

Education for Failure

“A consensus of over thirty years of research from psychology and education shows that learned helplessness creates a negative explanatory style and expectations to fail which bring about cognitive, motivational, and emotional deficits. These deficits abort the volitional and mental powers of students. It is a root cause of under achievement and failure in all strands of education from the disabled to the gifted. It is not a moral decision but a learned behavior. The remediation of this problem involves three necessary components: understanding the problem, finding the root cause of the problem, and providing the child with tools to effectively dispute and overcome his negative thinking.”

“The national report by the Commission on Reading describes this student as "listless and inattentive and sometimes disruptive. They do not complete work. They give up quickly when faced with a task that is difficult for them. They become anxious when they must read aloud or take a test. A good summary description is that they act as though they were helpless to do better." The report further states that this sense of helplessness is affected in some subtle ways by parents' and teachers' behavior, but is not completely understood.”

“Bruno Bettelheim, among others, pleads with educators to look at the "valid" psychological reasons as to why students fail. He says, "Although there has been great concern about children who fail to become literate, and much research into the causes of children's inability to read and how to overcome it, by and large there has been little sympathy for the valid psychological reasons why a child may passively resist or actively refuse to become literate, despite the obvious advantages that literacy offers." He adds that **"the missing component in educating the whole child is our lack of understanding why he doesn't want to learn."**

From Learned Helplessness and School Failure, by Robert and Myrna Gordon.

Daniel Arthur's Response

This society has institutionalized an environment of secrets, deceit, manipulation and abuse of children. It is done with casual amusement and a sly smugness of intellectual and physical superiority. American parents wait to tell the Truth until after the Santa Lie is discovered. From that point on children wonder what other Truths await them that they don't want to know.

The socialization process for the continuation of this environment has been orchestrated throughout the world by the construction of 6900 languages, the written forms of which are used as the foundation of “educational” systems, which herd humans into isolated and stratified subcultures, defined by esoteric vocabularies and methods of communication. A mere five percent of Americans read books and only twelve percent read anything at all.

A. The **Problem** here is the non-phonetic structure of the English language. This is obvious to most children when they first begin learning the alphabet. The names of the letters are arbitrary and ridiculous, but teachers take them seriously and impose their authority over each student immediately and consistently, adding irrational rules of spelling and grammar, year after year.

B. The **Cause** of the Problem is that there is no organized effort to fix the language or even make fun of it. The language has become the foundation of learning at all levels, continually alienating and punishing students and even preventing them from learning. This deification of English, by teachers at all levels, is easily perceived as a conspiratorial subculture, called “Academia.” For those of us with any literary background, this behavior can be seen as distinctly Orwellian, which children intuitively sense.

C. The **Tools** to Fix the Problem need to be based initially on not blaming children for being the problem, then openly pointing out that the problem is the language itself. By not doing this, teachers align themselves with the problem and become the enforcers of this language conspiracy.

Another tool is the teaching of logic. This can't be done at the same time children are learning the alphabet because the language, and the teachers using it, become even more obviously absurd. Logic instantly breaks down respect for the language and the authority of those attempting to deliver it. To prevent this, a child's will to learn is sacrificed and replaced with the fear of failure.

A third tool is an organized delineation of Truth and the related Methods of Deceit used by society to hide it. This can't be taught in an environment that has already manipulated the learner to accept the arbitrary rules of a poorly designed language.

A fourth tool is the use of Arts and the recognition that they are languages themselves, more universal than writing. For example, Music is Math you can hear and Geometry is Math you can see, yet these subjects are separated from each other and their connections never mentioned in general education, even though they were integral parts of Plato's original Academic curriculum, upon which Democracy itself was founded.