

# Elementary schools run by universities

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I'm subscribed to an email list dealing with some educational issues. In one of the better recent postings, someone noted that sometimes colleges and universities run local elementary schools and asked whether any college/university run elementary school takes arithmetic seriously, in the sense of actually teaching kids how to do arithmetic (whatever else they might or might not teach them), advocacy of that sense of seriousness being apparently one of the *raison d'être* of the email list.

Unfortunately, he hasn't gotten any examples of such schools that do. Independently of how one feels about the issue itself, it is reasonable to ask which elementary schools run by universities actually teach kids how to do arithmetic by teaching them algorithms and emphasizing proficiency in them.

Does anyone here know?

The practice they seem to be trying to end is that in which, instead of learning algorithms, the pupils are taught to use calculators and generally how to feel good about math. So, it seems to be a contest between two approaches, neither of which I think Herman Rubin would approve of, and this group seems to be organized around the practical problems of implementing a particular one of them.

Me, I say, "Out of the classrooms and into the streets", but not the way they meant it in the 60's. I think that education shouldn't be viewed as the special province of schools, and that schools don't own the definition of the word "education". Once that point is appreciated, I think the language of reform will be less co-opted. So, that is yet another point of view.

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Ignorantly,

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\* Disclaimer: I am a guest and \*not\* a member of the MIT CSAIL. My actions and \* comments do not reflect in any way on MIT. Also, I am nowhere near Boston.