Similar to John Dewey's philosophy on education, Linda Darling-Hammond also emphasizes the importance of building democratic schools, with a foundation of authentic teaching and active learning. In creating a 'blueprint' for effective schooling and education, Darling-Hammond determined the first necessary step as being a complete shift in society's view of educational standards.

I also agree that this fundamental change towards the proper utilization of standards is the most important element in getting our schools to where they need to be. As a teacher, it is extremely difficult to teach authentically and at a level of deeper understanding when current standards and direct instructional models emphasize broader coverage of material. Fulfilling the quota to meet national standards does not necessarily indicate a higher level of conceptual learning. It simply means that the students know a little about a lot.

Darling-Hammond's focus centers around the depth of knowledge attained by the students and the authentic learning that comes from their higher level of thinking and their ability to relate the instruction or material to real world situations. She cited one of the core principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools as 'less is more', which reiterates her stance on allowing extended and appropriate amounts of time during learning to ensure the students can embed themselves in meaningful activity and engagement.

I felt the title of this excerpt, "A Right To Learn" was more than appropriate for the context of Darling-Hammond's work. She believes that human beings are innately driven to find purpose and to make meaning out of our environment and it is our obligations as teachers, and as administrators to facilitate this environment for the 'inquiring minds' of our youth. Gardner, Torff, and Hatch (1996) supported this notion by stating, "Students need to learn how to learn". As teachers, if we can act as catalysts for this metacognitive learning by enabling our students to learn, apply, and relate topics, we will provide them with the foundation for extended in depth-learning.

Darling-Hammond makes a clear distinction that we need to encourage the development of the whole product through experiential learning. And even though the reductionist view on performance is still prevalent in our schools today (through the increased focus on standardized test scores), it is extremely important in the role of the teacher to focus on the process of learning and not just the product.