

# The Deliberate Dumbing Down of America

## A WHISTLEBLOWER'S ACCOUNT

Charlotte Thomson Iserbyt, former Senior Policy Advisor in the U.S. Department of Education, blew the whistle in the '80s on government activities withheld from the public. Her inside knowledge will help you protect your children from controversial methods and programs. In this book you will discover:

- -how good teachers across America have been forced to use controversial, non-academic me
- -how "school choice" is being used to further dangerous reform goals, and how home schooling and private education are especially vulnerable.
- -how workforce training (school-to-work) is an essential part of an overall plan for a global economy, and how this plan will shortcircuit your child's future career plans and opportunities.
- -how the international, national, regional, state and local agendas for education reform are all interconnected and have been for decades.

## A CHRONOLOGICAL PAPER TRAIL

*the deliberate dumbing down of america* is a chronological history of the past 100+ years of education reform. Each chapter takes a period of history and recounts the significant events, including important geopolitical and societal contextual information. Citations from government plans, policy documents, and key writings by leading reformers record the rise of the modern education reform movement. Americans of all ages will welcome this riveting expose of what really happened to what was once the finest education system in the world.

Readers will appreciate the user-friendliness of this chronological history designed for the average reader not just the academician. This book will be used by citizens at public hearings, board meetings, or for easy presentation to elected officials.

Publication of *the deliberate dumbing down of america* is certain to add fuel to the fire in this nation's phonics wars. Iserbyt provides documentation that Direct Instruction, the latest education reform fad in the classroom, is being institutionalized under the guise of "traditional" phonics thanks to the passage of the unconstitutional Reading Excellence Act of 1998.

## PREFACE

Coexistence on this tightly knit earth should be viewed as an existence not only without wars...but also without [the government] telling us how to live, what to say, what to think, what to know, and what not to know. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, from a speech given September 11, 1973.

For over a twenty-five-year period the research used in this chronology has been collected from many sources: the United States Department of Education; international agencies; state agencies; the media; concerned educators; parents; legislators, and talented researchers with whom I have worked for at least twenty-five years. In the process of gathering this information two beliefs that most Americans hold in common became clear:

1) If a child can read, write and compute at a reasonably proficient level, he will be able to do just about anything he wishes, enabling him to control his destiny to the extent that God allows (remain free).

2) Providing such basic educational proficiencies is not and should not be an expensive proposition.

Since most Americans believe the second premise-that providing basic educational proficiencies is not and should not be an expensive proposition-it becomes obvious that it is only a radical agenda, the purpose of which is to change values and attitudes (brainwash), that is the costly agenda. In other words, brainwashing by our schools and universities is what is bankrupting our nation and our children's minds.

In 1997 there were 46.4 million public school students. During 1993-1994 (the latest years the statistics were available) the average per pupil expenditure was \$6,330.00 in 1996 constant dollars. Multiply the number of students by the per pupil expenditure (using old-fashioned mathematical procedures) for a total K-12 budget per year of \$293.7 billion dollars. If one adds the cost of higher education to this figure, one arrives at a total budget per year of over half a trillion dollars. The sorry result of such an incredibly large expenditure-the performance of American students-is discussed on page 12 of Pursuing Excellence-A Study of U.S. Twelfth Grade Mathematics and Science Achievement in International Context: Initial Findings from the Third International Mathematics and Science Study [TIMSS], a report from the U.S. Department of Education (NCES 98-049). Pursuing Excellence reads:

Achievement of Students, Key Points: U. S. twelfth graders scored below the international average and among the lowest of the 21 TIMSS nations in both mathematics and science general knowledge in the final year of secondary school. (p. 24)

Obviously, something is terribly wrong when a \$6,330 per pupil expenditure produces such pathetic results. This writer has visited private schools which charge \$1,000-per-year in tuition which enjoy superior academic results. Parents of home-schooled children spend a maximum of \$1,000-per-year and usually have similar excellent results.

There are many talented and respected researchers and activists who have carefully documented the "weird" activities which have taken place "in the name of education." Any opposition to change agent activities in local schools has invariably been met with cries of "Prove your case, document your statements," etc. "Resisters"-usually parents-have been called every name in the book. Parents have been told for over thirty years, "You're the only parent who has ever complained." The media has been convinced to join in the attack upon common sense views, effectively discrediting the perspective of well-informed citizens. Documentation, when presented, has been ignored and called incomplete. The classic response by the education establishment has been, "You're taking that out of context!"-even when presented with an entire book which uses their own words to detail exactly what the "resisters" are claiming to be true.

The desire by "resisters" to prove their case has been so strong that they have continued to amass-over a thirty- to fifty-year period-what must surely amount to tons of materials containing irrefutable proof, in the education change agents' own words, of deliberate, malicious intent to achieve behavioral changes in students/parents/society which have nothing to do with commonly understood educational objectives. Upon delivery of such proof, "resisters" are consistently met with the "shoot the messenger" stonewalling response by teachers, school boards, superintendents, state and local officials, as well as the supposedly objective institutions of academia and the press.

This resister's book, or collection of research in book form, was put together primarily to satisfy my own need to see the various components which led to the dumbing down of the United States of America assembled in chronological order-in writing. Even I, who had observed these weird activities taking place at all levels of government, was reluctant to accept a malicious intent behind each individual, chronological activity or innovation, unless I could connect it with other, similar activities taking place at other times. This book, which makes such connections, has provided for me a much-needed sense of closure.

the deliberate dumbing down of america is also a book for my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. I want them to know that there were thousands of Americans who may not have died or been shot at in overseas wars, but were shot at in small-town 'wars' at school board meetings, at state legislative hearings on education, and, most importantly, in the media. I want my progeny to know that whatever intellectual and spiritual freedoms to which they may still lay claim were fought for-are a result of-the courageous work of incredible people who dared to tell the truth against all odds.

I want them to know that there will always be hope for freedom if they follow in these people's footsteps; if they cherish the concept of 'free will'; if they believe that human beings are special, not animals, and that they have intellects, souls, and consciences. I want them to know that if the government schools are allowed to teach children K-12 using Pavlovian/Skinnerian animal training methods-which provide tangible rewards only for correct answers-there can be no freedom.

Why? People 'trained'-not educated-by such educational techniques will be fearful of taking principled, sometimes controversial, stands when called for because these people will have been programmed to speak up only if a positive reward or response is forthcoming. The price of freedom has often been paid with pain and loneliness.

In 1971 when I returned to the United States after living in the West Indies for three years, I was shocked to find public education had become a warm, fuzzy, soft, mushy, touchy-feely experience, where its purpose had become socialization, not learning. From that time on, and with the advantage of having two young sons in the public schools, I became involved as a member of a philosophy committee for a school, as an elected school board member, as co-founder of Guardians of Education for Maine (GEM), and finally as a Senior Policy Advisor in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) in the U.S. Department of Education during President Ronald Reagan's first term of office. OERI was, and is, the office from which all the controversial national and international educational restructuring has emanated.

Those ten years (1971-1981) changed my life. As an American who had spent many years working abroad, I had experienced traveling in and living in socialist countries. When I returned to the United States I realized that America's transition from a sovereign constitutional republic to a socialist democracy would not come about through warfare (bullets and tanks) but through the implementation and installation of the "system" in all areas of government-federal, state and local. The brainwashing for acceptance of the "system's" control would take place in the school-through indoctrination and the use of behavior modification, which comes under so many labels, the most recent labels being Outcome-Based Education, Skinnerian Mastery Learning or Direct Instruction. In the seventies I and many others waged the war against values clarification, which was later renamed "critical thinking," which regardless of the label-and there are bound to be many more labels on the horizon-is nothing but pure, unadulterated destruction of absolute values of right and wrong upon which stable and free societies depend and upon which

our nation was founded.

In 1973 I started this long journey into becoming a "resister," placing the first incriminating piece of paper in my "education" files. That first piece of paper was a purple ditto sheet entitled "All About Me," next to which was a smiley face. It was an open-ended questionnaire beginning with: "My name is \_\_\_\_\_." My son brought it home from public school in fourth grade. The questions were highly personal; so much so that they encouraged my son to lie, since he didn't want to "spill the beans" about his mother, father and brother. The purpose of such a questionnaire was to find out the student's state of mind, how he felt, what he liked and disliked, and what his values were. With this knowledge it would be easier for the government school to modify his values and behavior at will-without, of course, the student's knowledge or parents' consent.

That was just the beginning. There was more to come: the new social studies textbook *World of Mankind*. Published by Follett, this book instructed the teacher how to instill humanistic (no right/no wrong) values in the K-3 students. At the text's suggestion they were encouraged to take little tots for walks in town during which he/she would point out big and small houses, asking the little tots who they thought lived in the houses. Poor or Rich? "What do you think they eat in the big house?...in the little house?" When I complained about this non-educational activity at a school board meeting I was dismissed as a censor and the press did its usual hatchet job on me as a misguided parent. A friend of mine-a very bright gal who had also lived abroad for years-told me that she had overheard discussion of me at the local co-op. The word was out in town that I was a "kook." That was not a "positive response/reward" for my taking what I believed to be a principled position. Since I had not been "trained" I was just mad!

Next stop on the road to becoming a "resister" was to become a member of the school philosophy committee. Our Harvard-educated, professional change agent superintendent gave all of the committee members a copy of "The Philosophy of Education" (1975 version) from the Montgomery County schools in Maryland, hoping to influence whatever recommendations we would make. (For those who like to eat dessert before soup, turn to page \_\_\_\_ and read the entry under 1946 concerning "Community-Centered Schools: The Blueprint for Education in Montgomery County, Maryland." This document was in fact the "Blueprint" for the nation's schools.) When asked to write a paper expressing our views on the goals of education, I wrote that, amongst other goals, I felt the schools should strive to instill "sound morals and values in the students." The superintendent and a few teachers on the committee zeroed in on me, asking "What's the definition of 'sound' and whose values?"

After two failed attempts to get elected to the school board, I finally succeeded in 1976 on the third try. The votes were counted three times, even though I had won by a very healthy margin!

My experience on the school board taught me that when it comes to modern education, "the end justifies the means." Our change agent superintendent was more at home with a lie than he was with the truth. Whatever good I accomplished while on the school board-stopping the Planning, Programming and Budgeting System [PPBS] now known as Total Quality Management [TQM] or Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures/Generally Accepted Federal Funding Reporting [GAAP/GAFFR], getting values clarification banned by the board, and demanding five [yes, 5!] minutes of grammar per day, etc.-was tossed out two weeks after I left office.

Another milestone on my journey was an in-service training session entitled "Innovations

in Education." A retired teacher, who understood what was happening in education, paid for me to attend. This training program developed by Professor Ronald Havelock of the University of Michigan and funded by the United States Office of Education taught teachers and administrators how to "sneak in" controversial methods of teaching and "innovative" programs. These controversial, "innovative" programs included health education, sex education, drug and alcohol education, death education, critical thinking education, etc. Since then I have always found it interesting that the controversial school programs are the only ones that have the word "education" attached to them! I don't recall-until recently-"math ed.," "reading ed.," "history ed.," or "science ed." A good rule of thumb for teachers, parents and school board members interested in academics and traditional values is to question any subject that has the word "education" attached to it.

This in-service training literally "blew my mind." I have never recovered from it. The presenter (change agent) taught us how to "manipulate" the taxpayers/parents into accepting controversial programs. He explained how to identify the "resisters" in the community and how to get around their resistance. He instructed us in how to go to the highly respected members of the community-those with the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Junior League, Little League, YMCA, Historical Society, etc.-to manipulate them into supporting the controversial/non-academic programs and into bad-mouthing the resisters. Advice was also given as to how to get the media to support these programs.

I left-with my very valuable textbook, Innovations in Education: A Change Agent's Guide, under my arm-feeling very sick to my stomach and in complete denial over that in which I had been involved. This was not the nation in which I grew up; something seriously disturbing had happened between 1953 when I left the United States and 1971 when I returned.

### Orchestrated Consensus

In retrospect, I had just found out that the United States was engaged in war. People write important books about war: books documenting the battles fought, the names of the generals involved, the names of those who fired the first shot. This book is simply a history book about another kind of war: \* one fought using psychological methods; \* a one-hundred-year war; \* a different, more deadly war than any in which our country has ever been involved; \* a war about which the average American hasn't the foggiest idea.. The reason Americans do not understand this war is because it has been fought in secret-in the schools of our nation, using our children who are captive in classrooms. The wagers of this war are using very sophisticated and effective tools:

\* Hegelian Dialectic (common ground, consensus and compromise) \* Gradualism (two steps forward; one step backward) \* Semantic deception (redefining terms to get agreement without understanding).

The Hegelian Dialectic<sup>4</sup> is a process formulated by the German philosopher Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) and used by Karl Marx's in codifying revolutionary Communism as dialectical materialism. This process can be illustrated as:

Synthesis (consensus)

Thesis Antithesis

The "Thesis" represents either an established practice or point of view which is pitted against the "Antithesis"-usually a crisis of opposition fabricated or created by change agents-causing the "Thesis" to compromise itself, incorporating some part of the

"Antithesis" to produce the "Synthesis"-sometimes called consensus. This is the primary tool in the bag of tricks used by change agents who are trained to direct this process all over the country; much like the in-service training I received. A good example of this concept was voiced by T.H. Bell when he was Secretary of Education: "[We] need to create a crisis to get consensus in order to bring about change." (The reader might be reminded that it was under T.H. Bell's direction that the Department of Education implemented the changes "suggested" by A Nation at Risk-the alarm that was sounded in the early 1980's to announce the "crisis" in education.)

Since we have been, as a nation, so relentlessly exposed to this Hegelian dialectical process (which is essential to the smooth operation of the "system") under the guise of "reaching consensus" in our involvement in parent-teacher organizations, on school boards, in legislatures, and even in goal setting in community service organizations and groups-including our churches-I want to explain clearly how it works in a practical application. A good example with which most of us can identify involves property taxes for local schools. Let us consider an example from Michigan:

The internationalist change agents must abolish local control (the "Thesis") in order to restructure our schools from academics to global workforce training (the "Synthesis"). Funding of education with the property tax allows local control, but it also enables the change agents and teachers' unions to create higher and higher school budgets paid for with higher taxes, thus infuriating homeowners. Eventually, property owners accept the change agent's radical proposal (the "Anti- thesis") to reduce their property taxes by transferring education funding from the local property tax to the state income tax. Thus, the change agents accomplish their ultimate goal; the transfer of funding of education from the local level to the state level. When this transfer occurs it increases state/federal control and funding, leading to the federal/internationalist goal of implementing global workforce training through the schools (the "Synthesis").<sup>5</sup>

Regarding the power of gradualism, remember the story of the frog and how he didn't save himself because he didn't realize what was happening to him? He was thrown into cold water which, in turn, was gradually heated up until finally it reached the boiling point and he was dead. This is how "gradualism" works through a series of "created crises" which utilize Hegel's dialectical process, leading us to more radical change than we would ever otherwise accept.

In the instance of "semantic deception"-do you remember your kindly principal telling you that the new decision-making program would help your child make better decisions? What good parent wouldn't want his or her child to learn how to make "good" decisions? Did you know that the decision-making program is the same controversial values clarification program recently rejected by your school board against which you may have given repeated testimony? As I've said before, the wagers of this intellectual social war have employed very effective weapons to implement their changes.

This war has, in fact, become the war to end all wars. If citizens on this planet can be brainwashed or robotized, using dumbed-down Pavlovian/Skinnerian education, to accept what those in control want, there will be no more wars. If there are no rights or wrongs, there will be no one wanting to "right" a "wrong." Robots have no conscience. The only permissible conscience will be the United Nations or a global conscience. Whether an action is good or bad will be decided by a "Global Government's Global Conscience," as recommended by Dr. Brock Chisholm, Executive Secretary of the World Health Organization, Interim Commission, in 1947-and later in 1996 by current United States Secretary of State Madeline Albright. (See p. \_\_\_ for quotes in entry under 1947.)

You may protest, "But, no one has died in this war." Is that the only criteria we have with which to measure whether war is war? The tragedy is that many Americans have died in other wars to protect the freedoms being taken away in this one. This war which produces the death of intellect and freedom is not waged by a foreign enemy but by the silent enemy in the ivory towers, in our own government, and in tax-exempt foundations-the enemy whose every move I have tried to document in this book, usually in his/her/its own words.

Ronald Havelock's change agent in-service training prepared me for what I would find in the U.S. Department of Education when I worked there from 1981-1982. The use of taxpayers' hard-earned money to fund Havelock's "Change Agent Manual" was only one out of hundreds of expensive U.S. Department of Education grants each year going everywhere, even overseas, to further the cause of internationalist "dumbing down" education (behavior modification) so necessary for the present introduction of global work force training. I was relieved of my duties after leaking an important technology grant (computer-assisted instruction proposal) to the press.

Much of this book contains quotes from government documents detailing the real purposes of American education: \* to use the schools to change America from a free, individual nation to a socialist, global "state," just one of many socialist states which will be subservient to the United Nations Charter, not the United States Constitution; \* to brainwash our children, starting at birth, to reject individualism in favor of collectivism; \* to reject high academic standards in favor of OBE/ISO 1400/90006 egalitarianism; \* to reject truth and absolutes in favor of tolerance, situational ethics and consensus; \* to reject American values in favor of internationalist values (globalism); \* to reject freedom to choose one's career in favor of the totalitarian K-12 school-to-work/OBE process, aptly named "limited learning for lifelong labor,"<sup>7</sup> coordinated through United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Only when all children in public, private and home schools are robotized-and believe as one-will World Government be acceptable to citizens and able to be implemented without firing a shot. The attractive-sounding "choice" proposals will enable the globalist elite to achieve their goal: the robotization (brainwashing) of all Americans in order to gain their acceptance of lifelong education and workforce training-part of the world management system to achieve a new global feudalism.

The socialist/fascist global workforce training agenda is being implemented as I write this book. The report to the European Commission entitled "Transatlantic Co-operation in International Education: Projects of the Handwerkskammer Koblenz with Partners in the United States and in the European Union" by Karl-Jurgen Wilbert and Bernard Eckgold (May 1997) says in part:

In June, 1994, with the support of the Handwerkskammer Koblenz, an American-German vocational education conference took place...at the University of Texas at Austin. The vocational education researchers and economic specialists...were in agreement that an economic and employment policy is necessary where a systematic vocational training is as equally important as an academic education, as a "career pathway."...The first practical steps along these lines, which are also significant from the point of view of the educational policy, were made with the vocational training of American apprentices in skilled craft companies, in the area of the Koblenz chamber. [emphasis added]

Under section "e) Scientific Assistance for the Projects," one reads:

The international projects ought to be scientifically assisted and analyzed both for the

feedback to the transatlantic dialogue on educational policy, and also for the assessment and qualitative improvement of the cross-border vocational education projects. As a result it should be made possible on the German side to set up a connection to other projects of German-American cooperation in vocational training; e.g., of the federal institute for vocational training for the project in the U.S. state of Maine. On the USA side an interlinking with other initiatives for vocational training-for example, through the Center for the Study of Human Resources at the University of Texas, Austin-would be desirable.

This particular document discusses the history of apprenticeships-especially the role of medieval guilds-and attempts to make a case for nations which heretofore have cherished liberal economic ideas-i.e., individual economic freedom-to return to a system of cooperative economic solutions (the guild system used in the Middle Ages which accepted very young children from farms and cities and trained them in "necessary" skills). Another word for this is "serfdom." Had our elected officials at the federal, state, and local levels read this document, they could never have voted in favor of socialist/fascist legislation implementing workforce training to meet the needs of the global economy. Unless, of course, they happen to support such a totalitarian economic system. (This incredible document can be accessed at the following internet address: <http://www.kwk-koblenz.de/ausland/trans-uk.doc> )

Just as Barbara Tuchman or another historian would do in writing the history of the other kinds of wars, I have identified chronologically the major battles, players, dates and places. I know that researchers and writers with far more talent than I will feel that I have neglected some key events in this war. I stand guilty on all counts, even before their well-researched charges are submitted. Yes, much of importance has been left out, due to space limitations, but the overview of the battlefields and maneuvers will give the reader an opportunity to glimpse the immensity of this conflict.

In order to win a battle one must know who the "real" enemy is. Otherwise, one is shooting in the dark and often hitting those not the least bit responsible for the mayhem. This book, hopefully, identifies the "real" enemy and provides Americans involved in this war-be they plain, ordinary citizens, elected officials, or traditional teachers-with the ammunition to fight to obtain victory.

1 Noted Soviet dissident, slave labor camp intern, and author of *The Gulag Archipelago* and numerous other books.

2 Statistics taken from *The Condition of Education, 1997*, published by the National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, NCEES 97-388. Internet address: <http://www.ed.gov/NCEES>.

3 OBE/ML/DI or outcomes-based education/mastery learning/direct instruction.

4Dean Gotcher, author of *The Dialectic & Praxis: Diaprax and the End of the Ages* and other materials dealing with dialectical consensus building and human relations training, has done some excellent work in this area of research. For more detailed information on this process, please write to Dean Gotcher of the Institution for Authority Research, 5436 S. Boston Pl., Tulsa, Oklahoma 74105, or call (918) 742-3855.

5 See Appendix \_\_\_ for an article by Tim Clem which explains this process in much more detail.

6 ISO stands for International Standards of Operation for manufacturing (9000) and human resources (1400), coordinated through the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

7 "Privatization or Socialization" by C. Weatherly, 1994. Delivered as part of a speech to a group in Minnesota



and later published in the Christian Conscience magazine (Vol. 1, No. 2: February 1995, pp. 29-30).