

Yes, our education system may be on the brink of collapse. That is not necessarily a bad thing

Apart from this blog here, I also have an active [profile on Medium](#). There you find selected posts from this blog and also some more personal stories or stories not related to education. Today, I was surfing over there and found this great [story](#) from [Gaby Diaz](#), who shares some insights into a failing education system in Texas.

Reading this story sparked some reflections, which I want to share.



Teachers are leaving the profession in droves. A true education revolution is needed to fix that.

Texas is not the only place with a failing education system

The situation that Gaby describes is a familiar one. Teachers flee the public system in droves. The pay is miserable. They receive no recognition for their

efforts. And they have to fulfill the increasingly contradictory expectations.

Instead of teaching the students how to become real agents of their lives in a fast-changing, complex world, we keep pushing standardized tests. Yes, our education system is failing.

But this is not only happening in Texas. It happens here in Denmark, too. And everywhere else you look. And in truth, that is not a new situation either. What is different, is the fact that we are living in extraordinarily wild times, where the issues seem to be compounding.

The pandemic revealed the cracks, it did not create them

During the pandemic, matters only got worse. I too, see it every day on my students. But the trends were already present. The real explosion in standardized testing came as an aftermath of the first PISA study. All governments, with a few exceptions, got rattled and pushed one educational reform after another. We never questioned, whether we use the right yardstick. The answer to poor performance on standardized tests was more standardized tests.

We defunded our school systems faster than ever before, and we made the situation worse for students and teachers alike. In 2013, the Danish government did its biggest educational reform in the history of the country. Part of the reform was to cut teachers' preparation time, standardize even more, and put unrealistic goals of integration of special needs students. While at the same time demand, that the school boards cut back 2% of expenses every year.

Recently, a [report was issued](#), that evaluated the reform. Not one of the targets that were set out was being met. Surprise, surprise. Yes, the article is in Danish, sorry for that.

Then COVID hit. Along with a multitude of societal issues, like rising inequality and poverty rates. The result is, that the cracks have now become so big, that no band-aid is ever going to fix it. It is too late for that.

The mental health of our students is devastated

I was working in a special needs school. A school that collected those students, who did not fit these neat integration boxes. And I saw my students changing. When I started, most of them still had some capacities to build on. In recent years, I received more students, who haven't been to school in years, locked themselves into their rooms for all that time, and who were grappling with severe depression and anxiety.

And the numbers are rising. Again, we should face the facts. Our education system has failed. The ideals that propelled the industrial revolution 150 years ago [do not do the trick](#).

It is game over for our education system.

The pandemic didn't cause this. It just showed us, how big the cracks really are.

It is high time to rebuild the education system from scratch

I think the situation may have a positive side. The teachers are leaving in droves. That is not good for the individual teacher. It is not good for the individual student either. And it certainly isn't good for the individual community. But it compels us to finally look for real solutions, instead of half-baked election promises.

I fear, that the collapse of many public school systems in our capitalist world is imminent. But from the ashes, we can rebuild an education system that is fit for the 21st century. That values true learning and insight over standardized tests. That can make our children true agents of change in a world, that is facing its biggest challenges yet.

When I see teachers like Gaby, I am confident that we have the answers. There are millions of Gabys out there. Let us give them the voice they deserve. Let us listen to what they have to say. They know what it takes to educate our children.