

Why don't THEY do something about the ----?"

If I was to make this comment whilst in the company of my father back in the 1950s his immediate response would be:- "Who's THEY and why don't YOU do something yourself by giving a possible solution instead of just going crook?"

Having been brought up under an educational system that taught the three "Rs" strictly and methodically and where we lived as best we could by the law, and just as importantly, by morals and lessons learnt through the reading from our set Queensland readers; poetry and selected short stories whilst also learning by rote the dreaded but vitally important, mental arithmetic. This being backed up by studying history - almost year by year- from a B.C. era to the then more recent times.

Geography rounded off our studies and we would be expected to know as much about our own "Land of drought and flooding rains." as we did other British Empire States and many foreign lands and their geographical surrounds. The only foreign language study of that era before year 10 consisted of Latin and Greek roots which was necessary to support our Anglo Saxon, French and German based English language studies. The undertaking of other foreign language study would only clutter up our already taxed minds.

Our ability to learn set material was regularly tested via examinations where a "PERCENTAGE GAINED" MARK WAS GIVEN on each subject so as to ensure that teachers, head teachers and parents were well aware of our scholastic efforts and abilities. A general remark made by our teacher on our progress in our studies and our personal behaviour in class was appended to our "report card" which was mandatory for sighting and signing by a parent and return to the teacher.

NOW, having given a good lead into the reason for my e-mail and in accordance with my father's wise words and commission to me all those years ago, I submit my following theory on how to formulate our education system so that it may enhance today's students' pathway to a successful future both as a responsible citizen and indeed a future employee or employer.

Firstly, I submit that students should not have to attend their schooling all the way through to year 12. A manual training type school should be further developed so as to support those students not wishing to work their way academically through years 11 and 12. Two years of ennui, studying subjects well beyond a student's scholastic ability or worse, beyond a genuine keenness to develop any sense of responsibility, can only lead to induced anti-social behaviour, and all the time being a distraction to both teacher and the genuine student who by year 10 has chosen a personal pathway to success and who, therefore, should not have their goals hindered by those whose demeanour towards stupidity is unable to be challenged let alone changed.

To thine own self be true" was Polonius's piece of advice to his son. By "true," he meant: "be loyal to your own best interests."

If it means that the government's social security budget is stretched to outside its desired limit, then so be it. Education budget money will be saved through the lesser need for such, due to fewer number of students being favoured, through studious behaviour, with an education in the two years past year 10.

The first "inch by inch" steps in an educational journey, if, "the distant goal" of a tertiary education "is to be won" is the era when "the boy is father to the man" and it must be during those years as described by Shakespeare as those during the second stage of man when "creeping like a snail unwillingly to school."

Those years, of course, are the ones of the prep school. Not all children in those tender years develop their physical or educational skills at an equal rate as their peers. Age should not be a criteria for advancement. A child will show through easy observation by a dedicated teacher, in liaison with both head master and parent, that one year of prep school learning is sufficient to advance him or her to year one of primary school, whereas others will show the need for two years guidance before they continue their educational journey. This criteria is critical, as a child who is not aided by diligent observation on such guidelines will always be at least one year behind peers, in learning ability, as the journeys through primary school is undertaken.

In digression, but of most importance, the most "unkindness cut" to a child is to trot him or her off to school too soon merely to have them "out from under a parent's feet" merely for selfish and self-serving reasons. Incomes earned by having a child "out of ones care and supervision" during working hours is money badly and unwisely earned. Governments of today, through their often ill thought through policies generally support parents financially in this regard.

However, back to my early schooling years educational theories. After about year two it can be easily assessed, once again through the EXAMINATION and PERCENTAGE GAINED per subject system, where a student's educational position amongst peers lies. I submit that by year three, classes be divided into two divisions, say A and B.

An "A" student class to consist of those who show that they are well able to achieve desired goals, and the "B" class consist of those who are well deserving, and in many cases, need a more concentrated effort in learning help.

A deserving child in the class "B" will often, through extra help both at home and at school, be able to advance to the "A" class. It follows that those in the "A" class who are not advancing satisfactorily be given the opportunity of the more concentrated teaching style afforded to a class "B" student.

This guideline is far beyond my year 10 (the former secondary school Junior) level to be able to formalise and so I leave that to the more learned and experienced persons to tackle.

In conclusion and with the satisfaction in having heeded my father's commission to me by "doing something myself" towards benefiting a good and just cause whilst also by giving my full support to AFA (Qld) with its own "Qld must fast-track external pen-and-paper exams like the other States." submission to the government in response to the ACER review.

I remain,

yours in a joint wish for a "smart state" educational program which is for the benefit of our children and not merely for a balanced budget.

Alan Phillips Macgregor