



Memoirs of a Mad Black Educator

Bobby R. Dixon

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Memoirs of a Mad Black Educator by Bobby Dixon is a critical reflection on the education reform movement through the personal experiences of this African-American educator. Dixon fictionalizes some of his experiences to delineate the emergence of a new educational power structure, which entails the marriage of philanthropy, federal government policy, charter school operators, new forms of teacher training and administrator training programs, the profitable testing industry, mayoral control of large school districts, among other entities. This new educational power structure not only advocates the privatization of public education, but forces it down the public's throat. The consequence is the growing obsolescence of the public school and the public school teacher. There are massive firings and layoffs of skilled, veteran teachers and principals nationwide to make way for alternatively trained teachers and principals. Likewise there are nationwide closings of schools in minority and poor communities to make way for charter schools and special school districts. This new structure has either eliminated or coopted teacher unions. It has devastated the solid, local economy of minority communities, abolishing jobs and benefits for not only teachers, but bus drivers, cafeteria workers, janitors, etc. In short, it has created the colonization of school districts with new "rulers" or managers and sources of influence. This new transformation has taken place without choice, undemocratically, and without showing any improvement in test scores for students. Studies have shown that public schools have always performed as well or better than charter schools. This new power structure is based on a business model that seeks monetary "returns on its investment." It is guided by "mission statements" and "vision statements" as any business would be. It advocates a market-driven system with "choice" at its core. It also relies heavily, to an extreme, on data, on test scores. Dixon contends that besides wrecking havoc upon public education and undermining its democratic core, this new power structure is also replacing trust in teachers and local school boards with the dictatorship of mayoral control, state control, or private control. We have to resist this madness by organizing at the grassroots level.

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