



2012 Brock International  
Prize in Education Nominee

**Herbert Kohl**

*Nominated by Ted Kahn*



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Letter of Nomination for **Herbert R. Kohl:**  
2012 Brock International Prize in Education

Dear Fellow Members of the 2012 Brock Education Prize Jury:

“Yes, we speak of things that matter,  
With words that must be said...”  
—“The Dangling Conversation,” Simon & Garfunkel

It is my deep honor, privilege and pleasure to nominate Herbert (Herb) R. Kohl for the 2012 Brock Prize in Education. I have known Herb and been his friend, student, colleague, co-author and collaborator now for 36 years. I can view these years as the same number of children in one of Herb’s first classrooms as a young teacher, whose stories were documented one of his earliest and best-known books: *36 Children*. First published in 1967, this classic now has over 800,000 copies in print, making it one of the all-time most widely read books about education—and about the challenges, trials and joys of being a teacher focused on trying to help kids learn in extremely impoverished and difficult urban school environments.

I believe Herb to be a rare and uniquely qualified candidate for the Brock Prize because of his innovative contributions as one of the pioneering fathers of “open education”—and who has practiced what he has taught and written throughout his career as a teacher, lifelong learner, parent, and writer. His contributions span the full spectrum of teaching, parenting and lifelong learning (both inside and outside of classrooms)—combined with a never-ending deep commitment to finding unique brilliance and providing equity of opportunities for learning and social justice for all students, no matter what their ethnic origin, physical, mental or emotional differences, or socio-economic backgrounds.

Innovation is not necessarily just what’s new or trendy. Educator Joseph Featherstone, who wrote the Forward to Herb’s book, *Growing Minds: On Becoming a Teacher*, spoke of the “USA” as often being the “United States of Amnesia” when it comes to education. We tend to forget (consciously or perhaps as part of an American ethos that focuses on being new and being first) that we stand on the shoulders of giants. The amount of outstanding lessons, resources, and approaches used by great teachers and educators for decades are often buried and forgotten as antiquated or just “not up to date.” But as 1937 Nobel laureate in medicine & physiology, Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, said, “Discovery consists in seeing what everyone

else has seen and thinking what no one else has thought.” In this sense, one of Herb’s main innovations is to have us re-discover “the things that matter, with words that must be said.”

One of the most important things I learned from Herb is how important it is to find one’s own **voice** when writing (and writing is a partially an external reflection of thinking). Reminding all of us (and our kids and students, as well as other educators) of the importance of words and language—both as vehicles of the mind to help create social change (as Voltaire and Thomas Paine did) and also, to just to play with ideas—are thus a major theme of Herb’s innovative contributions to education.

Schiller (who wrote the glorious words for the “Ode to Joy” of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony), once said, “Higher (deeper) meaning often lies in child’s play.” Herb’s lessons for us include the power of **play** in language, as well as in mathematics, which was one of his first loves in high school and college. His *Book of Puzzlements* and *Mathematical Puzzlements*, and his earlier *Math, Writing and Games in the Open Classroom* are classic collections and resources for lifelong informal and recreational learning for parents and kids, as well as timeless classroom resources for teachers.

It was through Herb’s love of games that we first worked together. After some initial strong arguments and critical discussions about the possible value of computers and technology in education during the 1970’s, I helped convince Herb the then new age of personal computers could actually help spread and give kids access to real power to creatively augment their learning. We later wrote three books together about kids creating their own computer games and recreational learning through learning programming and using software tools to enhance creativity. Early personal computers and later, more advanced digital technologies became a part of the lives and learning of Herb and his wife, Judy’s, own kids: The whole Kohl family became quite interested in playing with the Atari home computers Herb had in his house while he was a valued member of my national advisory board for the Atari Institute for Educational Action Research in the early 1980’s, together with his longtime friend and colleague, Marian Wright Edelman (Children’s Defense Fund) and others.

For nearly a half century, Herb has developed and given back his gifts and talents as a rare, gifted and equally creative, playful and pragmatic teacher, one who, at the same time, is also so skilled as a prolific, passionate and articulate writer and spokesman for equality, social justice and the rights of students of any age and background to be able to learn. He has personally taught thousands of students, helped guide and mentor hundreds of thousands of classroom teachers & educators of all kinds (including students themselves, as well as parents). Through his more than 40 books and over 250 published articles, columns, reviews, interviews, seminars, and education conference presentations, Herb has informed and educated millions since his first books, *The Age of Complexity* and *Teaching the “Unteachable,”* came out in 1965.

Stanford Professor Emeritus, Shirley Brice Heath, has pointed out in her letter of support how important the connection between the Civil Rights Movement in America was to all of Herb's work, but especially how it helped lead to his connecting his development of open education to social justice and activism. Herb and his wife, Judith Kohl's receipt of the 1991 Robert F. Kennedy Book Award for their co-authoring of educator and founder of The Highlander School) Myles Horton's autobiography, *The Long Haul*, is a great example of these themes come together—as well as his later book on the real story of Rosa Parks, *She Would Not Be Moved* (see attached link to the video of his speech about this book in the attached nomination packet).

Nancy Larson Shapiro, Former Co-Chair and longtime board member of Teachers & Writers Collaborative, another of Herb's most important contributions to education, and another of the writers of letters of support for Herb's nomination, feels Herb's work has centered around five areas:

1. Parents and Families—and how we live in society in a moral way and the development of character
2. Students themselves—his love of children and students, regardless of what age they are
3. Books specifically for children
4. Teachers and Teaching—curriculum in the schools and the art and practice of becoming and being a teacher
5. Mentors and models

Some examples of the huge impact Herb has had on the field of education include:

- *36 Children*: Over 800,000 copies in print since 1967
- *Reading, How To*: Over 350,000 copies in print since 1974
- Winner (with his wife, Judith Kohl), of the 1978 National Book Award for Children's Literature for *The View from the Oak* (science, ethology and the environment)
- Winner (with Judith Kohl and Myles Horton) of the 1991 Robert F. Kennedy Book Award for Myles Horton's autobiography, *The Long Haul*
- Taught or presented to an average of 10,000 teachers a year since 1991
- Senior Fellow, Open Society Institute, Soros Foundation Network, (1997)
- Guggenheim Fellow, 2010
- *The Muses Go to School: Conversations about the Necessity of the Arts in Education*, written with Tom Oppenheim (2011), comes full circle to Herb's longtime strong advocacy and support for the arts.
- Herb & Judy's three (now adult) children are examples of their living their own educational philosophy and creative education: Tonia is a pioneer in 3D virtual worlds and interactive digital media; Dr. Erica Kohl-Arenas is on the faculty of International Affairs, Management and Urban Policy at the New School in New York;

and Josh is an internationally known *avant garde* composer/musician in Seattle—all dynamic, creative living examples of open education.

Herb's many books—and more than 200 published articles, reviews and columns—are just as relevant and current today (and perhaps even more so) than they were when first written 10, 20, 30 or 40 or more years ago. His writing reflects his own deep love of learning, his curiosity and equally analytic and creative mind, and his empathy and caring for children and students of any age (including us as adult learners). His books have included a vast variety of topics related to learning and teaching, parenting, character development, curriculum, games, computers, careers and college, as well as math, science, theater, and especially writing, language and literature. While many of these books have been written in his role as a teacher (he has not only continued actively teaching for over 45 years, but has taught and mentored hundreds of thousands of teachers), other books have been written specifically for children—including *The View from the Oak* (written with his wife, Judith Kohl), which won the 1978 National Book Award for Children's Literature and *From Archetype to Zeitgeist*, which is a kind of dictionary or encyclopedia of important and powerful ideas for children of all ages. A copy of a recent collection of excerpts from some of the best of Herb's many books, *The Herb Kohl Reader: Awakening the Heart of Teaching* (2008), is being provided to each of you as part of my nomination:

[http://thenewpress.com/index.php?option=com\\_title&task=view\\_title&metaproductid=1749](http://thenewpress.com/index.php?option=com_title&task=view_title&metaproductid=1749)

In summary, I quote Dr. Lisa Delpit, fellow educator, writer and a MacArthur Foundation “genius award” Fellow, from her letter of support for Herb in this nomination portfolio, regarding what she feels is Herb's specific innovation viz. the Brock Prize:

“ I was reminded of a Jules Henry quote that Herb brought to my attention some time ago, a discussion about sanity:

“Sanity...can take three forms: to believe sham to be the truth; to see through sham while using it; or to see through sham but fight it. We are now in the stage of believing sham to be the truth, while entering the stage of seeing through sham while using it. The third stage is understanding sham and knowing how to fight it. The fourth stage is a world without sham.

“And this I realized the “innovation” that Herb Kohl has brought to the field of education that has the potential to provide long-term benefit to humanity. Much ahead of Henry's curve, Kohl has taught us through his teaching, writing and actions to recognize and fight sham. He has insisted that “sanity” be the beacon toward which we steer our work in education.”

In this light, I strongly advocate for Herb Kohl to be awarded the 2012 Brock International Prize in Education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted M. Kahn", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ted M. Kahn, Ph.D.

Co-founder, President and CEO, DesignWorlds for Learning, Inc. &  
Chief Learning & Future Careers Strategist, DesignWorlds for College & Careers  
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Distinguished Visiting Scholar, Media X @ Stanford University (2007-'10)  
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Adjunct Faculty, School of Education & Counseling Psychology,  
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# Herbert Kohl

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## *Career Narrative*

I attended the Bronx High School of Science and studied philosophy and mathematics at Harvard from 1954-1958. At Harvard I was president of the Signet Society and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, graduating with an AB degree in 1958. During the 1958-59 academic year I attended University College, Oxford on a Henry Fellowship, and in 1959-60, was rewarded a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, and studied philosophy at Columbia, University.

Deciding against an academic career, I matriculated at Teachers College, Columbia in 1961, and in 1962 received an MA in teaching, while qualifying for a permanent kindergarten through eighth grade teaching certificate in the New York City public schools. In 1962 I became a sixth grade teacher in the New York City public schools, something I had dreamed of doing since childhood.

I have been teaching and writing for over forty-five years. During that time I've taught every grade from kindergarten through graduate school, not in that order. My career as a teacher began in 1962 in Harlem, where I continued to work for six years. From September, 1964 to June, 1967, under a grant from the National Institute of Education, I ran a storefront school for junior high and high school students, taught high school psychology and writing, and worked as curriculum coordinator for the Parent Board of the I.S. 201 Community School District. In 1966 I became the founding director of the Teachers and Writers Collaborative, a project intended to transform the teaching of writing in the schools. I am still a Board member of the Collaborative.

In 1964 my first book, *The Age of Complexity*, about analytic and existential philosophy, was published at the same time that I was teaching sixth grade. My first writings on education, *Teaching the Unteachable* (New York Review of Books, New York, 1967), and *The Language and Education of the Deaf* (The Urban Review Press, New York, 1967) set the themes for much of my future work. They centered on advocating for the education of poor and disabled students, and critiquing and demystifying the stigmatization of students perfectly capable of learning.

In 1967, *36 Children* (New American Library, New York, 1967) was also published and I was drawn into national debates on the education of African American and other minority students, and into conversations on school reform and the nature of teaching and learning. I'm still engaged in

them now, forty-two years later, having lived through cycles of reform and reaction, none of which succeeded in creating excellent education for the children of the poor. The problems persist, and I still believe that, through hard, imaginative effort, they can be solved.

In 1968 we moved to Berkeley California where our family lived for the next nine years. I was a Visiting Associate Professor, half time in the English Department and, the other half time, in the School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley during the spring semester of 1968. At that point I received a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York (September 1968- June 1969) to work with Allan Kaprow, the "happener," who was a Professor of Art at the State University of New York, Stonybrook, on teacher education and the development of creative curriculum that crossed disciplinary and artistic boundaries. Working with Kaprow freed me to cross boundaries, work with students in theater, and experiment with interactive media. This unlikely marriage, made by Margaret Mahoney of Carnegie, had a profound influence on my teaching and thinking about learning.

An alternative high school, Other Ways emerged during that collaboration and it was supported, in 1969 by a grant from the Ford Foundation (September 1969 to June 1970). This was one of the first attempts to create a series of alternative educational options within public school systems.

In 1972 I became co-director of the teacher education program at the Center for Open Learning and Teaching, and taught a combined kindergarten first grade at a Berkeley public elementary schools, while acting as a master teacher for our teacher education students.

For ten years (1970 to 1982) I wrote a monthly column for *Teacher Magazine*, and contributed many reviews and articles for publications such as *The New York Times*, *The London Times*, *The Nation*, and *The New York Review of Books*. I also wrote a number of books during that period including *The Open Classroom*, *Golden Boy as Anthony Cool*, *Reading, How to*, *A Book of Puzzlements*, *Mathematical Puzzlements*, *On Teaching*, *Growing With Your Children*, and *Half the House*.

In 1976, my wife Judith and I wrote *The View from the Oak*, which won the 1977 National Book Award for Children's Literature.

In 1977 we moved to Point Arena, California and established the Coastal Ridge Research and Education Center. Over the years the Center has sponsored a summer camp where I taught theater, and hosted a number of seminars on education and social justice. These seminars have involved educators such as Myles Horton and Septum Clarke of the Highlander Center, Joseph and Helen Featherstone, William Ayers, Len Solo, Ira Glaser, Norm Fruchter, Asa Hilliard, Courtney Cazden, Phillip Lopate, Cynthia Brown, and Ron Jones. The Center also worked with Amnesty International developing a curriculum on conscience and human rights, and with the ACLU developing a Bill of Rights curriculum.

I also spent a year (1985-86) teaching in a one room schoolhouse in Point Arena, and created, under a grant from the Agency for International Development and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, (June 1986-January 1986) a month long residential session and a semester's internship in the New York City schools, for the heads of teachers' colleges from Botswana sponsored by the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

During the 1980's I also spent time working with a number of pioneers in the computer world. I was on the Board of the Atari Education Foundation and consulted with Allan Kay's Vivarium



Project of Apple Computers. My work with computers also involved being a games columnist for *Recreational Computing Magazine and Publish!*, spending several years (1983-1985) as Director of Software Development for *Scientific American*, co-authoring four books on computer programming and games for Reston Publishing Company, and editing a series of books on games and computers for them as well. Also during that period, as a member of the Executive Board of PEN, American Center, I established the PEN American Center West.

I continued writing over these years and teaching occasionally as a Research Fellow at the University of San Francisco. I was the Gordon Sanders Professor of Education at Hamline University in St. Paul during 1988-89, and then later on, spent more time in the Twin Cities area, as Benedict Professor of Educational Studies at Carleton College in 1995. During all of this time, I was engaged with developing pedagogical content and structure that would take advantage of the strengths and experiences of poor and minority students.

Throughout the 1980's my wife, Judith, and I worked with Myles Horton on his autobiography, *The Long Haul* (Doubleday, New York, 1990). It won the Robert F. Kennedy book award in 1991.

From September 1994 to June, 1997 I had the opportunity to work, through a grant from the Aaron Diamond Foundation, with the Fund for New York City Public Education September. The goal of the project was to design structures for the development of small, theme based and community oriented, schools of choice within the city's public school system. The Fund morphed into New Visions Schools and is engaged in implementing that work.

In 1997 I was appointed a Senior Fellow at the Open Society Institute, the US foundation that is part of the Soros Foundation Network. From September, 1997 to June, 1999 I worked towards planning a funding strategy in education for the Foundation, and in the process, managed to support a number of projects that promise effective school reform.

I have found myself both teaching and writing throughout my adult. Writing is a private matter, education a public one. For me, they play off each other, nurturing and informing each other. Both are a source of energy and give me a feeling of being of use to others. Among the books I published from 1982 to 1999 are: *Basic Skills* (Little Brown, Boston, 1982), *Growing Minds* (Harper and Row, New York, 1986), *Making Theater* (Teachers and Writers Collaborative, New York, 1988), *I Won't Learn from You* (The New Press, New York, 1994), and *Should We Burn Barbar?* (The New Press, New York, 1995), and *The Discipline of Hope* (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1998).

In the spring of 2000, after my Fellowship at the Open Society Institute was completed, I accepted the challenge of building a small, autonomous teacher education program centered on equity and social justice at the University of San Francisco (USF). The Center for Teaching Excellence and Social Justice opened with twenty-five students in the fall of 2000. The first year was supported by a special innovative grant from the President of USF (January, 2000 to January, 2001). The next three years were supported by a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (September, 2001 to June, 2004). Under the terms of the grant, the Center also worked on reform in the Oakland and San Francisco school districts.

During this time I published a book of essays, *Stupidity and Tears* (The New Press, New York, 2003) and *She Would Not be Moved* (The New Press, New York, 2005).

In 2005 I left the program at USF after five years and accepted a year's appointment as Eugene Lang Visiting Professor for Issues of Social Change at Swarthmore College during the academic

year of 2005-06.

I returned to my home in Point Arena, California in the summer of 2006. Storms and water damage during the spring destroyed my study and many of my books and resources. It took months to rebuild, and some of the work is still going on. Nevertheless I continued to write, and my book *Painting Chinese* (Bloomsbury, New York, 2007) was finished in Point Arena and published in 2007.

I continue to work with educators across the country. In particular I'm currently collaborating with Kevin Truitt, formerly principal of Mission High School and currently Associate Superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District, on a book about the complex, demanding, and often heart breaking lives of urban high school principals. The book proposes a way of supporting principals that is a cross between psychotherapy and dramaturgy, which we tried out for three years and decided to call edutherapy.

I'm also collaborating with Tom Oppenheim and the Stella Adler Acting Studio, of which he is Director, on advocating support for the arts as necessary components of any decent public education. In conjunction with this book, so far I have interviewed artists such as Phylicia Rashad, Rosie Perez, Bill T. Jones, and Whoopi Goldberg, and educators such as Maxine Greene, Frances Lucerna, and Steve Seidel. Many other people have indicated willingness to participate in the project.

In addition, a collection of my works, *The Herb Kohl Reader* (The New Press, New York, 2009) was published recently. I'm also currently teaching an essay writing class in Point Arena and working on a book of personal essays.

At the center of all of my work is the belief that a quality education for all children is a pedagogical imperative and a social justice issue.

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## *Some thoughts on my education and my work.*

I attended PS 82, PS 104, Macombs Junior High School, and the Bronx High School of Science, all in the Bronx. My kindergarten teacher was wonderful. She was a member of our working class Jewish, Italian and Irish community and knew all of our parents. She also cared about us and her classroom was comfortable and I assume that we learned what was expected in kindergarten in 1942. I had a few problems in the first grade, as I didn't understand why I should have to learn to read. My teachers called my father in one morning - meaning he had to miss some work - and she asked me to read for him. I said Jane for Dick and Dick for Spot. I didn't even look at the page when I read. My father was embarrassed and said that when I returned to school the next day there was no question but that I would be attentive to learning to read. At home he told me that I had to cut out the occurrences of the word "the" on the front page of the New York Times and I would do it every day until my teacher told him I was caught up. He wasn't kidding, I got the message, and from then on academics was never a problem to more. Until high school it was simply a matter of what was expected of me within the family and it wasn't hard at all. In elementary school I had very nice teachers, a number of whom were trained in progressive education methods. Though I hated competing with other students and often suffered from asthma, school seemed pleasant enough. In the third through the fifth grade I especially loved walking almost a mile to school with my cousin Marilyn and my friends Ronny and Bobby, or wandering aimlessly to school by myself, looking in store windows, or stopping at the candy store and perusing the comic books. During my elementary school days I rather enjoyed school and liked my classmates, though I was a bit of a loner. Public school was and still is a very comfortable place for me. The sixth grade was sometimes unsettling because there were gang troubles around the school and walking home could be perilous.



Junior High School was another thing altogether. Many of the teachers were old school Irish disciplinarians who didn't particularly like Jewish kids. One of them, the school disciplinarian and

social studies teacher, was a chronic drunk. I was in a Special Progress class and we did the 7, 8, and 9 grades in two years. So far as I'm concerned, except for print shop and English, I could have skipped all three years. My homeroom teacher was one of the few Jewish teachers at the school but she left in the middle of my first year, to be replaced by a young teacher who, for some reason, didn't treat us with respect. With the support of our parents, who felt she might be anti-Semitic, we drove her to quit. In retrospect, I think it was a matter of social class. She simply didn't understand or respect working class pride and treated us with condescension, which we found insulting.

In junior high I grew about five inches and became more sociable, liked to play basketball and softball, and had my first girlfriends. I don't remember learning much but did encounter a book in the school library that transformed my life (see my essay *The Tattooed Man*). I also pretended to be part of a gang until I had a few unpleasant encounters with actual gang members and decided it wasn't for me. I still don't like to fight even though, growing up, I learned how to defend myself.

Bronx Science was a new, exciting, and very important experience for me. I entered Science in 1951, during the time of Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities red hunt. My family and many of the families of my friends had members who were socialists or communists, and we all knew card-carrying members of the Communist Party. The teachers at Science were, in my experience, wonderful. They knew and loved their subjects on the highest professional level, and many did independent work in mathematics and the sciences independent of their teaching. Others, like Eleanor Burstein, my English teacher, helped students like me encounter poetry and literature for the first time. There were no books in my home. It was from her teaching that poetry, fiction, philosophy and almost anything that came in book form became a necessary part of my life. To this day I love and collect books.

Nor was there any exposure to painting, sculpture, classical music or jazz at home. My parents did take me to the Metropolitan Museum of Art once or twice, rushing me by all of the nude paintings and those that represented Jesus. This presumably was to prevent me being corrupted by sex and Christianity.

At Science music and the arts also contributed profoundly to my growth. I remember my friend, Ralph Lehman and I, encountering a poster announcing that Paul Badura Skoda was playing the Mozart Piano Concerto at Carnegie Hall. We were just wandering around 57th Street on a Saturday and ended up buying standing room only tickets. I remember thinking that we were really lucky that Mozart was being played in New York that year. I had just encountered his music in class at Science and had no idea that there was a thriving classical music culture in New York.

Through my friends I discovered Birdland and the Village Vanguard, and became a jazz aficionado. It seemed to me that through what I was given at high school I had moved from planet Grand Avenue in the Bronx to planet Earth. It was very exciting, and in all of my educational work I have wanted all of my students to have similar gifts of discovery and encounter challenging and exciting worlds they would not have encountered but for good teachers and schools.

I also discovered and became a participant in political and social activism at Science. Many of our teachers were called before the McCarty Committee and HUAC, and as students we were active in defending them. One of the most beloved teachers at the school, Julius Hlavaty, the Chairman of the Mathematics Department, took the Fifth Amendment and refused to rat on anybody. As a consequence he was fired. We were all enraged and devastated. This taste of demagoguery and fascism added to our experience of the Holocaust and Hitler's repression of us Jews, colored my entire youth. We were embattled and struggles for justice were a matter of life and death. I became a socialist through my grandfather and an activist through my experiences at the Bronx High School of Science.



In addition to national politics, I was directly involved in student government politics in New York City. At Science I became active in the student organization, being secretary, vice-president, and eventually president of the student body. I also was the school's representative to the New York City Inter-city Student Council, which represented all 86 high schools in the city. In my senior year I became president of the Council and along with the vice-president, Robert Maynard (who became the only African American owner of a major daily newspaper in the US, the Oakland Tribune), became involved in issues of racism, police brutality, and student power. We even held a school strike over the New York Daily News running a series of articles demonizing high schools in New York. Along with the articles the paper printed picture of kids with knives (those were the days before guns), of students making out in school stairwells, and of other students menacing teachers. We discovered that all of the pictures were posed by professional models and exposed this and ended up in conversations with the Mayor's office, the Police Department, the Superintendent of schools, and members of the media. This was unfortunately a short-lived action as the leaders (myself included) all graduated and our successors showed no taste for struggle.

My experience as an undergraduate at Harvard was different than my high school experience. First of all, I was away from the Bronx and loved it. I wanted independence and got it. Much to the chagrin of my parents I chose to major in philosophy and minor in mathematics. And much to the chagrin of my philosophy professors, who encouraged me to pursue a career in academic philosophy, I took classes in modern theater, fourteenth century Italian painting, 17th Century English poetry, the 20th century novel, advanced mathematics, and the social sciences. I went where the great teachers were, and have never regretted it. Douglass Bush teaching John Donne and Ben Jonson was inspiring. Lynn Loomis' classes on modern algebra and functional analysis introduced to me pedagogical strategies that have been part of my teaching repertoire throughout my educational career. And there was so much more. My life-long interest in theater and my work creating plays with children was profoundly influenced by Chapman's modern theater course. My tutor, Marshall Cohen, on a personal level guided me in reading philosophy and integrating the arts into my thinking about the world. I am aficionado of excellent teachers and have been privileged to know many throughout my life. One thing I learned at Science and Harvard was that first-rate teaching comes in many forms, shapes, and colors and knowing this has helped me build coherent educational programs with very diverse groups of people.

However all was not smooth at Harvard. It was a social nightmare for me, one that, during times of stress, was punctuated by attacks of asthma. I was literally out of my class and felt awkward. There were times when I wasn't sure I belonged; others when I tried to belong too much and took on airs and attitudes, in imitation, I thought, of what a "good Harvard man" is like. Of course people knew I was a sham.

The hardest thing at Harvard was my encounter with anti-Semitism. It didn't change my complex feeling of being a Jew from a somewhat mixed, secular and anti-Zionist family but did enrage me. There were a few times when I exploded but for the most part my rage was tempered. I had too much to gain from what I was learning to blow it on the kind of prejudice I knew I would spend my life encountering and fighting.

My dream after Harvard was to return to the streets, to go home to the kind of rough and tumble neighborhood I grew up in, and to teach in a public elementary school. Then, as now, I thought that the two things I wanted to do and had to do with my life were write and teach.

After a year at Oxford and Paris, and another at Columbia in the graduate school of philosophy I finally followed my inner voices, my daemon, and became an elementary school teacher and a writer. Of course I learned from my students, but I've written a lot about that and won't go into it here. I also learned from the parents of my students and from the community activists, like David X Spencer and Jose Gonzales, who put their lives and careers on the line for justice, and who became lifelong friends.

There is one other extended learning experience I had that deepened my understanding of pedagogy, and showed me, in a more profound way than I could have imagined, the centrality of education to the struggle for social and economic justice. That was my and my family's twelve-year friendship with Myles Horton, the founder of the Highlander Center. It lasted from 1977 to his death. Myles' presence infused me with energy and love, and his storytelling and actions - for example, we traveled together to Belfast in the mist of the troubles, and to the coal mines in the Rhonda Valley of Wales during the coal miners strike in 1984. My wife, Judy and I spent time with Myles at Highlander and at our home in Point Arena, and our daughter Erica worked with him and Highlander while she was in college. The result of this was Myles' autobiography, *The Long Haul*. It would take me a book to talk about what I learned from Myles but I think it would be best for people to read the book and learn from Myles themselves.



I have been blessed by being given the gift of learning from superb educators both within formal settings and informally. I love schools and love learning on the fly. I love learning from reading, from conversation and from confrontation; from looking and listening; and from living within a racially diverse and cross-cultural family and community.

I don't consider the education I advocate and practice as alternative to anything. I think of it as good education. My development as an educator emerged from my practice in the classroom

informed by a vision of a decent world where resources were shared, creativity encouraged, and individual growth was accompanied by social responsibility and a commitment to social justice.

My earliest teaching experience was in a fifth grade class of students who had rejected schooling. I began trying to lecture to the class, use copying from the chalkboard, textbooks, and threats to try to compel learning. It simply didn't work, and since I refused to blame the students for my failures as a teacher, I struggled to develop other ways to get them to value what they were learning and enjoy being together as a community of learners. I quickly learned a few things. Giving students choices instead of trying to force them to do only one thing calmed them down, got them thinking, and taught me what they cared to learn and how they liked to go about learning. Mixing group, individual, and full class learning during the course of the day allowed for flexibility and comfort. Providing the students with rich materials that had compelling content seduced students into engagement with complex ideas. Crossing disciplinary boundaries and introducing theater, the visual arts, technology, storytelling, reading and research as part of a whole led to personal and group enrichment. Drawing on the student's own experience and getting to know parents and becoming familiar with the community created trust and made it possible for, not just the students, but the community to feel that I provided a useful service that was valuable. In sum, over the first few years of teaching I learned to become connected, as a teacher and a learner myself, to my students and to begin to understand their skills, talents, dreams, and ideas.

From the very first day I began teaching my work was driven by a refusal to accept any limitation on what my students could learn, and therefore to reject any prior



stigmatization that had been imposed upon them in their school histories. I worked very hard at becoming a good teacher and loved it. Being with children and contributing to their growth has always been a joy and blessing to me. However, as I began to observe my students open up, I began to see how unhappy and badly treated other students at the school were. I saw overt racism and brutality, as well as more subtle though equally damaging institutionalized or rationalized racism and often gotten in trouble for confronting it directly.

I had learned from my grandfather and other socialists and labor activists that the only way to change something was to confront it - intelligently and strategically, but nevertheless without fear of losing a job or being criticized or ostracized. Over the course of my teaching I have been

involuntarily transferred out of a school where I was successful; been engaged on the side of the community in battles over the control of schools; confronted both administrators and other teachers and the union over issues of racism; and at the same time advocated for excellence in public education. It is in the public domain - not home schooling, private schooling, or alternative schooling - where I have located my work. And I have achieved successes beyond my dreams, seen sad and discouraged children emerge as powerful, caring, thoughtful, and skilled adults. I also experienced communities coming together over educational issues and, through attempting to help children, learn to organize and advocate to help themselves as well. I have also been honored to play a modest role in the Civil Rights movement, a number of anti-war movements, been a fellow traveler of movements for social and economic justice wherever they emerge. And perhaps my writing over the past forty years has contributed to developing richer, more effective, and socially responsible education. I hope I have done my grandfather proud.

Finally, I have always advocated that all students should have every opportunity to acquire the basic skills of reading with intelligence and sensitivity; calculating and understanding the role of numbers in your life; engaging in the arts and tutoring the social and personal imagination; learning your own history and developing a critical and analytic knowledge of history and economics; learning the scientific method and understanding the role of experimentation and verification in life as well as in the lab; and becoming part of social action for community development. The consequence of good education, for me, has been the development of the habit of lifelong learning and, on the part of my students, the feeling that they can continue to learn and have something to teach their own and other people's children as well.

I am now seventy-two and living in Point Arena, California. I am teaching a seminar on essay writing. The half dozen members of the class have made personal commitments to writing, and the experience has allowed me to focus, once again, on improving my own work while helping others develop. I'm also working on a number of other projects. One, in conjunction with the Stella Adler Studio of Acting, consists of developing, along with actors and educators, a book that advocates funding for the arts in public schools, and proposes ways to consider the arts as basic skills. Hopefully the book will appear in the context of a campaign to promote public advocacy for arts in the schools. This is a way of reminding people of the importance of nurturing the personal and social imagination during a time when schooling is becoming increasingly sterile.



Another project I'm working on is developing a toolbox for progressive educators. It would gather together specific resources for teaching social, economic and human rights; civic participation and community development; ecological thinking; geopolitical understanding; change, innovation and invention; communication and media (including propaganda analysis); planning and design; and finally conflict resolution. This is a very ambitious task, involving bringing together specific published resources, games, original documents, teacher



created and locally published curriculum material, and visual and computer based materials that deal with subjects not usually included in the curriculum. These subjects have been chosen to help teachers create progressive and critical understanding in their classrooms or small schools. They specifically and unambiguously are meant to help teachers introduce sensitive issues into their work no matter how restricted their latitudes of freedom are becoming with the current obsession with high stakes tests and "teacher-proof" materials. They will also involve soliciting and creating new materials. If I ever get this done they will be what might be called chicken soup for subversive teachers.

I have also been thinking about developing a project that engages teachers, educators, community organizers, academics, and parent advocates in developing the skills of writing for the public. The goal is to create a public voice that advocates for children and teachers who have a democratic vision of teaching and learning. For me its means advocating for progressive educational ideas (a definition of what this means in the context of 21st Century education would entail a book, which at times I have thought of writing). Mike Rose and others have been thinking along the same lines. This is still in the talking stage.

There are a few books I have been working on or planning. I'm working on a book, along with Kevin Truitt, former principal of Mission High School in San Francisco, on what we call edutherapy, that is, support for school leaders that is more like dramaturgy than training or evaluation. I have also been thinking about doing a book about basketball in my life, and maybe writing a mystery novel.

The most complex and difficult project I imagine undertaking is a philosophic and pedagogical work on learning which would bring together my experience, thoughts, and understanding of how people learn and how teaching fits into all of the different ways of learning that human beings utilize.

All of this is keeping me busy, though I continue to be troubled about how much work needs to be done to create greater justice and equity throughout the world. And what's going on in public education enrages me - in particular the foolish move to privatizing public education and the continued torturing of young people in order to support the testing and textbook industry. I am particularly disturbed by the way in which the Obama administration has intensified, at least in the area of education, all of the Bush's disdain for the lives of the young. My commitment to social and economic justice is stronger than ever and I hope to continue to be of use over the coming years.



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## Herbert R. Kohl

### *BOOKS IN PRINT*

*The Age of Complexity* (Mentor, New York, 1966)

*36 Children* (New American Library, New York, 1967)—**over 800,000 copies in print**

*Reading: How To* (E.P. Dutton, New York, 1973)—**over 300,000 copies in print**

*On Teaching* (Shocken, New York, 1976)

*View From the Oak*, with Judith Kohl (Scribners, New York, 1977)—**winner of the 1978 National Book Award for Children's Literature**

*Growing With Your Children* (Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1978)

*Basic Skills* (Little Brown and Company, Boston, Spring, 1982)

*Pack, Band and Colony*, with Judith Kohl (Farrar Straus and Giroux, New York, Fall, 1983)

*Growing Minds: On Becoming a Teacher* (Harper and Row, New York, NY 1986)

*Making Theater: Developing Plays with Young People* (Teachers and Writers Collaborative, New York, 1988)

*The Question is College* (Times Books, New York, 1989)

*The Long Haul: An Autobiography* with Myles Horton and Judith Kohl (Doubleday, New York, 1990)

*From Archetype to Zeitgeist: A Dictionary of Powerful Ideas* (Little Brown, Boston MA, 1992)

*'I Won't Learn from You' and Other Forms of Creative Maladjustment* (The New Press, New York, 1994)

*Should We Burn Babar? Essays on Children's Literature and the Power of Stories* (The New Press, New York, 1995)

*The Discipline of Hope: Learning from a Lifetime of Teaching* (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1998)

*A Grain of Poetry: How to Read Contemporary Poems and Make Them a Part of Your Life* (Harper Collins, New York, 1999)

*Stupidity and Tears* (The New Press, New York, 2003)

*She Would Not be Moved* (The New Press, New York, 2005)

*Painting Chinese* (Bloomsbury, New York, 2007)

*The Herb Kohl Reader* (The New Press, New York, 2009)

## **Herbert R. Kohl**

### ***OTHER BOOKS (NO LONGER IN PRINT)***

*Teaching the “Unteachable”* (New York Review Book, 1967)

*The Language and Education of the Deaf* (The Urban Review Press, New York, 1967)

*The Open Classroom: A Practical Guide to a New Way of Teaching* (New York Review Book, New York, 1971)

*Golden Boy as Anthony Cool: A Photo Essay on Naming and Graffiti*, with James Hinton (Dial Press, New York, 1972)

*Math, Writing and Games in the Open Classroom* (New York Review Book/Random House, New York, 1974)

*Half the House* (Bantam Books, New York, 1974)

*Atari Games and Recreations*, with Ted Kahn & Len Lindsay, with Pat Cleland (Reston Publishing Co, Reston, VA, 1982)

*Atari PILOT Games and Recreations*, with Ted Kahn & Dale Disharoon (Reston Publishing Co, Reston, VA, 1983)

*Where is Emmett Gold? A Solve-It-Yourself Rock Music Mystery*, with Erica Kohl (Little Brown & Co., Boston, 1984)

*A Book of Puzzlements: Play and Invention with Language* (Shocken, New York, 1987)

*Mathematical Puzzlements: Play and Invention with Mathematics* (Shocken, New York, 1987)

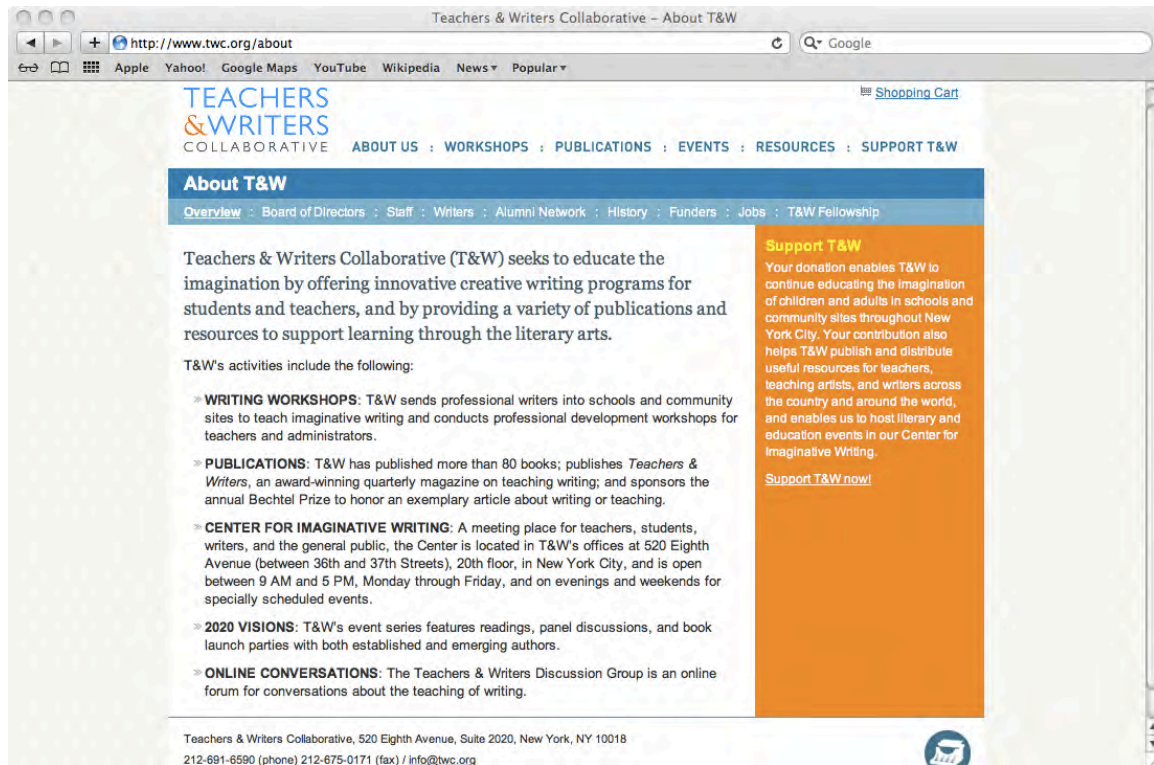
*Exploring ‘Creative Writer’: Imaginative and Fun Computer Activities*, with Drs. Barbara Kurshan and Ted M. Kahn (Addison-Wesley Publishing Co, Menlo Park, CA, 1994)

### **BOOKS EDITED**

*A Call to Character: A Family Treasure of Stories, Poems, Plays, Proverbs, and Fables to Guide the Development of Values for you and Your Children*, With Colin Greer (Harper Collins, New York, 1995)

*The Plain Truth of Things: A Treasury: The Role of Values in a Complex World*, with Colin Greer (Harper Collins, New York, 1997)

In 1967, Herb Kohl, co-founded and became the first Director of **Teachers and Writers Collaborative (TWC)** in New York City [www.twc.org](http://www.twc.org).



In December, 2005, Herb appeared with longtime TWC Board Member, Nancy Larson Shapiro, on C-Span, to discuss the real story of Rosa Parks, which Herb documented in his book, *She Would Not Be Moved: How We Tell the Story of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott* (New York: The New Press, 2005, 2006): [http://thenewpress.com/index.php?option=com\\_title&task=view\\_title&metaproductid=1532](http://thenewpress.com/index.php?option=com_title&task=view_title&metaproductid=1532)

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### ***SHE WOULD NOT BE MOVED***

DEC 6, 2005

Teachers and Writers Collaborative

Herbert Kohl talked about his book *She Would Not Be Moved: How We Tell the Story of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott*, published by New Press. In his book, he argued that the traditional way children have been .. [Read More](#)

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12/6/05

Herbert Kohl  
Author, "She Would Not Be Moved" Book TV C-SPAN2

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(This Web site also includes a complete verbal transcript of Herb's talk.)

## RESUME

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 Email: [hkhkohl@aol.com](mailto:hkhkohl@aol.com)

Birthdate: August 22, 1937  
 Spouse: Judith  
 Children: Antonia, Erica, Joshua

Web: <http://herbertkohleducator.com>

### EDUCATION

Teachers College Columbia University	New York City	1965 – 66	30 Credits toward Ph.D.
Teachers College Columbia University	New York City	1961 - 62	MA Special Education
Columbia University	New York City	1961 - 62	Woodrow Wilson Fellow
University College Oxford	Oxford, England	1958 - 59	Henry Fellow: Philosophy and Logic
Harvard College	Cambridge, MA	1954 – 58	AB Philosophy, <i>Magna Cum Laude</i>
Bronx High School of Science	New York City	1951 - 54	Diploma

### RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

Institute for Social Justice and Education	San Francisco, CA	2004 -	Director
Center for Teaching Excellence and Social Justice	San Francisco, CA	1999-2004	Director
Open Society Institute— Soros Foundation Network	University of San Francisco New York, NY	1997-1999	Senior Fellow
University of San Francisco	San Francisco, CA	1996-99	Research Scholar
Fund for New York City Public Education	New York, NY	1992-97	Program Director
Carelton College	Northfield, MN.	1995	Benedict Professor of Educational Studies
Hamline University	St. Paul, MN	1989 - 94	Visiting Professor of Education & Liberal Studies
		1988 - 89	Gordon Sanders Professor of Education
Point Arena High School	Point Arena, CA	1987 - 88	Teacher of Economics, Civics and Sociology
Acorn School	Point Arena, CA	1986 - 87	Teacher, Kindergarten through grade 4
Scientific American Books	New York, NY London, UK	1983 - 84	Director of Software Development
College of Rural and Human Studies University of Alaska	Fairbanks, AK	Summer '83	Visiting Professor of Education
Coastal Coastal Coastal Ridge Research & Educational Center	Point Arena, CA	1978 - Present	Director, Educational Development
Center for Open Learning and Teaching	Berkeley, CA	1972 - 77	Co-Director Teacher Training, K-2 Teacher
Other Ways High School Berkeley Unified School District	Berkeley, CA	1968 - 1971	Principal and Teacher
University of California, Berkeley Department of English, School of Education	Berkeley, CA	1967 - 1968	Visiting Associate Professor
Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute, Teachers College, Columbia	New York City	1966 -1967	Research Associate
Teachers & Writers Collaborative	New York City	1966 - 1967	Co-Founder and Director
Center for Urban Education	New York City	1965 -1967	Research Associate and Journalist
Public School 10379	New York City	1962 - 64	Sixth Grade Teacher
Public School 145	New York City	1962	Fifth Grade Teacher
Reece School for the Severely	New York City	1961	Teacher, Emotionally Disturbed

Disturbed

HONORS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship[	2010
William & Flora Hewlett Foundation Education Award	2002-2007
National Teacher Award, Mothering Magazine	1999
Aaron Diamond Foundation	1991 - 1996
Robert F. Kennedy Book Award	1991
Boehm Foundation	1988
New World Foundation	1988, 1992, 1995
Distinguished Achievement Award, Education Writer's Association of America	1983, 1984
National Book Award —Childrens Literature	1978, with Judith Kohl
Ford Foundation (to the Berkeley Unified School District)	1970 -1971
Carnegie Corporation of New York	1969-1971
National Endowment of the Arts Award for best non-fiction article published in a small magazine	1968
Bureau of Research, United States Office of Education (to the Teachers & Writers Collaborative, Teacher's College, Columbia)	1965 - 1967
Teacher's College Fellowship, Columbia University	1965 - 66
Woodrow Wilson Fellow, Columbia University	1959 - 60
Henry Fellowship, Oxford	1958 - 1959
Phi Beta Kappa, Harvard College	1958
President Signet Society, Harvard College	1958
Harvard College Scholarship	1954 - 1958

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Education Writers Association  
Authors Guild  
National Association of Developmental Educators  
P.E.N. American Center  
Phi Beta Kappa  
Signet Society  
National Coalition of Education Activists  
Progressive Education Association

MEMBER OF BOARDS

Atari Institute for Educational Action Research (Atari Inc./Warner Communications, Inc.)  
California Poets in the Schools  
Center for Open Learning and Teaching  
Children's Advocate  
Childrens' Choice Book Club  
Coastal Ridge Research and Education Center  
Computer Equity Project, National Women's Coalition  
Coordinator, American Center, P.E.N. West  
Dolores Kohl Educational Foundation, Executive Secretary, Advisory Board  
Editorial Board, *Learning Magazine*  
Editorial Board, *The Lion & The Unicorn*  
Educational Media Laboratory, WNET, New York  
Equity and Excellence in Education  
Executive Board, P.E.N. American Center  
Hamline Education Review  
Hungry Mind Review



Interaction Magazine  
New Press Education Advisory Board  
People's Yellow Pages  
Public Education Information Network  
Rethinking Schools  
Teachers & Writers Collaborative  
The Lion and the Unicorn

#### CONSULTANT/LECTURER

Adelphi College  
Apple Computer —Vivarium Project  
Associated Councils of the Arts  
Atari Inc. (Warner Communications, Inc.)  
California Educators for Social Responsibility  
Children's Defense Fund  
Dominican College, San Raphael, CA  
Educators for Social Responsibility  
Harvard University Graduate School of Education  
Leslie College  
Liverpool University  
London Institute of Education, University of London  
National Association for the Education of Young Children  
National Coalition of Alternative Schools  
National Institute of Education  
National Literacy Volunteers  
Right to Read Program  
San Francisco State University  
S.F. Austin State University, Nacagdoches, TX  
Sonoma State University  
Stanford University  
Teachers College, Columbia  
Teaching the Trainers of Teachers (TTT) Program, University of Kansas  
United States Office of Education  
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.  
University of California, Berkeley  
University of California, Irvine  
University of California, Santa Cruz  
University of Liverpool  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
University of Minnesota, St. Paul  
University of Oregon, Eugene  
University of Reading, United Kingdom  
United States Office of Education  
Vivarium Project Apple Computer  
W.H. Freeman/ Scientific American Books

#### MEDIA

Host, In the Morning, KPFA Berkeley, CA, 1968 - 1972  
Education Commentator, Minnesota Public Radio, 1988 - 1992  
Education Training Films, DBA Inc., Los Angeles, CA 1973 - 1978  
Host, Education Now, KZYZ, Philo, California, 1996 -7

## PUBLICATIONS

### BOOKS

- The Age of Complexity*, Mentor, New York, 1966  
*The Language and Education of the Deaf*, Urban Review Press, 1967  
*Teaching the Unteachable*, New York Review, 1967  
*36 Children*, New American Library, New York, 1967  
*The Open Classroom*, New York Review of Books -Vintage, New York, 1969  
*Fables: A Curriculum Unit*, Teachers & Writers Collaborative, N.Y., 1969  
*Golden Boy as Anthony Cool: A Photo Essay on Narnes and Graffiti*, Dial Press, New York, 1972  
*Reading: How To -A People's Guide to Alternative Ways of Teaching and Testing Reading*, E.P. Dutton, New York, 1973  
*Games, Math and Writing in the Open Classroom*, New York Review - Random House, New York, 1973  
*Half the House*, E.P. Dutton, New York, 1974  
*On Teaching*, Schocken, New York, 1976  
*View From the Oak*, with Judith Kohl, Scribners, New York, 1977  
*Growing With Your Children*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1978  
*A Book of Puzzlements*, Schocken, New York, November, 1981  
*Basic Skills*, Little Brown and Company, Boston, Spring, 1982  
*Atari Games and Recreations*, with Len Lindsay, Ted Kahn & Pat Cleland, Reston Publishing, Reston, VA, Spring, 1982  
*Insight: Reflections on Teaching*, Addison-Wesley, New York, Spring 1982  
*Conscience and Human Rights*, (a Curriculum written for Amnesty International), Amnesty International, Fall 1983  
*Pack, Band and Colony*, with Judith Kohl, Farrar Straus and Giroux, New York, Fall, 1983  
*Atari PILOT Activities and Games*, with Ted Kahn and Dale Disharoon, Reston Publishing, Reston, VA, 1983  
*Whatever Became of Emmett Gold* with Erica Kohl, Little Brown and Company, Boston, Fall, 1983  
*Atari Puzzlements*, Reston, VA, 1984  
*Commodore Puzzlements*, Reston, VA, 1984  
*41-1/2 Things to do with your Atari*, Reston, VA, 1984  
*41-1/2 Things to do with your Commodore*, Reston, VA, 1984  
*Growing Minds: On Becoming a Teacher*, Harper and Row, New York, NY 1986  
*Mathematical Puzzlements*, Schocken, New York, 1987 ,  
*Making Theater: Developing Plays with Young People*, Teachers and Writers Collaborative, New York, 1988  
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*'I Won't Learn from You' and Other Forms of Creative Maladjustment* New Press, NY, 1994  
*Exploring Creative Writer: Imaginative and Fun Computer Activities*, ,with Barbara Kurshan and Ted Kahn Addison Wesley, Reading, MA, 1994  
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*Should We Burn Babar* New Press, New York, 1995  
*The Discipline of Hope* Simon and Schuster, New York, 1998  
*A Grain of Poetry*, Harper Collins, 1999  
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### PAMPHLETS

- A University for Our Time*, Other Ways Press, Berkeley, CA, 1968  
*Learning With a Computer* in the School Success Series, The Hume Company, Los Angeles, CA, 1988  
*Working With Your Child's Teacher* in the School Success Series, The Hume Company,

Los Angeles, CA, 1989

*Games and Toys for Learning* in the School Success Series, The Hume Company, Los Angeles, CA 1989

*I Won't Learn from You: The Role of Assent in Learning*, Milkweed Editions, St. Paul, MN, 1991.

#### BOOKS EDITED

With Victor Hernandez Cruz, *Stuff*, World, New York, 1970

*An Anthology of Fables*, two volumes, Houghton-Mifflin, Boston, 1973

*Stories of Sports and Society*, Houghton-Mifflin, Boston, 1973

*Gamesmag*, Berkeley, CA, 1972-1976

*And Gladly Teach: a Dolores Kohl Education Foundation Anthology of Teaching and Learning Ideas*, Dolores Kohl Education Foundation, Wilmette, IL 1989

With Colin Greer *Call to Character* Harper Collins, NY, 1995

With Colin Greer *The Plain Truth of Things* Harper Collins, NY, 1997

#### ARTICLES, REVIEWS AND ESSAYS

1960 "Self-Reference, Truth and Provability", with Charles Parsons in *MIND: A Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy*, The University Press, Aberdeen, Scotland

1966 "The Literature of Children", *The Urban Review* v1.n3., New York, NY  
"Children Writing' the Story of an Experiment", *The New York Review of Books*, v7.n8.

1967 "The Education of A Deaf Child as a Culturally Deprived Individual",  
*The Deaf American*, v18.n8, Indianapolis, IN  
"The Art of Teaching and the Teaching of Arts", *Children and the Arts*, Central Atlantic Regional Laboratory, Washington D.C.

1968 "Art and Education", with James Hinton and Allan Kaprow, *Cultural Affairs*, New York, NY  
"How to Succeed in Antipoverty Without Really Trying", *Poverty: Views from the Left*, ed. Larner and Howe, William Morrow and Company, New York, NY  
"Great Expectations, a Review", *The New York Review of Books*, v11.n4., New York, NY  
"How Teachers Fail", *The New York Review of Books*, v10.n1., New York, NY  
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"Children and the Language of the Schools", *California Monthly*, v78.n7., Berkeley, CA

1969 "Up Against It: A Review", *New York Review of Books*, v11.nB., New York, NY  
"A Harlem Class Writes", *Radical School Reform*, ed. by Bea and Ron Gross, Simon and Schuster, New York, NY  
"Some Modest Proposals", *Equal Educational Opportunities*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA  
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1970 Introduction to *This Book is About Schools*, Pantheon, New York, NY  
"Be Creative, Follow Directions!" *Museum News*, v49.n2., American Association of Museums, Washington, D.C.

1971 "Other Ways: Resource for a System", *High School*, ed. by Ron Gross and Bea Osterman, Simon and Schuster, New York, NY  
"Other Ways", *Woodrow Wilson Fellowship Newsletter*, #22, Princeton, NJ  
"Can One Survive?", *The Teacher Paper*, v4.n1., Portland, Oregon

1972 "The Politics of Jargon", *The Teacher Paper*, v4.n3., Portland, Oregon  
"Out Our Way", *The New York Review of Books*, v18.n1., New York, NY

- 1973 "Opening Up the Troop", *Girl Scout Leader*, v49.n6., Girl Scouts of America, New York, NY  
 "A Colloquy on Educational Reform", *The National Elementary Principal*, v52.n6.,  
 The National Association of Elementary School Principals, Arlington VA  
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- 1974 Forward to *Flowers Can Even Bloom in Schools* ed by Marcia Perlstein, Westinghouse  
 Learning Press, Sunnyvale, CA  
 "Hanging Up the Students", *Flowers Can Even Bloom in Schools*, Ibid.  
 "Games and Dinosaurs", *The Teacher Paper*, v6.n4., Portland, OR  
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 "Symposium on School Busing", *Ramparts*, v13.n5, Berkeley, CA
- 1975 "Is It Enough to Change the Schools?", *American Libraries*, v6.n3 American Library  
 Association, Chicago, IL  
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 Education Supplement, London, United Kingdom
- 1976 "Community Control - Failed or Undermined?", *Phi Delta Kappan*, v67.n6., Bloomington, IN  
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 Sausalito, CA  
 "Reflections on Nine Years in Berkeley", *City Miner*, Berkeley, CA  
 "How to Help Your Preschool Child Get Ready to Read", *Family Circle*, v90.n7., New York, NY  
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- 1978 "Public Education Must Be Saved - Even From Itself ", *Los Angeles Times*, October 15,  
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 "Through the Camera's Eyes: Filmmaking as a Basic Skill", *Media and Methods*, North  
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- 1979 "The Hollow Search for the 'Perfectly Parented' Child", *Los Angeles Times*, February 4,  
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 "Talk of Oil Divides the Small Residents of a Small County", *Los Angeles Times*, May 6,  
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- 1980 "Can The Schools Build a New Social Order?" *Journal of Education* v162, Boston University  
 School of Education, Boston, MA and in expanded form in *Debate* v1.n1., Committee on  
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- 1981 "Public Alternative Schools and the Future of Democracy" (with Joe Nathan),  
*Phi Beta Kappan* v62.n10., Bloomington, IN  
 "It's Time to Stop Sacrificing the Arts", *Learning Magazine*, Belmont, CA  
 "On Being a Father", *Harvard Magazine* v84.n1, Cambridge, MA  
 "Public Education Won't Work Until We Care", *Los Angeles Times*, October 26,  
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- 1982 "What Does it Take to Be A Real Teacher?", *Learning Magazine*; v10.n8., Belmont, CA  
 "The All American Report Card is a Loser", *Learning Magazine*, v10.n9, Belmont, CA  
 "Physical Violence Aside, TV's Psychic Violence is the Real Cause for Alarm",  
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 "The Agony of Trying to Tell My Children", *Los Angeles Times*, September 23,

Los Angeles, CA

"Personalized Teaching", *Learning*, v11.n2., Belmont, CA

"Children and Computers", *Harvard Magazine*, v85.n1., Cambridge, MA

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"Should I Buy My Child a Computer?", *Graduate Woman*, v76.n6., American Association of University Women, Washington, DC

- 1983 "The World's Most Expensive Flash Card", *The Intelligent School House*, ed. Dale Peterson, Reston Publishing Co., Reston, VA.  
Forward to *Free To Teach*, Joe Nathan, The Pilgrim Press, New York, NY  
"Electronic Cottage", a column on computers and learning in  
*The Atari Connection* (6 issues), Sunnyvale, CA  
"The Comics: What Do They Teach the Young About Life", *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 3, Philadelphia, PA  
"Video Games", *Changing Schools*, v11.n3., Ball State University, Muncie, IN  
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- 1989 "What's the Price of Commercial TV in the Classroom?" *New York Times Sunday Edition*, Arb and Leisure Section August 13  
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"Rosa Was Tired", *Facing History and Ourselves Newsletter*, Fall, Newton, MA  
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1991-2007

Information pertaining to articles written from 1991 to 2007 was, unfortunately, destroyed, along with my study and computer, by storms and water damage in 2006. I am presently in the process of finding citations, copies, and publishing information in order to update this list.

From what I have been able to establish over that time I wrote reviews and articles for *The Nation*, articles, reviews and interviews in *Phi Delta Kappan*, *Z Magazine*, *Multicultural Education* (winner of the 1994 Feature Article award of EdPress), *Black Issues in Higher Education*, *Our Schools / Our Selves*, Philadelphia Inquirer, Ladies Home Journal, Boston University Journal of Education, *Mother Jones*, *Culturefront*, plus a series of articles (6) on good public schools for *Mothering Magazine*.

In addition to the works cited above, I wrote nine columns a year on education for *Teacher Magazine* from 1968 until 1982, for a total of 125 columns. From 2000 to the present I have written the *Good Stuff column for Rethinking Schools* for a total of 27 columns.

## Video and Web Video Presentations and Interviews

**Dec. 5, 2005 C-Span Video Archives, *She Would Not Be Moved*, with Nancy Shapiro, Teachers & Writers Collaborative,**  
<http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/BeM>

**Oct. 4, 2010. Alternative Education Resource Organization (AERO), 2010 Conference Keynote/Intertview**  
<http://aeroeducation.org/2010/10/04/herbert-kohl-2010-aero-conference-keynote-video/>

# TEACHERS & WRITERS COLLABORATIVE

August 23, 2011

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Susan Karwoska

TO: Jurors for the 2012 Brock International Prize in Education

FROM: Nancy Larson Shapiro, Co-chair of the Board of  
Teachers & Writers Collaborative

RE: Support for Herbert Kohl Nomination

With pleasure I write to support the nomination of Herbert Kohl for this prestigious prize.

I have known Herb personally and professionally for 35 years, since I came to Teachers & Writers Collaborative (T&W) in the mid-1970's (I was the organization's Director for 30 years). T&W was founded by Herb (along with other educators and writers) in the late 1960's to revolutionize the teaching of writing by having professional writers work with teachers in New York City classrooms. This nonprofit continues to thrive—working in schools, supporting writers, and publishing materials about teaching writing. T&W was the first and largest writers-in-the-schools program in the country and continues to provide leadership to similar groups that have grown up in many areas.

In thinking about Herb's many contributions to teaching and learning, I find an analogy in one of his own books—*She Would Not Be Moved: How We Tell the Story of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott*. In this book Herb takes to task popular portrayals of Rosa Parks often used in classrooms: that is, as a simple woman too tired to move to the back of the bus. He delves into her background as a well-trained activist committed to desegregation and posed to seize the moment when an opportunity arose. Parallels to Herb's work that I could make include the following:

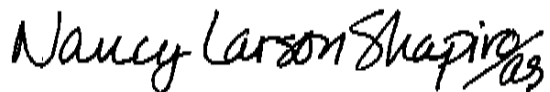
—There is a clear, consistent philosophy underlying all of his educational work that centers first and foremost on the child. His early books—*The Age of Complexity* and *Teaching the Unteachable*—establish the foundation for everything he has done/written since. He has an unshakeable belief in every child's ability to learn, and he has spent his career writing, teaching, and organizing other like-minded educators to address the challenge of teaching students who present the knottiest problems to the system. In the course of this career he has never settled for easy solutions to education's recalcitrant problems, and he has never devised strategies that punish students

who fail to learn or that blame teachers for the problem. Rather, he has searched for and written eloquently about reasons for a child's resistance, and he has shared innumerable practical ways to help teachers make classrooms creative and successful.

—Interestingly, Herb's major in college was math and logic, and his profound engagement with these subjects informs all of his teaching and writing. He loves puzzles, and he delights in games, believing that making something "work" should be as much fun as it is effort. This sounds like a "simple" idea, but in my own experience, keeping a sense of "playfulness" in children's lives is one of education's greatest challenges, especially for those having troubles in school.

—The publication of his seminal work—*36 Children*—in 1967 came at critical time in education's history, a moment when key issues and strategies that remain with us today were laid out. Over the years since, Herb has refined and deepened his approaches to teaching, but the basic vision and energy remain, and his work continues to inspire new generations of teachers looking for a firm foundation for their careers.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Larson Shapiro" with a stylized flourish at the end.

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College of Education  
Southern University and A & M College  
Baton Rouge, LA  
August 21, 2011

Ted M. Kahn, Ph.D.  
CEO & Chief Learning Strategist & Future Careers Coach  
DesignWorlds for Learning, Inc. &  
DesignWorlds for College & Careers  
20370 Town Center Lane, #258  
Cupertino, CA 95014

Dear Dr. Kahn,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to recommend Herb Kohl for the 2012 Brock Prize. Herb has been a particular motivator for me – pushing me to write my first book (which turned out to be an award-winning best seller) when I thought I had nothing interesting to say. That is something unique about Herb, he has a way of releasing the genius in anyone he touches, whether in person or through his writing. It is that gift that has made him a monumental, if somewhat “underground” force in shaping the belief systems of innumerable students, teachers, and scholars over the last three or so generations. He was one of the first educational writers to put into the country’s *zeitgeist* the unpopular notion that any lack of educational achievement among low-income African Americans had nothing to do with their intelligence or capacity, and everything to do with racism, poor instruction, and lack of school resources.

Despite the phenomenal effect of Herb Kohl’s work on myself and so many of my colleagues, I found this letter at first difficult to write. I was initially unable to gibe Herb’s wide-ranging contributions in teacher education, progressive

pedagogy, arts education, anti-racism, environmental education, mathematics education, and political activism with the Brock Prize notion of a “specific innovation.” But then, I was reminded of a Jules Henry quote that Herb brought to my attention some time ago, a discussion about sanity:

Sanity...can take three forms – to believe sham to be the truth; to see through sham while using it; or to see through sham but fight it. ...We are now in the stage of believing sham to be the truth, while entering the stage of seeing through sham while using it. The third stage is understanding sham and knowing how to fight it. The fourth stage is a world without sham.

And thus I realized the “innovation” that Herb Kohl has brought to the field of education that has the potential to provide long-term benefit to humanity. Much ahead of Henry’s curve, Kohl has taught us through his teaching, writing, and actions to recognize and fight sham. He has insisted that “sanity” be the beacon toward which we steer our work in education.

The sanity that Herb Kohl has brought to so many students, teachers, communities, scholars, and even politicians, is three-fold:

- An unfaltering belief in and respect for the brilliance of all human beings
- An indefatigable persistence and ingenuity to call forth that brilliance, and
- The steadfast courage to fight for equity and justice against all the forces that seek to crush brilliance.

Sanity without sham is refusing to believe that the color of one’s skin or the thickness of one’s wallet can affect the ability to learn. It is believing that connecting to our students can make a difference in their willingness to trust us to teach them. It is understanding that getting to know students, their parents, and their larger community can help us discover how and what to teach. Sanity without sham is always seeking to learn more in order to share the larger world with our students. It is listening and not just telling. It is constantly inventing new

strategies to keep students engaged. Sanity without sham is demanding justice by fighting necessary battles for our students and ourselves. This is the innovation Herb Kohl has continued to bring to the education world.

Kohl has also brought to education a focus on the human beings who inhabit schools. He has railed against anything that compromises a student's or teacher's innate humanity, be it subscribing to mechanized "teacher proof" instruction, looking at children solely through the distorted lenses of test scores, or seeking to turn teaching into some kind of vacuous follow-the-numbers template.

Herb has taught us to look deeply at our students, not to see what they don't know, but to identify the gifts they bring with them that can connect what they already know to the world waiting to be known. He asks that, in our careful observations of our students, we create curricula that allow them to see themselves as the brilliant human beings they are. He demands that we educators look inward: that we harbor no doubts about our students, but constant doubts about ourselves – are we creative enough, connected enough, committed enough to ensure that those children who are least well-served by educational systems are able to become the change agents of their communities and our world?

Herb Kohl has affected countless educators and students. No matter who we teach, what our setting, he has taught us to accept no limitations for our students or for ourselves. We can teach anybody anything, and if there are forces working against our doing so, we can fight those forces collectively with our colleagues, our students and our communities. What greater innovation could there be in education? The persistence of hope through a commitment to fight sham and insist on sanity!

This message seems to be all but extinguished in the current educational climate, where looking at and listening to students, or connecting to parents and communities are not on any national agenda. With the focus instead on competition, privatization, and creating in education a "market economy," sanity has taken a back seat. Still there are educators who cling to the life lines Herb

Kohl has consistently sent up for decades -- to continue to fight the good fight. While we persist in plodding through the muck of education today, he inspires me and countless other educators to work, to teach, to battle for children, their families, and a better world. Herb Kohl has given us the model for fighting sham and embracing sanity. That is his world-changing contribution to education.

I sincerely hope that the Brock Prize committee bestows upon Herb Kohl the much deserved 2012 Prize.

Thank you,

  
Lisa Delpit



Clark Distinguished Professor of Education

Southern University



STANFORD  
UNIVERSITY

SHIRLEY BRICE HEATH  
*Margery Bailey Professor of  
English and Dramatic Literature  
and  
Professor of Linguistics, Emerita*

August 24, 2011

Jury of the 2012 Brock International Education Prize  
and  
Ted Kahn, nominator

Re: Herbert Kohl

I write in support of the nomination of Herbert Kohl for the Brock International Education Prize for 2012. Herb began his innovative work in education reform in the 1960s, when he initiated store-front schools to continue and improve educational opportunities for youngsters living in violence-ridden urban areas. The struggles of the Civil Rights Movement touched Herb deeply when he realized that in spite of the rhetoric, legislative changes, and lives lost, true education reform had no central place on the national agenda. Herb started storefront schools, wrote of the teaching there, and the creativity inspired for students from communities of violence, deprivation, and torn relationships. His writings touched on points still very much part of international reform moves in education. He urged small classes, re-invigoration of the ideas of John Dewey in the learning lives of children, teacher understanding of the seamlessness of children's learning, and integration of community elders and organizations into the learning environments of the young.

Since the 1960s, Herb has in numerous ways continued to put these ideas in front of education reformers, pointing consistently to the need to ensure that the young know how to seek out and critique information sources and plan and develop creative projects. He has personally reached out to minority scholars and teachers who have started charter schools, after-school learning environments, and community-school collaborations. His books of essays, accounts, and interviews with major education thinkers have gone around the world, motivating individuals in other nations to rethink the natural inertia of institutionalized curricula, assessments, and teacher preparation regimens.

In recent years, Herb, like other reformers from the 1960s and 1970s, has considered carefully the pragmatics of school reform. He has come to recognize that in the current climate of standardized testing and curricula, few opportunities are likely to arise within schools for the types of strategic thinking, critical planning, and creative innovation essential for the work force of the United States and other modern economies. He has therefore pointed to the complementary role that study of the arts can play in curricula and in non-school environments. Recently published collections of his essays and interviews portray his plans for linking the arts with the sciences, social sciences, and mathematics. He has drawn inspiration from major thinkers and practitioners in the arts, as well as from the principles of education that guide education in Finland and Sweden, where students consistently outperform US learners. In Sweden, the study of architecture begins in primary school, enabling youngsters to see principles of mathematics, physics, and aesthetics at work in the environment around them. Their study of architecture takes them into history, national pride, and environmental sciences. Content subject

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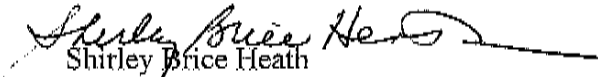
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shirley Brice Heath'.

areas "live" in the world around them, and children as young as seven can talk at length about principles behind arches, particular construction techniques, and new materials developed to support solar energy.

Many educators hear "soft and fuzzy" whenever the term "creativity" comes up in talk of education reform. Make no mistake: Herb is no proponent of fuzziness or ease of learning. He is a public intellectual who has for fifty years looked to the future and correctly predicted the current serious lag in American education. He has lectured, mentored, and written in his attempts to put action behind this recognition of where current education reforms take us.

The international reach, along with the solid record of innovative thinking, of Herb's work make him a stellar candidate for this award.



Shirley Bruce Heath

Margery Bailey Professor of English and Dramatic Literature  
and Professor of Linguistics, Emerita, Stanford University  
and

Professor at Large, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University 2003-2010