

## **RETHINKING EDUCATION**

*Speech by Lox Pratt, September 2022*

Teacher: Lox, you can't do that!

Me: Why not?

Teacher: Because I say so!

Me: Right, this is the big problem. Grown ups still don't get it. You went to school thirty years ago and you are just carrying on like those teachers you didn't like back then, who told you what to learn and how to learn it. When they would sit you down in a classroom and force you to learn.

Learning is something we choose to do. When a child goes to school they are hardly ever listened to and are not treated as equal beings. Children are not grown ups in waiting. They are just as important but learn things in a different order to you. Even if I can't yet do my eight times table I can drum, dance and rap.

So, what are you doing? Let's change the playbook. That's why we are all here, right?

So what I want to prove to you is that kids are amazing at being kids. We have super fast and intelligent brains designed by millions of years of evolution, we want to learn everything about everything and particularly from cool people who inspire us. We need to feel empowered by all of you adults not squashed and patronised. Sure, we don't need to make handaxes anymore like in the Palaeolithic, but we do want to learn about being human...right now with all the challenges of the future. Schools have only been around a couple of hundred years and before that children learned by watching the adults around them. Why are we sending our kids to a place where they are made to feel like they are inferior? A community place to learn together, yes. A coercive and stressful environment, no!

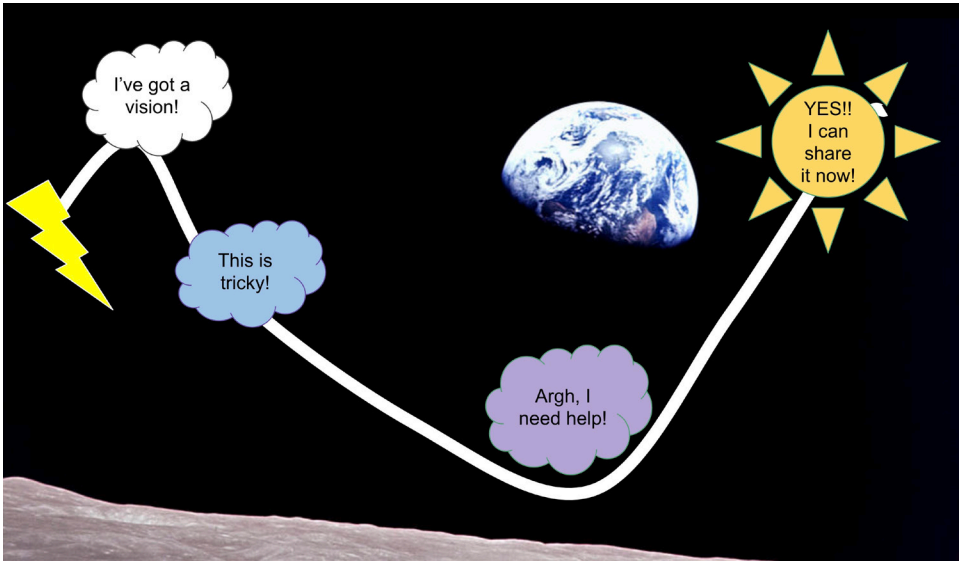
So what does this look like? Sparks of inspiration are where it all begins and now we have so many sparks all around us, thanks to the internet and other people- I've learned to moonwalk, built a bird trap, edited special effects into my movies and learned how to programme games – all from sparks I've found from all over. The right one at the right time explodes my authentic need to learn and then I'm off- and in the flow state where time disappears and I even forget to eat.

Aren't you just the same? Don't you get sucked right in to really interesting stuff sometimes?

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So what you need to do is recognise that kids are equals to you—they feel and learn in the same way. They need power, agency and a multi-faceted, rich environment to play in—just like you. Feedback can be tough, and we need to be in a right frame of mind or in a deep struggle pit to want it.

Check out this project cycle which shows you how I see my self-directed projects. This is where I need help—when I ask for it at the bottom of the struggle pit.



I get a spark of inspiration which builds in my head into a project vision. And then I run with it, getting all the resources I need, but then reality hits me, and I realise it's not going to turn out the same as the plan but morphed into something even better. The pit is where the morphing happens when I'm at the bottom and can't find a way forward. Sometimes there I ask for help from parents, friends or experts.

So here's my advice:

- Listen to kids
- Empower them all the time
- Treat them as equals
- Be a guide and provide feedback only when invited
- Do wacky and interesting stuff to inspire young people.

If you do this, you will be inspiring to all young people because that's what will change our system and what will do a lot of good in the world.

### **Lox's Rap**

Now I know what you're thinkin' I'm only ten years old.  
But when you look at me, my future's so untold:  
We got the world heatin' up,  
Politicians ignoring,  
I just don't want to be in my classroom snoring.  
We're out everyday  
My three brothers and me  
Goin' cool places, fishing fish out the sea  
Don't tell me what to do  
Don't tell me what I think  
I can make my own choices,  
not another brick.  
Come dance with me,  
Show me what you've got  
And let's all not throw away our shot!

Lox Pratt (age ten) is a self-directed home-educated drummer/dancer/surfer/skater/designer and contributor to Rethinking Education podcasts and campfire conversations.