

High school: traumatic or overdramatic?

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High school, despite being constantly on a balance scale between an incredible and horrible experience, is inarguably one of the most formative times in a person's life. In those four short years one is left to figure themselves out. They are there to learn, not only about the quadratic formula and how to identify a subordinating conjunction, but also many things about themselves as a person. It is the time to figure out the different types of people and how one fits into the inevitable cliques that form within the student body. However, the goal by the end of one's senior year is to know what they plan to do next, whether that be to go to college, get a job, or become a beach hobo.

Often times, there is controversy on whether or not what America is being taught in high school is actually necessary for them to succeed in today's society. What many students may not realize, however, is that certain subjects that they may find "pointless" aren't necessarily designed to prepare them for X and Y issue, but will lay the groundwork for how to problem solve correctly in those areas. In the image provided titled "Conversation," we see a little girl who portrays the role of the spirit of education. To me, this picture represents the pressure of happiness and satisfaction with the academic system. Students are expected to go to school, and like it. They seem to take on the mindset of, "You don't have a choice but to be here, so be happy!" This however, is not the case for almost every student in high school.

There is so much pressure to do well in one's studies, and so much pressure to do it with a smile on their face. The fun in school quickly dissolves when academics feel forced upon the student. They will often feel the same way

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the girl does in the image, and they may feel as though there is nothing to do besides suck it up and deal. In Dewey's vision on education, America cannot achieve a healthy democracy without an educational system that teaches people more than to read, write, and do math, because real people out there who have convictions do much more than just read, write, and do math. Although it may seem like all one will need in their life is reading, "writing," and "arithmetic," the classes we are given in high school are actually not pointless. Many other things must be taught such as business, crafts, music, art, history, music, politics, economics, geography, and religion on top of reading, writing, and math.

Human beings have created passions beyond the three R's, expanding into fields that would never be possible with only reading, writing, and math. Dewey wants students to accept the challenges they are faced with in their classes rather than question their significance. He would also like them to truly understand and think about them beyond just the homework and exams. He believes that realistically, one cannot flourish in today's society with only what is considered now the basics of an education. Although they are certainly important materials to cover, branching out from those fundamentals will lead to applications in other fields, subjects, and passions that are not only subtle, but vital. When it comes to high school, having many choices for classes to take is an extremely vital part of one's education.

In my opinion, I think I would rather attend a high school that primarily focused on the liberal arts. When it comes to the liberal arts, it's not necessarily a specific subject. Instead, one is given many different options

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for classes and fields of interest. This gives a student time to experiment in different subjects, and to perhaps decide on what career they'd like to pursue after high school. I believe that college should emphasize a vocational education instead, as you were given many different tastes of classes in high school, and can now use those to your advantage. High school is an important time to fully grasp what you love and what you dislike, whereas I believe that college should focus more on applying those to a potential career.

In the days where people were required to either finish school early or drop out because they needed to take care of their family or else help with farming, cattle, etc., they were taught the three R's as a requirement to graduate. Now, as society has become more like it is today, where these things are less common, we use subjects such as algebra as the groundwork for problem solving and other fields, and all we seem to do is moan and groan about how pointless these types of classes are. This is one of the biggest issues for students: Resisting the urge to drop out. Often times, students will joke about how they plan to quit school and so on, but you begin to wonder how serious they may be on the matter. How many students are truly tempted to drop out? Staying in school and receiving an education is much more important than many care to understand.

Students may never directly realize the importance of the classes they take, nevertheless the teachers are able to send them off into the world knowing that someday, somehow, they will apply it to their lives. Today schools are still informed on Dewey's perspective on academics, but unfortunately, the success of their attempts often depend on budget. This is another large issue

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for the education system nowadays. It's simple, really: The more money, the more likely it is that they will be eligible to offer a broader curriculum to their students, and be able to attract and hire better teachers. Some schools, such as very small ones, do try to get by without a lot of money. Sometimes this is successful, often times it is not.

But, it's safe to say that Dewey's goal is to provide this opportunity to each and every school at one point, whether these schools be rich or poor, large or small, urban or rural, etc. The American education system will never be perfect. Perfection is completely subjective, and someone will always find a flaw. However, this doesn't mean that we as a society should stop trying to make school as beneficial of a place as humanly possible. Dewey's beliefs regarding education were ones that the school system has been trying to follow for an extremely long time. Teaching students about more than just the fundamentals will benefit them more in the long run than they will ever truly understand.

They may fuss and complain now, but those that care for them will soon rest easy knowing their loved one is subconsciously bettering their overall adaption into today's society with the knowledge they pulled from their high school experience.