

How Behavioral Psychologists Have Destroyed American Education

By Samuel L. Blumenfeld

On September 11, 2001, Americans discovered how physically vulnerable we are to the attacks of our enemies. In just a matter of a few hours the Islamic terrorists destroyed the two magnificent towers of the World Trade Center in New York, killing almost 3,000 people, destroyed a large section of the Pentagon and its personnel, and destroyed four airliners with their passengers. Never before had America suffered such a devastating attack on its own soil at the hands of a fanatic enemy.

However, there is an area of vulnerability, which our enemies are using to destroy our most important cultural and scientific asset, the American brain. This enemy is so well disguised that most Americans don't even know it exists. But we can see the results of this internal attack all around us: epidemics of drug addiction, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, reading failures, dyslexia.

Over four million children—some say six million—are required to ingest the powerful drug Ritalin and other similar drugs in order to be able to sit in their classrooms and undergo the process of having their brains crippled by a non-surgical pre-frontal lobotomy. And this process has been going on for over fifty years. In fact, the public first learned about it back in 1955 when Rudolf Flesch wrote *Why Johnny Can't Read*. In that book, Dr. Flesch wrote:

The teaching of reading all over the United States, in all the schools, and in all the textbooks is totally wrong and flies in the face of all logic and common sense.

He then explained how in the 1930s the educators got rid of the alphabetic phonics method of teaching reading and replaced it with a new ideographic method, in which children are taught to look at each word as a whole configuration, like a Chinese character. He said that when you impose an ideographic teaching method on a phonetic writing system, you get reading disability and dyslexia.

Back in the 1970s, when I was trying to find out who the idiots were who dreamed up this new method, I discovered that it was conceived at the turn of the last century by educators known as the Progressives. The Progressives were members of the Protestant academic elite who no longer believed in the religion of their fathers. They now put their faith in science, evolution, and psychology. Science permitted them to know the material world, evolution explained the origin of living matter, and psychology permitted them to study human nature and control human behavior. They were also socialists, because they believed that individualism and capitalism were the cause of all social evil, and that only by eliminating them could social utopia be achieved.

It was their philosophical leader, John Dewey, who first argued the need to get rid of high literacy in order to prepare the children of tomorrow for a socialist society. He wrote, in an essay published in 1898:

My proposition is, that conditions—social, industrial, and intellectual—have undergone such a radical change, that the time has come for a thoroughgoing examination of the emphasis put upon linguistic work in elementary instruction....The plea for the predominance of learning to read in early school-life because of the great importance attaching to literature seems to me a perversion.

He then outlined a plan whereby primary education would be completely revamped to conform with the Progressives' agenda for a socialist America. He wrote:

Change must come gradually. To force it unduly would compromise its final success by favoring a violent reaction.

And that is why the process has been going on for so long with most Americans being totally unaware of it taking place right under their noses. Even four to six million children on Ritalin are not enough to wake up America. Yet we know that Ritalin has caused violent behavior and sudden death among some children. It also causes shrinkage of the brain.

How was Dewey's plan implemented? It was carried out by the behavioral psychologists, notably Edward L. Thorndike and his protégé Arthur I. Gates at Teachers College, Columbia University. They devised the new whole-word teaching method.

It was one of Thorndike's students, William Scott Gray, who conceived the Dick and Jane reading program at the University of Chicago, first published by Scott, Foresman in 1930. Gates's whole-word reading program was published at the same time by Macmillan.

Thorndike, by the way, was a strong believer in eugenics and advocated a non-intellectual curriculum for black children because of their racial inferiority.

Thorndike's claim to fame is his discovery that you could train children like animals. He wrote in 1928:

Our experiments on learning in the lower animals have probably contributed more to knowledge of education per hour or per unit of intellect spent, than experiments on children....The best way with children may often be, in the pompous words of an animal trainer, "to arrange everything in connection with the trick so that the animal will be compelled by the laws of his own nature to perform it."

But it was John B. Watson, the most arrogant behaviorist of them all, who revealed the true contempt that he and his fellow behaviorists had toward their fellow human beings.

In his book, *Behaviorism*, a textbook for his students, he wrote:

Human beings do not want to class themselves with other animals. They are willing to admit that they are animals but “something else in addition.” It is this “something else” that causes the trouble. In this “something else” is bound up everything that is classed as religion, the life hereafter, morals, love of children, parents, country, and the like. The raw fact that you, as a psychologist, if you are to remain scientific, must describe the behavior of man in no other terms than those you would use in describing the behavior of the ox you slaughter, drove and still drives many timid souls away from behaviorism.

Watson meant to be shocking, because he had to convince his students that they had to treat human beings coldly and callously as animals. He wrote further:

The interest of the behaviorist in man’s doings is more than the interest of the spectator—he wants to control man’s reactions, as physical scientists want to control and manipulate other natural phenomena. It is the business of behavioristic psychology to be able to predict and control human activity.

In the 1920s, behavioral psychologists in the Soviet Union were also conducting experiments on predicting and controlling human activity. Ivan Pavlov was experimenting on dogs to produce conditioned reflexes. He and his helpers were also experimenting on ways to artificially create behavioral disorganization.

Now, why would anyone want to know how to artificially create behavioral disorganization, if that is not what they intended to do?

In 1932, a book was published describing those experiments in great detail. Entitled *The Nature of Human Conflicts*, it was authored by Alexander Luria, one of Pavlov’s helpers, and translated into English by an American, W. Horsley Gantt, who had spent six years working in Pavlov’s laboratory in Russia, after which he joined the staff of the Phipps Psychiatric Clinic at Johns Hopkins University. Luria wrote:

We are not the first of those who have artificially created disorganisations of human behaviour....[You see, after having succeeded in driving animals crazy, they were now trying to find out how to do it to humans. Luria continues:]

I. P. Pavlov was the first investigator who, with the help of exceedingly bold workers, succeeded experimentally in creating neuroses with experimental animals. Working with conditioned reflexes in dogs, Pavlov came to the conclusion that every time an elaborated reflex came into conflict with the unconditioned reflex, the behaviour of the dog markedly changed.... Although, in the experiments with the collision of the conditioned reflexes in animals, it is fairly easy to obtain acute forms of artificial affect, it is much more difficult to get these results in human experiments.

K. Lewin, in our opinion, has been one of the most prominent psychologists to elucidate this question of the artificial production of affect and of the experimental disorganisation of behaviour....Here the fundamental conception of Lewin is very close to ours.

Now, who is this K. Lewin praised so highly by Luria? He is none other than the Kurt Lewin who came to America in 1933 and set up the Research Center for Group Dynamics at M.I.T. and invented "sensitivity training." Shortly before his death in 1947, Lewin founded the National Training Lab at Bethel, Maine, under the sponsorship of the National Education Association. Think of it. Here you have a communist behavioral psychologist who is an expert at artificially creating behavioral disorganization—that is, driving people crazy—being sponsored by the National Education Association.

The importance of Lewin in this story is that he represented the collectivist or communist mentality in the psychological community, which had its own socio-political agenda. Lewin's biographer, Alfred J. Marrow, writes:

Students of progressive education also saw the need for studies of group behavior. This was stimulated by the educational philosophy of John Dewey....This called for the development of leadership skills and collective setting of group goals.

And, of course, that is what we have in today's classrooms: group learning, group-think, outcome-based education. So we have destroyed the ability of children to learn to read and forced them to be indoctrinated by collectivist means. That's not education. That's a program to destroy the individual independent mind.

We know that one of the reasons why children become frustrated in the classroom and act up is because of the way they are being taught. They enter school at age six feeling very confident that they are intelligent enough to be able to learn to read. After all, they taught themselves to speak their own language on their own without the help of a certified teacher. So the confidence in their learning ability is quite justified.

But once in school they discover that they can't learn to read in the manner they are being taught. So they become angry and frustrated, doubting their own intelligence. And soon they join the ranks of the reading disabled, the dyslexic, the ADD or ADHD, and are given a drug to solve their learning and behavioral problems and make the teacher happy.

It should not surprise you to learn that one of Kurt Lewin's most significant experiments was aimed at determining the behavioral effects of frustration on children and how these effects are produced. Marrow writes:

The experiment indicated that in frustration the children tended to regress to a surprising degree. They tended to become babyish. Intellectually, children of four and a half years tended toward the behavior of a three-year-old. The degree of intellectual regression varied directly with the strength of the

frustration....Aggressiveness also increased and some children went so far as to hit, kick, and break objects.

So what do you do with kids like that? You drug them! And what does this do to the American brain? It kills it.

We see the ramifications of this in our daily lives. For example, have you ever corrected a teenager on a bit of factual information, or a misspelling, or an incorrect usage of language, and gotten the response, "Whatever"?

Where does this casual, dumb response come from? It comes from the public schools, and probably some private schools, where accuracy is no longer an academic value. In fact, 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. Palmer 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," she said, "because she understands the meaning. Accuracy is not the name of the game." (Washington Post, Nov. 29, 1986)

But accuracy IS the name of the game if you believe that education is 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. (By the way there are a lot of people who think that spelling is unimportant. Tell that to Dan Quayle, whose political career was ruined because he misspelled potato by adding an e. He's been the butt of comedians ever since.)

A brain that thinks inaccurately is a disabled brain. And we are turning out of our schools millions of disabled brains, unable to think logically, virtually crippled as defenders of our 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 is promulgated at the highest levels of our education system. Let me read to you a definition of whole-language philosophy written by three whole-language professors in a book entitled *Whole Language: What's the Difference*, published in 1991:

From a whole-language perspective, reading (and language use in general) is a process of generating hypotheses in a meaning-making transaction in a sociohistorical context. [I'm sure you got that.] As a transactional

process...reading is not a matter of “getting the meaning” from the text, as if that meaning were *in* the text waiting to be decoded by the reader.

Rather, reading is a matter of readers using the cues print provides and the knowledge they bring with them (of language subsystems, of the world) to construct a unique interpretation.

Moreover, that interpretation is situated: readers’ *creations* (not retrievals) of meaning with text vary, depending on their purposes of reading and the expectations of others in the reading event. This view of reading implies that there is no single “correct” meaning for a given text, only plausible meanings.

And what have these psycho-educators done to America? In 1972, the number of students who scored highest on the SAT verbal test, between 750 and 800, was 2,817. In 1994, that number was down to 1,438—about half! At the lowest end, the number of students who scored between 200 and 290 in 1972 was 71,084. In 1994, it was up to 136,841. What more proof do you need that America is losing its brains?

Last month, several million children entered the primary schools of our nation with healthy brains. In a year their brains will be disabled.

And this has been done to us not by foreign terrorists, but by behavioral psychologists: Dewey, Thorndike, Gates, Watson, Pavlov, Luria, Gray, and their loyal disciples. And there is no escaping them. They own the schools and they have the money. That is why home schooling is so important. And that’s why your schools are so important. It’s the only way out of this brain-killing process. So, as you can see, we all have a lot of work to do, and may we succeed before it’s too late. Thank you.