

Public Schools: The Sorcerer's New Apprentice - Part 4

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In Parts 1 and 2 of this series I have asserted that there are a number of endemic New Age religions and problematic psychotherapeutic strategies and curricula widespread in public schools today that are fraught with illegalities, are ineffective and can be harmful to the student.

In Part 3, I described the religious philosophy of the New Age Movement and how many educators are unknowingly implementing these strategies as well as how some prominent and influential educators who are personally involved in the new age, are calculated in their attempts to disguise their use.

The use of these programs is not isolated but can be shown to be a systematized effort of implementing these approaches, claiming to be the solution for problem behaviors and declining academic performance. These programs began to be somewhat public in 1984 through public testimony before the U.S. Department of Education.

Parents revealed that their children had been exposed in the classroom to practices such as meditation, yoga, astral projection, ESP, hypnosis, astrology, occult games and even spirit guides. This led to the adoption of the Protection of Public Rights Act, also known as Hatch Act.

The Hatch Act applied only to federally funded programs and restricted exposure to children of "unproven teaching methods or techniques" as well as psychiatric or psychological examinations or tests which could violate privacy issues, without informed parental consent. Unfortunately the Act was just vague enough that no one ever enforced it. I will cover more on the legal issues in a later part in this series.

In an effort to illustrate the various expressions of the objectionable curricula as well as to demonstrate how widespread it is, I will list a number of examples.

Example 1: My first exposure to this issue came through the May 1, 1988 issue of the New York Times Magazine, featuring "Colorado's Thriving Cults" on the cover. While detailing the permeation of new age religious influences in that state, it affirmed that "meditational techniques have become common fare in the states public and private schools".

It noted that parents' groups were protesting the encroachment of new age practices in the schools, notably in the 2nd and 3rd grade. The article summarized the basic strategies, which can be found all over the county, "many Colorado schools utilize practices adapted from Eastern meditation under the rubrics of 'centering', 'stress reduction', or 'guided visualization', usually with the aim of enhancing students' self esteem and creativity, or presenting an alternative to alcohol and drugs".

Example 2: In 1989 at parents' request we investigated and found in Huntsville, Alabama, young elementary school children were subjected to two mandatory guidance counseling programs, "Visual Thinking: A Scamper Tool for useful Imaging" and "Peace, Harmony, and Awareness", an APPLE curriculum.

In both programs the children were led through "relaxation techniques" which are standard induction methods for meditation/hypnosis, and while possibly in an altered state were then led to meet a "wise person" or an all knowing "white rabbit" in their minds in order to get wise counsel.

Example 3: We also discovered a health program (Teenage Health Teaching Module, THTM) funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for use in grades 9-12, with a section titled "Handling Stress". In it we found again standard meditation/hypnosis induction techniques, explicitly labeled "autogenics", and a form of yogic alternative nostril breathing.

Proponents typically claim that the best way to deal with stress is to condition oneself to escape through the drugless drug of meditation. Also under the section "Violence Prevention" students are advised that some of the acceptable ways to deal with anger include having sex, slamming doors, locking yourself in your room, creaming, meditating, eating, and throwing things that can't be broken.

Example 4: Two of the most popular self-esteem curricula circulating in the U.S. are Pumsy (the dragon) and DUSO (the dolphin). Pumsy's promoters claim that it is in over 40% of public schools.

Pumsy and DUSO have been challenged by parents groups in a number of places including Lee's Summit, Missouri; Jefferson City, Missouri, Jacksonville, Florida, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Putnam, Oklahoma, and Birmingham, Alabama, just to name a few. In most cases they were removed by the local school boards.

Both programs involve inductive progressive relaxation exercises, fantasy trips, and counseling from these imaginary friends. Because of DUSO, the New Mexico senate passed a resolution calling for the elimination of psychological or mind altering techniques in schools.

Example 5: In 1992 Picayune, Mississippi began implementing Suggestive Accelerative Learning and Teaching Technique (SALTT) in its elementary schools. SALTT was developed by Bulgarian hypnotist/psychotherapist George Lozanov. Included in the program is hypnosis/meditation, using a cover name, "mind mapping".

The National Academy of Science conducted a major study in 1988 on programs purporting to enhance performance and criticized SALTT stating "after 10 years of informed research there is little scientific support even for the mild claims." The Academy revealed that independent evaluations do not support its claims of enhancing performance.

Example 6: In Oregon, "Coping with kids" caused a furor and after the district review committee scrutinized the evidence surrounding 28 "stress control" taped exercises, it suspended the curriculum stating it was "borderline religious, questionable, and inappropriate".

Example 7: Many school textbooks, especially the health books have significant problems. I appeared to testify before the Alabama State Textbook Committee after reviewing 4 health textbooks and 2 home economics textbooks. I reported discovering the same pattern of promoting Eastern religious practices (New Age) such as progressive relaxation, visualization, guided imagery meditation, yoga, and autogenics or hypnosis. For example, twenty pages of *Health: Choosing Wellness* were devoted to teaching the same techniques as above.

Example 8: Waldorf Schools have been springing up all over the country, especially through Charter School programs. Waldorf Schools were founded and receive their direction from the late occultist and spiritist Rudolf Steiner. Steiner's occult religious principles are known as Anthroposophy.

Example 9: Colleges and Universities are full of these programs. Several liberal arts colleges including a fairly conservative Christian college in Mississippi were found to be requiring freshmen to take a class and textbook, *Becoming a Master Student* by est promoter David Ellis. The text includes a number of transcendental meditation techniques and

overt new age philosophy. The section on health promotes such quack new age techniques as iridology, reflexology, and psychic healing.

Also one will frequently be exposed to college courses on Tai Chi, the meditation exercise/prayer form of Taoism, and yoga.

Example 10: In May of 1999 a number of San Antonio Texas parents, after being stonewalled and rebuffed repeatedly by the local educational establishment on their concerns, filed a suit against the school district. They were represented by the Texas Justice Foundation.

Their children were given personally intrusive psychological surveys, which the parents maintained violated Constitutional privacy acts, not to mention the Hatch Amendment. The parents prevailed as the federal judge delivered a final judgement severely restricting the intrusive activities of the schools (see <http://www.txjf.org/pr/student.html>).

Example 11: Two Roman Catholic parents courageously challenged the school district in Westchester County New York for introducing students to a host of new age occult practices. Under the guise of multicultural studies the students were led to build an altar and bring offerings to a Hindu god, Ganesha. The school led the students in using the occult fantasy game Magic, the Gathering, taught yoga, received a lecture about how to use crystal to experience enhanced energy, learned meditation techniques, used occult "worry dolls", and even took the children to a cemetery to lie down on the graves, and to recite prayers to the Mother Earth.

After being subjected to much harassment and public ridicule, on May 22, 1999, the mothers finally won a partial victory in court. The judge ruled that the district had violated the students' First Amendment rights, upholding 3 of the 15 claims. He said the district promoted Satanic rituals and cult worship and impermissibly mixed religion into school curriculum, ordering teachers to cease using lessons that incorporate religious symbols or routines.

The following are some specific programs that contain either new age precepts or practices of new age transpersonal psychotherapeutic techniques used around the country. I hesitate to give a list as (1) it is not exhaustive, and (2) there are many more with different names. So do not assume if you do not see the program listed that your child's school is using, it is safe.

Bridges

Choosing Wellness (by Prentice Hall)

Coping with Kids

Coping with Stress

DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education)

Delphi Foundation Institute

Discipline with Dignity

Discovery Skills for Life

Dungeons and Dragons

Flexing your Test Muscles

Flights of Fantasy

Free the Horses (Active Parenting)

Get Set

Green Circle Program

Growing Healthy

Health: A Wellness Approach (by Merril Publishing)

Heart to Heart
HeartMath
Here's Looking at You
Holistic Learning
Impressions
Integrated Thematic Instruction
Know Your Body
Kreative Kids
Letting Go of Stress
Life Education Centre
Mac's Choice
Magick
Michigan Model for Comprehensive Health Education
PALS
Peaceworks
Positive Action
Project Aware
Project Rainbow
Project Strain
Quest
S.O.A.R.
Self Concept
Small World: Chinese
SOS (Strengthening of Skills)
Tactics for Thinking
TAD (Toward Affective Development)
The Centered Student
Visual Thinking: A Scamper Tool
Waldorf Schools
Whole Mind Learning
Wizards
Workshop Way
Yoga Program

It is best to learn how to recognize the techniques and strategies so you can effectively evaluate your children's programs.

This will be covered in part 5 of this series. You are urged to obtain a copy of our book, *Public Schools: The Sorcerer's New Apprentice*, written by John Ankerberg, John Weldon and myself for a suggested donation of \$12 plus \$3 postage. Go to my website at www.apologeticsresctr.org, or contact us at Apologetics Resource Center, PO Box 531204, Birmingham, AL 35253.