Nations in our efforts to avert war, but it was not enough. So we moved on to the UN, a further step in sophistication toward the desired goal but still not enough. For in the very midst of its development sprang the Cold War, ever threatening to turn hot and wipe us all out.



Now we have lucked out of the Cold War, avoiding the wanton destruction normally associated with war – but for the monstrous wastes of vast missile systems, and associated

military armies and supplies, built up for no good purpose! Unable so far to take that final step in making the UN effective toward its ultimate goal, perhaps we could look at lower levels with Einstein's theme.

Here, communication is the first step, and is fundamental, in everything that we do. You can cite all the wondrous devices, radio, TV, computers, the internet, asking what more can we do. Still, the UN is burdened by translation services that eat up 10% of its operating budget. Worse still, this mode of operation leaves it open to serious misunderstandings, while also slowing down operations when time may be critical. The Language Barrier, hard at work! However marvelous may be the so-called simultaneous translation, it still is a poor second to direct communication in a language which is mutually well understood by all concerned.

Einstein's theme comes in quite strong, here! The solution is quite simple -- a *universal second language* (USL), as postulated some 400 years ago by the great philosophers Descartes and Leibnitz.



This idea has been acted upon by many intellectual giants in many countries down thru the years, thus to develop an ideal working model, along with all the necessary material peripherals. That model is Esperanto, with its world-wide community of adherents and the extensive and elegant literature that this community, in turn, has developed.

Pertinent to this, John McWhorter, Professor of Linguistics at Manhattan Institute, was heard to remark on TV that language had changed dramatically, in a continuous state of flux, throughout the centuries of antiquity. Then he wondered why this evolution went into a freeze in recent

centuries. After having made this profound statement, it is surprising that, at the end of an extended and interesting commentary about Esperanto, he could dogmatically declare that, Esperanto will not be the universal language, for English is, words to that effect. Would the acceptance of Esperanto, in its intended role, not constitute another logical step in his evolution of language? And in the dire need for evolution of social institutions as postulated by Einstein?



If admitted as a choice among the foreign languages offered in our schools, Esperanto, would provide (besides its direct benefit to international communication) an incisive demonstration of the merits of spelling reform, primarily to simplify every child's mastery of learning to read, but also with many peripheral benefits to society at large, including simplification of the learning of English for other peoples. The political environment now existing in favor of such basic change might even be sufficient that the demonstration of merit which Esperanto alone can produce so effectively, can be sufficient to overwhelm the ingrained inertia that stunted the efforts of President Theodore Roosevelt.

These steps, in increasing efficiency, would redound with new attention to the merits of our conversion to Metric measures, to simplify the learning of math and science and, again, with extensive benefits in the efficiency of everyday life and more.

These three major steps in efficiency each would also be an outreach to the rest of the world, another aspect of the comprehensive change that President Obama is calling for.

Allan Boschen, a retired engineer and teacher, is an occasional Eagle contributor.

Enhance Education via Metric Measures

by Allan C. Boschen.

Let us *consider*, what metrics can do for the enhancement of education. Education Reform has its primary stress at this time upon testing (MCAS itself an example of [and a tool for] making measurements -- a curious twist in this consideration). We may ask whether adequate attention is directed toward the bases of instruction, *in advance of the testing*.

Noting the attention given to math and science in education since the time of Sputnik, we may ponder the paradox of our continued use of a primitive non-system of measurement¹, whereas making measurements is an essential part of all of applied math and science.

Sir Isaac Newton, Charles Steinmetz, and other scientists have stressed that when you can *measure* something, and *put a number* on it, then you KNOW something about it; but if you *cannot measure* it, then you have only a fuzzy and inaccurate idea about it.

From time to time we observe lively dispute over the relative merits of rote memorization vs. logical thinking. This is memorizing discrete facts and data (most of which are soon forgotten) vs. learning to apply what we know in terms of logical thinking. Here we have an excellent case for comparison in these terms: Our traditional system of measurement is a wide range of loosely interrelated units, with a hodge-podge of conversion factors between larger and smaller units and among the various measures, some of them only coarse approximations. Metric, on the other hand, has only 3 basic units; meter, gram, and liter, for length, weight, and volume respectively, each with the *same prefixes* for larger or smaller units, all representing coefficients in powers of 10.² Also, the relationships among these three basic units are exact, in Metric.

¹ Inch, ft, yd, rod, mile; tspfl, tblspfl, ounce (2 *different* ounces for wt and vol), cupful, pint, quart, gallon, peck, bushel, pound, hundredweight, ton, square inch [foot, yard, rod, mile, etc] acre, cubic inch [ft, yd, rod, mile, etc]

² Powers of 1000 are the more usual practice, exception taken for the cm, in the USA, for it's closeness to the inch.

A particular anomaly, here, is that American children must not only deal with this confusing conglomeration, but also must learn Metric, and with it an additional set of conversion factors -- for conversion between various metric units and the corresponding English units. Rare is the person who remembers all of these units and conversion factors, however. One tends to memorize those which he / she uses often, resorting to reference books for the others when now and then they are needed. In any event, this is a great amount of extra [and confusing] work, and it is distracting to (from) the learning process.

Studies have revealed critical learning periods (*imprinting*) for the young of various species of animals, and we have pondered whether we humans might have such. Though we see no evidence of *imprinting* itself in the early learning processes in children, still we do see strong evidence that success feeds upon success -- that success in the introductory levels of any subject area arouses deeper interest levels for further and deeper pursuit of ever higher levels of the subject materials (as intuitively we would expect). It is suggested here that this deeper interest arousal at the outset may sometimes be the difference between success and failure, providing the basis for the child to find his / her ongoing learning to be easy and fun, rather than boring and difficult.

Then might the introduction of measurements (in school) through a simple and logical system have a 'critical' effect in a child's learning process? Might this effect be carried on throughout the ongoing learning of math and science -- and through all of logical thinking development?

All of the above, of course is in addition to the merits of metric for all aspects of everyday life, most particularly international industry and trade.

Might a depth of such consideration on the merits of Metrics point the way for other applications of logical bases for the improvement of the education process? Consider the most basic component for all of formal education, learning to read. The gross irregularity of spelling is obvious to everybody, but again, in deference to Sir Isaac Newton, et al, let's *put a number onto it*: According to one account, there are 253 ways of spelling our 44 phonemes. Is there cause, then, to give serious consideration toward the resumption of the spelling reform that was begun under Teddy Roosevelt's presidency?

According to another account, a serious, in-depth spelling reform would reduce the space required for print by as much as 12%. One result would be to save many tons of newsprint, *every day*. Should this not also arouse conservationists to such a cause?

Yet a third logical base for such educational reform is Esperanto, on which I have written extensively, here and elsewhere. I have been an ardent advocate of Metrics and Spelling Reform since long before I ever heard of Esperanto. One critical difference is that the former both require federal legislation and much capital investment, while Esperanto needs none of that. It can be applied directly by any school at zero cost and with immediate dividends, on a broad scope!

1. It is a language that all students can *actually learn* (rather than merely be exposed to), because it is *so much easier* to learn.
2. It can be used all over the world, and it enables travelers to *mingle with the locals*.
3. It will provide an ITA (Initial Teaching Alphabet), if taught at preschool. (For introducing kids to reading.)
4. It is the ideal introduction to the foreign language field, paving the way to the study of other languages, for those interested in foreign language studies, but obviating the need for studying other languages, for those *NOT* interested.
5. It is an ideal model for the study of grammar.
6. It opens an ideal path for the study of the great works of other cultures, because it is the ideal language for translation, producing truest to the original translations & minimal 'foreign flavor'.
7. Its study is an excellent exercise in logical thinking.

The annual "Aŭtuna Renkontiĝo Esperanta" (Fall Gathering on Esperanto) on Columbus Day weekend (Oct. 9 thru 11, 2010) at the YMCA Lodge at Silver Bay on Lake George, will be an excellent opportunity for anybody who is curious about this, to just drop in and observe Esperanto in action. They may even enroll there in free lessons on this language, *just to imagine*, then, how profoundly it can aid Public Education. Or, to enroll in the program, write to:

normandfleury@esperanto.qc.ca

Allan Boschen, an occasional contributor, teaches Esperanto at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, and other schools.

THE CULTURAL VALUE OF ESPERANTO

by William Auld

It is a well known fact that by learning a second language one can gain entree to a second culture. This has always been a fundamental argument to justify language teaching in schools. By learning a foreign language one may have two cultures: one native and one foreign. The extent to which he actually acquires the foreign culture will depend how well he gets to know the language concerned, and how much time he spends among people whose native language it is.

It is sometimes thought that Esperanto lacks this dimension. To some people, the fact that Esperanto lacks a national or geographically localized basis suggests that no basis for an indigenous culture exists. If this were true, then communication by means of Esperanto would inevitably break down at all levels beyond the crudest and simplest expression achieved in pidgin English or in the few words of school-boy French that is all most of us remember from our classroom years. This is not what actually happens, as anyone may confirm for himself by attending an international conference where Esperanto is used. The truth is that by learning Esperanto, one will have access to two cultures, one national and one universal, and he will also gain access to a very large number of other national cultures. I shall deal with these points separately, beginning with the second, as its significance is perhaps easier to grasp.

The Esperantist has access to a wide range of translated literature drawn not only from the languages of major diffusion, but also from the smaller ethnic cultures. Esperanto has at least four advantages over other languages in this field. Firstly, translations into Esperanto are normally made by native speakers of the original language, while translations into national tongues are normally made from a foreign language into the translator's native tongue. Secondly, Esperanto is enormously flexible in syntax and therefore capable of closely imitating particular features of the original languages without distorting or compromising its own nature, while national languages tend to be syntactically inflexible. Thirdly, among Esperantists translation is *not* a despised art as it is among many national

cultures; thus it attracts major creative talents. Fourthly, being rich in rhyme, Esperanto is an unusually suitable medium for very faithful translation of poetry.

Of course, poor translations have been published in Esperanto, as in any other tongue, but the total of veritable successes is huge. An English Esperantist, for example, can acquire a knowledge of Hungarian, Bulgarian, Estonian, modern Icelandic, Chinese, Polish, Vietnamese, and still other literature that otherwise is not easily obtained. The world is his oyster. Nor is his cultural opportunity purely literary in nature; he can inform himself of other aspects of the most various national cultures straight from the horse's mouth naturally, by free, private correspondence untrammelled by linguistic restrictions. Use of Esperanto is not restricted geographically, as is use of an ethnic tongue.

Hence, even were there no indigenous Esperanto culture, there still would be a strong cultural justification for learning this language; and school teachers, who extol the undoubted cultural advantages obtained thru the study of an ethnic language -- so very difficult and time-consuming -- should ask themselves whether the case is not every bit as persuasive for a wider-based cultural ethos to be enjoyed through Esperanto, so relatively easy to acquire.

This brings us back to the other point, that an Esperantist has access to two cultures, largely separate but by no means mutually exclusive, whose roots are there within his own personality. I have called these national and universal. A national culture, by definition, consists largely of those things which identify the nation as different from other nations, and is associated with the nation's history, geography, political philosophy, and, of course, language. Sometimes this agglomeration of largely random factors which serve to distinguish ethnic groups from one another assumes such importance that it obscures the equally important fact that a very great part of every individual's personality and ambience consists of factors which are universal to the human race. These include such fundamental characteristics as hunger, love, anger, aspiration, moral sense, fear and sex. Upon these universal qualities the very notion of cultural universality is founded, and they form the basis of a universal culture, of which Esperanto is the natural and appropriate vehicle.

It is at least arguable that the universal characteristics found in the individual are "natural", while the national characteristics are "artificial", because, while the universal appear to be present in every human from birth, wherever and

into whatever social group he happens to be born, national characteristics have to be acquired -- through parents, peers, and, mainly, educationalists. A knowledge of national history is not inborn, but acquired. The subtlety and allusion, of which literary language is full, has to be learned through a long and arduous course of study -- and very many individuals never acquire it. One can not deny that national culture exists -- but it exists only because we say it does, and innumerable national cultures have disappeared because people ceased to care about them; a few have even been revived because people started to care about them again.

Similarly, a universal culture is possible only so long as people care about it, despite the fact that the bases for it exist naturally. It has been characteristic of Esperanto-speakers for four generations, now, that they have cared about the cultural bases underlying the very concept of an international language. Countless thousands of people all over the world have not been content to treat Esperanto as no more than a useful tool -- though a useful tool it is -- but have looked upon it as an expression of human brotherhood and the aspiration to live at peace with one's fellows. One may agree or disagree with them; but it is no accident that fanatical nationalists of the Hitler type have seen fit to persecute people only because they were Esperantists. Esperanto today has a history going back beyond the memory of even its oldest living speaker, that it possesses a literature which expresses ideals and hopes of a universal nature, and that it has inspired the kind of loyalty that men give only to the things which seem to them culturally valuable. There is a cultural basis underlying Esperanto, whether or not this fact is pleasing to this or that individual.

There need be no contradiction between a man's national culture and his universal culture. No one would seriously suggest that Esperanto might in any sense "replace" national languages. It was Zamenhof himself who said, "...the true patriotism is a part of the great worldwide love that builds, conserves, and enhances everything. The Esperanto ideal, which preaches love, and patriotism which also preaches love, can never be inimical to one another." To love what is ours does not imply hatred of that which is not ours but someone else's; to love our fellow men in another country, it is not necessary to hate our own.

Esperanto encourages worldwide understanding and friendship. It does not solve all our problems; nor does it make war impossible. But it does solve one pressing problem: the need for people all over the world to be able to communicate and understand one another. To really 'understand' a person, one must know something of his cultural background; Esperanto makes this more widely possible than does any other language.

A **STRATEGY** FOR MAKING A BETTER WORLD

The greatest need of this world is
a stronger, more effective UN!

For **RESULTS** on Global Warming; Environmental Conservation for Wildlife, Food, Water, & Energy; Sanitation; Health; & **Sanity** → → **PEACE** & no more war → for ALL these major concerns → a stronger, more democratic, more effective United Nations! To get away from the waste & devastation of war, and apply our resources for solutions! Let taxes pay for the works of government, NOT for war!

The very **best** first step in fortifying the UN is to enable it to function in ONE language, instead of SIX. *Esperanto* is ideal for this role, as is no other living language.

The *means* to these ends are thru applying *Esperanto* to provide a major enhancement to education! It can make our foreign language goals* realizable and far less costly, while aiding in other ways as well and pointing the way for *true reform* in education.

The idea that Americans are *lazy* and *inept* about learning languages ignores these critical factors:

1. Learning a foreign language is a major task.
2. The means for practice are rare for Americans.
3. Our need for foreign languages is small, compared to others', for we have one primary language, coast to coast; the same one is dominant in int'l affairs.
4. American students must ponder: "Which one?"

For most others, their best choice is obvious.

The glaring result of these 4 factors is that the great majority of Americans who study foreign

* All schools are encouraged to introduce a second language as early as feasible, even at preschool; and foreign language studies are required for graduation from high school.

languages do so only to meet school requirements, never becoming competent to use them in any depth. Their gain from these studies, then, resolves to no more than general educational enhancement.

Esperanto, 4-to-10 times less difficult to learn, but still a *complete* and *beautiful living* language, can serve educational enhancements at far lower cost, and being scientifically designed, can serve them far better as well, as detailed in *The Value of Esperanto to Education*. Thus students are more likely to learn it well, retain it far better, be more likely to find *use*¹ for it, and *to go on using it*.

This begs the question of why, then, has the utility of *Esperanto* not been clearly seen long ago, and applied more extensively? There is a bit of *chauvinism* here but primarily it is a matter of *apathy*, aggravated by *gross misconceptions* about this language which seem to prevail in the public mind.

There is a need to influence public policy on this, for awareness of this potential is yet to be acknowledged in the halls of power. Powerful countries are jealous of their status, even if only regional. Nor is opposition limited to *government* politicians; many in the administrative structures of foreign language teaching are also wary of *their* loss of power and prestige. Foreign language teachers worry too, aware that many students would take the *easy* language, leaving others insufficiently subscribed. Here, the prospect is of losing their jobs, ostensibly to a '*cheap, plastic, substitute*', as the word '*artificial*' tends to suggest. Some seize upon any suggestion of inadequacy or unreality, even imposing snobbish displeasure over the very idea. Some declare that language 'cannot be invented', even though *all* human languages are *at least partially* the product

¹ Besides educational enhancement, the most prominent immediate applications are int'l correspondence (pen pals, ham radio, internet, stamp collecting ...). Access to other cultures (including its own int'l culture) thru journals and books (including excellent translations of the great works of many countries), and most of all in tourism, to add a new dimension to travels abroad -- meeting people of all countries, and meeting them halfway on language.

of deliberate design. Some discourage any suggestion to explore, investigate, or even consider any evidence to the contrary. Politicians are eager to defer to the professionals, their supposed experts, not realizing that conflict of interest forestalls upgrading their expertise. In consequence, the misconceptions about possibilities in language design, and about its foremost product, *Esperanto*, have come to prevail in the public mind. Meanwhile, many foreign language teaching jobs are lost anyway due to the high costs of trying to meet all of the sought objectives with ethnic languages only.

To correct misconceptions and *demonstrate* that traditional values are *NOT* lost in *Esperanto*, a special course was developed. It was designed as an *Overview*, whereas people are not inclined to commit toward learning a language in depth just to verify its value. It presumes just sufficient depth to provide, at minimal cost in time and energy, a profound feeling for what *Esperanto* is like and what it's all about -- thus to *demonstrate* the basis for its *extraordinary* value to education. Hereupon, perhaps an effective advocacy can be developed, influential toward getting *Esperanto* into the core programs in the schools², or perhaps educators can be persuaded directly.

It is safe to assume that some of those who take *this* course will find this language interesting, exciting and enjoyable. So by design it leads into further studies, for those so inclined, via the video course, *Pasporto al la Tuta Mondo* -- 16 half-hour lessons, set to a typical TV Sitcom format. PTM is a very interesting & amusing course!

Teachers get PDP's for the larger course.

Allan C. Boschen.

² This course was taught in Elderhostel, at BCC, and 16 of its students signed a statement of advocacy! Previous to this another, a 3-credit course, was taught at BCC and some of its students drew up such a statement, which was signed by all, and was signed also by many other people of this area who had studied *Esperanto*.

Learning to Read, with Joy

Allan C. Boschen.

In January, Arlington, MA had an interesting program on TV about its problems in education. Its new superintendent, an industrial entrepreneur turned educator, slashed personnel as a first step, against financial difficulties. With his industrial background, we should now expect attention to in-process learning efficiencies – something akin to the Time & Motion Studies that produced such sweeping gains in manufacturing efficiency. This could justify the personnel reductions and could also expedite learning.

Learning to read is prominent here, not only as a major problem itself, but also underlying others. This lends itself well to such analysis, its root being the gross irregularity of spelling -- 253 ways of spelling 44 phonemes. It is so bad that we have lessons and drills on spelling all thru the 12 grades, and even into college.

In the 1950s, the "initial teaching alphabet" (ITA) was devised in response, in England. It was tried in many schools, there and in this country and was quite successful in speeding up the process at the front end. But the time that it had saved was lost back when converting to everyday spelling, so the ITA was abandoned. Now the only data on the ITA that remains is a book stating that it had failed, with data on tests to prove this failure.

♦

The ITA is a great idea, but it ought have been introduced before first grade, and with less complex characters. After learning that the ITA was abandoned, I wrote up another

approach, calling it "*Spelling Reform for Introducing Reading*". It has only one set of letters, the upper-case caps, but with C, Q, and X dropped out as redundancies, and with new letters for 'TH' and 'SH' -- 'T' and 'S' with the right-hand part of a lower-case 'h' tacked onto each. "Head-Start" people were approached with this, but they were not interested. For lack of time, it was set aside.

Then came the Education Reform of 1993, urging all schools to introduce a second language as early as feasible, even at pre-school. With Esperanto as that second language, at pre-school, the kids would learn to read automatically in the process of beginning to learn this language. Its alphabet, almost identical to the Latin, would serve excellently as an ITA. This supersedes both "*Spelling Reform for Introducing Reading*" and the original ITA. For it does not impose an extra process nor anything to 'un-learn', nor conversion to "everyday spelling". In this approach first graders learn to read in English in the traditional manner, but after having mastered the mechanics of reading as a separate process. This can make the difference between early-on success and failure for a great many kids.

Does this not reflect the "Change!" and "Efficiency!", so prominent in Barak Obama's election? -- And, at the very base of everything that we do in life? And of the economy itself?

After mastering the mechanics of reading, via Esperanto, learning to read in English will still require a major effort, for the kids will still have to sort out the 253 ways of spelling those 44 phonemes. Still, the initial start will be faster and will produce better reading skills in the end, yielding dividends in all of their further schooling.

Other educational gains will also result:

1. Many if not all of the kids will go further in Esperanto, perhaps as a club activity, fulfilling the second-language requirement.
2. Their reading skills in Esperanto will remain superior to reading in English, at first. Noting, then, how closely many of the words in Esperanto resemble words in English and how well they serve, in 'clean' spelling, it will be ever more apparent that spelling reform, as initiated by Teddy Roosevelt, should be resumed.
3. Esperanto, being grammar-coded, serves later as an excellent model for teaching about the grammar of English.
4. Correspondence with pen-pals in many countries lends a better sense of reality in social studies.
5. The study of Esperanto is an excellent exercise in logical thinking.
6. Pasporta Servo, a project of TEJO, (Esperanto Worldwide Youth) paves the way for travels abroad.
7. Teaching Esperanto in school will pave the way toward having a universal second language (USL) in practice, to simplify international communication. This will fortify and simplify diplomacy, commerce, travel and the operations of the UN, if not indeed *enabling* the continuance of these functions *in a healthy society*. It will also eliminate much of the waste of time, energy, and material substance entailed in the current multilingual operations.

♦

A preliminary step for all of this is to address some gross misconceptions that seem to prevail in the public mind. Here, at this juncture, let it be said simply that:

1. Esperanto is NOT a '*cheap, plastic, substitute*', as the word '*artificial*' tends to suggest, but is a real living language, quite appropriate to all lingual applications.
2. Its worldwide body of adherents use it on a regular basis and thereby have developed an elegant living culture.
3. Though artificially designed, Esperanto is as natural as any ethnic language, even more-so when considering how soon after beginning its study one can *feel natural* in using it.

◆
Governor of Indiana Mitch Daniels' State of the State address, in January 2010, was quite interesting in portraying a healthy economy in that state. It took a negative turn, however, as he went to problems in education and his promise of additional measures to elicit closer attention and greater effort, both by students and by teachers, as well as the community. Again, learning to read was cited prominently.

Chris Christie, in his inauguration as governor of New Jersey, in another TV program, made a similar promise of new attention to education problems. Among them, learning to read again was prominent.

Problems in education are largely the same across the country. The same primary response poses a two-fold competitive challenge to the students and the schools -- stringent standardized testing on the one hand, and charter schools on the other. Both of these, figuratively, are the lash of the whip.

The opposite would be to seek to capitalize upon the joy of learning, something we all are endowed with, from birth. A process that yields early and on-going feelings of success knows this joy and compounds it. Logical inconsistencies which bear no sense of necessity, beyond society's emotional ties to tradition, blunt that natural joy of learning. The extensive extra work entailed would seem fruitless and unnecessary, inducing a sense of frustration and boredom, instead of the joy. Overall, they impede and complicate the learning process.

◆
Can the ties to cultural tradition be so sacred as to sacrifice the natural joy of living for whole strata of the student population? And to impose a general lag in educational performance? Or can our sensitivities not be induced to 'get used to' such changes, for the larger and more enduring health of society?

Did we suffer a loss with the adoption of Arabic numerals in place of the Roman? Phonetic writing in place of hieroglyphics? * Is the outside world culturally handicapped by its standardized and mathematically efficient Metric System for Measurements? (Is this not *another* CHANGE that we in the USA should make, in this same spirit?)

◆
As Dr. Einstein proclaimed in his lecture series during the early stages of the Cold War: "The root of our greatest problems is the failure of our social institutions to evolve in step with our rapidly advancing technologies."

* Well, *maybe* "Yes!" on this one, but certainly "No!", if we could get back to its basic principle!

Allan Boschen, an occasional contributor, is a retired engineer and teacher, and now teaches Esperanto at MCLA.

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