Higher education being haunted by zombies

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The Twilight Zone was one of my favorite TV series when I was growing up. Of the 157 episodes, originally broadcast between 1959 and 1964, the one titled “The Changing of the Guard” left a stark mark on me. It was about a teacher named Fowler, interpreted by Donald Pleasence, who, after being forced to retire, retreats to his office because he does not feel he has made a difference in the world. Then he imagines going back to his classroom where the ghosts of a number of his former students show up and talk about all of their achievements while thanking him for teaching them values such as courage, ethics, empathy, patriotism, loyalty and honesty. Fowler reflects on the effects of the networks and wishes them well in their future academic endeavors. “The entire District 7 staff is proud of these talents,” he said.

Dr. Aldemaro Romero Jr., Letters from a School

Education as an enterprise is being assaulted on many different fronts and for many different reasons. Public education has too many managers and too much red tape. Some politicians believe that the only way to fix the problems in public education is to close schools and have the military run them. Fewer states on the rich will spur economic development and the “trickle-down” economic ideology has been debunked again and again. With the same passion that the Republican-controlled Congress keeps passing on an almost weekly basis a useless repeal of ObamaCare, fans of the trickle-down ideology believe that the only way to fix the problems in public education is to close schools and have the military run them.

Then we have the numerous foolishness spread about such as the “achievement gap.” It is a newspaper term, that talent work too much money, and that the whole system is failing. Critics propose a overhaul of the system that today only 2% of students are going to college. The line is the proposition that ideas like these believe that good teachers are useless and can be replaced by robots (i.e., computer programs) that can deliver education at a low cost under the guise of new technologies.

The question is what we propose an overhaul of what should be taught by concentrating efforts in teaching and learning skills. Graduates in higher education should only have a narrow spectrum of abilities, that is to say, not the broad range of skills that modern world requires what have been termed “soft skills,” including critical thinking, communication, problem solving and team-work capabilities. Some politicians also have concerns that they want the state, or the federal government, to decide what the educational system should be and then fund it. This is the argument that education is a business, for-profit, model.

Program to educate monarch butterflies

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The evening’s program will be “The Flight of the Monarch” presented by Kitty and Cindy Pregrein from Tuscalo, Illinois. A 20-minute digital presentation on the Monarch Butterfly that details the fascinating trip of the Monarch Butterfly and the importance of milkweed as the host plant for its life. Of particular interest to the butterfly enthusiast will be the magic that can be seen with the naked eye in the Woodford Senior High School Willis classroom.

Lakatos, EHS Track and Field assistant coach, Mikala McCutcheon, and Ms. Jakim Kostler (cheerleading coach) will provide the Estates.

EHS coaches Chad Lakatos, Mikala Thompson, Ms. Ashley Walsh, Shanna Combs, Cayla Bowen, Kelly Stanpa and Andrew Sherwood attended the school board meeting to support the Give Me 5 program.

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On top of that, teaching as a profession has become the target of unbridled criticism that claims it not only to transform the minds of students but also change people’s lives, that they can really make a difference in this world.

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