

*When you get down to it, unschooling is really just
a fancy term for 'life' or 'growing up uninstitutionalized'.
- Grace Llewellyn¹*

Editor's Note

We are on the cusp of good times in public education. The explosion of knowledge about how we best learn and the growing number of people who are turning good ideas into practice, often with much personal sacrifice, are creating a clear vision of the future of learning. The speed with which we achieve that future is dependent upon how quickly the masses become aware of it.

To get more people looking beyond the confines of traditional education, the conversation has to move beyond ourselves. We need to bring what we know to the attention of everyone who will listen, and to unite for change. For example, we need parents with children in public schools to join their school councils and to take advantage of opportunities to share ideas with the staff and the parents of other children attending the school.

It helps to recognize that even people who are versed in learning alternatives can find it difficult to defend their views under questioning. Knowing something is one thing, being able to articulate it clearly is a big step further, but we don't need to be great communicators. We can help just by pointing others to related articles and videos that we like. Having a book club consider publications like *Free to Learn*² or *School's Over*³ is another way to get the dialogue going where no one is an expert. The task is to get people talking and there are endless ways to accomplish this. OPERI is sharing information and working to those who want change. (See: The OPERI Recap, Vol.1, No.1 - <http://operi.ca/?p=1983>.)

I hope you find this issue of *The Recap* worthwhile. Visit the OPERI Facebook group for other interesting postings not mentioned here. If you are not already a member of the OPERI Facebook group, please consider joining it to show of support for the work we are doing - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1416370692001490/>.

Richard Fransham
September 2017

The OPERI Recap provides only a selection of posts from the OPERI Facebook group. Visit the group and scroll down to see the full list.

Touching the Emotions

Seeing life through the eyes of the students is essential to bringing real change to public education. This short film was listed in the first issue of *The Recap*. It is repeated here for the strength of its message.

How Society Kills Our Creativity – In A Breathtaking Award-Winning Short Film - <http://www.upliftedlife.com/how-society-kills-our-creativity-in-a-breathtaking-award-winning-short-film/>.

The Out-of-doors

Summertime provides greater opportunities for children to enjoy the out-of-doors, and various articles were posted to draw attention to the value of nature and play. *Thinking Outside*⁴, *Nature Explore*⁵, and *Brighter Schooling*⁶ are some of the groups providing related posts. *Forest Schools*⁷ is another source. The *Ottawa Forest and Nature School*⁸ and the Chelsea Forest School⁹ serve the people of Ottawa-Gatineau. *Active and Safe Routes to School*¹⁰ also encourages a healthy use of the outdoors.

Why kids need risk, fear and excitement in play - https://theconversation.com/why-kids-need-risk-fear-and-excitement-in-play-81450?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=twitterbutton

'Dirt Is Good': Why Kids Need Exposure To Germs - http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/07/16/537075018/dirt-is-good-why-kids-need-exposure-to-germs?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=npr&utm_term=npr_news&utm_content=20170716

Tiny Trees Preschool - <https://www.facebook.com/tinytreesschool/videos/1919245891650751/>

What if School Were More Like Summer Camp - <http://brighterschooling.com/school-like-summer-camp/>

The AERO Conference

The AERO Conference¹¹ was held in August with an impressive list of keynote speakers. Links to videos produced by some of the speakers are provided here. People came to the conference from all over including South America and Australia. We hope that a group from the Ottawa area will attend the 2018 conference. OPERI will share details about the date and location as soon as they are available.

2017 Keynote Speakers:

- Jonathan Kozol: Education in America (1 of 6) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgkZKTPEspg>
- Dennis Littky: *Follow Your Passions* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyxkVi6XrNA>

- Akilah Richards: *How We See Self-Directed Education* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbKQGNE1nUo&feature=share>
- Peter Gray: *The decline of play* - https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=62&v=Bg-GEzM7iTk
- John Gatto – *Boredom, Zombies, & Economic Collapse* - https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=155&v=do_bpLjunc

Self-Directed Education (SDE)

Peter Gray¹² and the *Alliance for Self-Directed Education*¹³ were a strong presence at the AERO conference this year. They are gaining prominence with their endless supply of thoughtful material and their efforts to unite people who believe in giving students more control over their learning.

Differences Between Self-Directed and Progressive Education

Self-Directed Education, not progressive education, is the wave of the future -

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn/201706/differences-between-self-directed-and-progressive-education>

Self-Directed Education: Allowing Children to Learn & Develop Naturally -

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOx\]zcv06H8&feature=share](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOx]zcv06H8&feature=share)

If students designed their own schools... -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REIUmGI5gLc&feature=share> (A group of high school students gets to create their own school-within-a-school.)

Wounded by School: Recapturing the Joy in Learning and Standing up to Old School Culture -

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn/201106/how-does-school-wound-kirsten-olson-has-counted-some-ways>

Homeschooling/Unschooling/Ancestral Schooling

Ancestral Schooling¹⁴ has been added to this sub-heading. It is a term that has recently come to the attention of OPERI and it is being suggested as a replacement for “unschooling”. It helps to emphasize the importance of creating educational environments that emanate from the culture of their people.

It takes a village to home-school a child in Las Vegas -

<https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/education/it-takes-a-village-to-home-school-a-child-in-las-vegas-video/>

We Don't Need No Education - <https://www.outsideonline.com/1928266/we-dont-need-no-education>

In Praise of The Unexceptional: Because Unschooling Doesn't Have to Be Impressive -

<http://yes-i-can-write.blogspot.ca/2014/05/in-praise-of-unexceptional-because.html>

ADHD

In a series of posts about ADHD, Peter Gray explains that the label is more about the deficiencies of traditional schools than it is about any shortcomings of students.

The ADHD Personality: A Normal and Valuable Human Variation -

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn/201008/the-adhd-personality-normal-and-valuable-human-variation>

Experiences of ADHD-Labeled Kids Who Leave Typical Schooling -

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn/201009/experiences-adhd-labeled-kids-who-leave-typical-schooling>

ADHD & School: Assessing Normalcy in an Abnormal Environment: ADHD diagnoses derive from schools' intolerance of normal human Diversity -

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn/201007/adhd-school-assessing-normalcy-in-abnormal-environment>

A Film

If there is sufficient interest, OPERI will collaborate with other groups to provide Ottawa screenings of these films. If you would be interested in attending, please send your name and email address to contact@operi.ca.

The Kindergarten Trailer - <https://vimeo.com/226782030>

Most Likely to Succeed Trailer - <https://vimeo.com/122502930>

A Plug for Kids

Brighter Schooling commented on this article saying, "More evidence that illustrates how crucial it is for children to have near endless opportunities to engage in unstructured play."

Children are the key to solving a 2000 year old philosophical mystery -

<https://qz.com/1051797/children-are-the-key-to-solving-a-2000-year-old-philosophical-mystery/>

Local Initiatives

OPERI remains committed to public education, but the work of people providing alternatives like those listed below is crucial to build awareness of a humane and authentic way to support learning and to provide for the needs of some of today's students.

Blue Sky School - <https://www.blueskyschool.ca>

Compass Centre for Self-Directed Learning - <http://www.compassteens.org>

Revel Academy - <https://www.revelacademy.ca>

A Finale

Making change happen is do dependent on us coming together that the following entertaining short video about building a movement is repeated from the first issue of *The Recap*.

How to Start a Movement - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXMnDG3QzxE&sns=em>

¹ The introductory quote was recently shared by the *Alliance for Self-Directed Education* - <https://www.self-directed.org>. Grace Llewellyn is the author of *The Teenage Liberation Handbook: How to Quit School and Get a Real Life*, and *Education and Guerrilla Learning: How to Give Your Kids a Real Education With or Without School*. She is the founder and director of *Not Back to School Camp* serving teens ages 13-18.

² <http://www.freetolearnbook.com>

³ <https://www.amazon.ca/Schools-Over-Freedom-Democracy-Education-ebook/dp/B072MK8TPH>

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/LearnOutside/>

⁵ <https://natureexplore.org>

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/brighterschooling/>

⁷ https://www.facebook.com/forestschoolcan/?fref=gs&dti=1416370692001490&hc_location=group

⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/OttawaForestNatureSchool/>

⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/ChelseaForestSchool/>

¹⁰ <http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca>

¹¹ <http://www.educationrevolution.org/store/>

¹² <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn>

¹³ <https://www.self-directed.org>

¹⁴ <https://ancestralschooling.blogspot.ca>