

11th August 2008

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Committee Secretary
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee
Department of the Senate

During my HSC year (2007) I experienced frequent incidents of teacher bias being projected onto students.

In English, whilst studying the module "Power play", my teacher would make frequent references to John Howard, comparing him to "Big Brother" and claiming the liberal party policies were aimed at "mind control".

Whilst studying "Inner Journeys" we read the biography "My Place" by Sally Morgan, her account of dealing with issues surrounding the "stolen" generation. My teacher used this topic to launch into her views of the issue and would frequently refer to John Howard in derogatory terms.

I respected and liked this teacher but felt it extremely unfair that she made no attempts to maintain a balanced perspective, I understood her bias and chose to ignore it but my peers who were not extremely well informed took her words as fact instead of opinion. Many of them immediately voicing their outrage at the "facts" my teacher would provide.

This is not what the NSW education system should be about, it should be about providing young people with the skills to make up their own minds and be well informed about all aspects of relevant issues.

In legal studies I was told directly that a HSC essay that concluded favouring Workchoices legislation would fail, I knew this came from the teacher's bias but my teacher insisted it was because we had to show "both sides of an issue" which I found extremely hypocritical.

On occasion I would make it clear to my teacher that I did not appreciate her making her opinions on the issue such a large part of the lesson and she would tell me that it was "inescapable" in a subject like legal studies. This I do not believe.

On many occasions I thought of making a complaint to the school principal but feared it would make my teachers angry towards me and I did not want to take that risk during the HSC.

Therefore during the HSC I was forced to write things I did not believe because I knew it was what my markers and teachers wanted.

Whilst I was a prefect at school, the principal decided to have an environmental action day. There was no problem with this event for me, until on the day, the entire school was shown Al Gore's documentary "An Inconvenient Truth".

They were shown this DVD under the assumption that it was all fact. Myself and other senior students were well aware that this was not the only argument in regards to “global warming” or “climate change”, however the younger students took the DVD as complete fact and some left the school hall crying about what “they've done” to the earth.

I was extremely upset that the teachers at my school could find a way to justify this kind of guilt through misinformation on children aged 13-18.

I am currently a university student and am still developing my own political ideas. To me however it is shameful that any kind of bias be present in education. This isn't a matter of which party is to blame, we should all be responsible for ensuring young people have access to a fair and balanced education.

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