

Notes on Teaching and Learning:

Systematizing, and statisticising, a body of data, does not necessarily validate this data, or, constitute being scientific, or indeed, making a real Science. Nor does prolix, obscurantist terminology, and verbal pomposity. This especially applies to so-called Social Sciences, which should be seen, in real perspective, as Social Studies! A prime example is seen re the confused mixing of Psychology and Education, when what is needed is applications of commonsense, rather than just endless self-interested tinkering, and, imposition of questionable individual imprimaturs by those same intellectually pretentious tinkers....

There are 6 commonsense themes to bear in mind, as a teacher, and also as a parent..

1) Brain stimulation and early education are important, 'use it or lose it' applies from the beginning of human life:

It takes a village to raise a child, so the saying goes, plus, these days, more like a global village, aka a comprehensive, comparative education, and, within an informed and educated liberal society. So, the Internet, (including Social Media), is not an appropriate village to raise a child, only one part of the experience of that all-important comparative education. Similarly, civic responsibility, freedom of information, political objectivity, and, less us-versus-them confrontation, must be taught, and widely practiced, within that society. One necessary, and binding social and societal foundation, is a universal, comprehensive, and comparative education system. Societies are thus intralinked by education systems.

'.. how much good might be accomplished if every child had a brain-based assessment and, if problems were found, a tailor-made program created to strengthen essential areas in the early years, when neuroplasticity is greatest. It is far better to nip brain problems in the bud than to allow the child to wire into his brain the idea that he is "stupid," begin to hate school and learning, and stop work in the weakened area, losing whatever strength he may have. Younger children often progress more quickly through brain exercises than do adolescents, perhaps because in an immature brain the number of connections among neurons, or synapses, is 50 percent greater than in the adult brain.

When we reach adolescence, a massive "pruning back" operation begins in the brain, and synaptic connections and neurons that have not been used extensively suddenly die off—a classic case of "use it or lose it." It is probably best to strengthen weakened areas while all this extra cortical real estate is available. Still, brain-based assessments can be helpful all through school and even in college and university, when many students who did well in high school fail because their weak brain functions are overloaded by the increased demand. Even apart from these crises, every adult could benefit from a brain-based cognitive assessment, a cognitive fitness test, to help them better understand their own brain.'

p. 42, https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/570172.The_Brain_that_Changes_Itself

Meanwhile,

<https://scitechdaily.com/scientists-uncover-how-the-infant-brain-rewires-itself-at-birth/> re '...timing and growth patterns of children's brain network development.' **Plus:**

<https://scitechdaily.com/brain-development-continues-far-beyond-birth-study-finds/> 'The study reveals that a specific group of inhibitory neurons in the entorhinal cortex (EC)—a region of the brain vital for forming memories—continues to migrate and establish connections from birth through toddlerhood. This extensive postnatal neuronal migration may drive critical periods of neuroplasticity, during which the brain is highly adaptable and responsive to changes.'

*So, beware, that intellectual development, at any early human age, could be narrowed, twisted, and constricted by lack of comparative education, overuse of the Internet, misuse of social media, brainwashing, early school leaving, cults, conspiracy theories, et al..... **Garbage in will result in garbage out....not a good prospect for adulthood.***

Always look out for, and treasure, the self-amusing child, whose mind is always active of their own volition, whose ever child they may be, and, at whatever age....but, always make sure that the elements that would interest such an active brain, when left to its own devices, are always to hand for that child...books, tools, sensible toys, opportunities for trips, interacting with friends, good school, and wordly teachers, et al. Plus, always provide encouragement for seeking a comparative education. Boredom is beneficial in small doses, if only to make the comparison with the excitement and satisfaction of the successful pursuit of ideas... which is then good preparation for ongoing learning during adulthood. Stable adults are then required to ensure that education at any level remain the common theme for an enlightened citizenry, thus, individual involvement and identity, within a community, and recognising national identity, ensures stability, but never subjection.

There is, sadly, too often the horror and sadness of seeing an adult, in a cafe, with a bored and restless child confronted with just a large sugary 'treat' to keep them quiet and occupied, whilst the supposedly supervising adult, who is totally unsuited to the role, sits obliviously scrolling through the limitless garbage of social media...

2) Socrates..not the pushing in of knowledge, but, the drawing out. Keep children interested by helping them to find answers, and to praise effort. For this to be successful, teachers and parents should strive to earn respect, rather than just court popularity. A merely popular teacher is not a good role model, and a superficial example of an adult.

3) Piaget .. no stage of development will be completed unless the previous stage is completed, thus, educate, and socialize, ***in relation to age and stage of development.*** Also, the importance of patient observation, and recording of progress, plus, comparison with peers.

4) Schools should stream, the naturally curious child is the best education prospect, none should be left behind..! Comparative education for a comparative/balanced mind is the optimum. A naturally curious child or adult always has an advantage, and, employ crest of the waves learning, by encouragement, without too many troughs. IQ should only ever be a one reference, as the entire progress of a child's development must be gauged. Precocity should never be confused with, or mistaken for, a child's potential growing maturity and self-reliance. Early childhood should always be an ongoing preparation for real life, especially occupational, not endless 'play....

5) No infotainment, instead, be interesting and involved, rather than didactic, giving reasons and incentive for given knowledge where possible, any age. Spoonfed knowledge has no real retainment potential.... Never treat younger children as adults, they are rote and example learners, individual spontaneity will emerge with maturation. **Minimise screen time, teach traditional reading and writing skills,** noting that humans retain the same brain, regardless of the recent rapid development of computers, and AI.

6) Organise, but do not regiment, teach but do not brainwash, encourage, but do not bully, involve but do not exploit:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/239331/study-reveals-human-brains-have-evolved/> re mental synergy, and, <https://phys.org/news/2024-11-hunter-children-human-history.html> re cumulative culture, as well as a comparative education, have never been so important as in modern times, when education is merely seen as a chore, or, as just the responsibility of schools, or, worst of all, reflecting intellectual insularity, or, in lieu, monopolised by social media as the go-to-reference source....

The best time for leaning is Intermediate age, before adolescence kicks in, and, when this happens, single sex schools with shared ancillary facilities are then recommended, as is class streaming. School uniforms maintain a social level playing field, also emphasising that appearance alone does not mean original thinking, or, signs of significant personal development. Keep the 'adolescent industry' at bay, as much as in optimally possible. Private education that promotes, or takes advantage of, social stratification, should also be discontinued.

Civics and living skills must be part of the general curriculum, towards fulfilling responsible citizenship, as well as ensuring healthy living, and thus, a productive working life, thus ensuring family well-being and security. **Give teachers a comprehensive and useful curriculum which they can creatively embellish, rather than imposing an endless burden of creating unnecessary lesson plans based on just 'Guidelines'..!**

The Dunning-Kruger Effect is, sadly, becoming increasingly ubiquitous, the main vector being social media, and, lack of comparative education, in the form of healthy skepticism, especially in regard to information sources and discrimination. Beware of screens supplanting hand-writing and library and book searches. Most concerning is the replacement of mentors, by online 'influencers' as primary role models, another trend involving social media. Screen time, and, physical health penalties, inclusive of sight and hearing, plus, social alienation, especially in regards to children and adolescents, and all resulting from thoughtless and unsupervised use,online use, are also increasing. These concerns are well known and documented, and hopefully, checks and balances will continue to evolve, given cultural and temporal lags being overcome.

D-K Effect in action: Local library has an assistant who was intending to study English, applied, went on the preparatory course, then decided that, having read the course books listed, did not have to attend Uni anyway...! So much for a comparative education, and all that goes with a Uni education, properly undertaken.

These two following life-affirming tracts are idealistic, very traditional, even schmaltzy, but, there is much therein to recommend for educating and socialising modern children:

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.
If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.
If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.
If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.
If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.
If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy.
If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.
If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.
If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.
If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.
If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.
If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.
If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.
If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.
If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.
If children live with fairness, they learn justice.
If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.
If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.
If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.

By Dorothy Law Nolte (1924 – 2005)

Desiderata:

Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

Max Ehrmann ©1927

Note that, the following passage is excepted because of dead-ended unintellectual determinism, and, for obscuring the reality of infinity, time, and knowledge: *And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be.*