

## **Editorial: Remembering We Are Right**

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This issue was in production during Covid Times: a period of weirdness, health concerns, difficulty, sadness, thoughtfulness, newness, responsibility and wondering. For my own part I have of course noticed the world suddenly swinging as though on a rope-swing hung from a tree straight into the alternative education camp. Boom: Government directive to go alternative: to avoid attending state schooling and do things differently. Did I say these were weird times?

Naturally there is all kinds of complexity around how alternative the response has been in practice and in spirit—answer: evolving. What this “new alternative” means when establishment-mainstream adherents are suddenly forced out of their comfort zone is a bright, shining question for us all. I’m pretty sure few people have ideas about a good starting point for such discussions.

Personally, despite imagining I’ve been immersed in alternative education know-how for the past 12 or so years, with a specialism in home education to boot, the reality of my school-choosing son suddenly being at home for months, as if my home educating dream for him were reality, has been somewhat sobering. One cannot, I believe, do alternative education particularly successfully if one does it halfway or half-heartedly. My husband kept talking about school work needing to be done. We found ourselves sitting down with school provided worksheets....Furthermore, given my son wishes to return to school when it is possible, I have to navigate between the standards they will expect and what is increasingly clearly his all-consuming love of playing and narratives. So my discourse with him is something like a parent to child reality check: “these are your choices darling, so these are the requirements.” It has not been and will not be the home education dream. Just a relatively beautiful pause.

It is very much worth mentioning nevertheless strange awakenings. My son, previously disappointingly focused on TV in particular, has been approaching me. He is there, suddenly in my face, as I wash the dishes, demanding I show him how to do science experiments. Now would be ok, mum. Right now. Of course the next and desired educational phases as far as am concerned—in this dream world of education that will never come—involve him telling me how he researched how to do these experiments, him getting the gear together to achieve the experiments and pricing out costs for materials, him deciding by himself to create some kind of results log and then, eventually, his delight when he gets a result which surprises him

amongst weeks of deliberations of an increasingly accurate and precisely scientific kind. He's eight. He's been schooled. It ain't gonna happen in a brief Covid induced pause of schooling: these things require a new way of life in the long term. But, I've never had before a moment where he hassles me for learning. So, I can report that I am now believing in myself and all the theories about home education that I understand to be true from the testimonies of other home educators further down the line of practical experience than I am. They say it takes a while for detox from school. Tick. They say the curiosity eventually emerges—from the blue—as though the child were never squashed and disappointed. Tick. They say that the force of a child to want to learn is irrepressible. Tick. To say I'm thrilled that the home education story is coming-seeming-true in my life, his life, even in a small way, is a big understatement. I'm in delighted shock. Someone, as I write this, has tuned into the Kahn Academy video based computing course on programming and is listening to an explanation of how to create and move a coded circle across a web page. Oh my. Did I say he was eight and I'd thought he was school-induced brain dead?

Home education is about fitting the kid. Or the kid fitting education to themselves. I'm hearing it happen. If schools could allow this...

Many families are (have been?-we don't know the Covid story in full...) embracing the home educating paradigm of covid-times. Many families have all parental parties on board and the children too. Even, I notice via social media, some grandparents are seeing, suddenly, the sense of freedom in education. Seeing is believing. Seeing is right now possible, month after month. Never before have we had such an opportunity so en-masse. Going back to the previous status-quo? It won't be the same. I do believe people are discovering education in new ways due to this global pandemic.

It seems home education is an education with its own pedagogical reality that is not family dependent education but is *education as science*. Time will provide us with further lessons—and thus scientific proof beyond our current store (see, e.g., <http://www.icher.org/>)—of covid home educating beginners who found it to be valid and reliable scientific pedagogy. There needs to be some decent research money to understand home education. To build on the significant body of work already achieved.

This issue of Other Education looks in its wonderfully curated special issue at Collective Memory Work (CMW). There'll be some memories of these 2020+ days to collect. A fascinating and important research method, CMW pulls apart the idea of research and re-sews it around what is personal about meaning. To include the otherwise excluded when it comes to meaning-making, such as women. I like it! It's a way of doing science that is less recognised as scientific but what is unscientific about personal meaning when it affects how lives are lived? Discuss...

I draw your attention to the updated mega paper that has been one of the most popular—if not the most popular—article ever published by *Other Education*. A blockbuster of brilliance by Kunzman and Gaither. Also about home education and highly pertinent to current questions about what is valid home education—what deserves the name—are two important articles by Coleman and McCracken looking at home education practices in Alaska: a region where home education is experienced via correspondence courses. We give you also the Other Contributions section and Book Reviews. Forthcoming in future issues of *Other Education* will be a new section on Arts and Poetry linked to education. If you have anything to offer this section, please get in touch.

Something alternative is being allowed to happen to education right now. It's not all bad in times of crisis.

Stay safe.

Helen



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