

WRITE IN Norma J F Harrison for Berkeley School Board Director

I have studied 'education' for 70 years. I've seen over and over the futility of the constant, always unsuccessful reform efforts. We're still left with school. The reforms do not, cannot! begin to rectify the inadequacy that school is, the role it plays in our singly-minded society directed at continuing our Owners' profiteering by our labor.

The problem is school itself.

I tell people 'we hate school'; we the faculty, staff, parents, communities ... and students. Most people wholeheartedly agree. Some guarantee 'I loved it!' I guarantee they – as do we all – experience selective amnesia, forgetting the treacheries, unceasing, which they set aside in order to get on with life as permitted. As with jobs, we all accustom ourselves more or less, to our day to day life. We have to accept what's permitted in order to survive, however wearing or boring or limiting the assignment is. The few of us who're fortunate enough to have jobs we like, that make sense, are subject to numerous undesirable conditions likely including having to spend too much time there.

School is to repair us. Its approach is that we're insufficient, in error; it's supposed to remediate that. That's the opposite of 'educate', the root of 'education'. 'Educate' means that who comes has content, thinks creatively – as we all do, from the time we're born. Instead we're approached as though we need to be taught to think creatively. The attitude instead is that if the student doesn't agree with the content, they're not creatively thinking. The fact is, we're all geniuses. Genius is not a genetic factor, hovering parents trying to be sure their child gets a good job, to the contrary.

We're all artists.

We're all teachers and students all our lives.

Alienation is defined by our not being permitted to engage our tastes and tendencies. These are stifled by the insistence that we fill classrooms and school desks and offices, instead; that we must be diploma-ed, degree-ed, in order to get some prestige that allows us – maybe! – to get some good position, which is not like changing the street lights' light bulbs (an esSENTial task! relegated to lesser status!).

People have long known that a four-hour work week overproduces what we need and like, if the full labor force, that's everyone, all of us, regardless of age, is permitted to participate in production. Participation in production is what orients us into our communities and into understanding our place in life. It includes feeling around for what to do – together – or alone. It imbues us with self-respect.

Instead we have to accept what's permitted in order to survive, including that our Owners bomb us – near and far; including that we resist, yet end up fitting ourselves into the imperium.

The artificiality of school lessons, classes, is felt as insults by all concerned: students, teachers, and their families and communities, by forcing age-segregated routinization formations in place of self-respecting

participation in society. Common Core notwithstanding (same ol'), the classroom presupposes students' interests, and their abilities. Teachers are to tell themselves as well as the subjects, students and parents, that the lessons are relevant for them, whether they are or not; that the lessons are time-appropriate – in that students' life, whether the student wants to study that lesson then or not.

Lessons are externally imposed classroom requirements; – classrooms created as a place for teachers and staff to earn a living, and for children to be warehoused as labor waiting until some artificially determined time to become a full participant in society.

These deformities have to come under discussion in order for us to begin to grasp together, the direction in which our struggle needs to go.

Continually expecting that the major aid to our oppression, school, be made useful, has got to be available for discussion; that, and what the choices need to become.

The choice obviously is us all doing our lives together. Don't let the system rip our children from us in order to use the formal stamping machine to fit them into it. Don't let the system force children to be made to believe that school equals work. Don't make people pretend to do the hammering and sawing of living, cutting milk cartons into house-shapes for some project. Let us ALL DO real work together.

No failure.

No tests in the present form.

Classroom-like study needs to rise in situ. All the skills can be learned doing our work together, not isolated into 8-, 10 years of unlearning how to read, write, calculate. Learning the skills has been cast as needing remediation, instead of happening as the natural accompaniment of any study and work.

Teaching and learning needs instead to become us working together regardless of age, altogether because of communal and individual need and desire. Work needs to become for all OUR benefit, none for our Owners, the profiteers.

I offer the opportunity to enable the discussion of how to remove the present binding form and replace it with the living that will allow us all the joy! of education, the joy of work, of actually participating within our communities, not requiring our children to accept the deception that school equals work.

Read: School Is The Opposite Of Education, a study to release us from our confinement, by Norma J F Harrison, <http://njfhar.wordpress.com/2014/12/10/table-of-contents>
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