

Educational Methods Encouraging Critical Thinking Versus Covert Methods of Inducing Obedience to “Authority”

By [Carla Stea](#)

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*The venue of **SXSW EDU 2023** was gargantuan, and the scheduled list of subjects and speakers was overwhelming. Undoubtedly, the great attraction of this years’ conference were the “Superstar Siblings,” **Doreen Nelson** and her brother, the world renowned architect, **Frank Gehry**, the Keynote Speakers on March 7, introducing Doreen Nelson’s “Design-based Learning Unwrapped: Build Our Future.”*

Doreen is the recipient of multiple honors awarding her innovative approach to education, “based on learning by doing in the spatial domain, allowing students to create physical artifacts and design solutions to content-related problems, fostering higher level thinking skills, agile decision-making, and the ability to apply concepts across the curriculum through self-expression.”

Doreen and her brother Frank dazzled the huge audience with their fearless repudiation of dogmatic approaches, and their courageous “defiance of authority.”

Although initially Doreen’s pathbreaking approach to education appalled the status-quo “education” authorities, whom Doreen courageously denounced for their stultifying methods of teaching, (they retaliated with personal attacks on Doreen, herself), she was indefatigable, and her new approach to pedagogy was eventually adopted, and, indeed, internationally honored.

Frank Gehry had a similar career trajectory, with his earliest architectural works breaking traditional rules, and eliciting much controversy, but he remained undaunted, and achieved world renown for his creation of a new style of architecture, breaking decrepit traditional molds, and freeing the entire profession from crushing dogmatic confinement. Both Doreen

and Frank were totally unpretentious, and boldly fearless in their inspiring defiance of authority, enabling them both to create new and crucially needed approaches to education and architecture.

By contrast, another of the most important and provocative meetings on March 6th was a panel discussion entitled: “Are Smartphones the Next Teen Addiction Crisis?,” featuring **Dr. Jim Winston, Dr. Kelley Brill, and Dr. Rosa Li.**

Dr. Winston has treated multiple forms of addiction, including alcoholism, drug addiction, etc., and he described the current obsession with “smartphones” as an addiction which actually damages brain development in very young children and adolescents. Most alarming is the process by which the “smartphone” addiction destroys the young brain’s capacity for critical thinking and judgement, preventing the development of prefrontal cortex brain function, the part of the brain which determines the capacity for judgement and critical thinking. Significantly, Dr. Winston stated that he does not permit his young children to use these “smartphones.”

The inevitable consequence of this destruction of crucial areas of brain development in very young children and adolescents guarantees a docile, submissive and obedient personality in the adult, which results in an adult population alarmingly vulnerable to control by the designers of these “smartphone” programs, which are also designed to convey the messages which the designers want accepted by the larger population, in reality subtly enforcing conformity upon an unwitting population.

Dr. Winston also emphasized that there is great financial profit reaped by the designers of these programs, while the consumers are virtually victims of a form of control about which they remain essentially unaware. Though many oligarchs and so-called “philanthropists” have spoken ecstatically about the opportunities the worldwide distribution of these phones will made available to people in the most destitute areas of the world, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America, hidden in this enthusiastic “philanthropic” welcome for smartphones are the opportunities for controlling these destitute populations by rendering them actually psychologically and physically addicted to these phones, and to any and all “messages” (or propaganda) spread by the designers of the programs of the smartphones. These designs are intended to promote the interests of the oligarchy which commissions them, not the interest of the otherwise destitute users of these addictive devices. This addiction to smartphones ultimately makes possible – indeed inevitable, the control of the actual thought processes and behavior of the addicted user.

The implications of this covert method of population control, through inducing addiction to these smartphone devices, from childhood through adulthood, are terrifying.

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