Architects of the Future.

The Hot Seat sessions, in the "Tools For Thought" class, pointed out the great Tsunami of change that is sweeping the global landscape. This wave is washing over all layers of society. Business, education, and society as a whole needs to adapt in order to survive. Intellectual ideas are going to be highly valuable in the expanding Communication age. Teachers who are willing to look at things differently will be able to help prepare their students to become good problem solvers in the future.

What is going to be the definition of a school in a technological world? Can we have a school that will function in a world where instantaneous global communication is possible? I would conjecture that schools will be able to beam in cutting edge textbooks and have chat rooms of educators, scientists, parents set up, to talk to students directly. There will be a Dish on the roof of the school and companies dedicated to education will provide the transmission of this information. They will link the most influential thinkers and scientists in open chat rooms. Students will be able to chat with the most visionary and talented teachers to learn how to solve problems. They will be able to tackle much more complex issues than are currently taught. Human development will start to progress at an exponential rate, much like the information on the web is now growing. There will be a slow and gradual acceleration of human invention and innovation that will start to snowball in the next millennium. Schools will become cauldrons of communication where ideas will be banded back and fourth between all levels of society. Parents, administrators, teachers and students will have direct access to each other. A small communication device will allow them to talk to each other to break down the fire walls of political correctness and legalize that are presently bogging down government and educational bureaucracy. Future schools will distinguish themselves by the relevance of the ideas that percolates to the top of their communication pot. They will have a filtering structure that is able to push forward intellectually valuable information and dilute less relevant noise.

The physical nature of schools will be radically different. The model of one educator disseminating information on a white board to a group of listening students in a classroom is not going to withstand the powerful current of questions and demands of future students. Let’s say a teacher poses a question to a group of students who have brought their miniature internet earphones. How will the teacher feel if the answers is much more intuitive than the question. Classes will look more like planetariums with the seats of students pointed at a central LSD screen. Teachers will act more like coaches directing their students to develop their ideas into multimedia projects.

I watched a documentary about web page development companies in the San Francisco. It followed the lives of young web page designers and the disenfranchised lives that they lead. One young web developer was trying to make it big. He had his bed near the computer, he would wake up early in the morning to work on his web pages, and went to bed after two a.m. most nights. Presently he was working on a web magazine called "Suck" that was going to be a model to showcase his companies ability to publish mainstream magazines on line. Ultimately, he is hoping a publishing company would pay him a lot of money to put a mainstream magazine on the web. His life and the lives of his employees was completely disenfranchised from the mainstream nine to five work world. This extreme exposure to technology, where most waking hours are consumed by the online world, is far removed from the minimal exposure that students receive in the two schools where I taught. The reality that the information age is changing how business and education are going to function in the future, has not filtered down to most school districts and
their schools are falling further behind.

I spent five years at Carriage Elementary School where they had a central computer lab, with a paid computer technician to monitor it. The students were scheduled for one hour a week and learned Typing, Math and English, using pre-selected software. There was not enough computer time available to go beyond these basics. Since then the lab has been broken up due to class size reduction and the need for classroom space. At Mira Loma High School students must take a half a semester of Computer Applications, basic spreadsheet, database and word processing, in order to graduate. Last year two sections of Graphic Technology was added to our school. Some of our Staff have never stepped into a computer lab in all the years that they have worked there. Recently, laptops have been purchased for them but many sit in their cupboards. The point I am making is that most schools in the U.S. have not made a technology plan. Metacognition is not taking place at schools. What is happening is that a few savvy individual teachers have taken it upon themselves to develop their own skills and implement technology in their classrooms. The rest of the school has discussions on how to spend modernization funds and has written down few agendas on how to proceed. Unless there is a better plan developed, technology will continue to trickle down into individual classrooms and pioneering schools. The majority of students will have only a small exposure to technology. I am hoping that I can pass some of the technology training I receive from this Masters Program to other teachers. Also, that I can help my school develop a plan of action that will bring, the vision outlined in the beginning of this paper, closer to reality.

There are computers, scanners, word processors, LED projectors and various other pieces of technology sitting in classrooms all over California much of which is not being used because technology is still not a priority. Teachers are not trained and districts do not see the need to spend money on technology training. There is a need to bring technology to the forefront of the education system K-12, so that it teaches students the skills that they will need in the future. If the Education system cannot reform in time, private technology schools will start to siphon off the brightest students, causing an even greater intellectual canyon in the U.S. Roger von Oech said in his book, *A Whack on the Side of the Head*, "The doctor inflicts pain to cure suffering." Clearly, education is suffering and needs teachers willing to implement new ideas.