

Opinion

Our View

Education is not one size fits all

In a perfect world every student that walked the halls of any school or college would have the ability to learn, process and understand information the same way. But we do not live in a perfect world and education is not black and white.

Academia has changed drastically throughout the years, but we still have a long way to go. Elementary classrooms are filled with students who are at very different reading and comprehension levels but are in the same grade. Higher education still requires general courses that do not necessarily connect to the students interests or major, and the class sizes in these general courses often require stadium seating. So how is a teacher supposed to teach each individual and meet their needs? How is a professor supposed to inspire an uninterested student?

Our current system runs as a one-size-fits-all program. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out this is not a good system. However, far too often it's the teachers who are getting blamed when a student isn't progressing at the level that has been mandated for a certain age group. Maybe we need to stop pointing fingers at our teachers and take a closer look at how we're educating students and more importantly, why we are continuing with a process that doesn't seem to be working anymore.

During the last 20 years or so studies have shown there has been an increase in dyslexia diagnoses as well as ADHD. That is not to say there is necessarily an increase in these conditions, only we are now learning more about them and diagnosing them correctly. In addition, there has also been studies that suggest schools are created with the extroverted student in mind, not the introverted. The good news is teachers themselves are becoming more and more aware of this and overall have made changes to their classrooms for accommodations and in some cases are even getting support to help with students who have different learning needs. The bad news, they are still required to teach from a mandated curriculum that still functions as a one-size-fits-all format. There might be some freedom in certain situations, but overall testing and exams are still done in an archaic format that does not necessarily show an accurate depiction of progress in the student.

For centuries, students who do not fit the "norm" of education have had to fumble their way through the education system all the while believing they are stupid and unteachable. For some, it's so discouraging they make the decision to not continue their education. In reality, these are the students who we should be learning from. Different learning styles are starting to show themselves; it's time we start paying attention.

Letters policy

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Tangle of lies could end democracy

Day after day, we Americans are living in a chaotic tangle of lies and delusions that imperil American democracy.

Bloated prevarication is, in large part, the thriving toxic legacy cultivated by Donald Trump, who has told more than 20,000 provable lies – big and small – during his tenure as president.

The bigger the lie, the more it's believed – hook, line, sinker. The following are just some of the lies that many still cherish:

Early lies: Barack O'Bama wasn't born in America; he is a secret Muslim; his ObamaCare is a "trainwreck" that will take this country down to tatters. Man-made climate change is just fake news.

Later lies: The biggest? The election was stolen, and we know because Donald tells us so. Did you know that one cause of fraud was an Italian satellite that beamed down to machines in polling places to steal Trump votes?

Republican-majority state legislatures are busier than bees passing voting-suppression laws, using as an excuse another big lie – to make elections secure from rampant voter fraud. Yeah, un-hunh, tell us another one!

Mike "Pillow Guy" Lindell staged a rally at which he promised to deliver proof of the stolen election. Oops. No proof surfaced. It was because of computers on the fritz or faulty wiring at Lindell's rally hall or . . . or . . . something.

Covid was a hoax. More fake news. Many believe hospital officials would write down "Covid" as the cause of death when, in fact, the deceased really died of

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heart attacks, car accidents or whatever. Tragically, so many anti-vaxxers are themselves now learning the hard way, the terminal way.

We've heard that masks are a means of control by sinister forces, like communist-socialist-radicals, not to mention devious Democrats. True Americans stomp on masks and even harangue or punch anyone who asks them to wear one. Such anti-maskers fancy themselves freedom fighters.

Vaccinations will cause people to die later or turn into reptiles or – worse – Democrats. Whatever comes first. And hey, get this!, vaccines contain microchips so "they" (evil ones) can keep track of us.

Some medicines, like horse de-worming concoctions, are good for us. But the Deep-State scoundrels keep pushing vaccines because they want people to die from them in order to keep their Covid hoax alive.

We hear time and again "The Donald" is a genius businessman, and that is why he was such a great president. All that talk about bankruptcies, cheating on taxes, phony foundations, stiffing contractors – just a bunch of baloney.

Some lies change like chameleons. An-

ti-fascists perpetrated the violence at our nation's Capitol. Oops. Nope. They were loving, cop-hugging peaceniks. Rewind that tape, please. Oops. The lies grew more desperate, with some in Congress claiming the "ralliers" were just like tourists strolling around in Capitol hallways. The current whopper? Those folks are patriots being persecuted by crooked functionaries (aka Democrats) – you know, the ones in Satan's cabal who drink babies' blood. We know because Qanon tells us so.

About a third of Americans – maybe more – have come to prefer flashy lies to plain facts. Lies are more entertaining, and besides you darned well know that what's reported by the "lamestream media" are lies and so what they don't report must be true. That's why they ignored the "facts" about Hillary's sex-trafficking of children at a pizza joint. Big cover-up. So they tell us.

Now Texas Gov. Greg Abbott tells us rape will be "eliminated" from that state. Lie or delusion? Doesn't matter. It's his way of countering outrage about an abortion ban, even in cases of rape or incest. Is Texas going to eliminate incest too? Or just wish it away?

Democracies wither and die when a critical mass of the electorate prefers preposterous conspiracy theories, lies and delusions rather than facts. Some day, we just might find ourselves living in a world imagined by George Orwell in his dystopian novel, "1984," in which the characters know (of course!) that 2 plus 2 equals 5. Yes it does! Because "Big Brother" tells us so.

National debt shouldn't be a political football

It seems like every few months, we have to listen to another crisis in Washington, D.C., about the debt limit and potential U.S. federal government shutdowns. There is last-minute negotiations, breathless news coverage and the risk of millions of government employees being furloughed and billions of dollars in government activity grinding to a halt. Usually these crises are averted at the last possible second, but this isn't something that's safe or reliable to count on. The situation shouldn't be this way, and playing political games like this risks the health of our economy and the financial security of future generations of Americans.

To start with, it's a terrible development that the debt limit and using it to threaten a government shutdown has become a political football. There are consequences to the federal government shutting down that go far beyond hurting the opposing political party or stopping programs one doesn't like. By definition, the debt limit controls how much money the government can borrow to cover its bills. As long as the U.S. government is spending more money than it's taking in, which it has been for decades under both Republican and Democratic presidents, not extending the debt limit creates the risk of the U.S. defaulting on loans it already has outstanding.

By defaulting on loans, the federal government would hurt its credit rating, which would make it harder and more expensive for it to borrow needed money in the future. Millions of federal work-

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ers across the country and their families would be left in limbo as jobs would be furloughed. Government programs that affect millions across the country would be stopped, or severely affected as the government goes into a shutdown mode. It would also set off a chain reaction that would hurt the entire economy, which is why business leaders have been lobbying Republican Senate Leader Mitch McConnell to plead for his caucus to not block a debt-limit increase. There is no win for anyone in creating a government shutdown and default for the federal government.

Why do we have this problem? Because the U.S. federal government has a terrible and inconsistent system of passing budgets and funding. The last full annual budget passed in the United States was in 2009 after President Obama first took office. Since then we've been operating solely on continuing resolutions and temporary funding measures. There are not the same measures of accountability and process to ensure a full budget is passed like there are in other parts of the world, or even in parts of the United States.

For example, in Minnesota, the state legislature must pass a two-year budget

in the first year of the state legislative term or else the government shuts down. With this hard deadline in place, a budget is usually finally agreed to and the issue is covered for the next two years. In other countries like the United Kingdom, passing an annual budget is considered to be one of the essential requirements of the sitting administration. If the House of Commons does not pass the government budget for the year ahead, that is taken as a sign of no confidence in the Prime Minister and their government and can trigger an early election. Safeguards like these ensure a budget is passed in other places and that political games aren't played with the essential functions of government.

So what can we do? The United States should implement a system of requiring a full annual budget be passed every year. This will prevent the constant kicking the can down the road and terrible timing that always accompanies continuing resolutions. There should also be consequences for members of Congress. If there's a government shutdown, Congress should have to deal with the same furloughs and restrictions as its fellow federal employees. We as voters can also provide accountability by voting out Congress members who play games with the budget. Our country deserves and can do better than this.

Connor Kockler is a student at St. John's University. He enjoys writing, politics and news, among other interests.

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