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Resolving Canada's crisis in education

Education in Canada is in a crisis. The crisis is national in scope—even international. Therefore the solutions will have to be broader than the jurisdiction over education given by the Constitution to the provinces.

The worst of the crisis is at the post-secondary level, but because the universities train our elementary and secondary teachers — and our lawyers (who become our judges) and journalists — the effect is felt throughout the educational system and throughout society.

The crisis is ideological, but the effects are intellectual, moral, and economic.

The cause and shape of the crisis was brilliantly introduced in 1980 by Canadian educator Dr. Kathleen Gow in her exposé of “values clarification” in her book *Yes, Virginia, There is Right and Wrong*.

That was followed by the late Professor Allan Bloom in his seminal 1987 book *The Closing of the American Mind*.

Then came Dinesh D'Sousa's 1992 exposé of Political Correctness on campus *Illiberal Education* and Martin Anderson's *Impostors in the Temple* in that same year, and in 1993 William Kilpatrick's penetrating *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong*, in which he stated “Educational fads come and go, but some stay long enough to do substantial harm.”

Those books were followed by Roger Kimball's *Tenured Radicals* and *Shadow University* by Professors Alan Charles Kors and Harvey Silvergate, both published in 1998.

These books, all by serious academics, take several different approaches — from the corrupting influence of “values clarification” and the anti-intellectualism of

postmodernism, to the violation of students' civil rights and intellectual freedoms by tenured 1960s-era radical professors. But they all have two things in common: they all warn of the corrupting influence of the illiberal education Establishment — and they were all ignored by that same Establishment.

Over the years, the education Establishment, lavishly funded by the federal governments of Canada and the USA, has built itself into an almost unassailable fortress. From that fortress, it has resolutely attacked the foundations of morality and civic responsibility upon which this nation and western civilization were founded and built.

Students who dare to think for themselves are ridiculed, and their grades are slashed; those who conform to the rebellious 1960s ethic of “flower power” win the professors' approval — and become Teaching Assistants who perpetuate the disinformation while the tenured professors do research, lecturing and writing. Some, like Gerald Hanlon of Ryerson, supplement their salaries by prostitution.

The politically correct atmosphere on university campuses has many sacred cows: killing you baby is a “right”; homosexuality is described as “normal” and a “civil right”; business, free enterprise and capitalism are “bad”; western civilization is “racist, oppressive, patriarchal and just dead wrong”; socialism, communism and rebellion are “progressive”. And so on and on and on...

Alan Bloom, who was still teaching philosophy at the University of Chicago when *The Closing of the American Mind* was published, said there is only one thing a professor can be sure of as he faces his freshman class: almost every one of them has been taught to believe that there are no absolutes — **absolutely not!** To them, “tolerance” is the only real virtue — and they **will not tolerate** being told that there are any other virtues!

It's absolutely imperative that Canadians understand that unless this anti-intellectual stronghold over "education" is broken, Canadian society and western civilization ***will not survive***.

How can the stranglehold of political correctness and postmodernism be broken? The best answer is to find a way to stimulate true academic freedom, in place of the fake variety that now dominates the nation's campuses. And the best path towards that goal is through the introduction of free-market economics into the fiefdoms of academe.

Because the Constitution gives provinces jurisdiction over education, the federal government cannot legislate a change — even if we had a government that understood the problem and/or cared, which none of the parties now in Parliament seem able to do.

However, because the provinces have already agreed to accept about 50 percent federal funding of elementary and secondary education, and nearly 80 percent of post-secondary education, the federal government can accomplish a significant change merely by altering the

mechanism for delivery of those funds: by giving education vouchers to the parents of elementary and secondary students, and to students themselves for post-secondary education (including technical and trades training and apprenticeship).

The "consumers" of education could then direct those funds to the schools that will provide an education they — the parents and students — consider worthwhile.

Under such a regime, many parents and students would choose private (and most often Christian) education; since the funds would be going directly to the students and their parents, their governments could not mandate anti-social courses, such as the study of "intergenerational sex", anti-Christian bigotry and revisionist history... and schools would find that such programs would no longer be useful. Indeed, the continuation of the pap that dominates most of the "soft" sciences would threaten the survival of those schools.

And that would be a good thing.