

# How Public Schools Are Destroying The American Brain

By Samuel L. Blumenfeld

Have you ever corrected a teenager on a bit of factual information, or a misspelling, or an incorrect usage of the language, and gotten the response, “Whatever”? What this response means is that the correct fact, or spelling, or usage is not important or even necessary. “If you’re going to make a case of it,” the teenager says, “it’s whatever you say it is.”

Where does this casual, numb response come from? It comes from the public school, and probably some private schools, where accuracy is no longer an academic value. In fact, the public schools are permeated with a philosophy summed up in the phrase, “Accuracy is not the name of the game.” Those are the actual words of Julia Palmer, president of the American Reading Council, an advocate of the whole language approach to reading. She said that it was okay if a child read the word house for home, or substituted the word pony for horse. “It’s not very serious because she understands the meaning. Accuracy is not the name of the game.” (Wash. Post, 11/29/86)

Since when is education a game? I thought education was the serious business of providing the citizens of tomorrow with a basic foundation in knowledge and academic skills. It was Sir Francis Bacon who wrote, “Reading maketh a full man...and writing an exact man.” In other words, an accurate reader becomes an accurate thinker, an accurate speller, and an accurate user of language. An inaccurate reader becomes an inaccurate thinker, an inaccurate speller, and an inaccurate user of language.

A brain that thinks inaccurately is a disabled brain. And we are turning out from our public schools millions of disabled brains, unable to think logically, virtually crippled as defenders of civilization. A crippled brain is unable to deal with reality in a logical, objective way. It relies on emotion, sensual urges, and superstition as its primary way of knowing and learning. It deprecates accuracy as a threat to its diminished ego.

The cult of inaccuracy can be seen in the way teenagers dress. The boys wear jeans that are about the fall off their behinds. The girls dress in the most tantalizing clothes, revealing their navels as an obvious focus of sexual attention. They all look brainless. “Whatever” is their response to the serious things in life that require a logical brain, objective thinking, and intellectual rigor.

And the reason why television sitcoms and movies are made to appeal to the brainless is because they have become the majority. Literacy surveys tell us that only 20 percent of the American people are highly literate. Many of them belong to the liberal cognitive elite who patronize PBS. There are a few programs on commercial television that cater to people with brains. *Sunday Morning* on NBC is one of them. You can tell who their

audience is by their commercials: Wall Street brokerage houses, prescription drugs for senior citizens, upscale cars. And, of course, you can tell the brainless programs too by their commercials.

In politics, the Democrat party is the political home of the brainless and those corrupt members of the cognitive elite who have a lust for power. The latter are the Faustian intellectuals who would be as gods.

Conservatives tend to be good readers who think accurately because they are constantly trying to establish truth in the face of Democrat lies, demagoguery, and corruption. Many of them are Bible readers with a keen sense of morality. And many of them are home schoolers who cultivate accuracy and a love of truth in the minds of their children

The Democrats know how to appeal to the emotions and superstitions of the brainless, and that is why the liberals who control public education have no desire to return to accuracy and intellectual rigor in the curriculum.

A simple way to gauge the effect of the cult of inaccuracy on the brains of the brightest is to look at the trend of SAT scores among the top students. In 1972, the number of students who scored between 750 and 800 on the verbal test was 2,817. In 1994, that number was down to 1,438, about half! At the bottom of the scale of the same test, the number of students who scored between 200 and 290 in 1972 was 71,084. In 1994, it was up to 136,841. That was eight years ago when the SAT was still a reliable measure of the nation's intelligence.

It is September, and I pity those millions of kids with healthy brains entering the public schools. In a year their brains will be disabled. What a tragedy for them and America.