



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on May 30, 2026

Soul Killers in the Classroom

There has been much talk in recent years about “misinformation” on social media. There’s relatively little focus, however, on the misinformation pumped directly into the most damaging place of all: young people’s minds. Moreover, this misinformation — or “brainwashing,” as a critic puts it — has supplanted real learning to the point where youths now lack basic skills. A major reason why, too, is that while some proclaim “wokeness” death, it’s alive and well. And this is because, says that critic, independent journalist Emil Hasle, wokeness-mind-virus carriers pervade American education.



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Publishing at Substack last Sunday, the journalist laments a decades-long ideological transformation in Western education, [writing](#):

Conservatives have become vanishingly rare in academia, and even moderates now find themselves marginalized as a fringe group. [Data on U.S. faculty ideology from 1969 to 2022](#) illustrates this shift dramatically: the share of liberals and far-left educators rose from 45% to 74%, while centrists declined to 15% and conservatives to just 11%.

The linked source also provides an even more striking finding. More “faculty identify as ‘far left’ or ‘very liberal,’” it relates, “than with any position right of center.”

In truth, though, even this understates the case, as the above statistics rely on *self-identification*. This matters because many self-proclaimed “centrists” (or “moderates”) are actually self-referential liberals who mistake their own views for consensus-opinion reality.

Moreover, “conservatives” are too often those espousing yesterday’s liberalism. For “progressives ... go on making mistakes,” as G.K. Chesterton observed. Meanwhile, the “business of Conservatives is to prevent mistakes from being corrected.”

The result is an ideologically monolithic academia that delivers dark dogmas at fundamentals’ expense. This has bred students both ignorant and indoctrinated, a toxic mix.

(Apropos of this, hundreds of University of California professors have signed [an open letter urging the re-embrace of standardized-testing admissions](#). The issue? Some *STEM majors* are now so unprepared that they don’t even know *middle-school math*.)

The Soul-stealing Process

This “higher-education” rot long ago filtered down into secondary and primary schooling as well. This manifests, Hasle tells us,

in public school curricula through programs rooted in updated Marxist frameworks.



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Traditional Marxism divided society by economic class into oppressors and oppressed. Contemporary versions in schools divide children by race, gender, identity, and perceived privilege. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) initiatives, for instance, encourage students to interpret common everyday interactions, through lenses of systemic oppression and activism. Critics such as James Lindsay and Christopher Rufo have described SEL as a “Trojan horse” for these marxist [sic] theories, training children to view normal behaviors or feelings as markers of privilege or oppression and urging them toward premature political activism.

The result of this is typified by striking anecdotes courtesy of the Manhattan Institute. As the organization [informed](#) in 2021:

“Kids are very aggressive now in their views, and pushing kids to other views,” one New York parent said of his child’s school, adding that “if you’re not with us, you’re against us, and you’re the problem.” “They are making my son feel like a racist because of the pigmentation of his skin,” one mother said of her son’s experience at a Los Angeles-area prep school. Teachers in North Carolina’s Wake County Public School System, facing this kind of pushback, were told to ignore it as a sign of “white parents” finding it “hard to let go of power [and] privilege.”

Another result has been children who let go of (disown) parents, [as I documented in 2021](#). One example:

“You are no longer my mother, because you are voting for Trump,” Reuters related lifelong Democrat Mayra Gomez, 41, as having been told by her 21-year-old son last year [2020].

This is all enabled, too, by a relativism allowing leftists to accept bizarre contradictions. For instance, cultural devolutionaries will routinely impugn Western civilization as fundamentally flawed. They’ll then, however, turn around and defend “noble savage” brutality. A good example occurred in 2025 when a wokester history teacher defended Inca child sacrifice as “kind.” And if you find this claim outrageous, it’s because you were handicapped with a [“quite white”](#) education.

Then there’s ubiquitous “gender ideology” as well. It holds that your perception of what you are — your “gender” — places you on a “gender spectrum.” This subjective, feelings-born determination must take precedence over your “sex,” too, something that’s plainly objective. The consequences of indoctrinating schoolchildren with this are everywhere. As I [wrote in 2023](#), providing an example:

“In junior high they’d (the kids would) come home saying they wouldn’t say the Pledge of Allegiance anymore,” one mother related. “They told me boy and girl bathrooms were wrong and they should all be gender neutral. That’s how it started.”

(Critics may disagree, saying that “how it started” was when the parent decided to send her children to government school.)

And there are even more shocking examples. There’s the Canadian academic who researches “queer- and trans-centered spaces.” He often collaborates “with young children,” [writes](#) Hasle, “including his



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own ‘non-binary ten year old.’” Then there is a teacher called “Debra.” He “filmed himself announcing a personal gender transition to a class, demanding new pronouns and a new name,” the author further relates.

Dogma’d Up and Dumbed Down

Really, though, the examples are endless. And the academic consequences are stark. As the Substack commentator also informs:

According to the [National Assessment of Educational Progress](#) (NAEP) in 2024, 40% of fourth graders and roughly one-third of eighth graders performed below basic reading levels. Only 23% of fourth graders and 26% of eighth graders reached proficiency. These figures reflect a systemic failure in teaching foundational skills, even as teachers pursue other priorities.

All this is depressing and quite tragic. And what’s the solution? That, and the fact that this educational corruption is nothing new, was revealed by the aforementioned Chesterton in 1910. As he [wrote](#) in *What’s Wrong With the World*:

The trouble in too many of our modern schools is that the State, being controlled so specially by the few, allows cranks and experiments to go straight to the schoolroom when they have never passed through the Parliament, the public house, the private house, the church, or the marketplace. Obviously, it ought to be the oldest things that are taught to the youngest people; the assured and experienced truths that are put first to the baby. But in a school to-day the baby has to submit to a system that is younger than himself. The flopping infant of four actually has more experience, and has weathered the world longer, than the dogma to which he is made to submit.

It “ought to be the oldest things that are taught to the youngest people.” What Chesterton really meant is that the *eternal* things ought to be taught to the young. Today, though, wallowing in relativism and its attendant moral confusion, people are chronological chauvinists. They *feel* that if something appears new, it must be better.

The solution is a return to tradition, to a belief in Truth (transcendent by definition) and all that it implies. This means resurrecting virtue-based education (virtues being “objectively good moral habits”), one of the things that made the West great.

This, mind you, is happening *to an extent* in America’s more traditional region, the South. Mississippi, for instance, a state oft mocked by urban arts-and-croissant pseudo-sophisticates, leads the post-Covid educational recovery. It [has gone from 49th to seventh nationally](#) in fourth-grade reading scores — despite still being our poorest state.

This rise has been made easier, however, because American education is in such a poor state. And until we muster up the guts and humility to return to the “old” ways, nothing will change for the better.



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