THE FUTURE SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATION

Ch (COL) Clinton E. Browne, Ret.

The middle-aged, greying man makes a game winning badminton placement on his teenaged son, says “That’s all for tonight, Jim,” and heads for the shower. One-half hour later, looking refreshed, Mr. 2025 pauses before a door in his ranch home and flips a small blank card on the door. The neatly printed card now reads “Quiet—Dad is Studying.” As “Dad” thinks “Light” the room is flooded with a soft but intense light. He seats himself at a large desk facing an electronic console and spins several knobs. As a screen comes to life the words “Central Instructional Development and Dissemination Center” appear. Mr. 2025 types in some cryptic letters and figures—SUADHO-ANGS-625-1. Slowly a classroom scene appears on the screen captioned “Syracuse University—Advanced Holographic Analysis of Genetic Structures—no. 625, Class V.” An instructor moves into the room but the screen is silent. Suddenly Mr. 2025 moves across the room with a mumbled “Hope I remember where I put that class card.” Quickly the computer card is inserted in the slot of the console and the sound is activated. Dr. Williams begins the introduction of his course as “Dad” pulls a notebook in front of him.

One hour later, lecture completed, Dr. Williams leaves the classroom which fades away as an announcement appears briefly on the screen, IBM Contract No. 467352-9 Adult Ed. After stretching and walking across the room twice, Dad returns to the console and dials the Dissemination Center again. This time the code connects with the electronic educational retrieving section. As the main reference room comes into focus, a business-like voice asks, “Do you have mini-micro module reproduction capability? If so, state the numbers you desire.” Dad consults his notebook and carefully reads three sets of twelve digit numbers. Within twenty seconds he hears, “You’re in luck tonight. Get ready to copy the chips.” Mr. 2025 removes three inch square mini-micro blanks from a drawer, places them in recording position and signals “copy.” As Dad removes the modules, he shakes his head, turns off the power and rejoins his family with the comment, “I just got my reading for the new course—would you believe 1500 pages?”

This sketch of education futures is called a “scenario” and is one technique used in futures studies across many areas. How—

Ch (COL) Clinton E. Browne, (Ret.), is a graduate of Gordon College (A.B. in Theology), Fuller Theological Seminary (M. Div.) and the John Hopkins University (M.L.A.). A candidate for the Ed. D. degree at the George Washington University, Chaplain Browne is completing the second year of his second career as Dean of Students at The King’s College in Briarcliff Manor, New York.