



Virtues into vices

Are you failing to prepare your children for a life of drudgery by educating them in interesting and exciting ways? That's what delegates of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers apparently believe ¹

The teaching profession, it seems, has finally accepted that they are boring their pupils into a stupor, but rather than find more interesting ways of educating them they have embraced the concept of boredom as a positive feature of a modern education.

So, hands up all those parents who intend to make their home education as boring as possible as a matter of educational philosophy. Can we expect LAs to say to us "your lessons are far too interesting, so you have failed to provide a suitable education that fits your child for a life in modern society?"

Delegates of the AT&L lined up at their annual conference to proclaim that it was good for children to be bored in their lessons so as to prepare them for a life of work. One delegate, the aptly named Zoe Fail, said, to loud cheers of approval, "I don't have the energy to do all-singing all-dancing lessons every day, five-days-a-week."

Barry Williams said, "...people just don't understand the nuances and subtleties of my lessons... When they say to me: 'Mr Williams, that girl is looking out of the window staring at a tree,' I ask them: 'Do they not recognise the advanced stages of Zen Buddhism which I have brought into my lessons?'"

Perhaps teachers' expectations that their pupils face a life-time of boredom reflect more on teachers' appraisal of their own working lives than on the real world. The teaching profession it seems are engaged in Orwellian double speak: creating virtues out of their failings.

On a more serious note, this attempt at excusing the inexcusable seems to me to be closely related to the way many schools react to a wide range of problems, including serious bullying. Too many schools that fail to protect their pupils comfort themselves with such as ideas as 'some bullying is good for children to toughen them up'.

Teachers of course deny that pupil bullying is being hushed up but in a report in The Guardian last April 1 (and no its not a joke) teachers are the first to openly charge schools with hiding bullying when it is perpetrated against teachers.

No matter what teachers try to tell us, parents know that neither boredom nor fear are suitable as educational tools.

¹ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/boring-lessons-are-preparation-for-life-474114.html>