

Essay # 1 conformity

Profession, Teacher



Society should utilize larger levels of conformity and dependency in schools because it helps to prepare students for the real world and society. You must learn your place in schools and in society to be accepted as part of society. Compulsory schooling doesn't teach children, but instead teaches them to conform to society. (Gatto, John, " The Seven-Lesson Schoolteacher."

Reading Life: A Writer's Reader, Boston, MA: Publisher's Design and Production Services, 2005. Pgs. 362-371.) An example of this is the school dress code. Dress codes allow students to conform, to be part of the crowd, to find a place in the hierarchy. Is this necessarily a bad thing? Dress codes, as a type of conformity, prepare students for the real world. Students need to learn to conform to society, or they will be labeled as an outcast.

Conformity is the only way that humans as social animals can function. In order to find a good job in the future, prospering students must conform to what society expects of them. They must conform to the rules and to the dress code of their future jobs. No casual Fridays here. They must learn to do what society expects of them, to do otherwise would be considered taboo.

Even when you go into a grocery store, you must conform to their expectations: " No shoes, no shirt, no service". Teaching students to conform is a crucial lesson if they are going to survive in this world. Conformity is not only found in dress codes, it is also found in the classrooms at school. Gatto states " that everyone has a place in the pyramid and there is no way out of your class position except by number magic. Failing that, you must stay where you are put". (Gatto, John, " The Seven-Lesson Schoolteacher."

Reading Life: A Writer's Reader, Boston, MA: Publisher's Design and Production Services, 2005. Pgs. 362-371.) In this example, conformity is

being taught early on in the classroom. Everyone has a place in the pyramid, which is representative of society. However, how much conformity is too much? Doesn't it stamp out individuality, one's own uniqueness? To an extent, it does stamp out individuality. But how much individuality is okay? Consider the example of the dress code. Say a student doesn't like it, and wants to rebel and be unique. She goes to school the next day wearing a scandalous outfit to fight for her individuality. This may seem fine to her because she believes she is being unique, however; her sense of self worth is in danger. She is making a statement and wants people ogling her because of what she is wearing. People will not look at her because they think she looks good, they will look at her critically. The way people dress sends out a vibe to other people, telling them without words what kind of person they are. This girl, who is fighting for her uniqueness would send out a negative and judgmental vibe, she would not be taken seriously. There is a line to be drawn with conformity. Some school dress codes are very lenient; they allow students to wear almost anything that makes them unique. Few schools, however, have strict dress codes. According to research done by Dateline on NBC, the students wear uniforms, a few varieties of finger-nail polish, and are not allowed to dye their hair. This does stamp out all aspects of individuality, and conformity goes too far. There are different components of conformity that students must learn in order to prepare for the real world. One of these components is emotional dependency. Beginning in elementary school, for example, students are taught to be dependent upon the teacher. The teacher holds all of the information and all of the rewards; she also holds the bathroom pass and permission to go outside for recess. If the student

wants any of these things, they must first prove to the teacher they are worthy. Gatto states the lesson of emotional dependency: " By stars and red checks, smiles and frowns, prizes, honors, and disgraces, I teach kids to surrender their will to the predestined chain of command. Rights may be granted or withheld by any authority without appeal." (Gatto, John, " The Seven-Lesson Schoolteacher." Reading Life: A Writer's Reader, Boston, MA: Publisher's Design and Production Services, 2005. Pgs. 362-371.) Emotional dependency is related to conformity because it teaches students to accept the " predestined chain of command". Good students will wait to be told what to do by the person in command. In fact, everyone does this, the teacher waits for the principal, and the principal waits for the administrators, and so on, because there is always someone above them who is in charge. The student is at the bottom of this long chain of dependency, but it is a necessary lesson to be learned. " The expert makes all the important choices; only I, the teacher, can determine...rather, the people who pay me can make those decisions". (Gatto, John, " The Seven-Lesson Schoolteacher." Reading Life: A Writer's Reader, Boston, MA: Publisher's Design and Production Services, 2005. Pgs. 362-371.) Students are completely subjective to the teacher. They are assigned seats, told when to eat, sleep, play, speak, even when to use the bathroom. If a student acts up in class, they are sent outside, or even sent to the dreaded principal's office. The school teaches an important lesson to this rebellious student. In order to do well, they must do as the teacher asks with minimum resistance, to avoid punishment. This may seem cruel, but it is necessary. If people suddenly started being completely independent, our society would fall apart. People

would make their own meals, grow their own food, make their own conclusions about entertainment, and make their own clothes. Every business would disintegrate. No one would have jobs because there would be no need for them, nothing would ever be done together because everyone would be independent of everyone else. The entire grounds that our society is based on would collapse. The test to see if students are "dependent" enough to survive the real world comes in college. Students are allowed real independence for the first time in their lives, an opportunity to be individualistic. A daunting thought is the students could reverse everything they have been taught for the past twelve years. The few students who completely become independent quickly find out they need the conformity and dependence of society, they need to fit in. College is a chance for students to find themselves, and to walk their own paths; however, this is only a small break, and a test at that. Once out of college the student will once again conform to the needs of society, they will have to, or they will be cast out. The student will also learn to be dependent on those higher in the chain or they will find themselves jobless. This is the test every college student must pass; they have the chance to rebel against everything they have been taught, however, this cannot last, not if they want to survive. Students can rebel against the little things like wearing vivid blue nail polish when a transparent color is the only option, or dying hair a radical color, but not against the structure of society. Our society would collapse if no one conformed and everyone rebelled against everything. The primary task of schooling is to prepare an individual to take their place in society-to become

a contributing member-a cog in the giant wheel of society. -----
