

Literary of dead poets society

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



Bill Beattie once said, " The aim of education should be to teach us how to think rather than what to think – rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with thoughts of other men." All too often, however, individual thoughts are crushed by the powerful weight of conformity. In the film *Dead Poets Society*, conformity exercises its influence and the results prove disastrous for some. For others, the effect of conformity compels them towards individual strength and the discovery of one's true self.

Modern education is one of the largest " offenders" when it comes to conformity, and that point is illustrated repeatedly in the film *Dead Poets Society*. At Welton, students of all walks of life are expected to learn the same lessons the same ways. They are expected to memorize the important facts and regurgitate the same facts during exams. Latin class involves recitation, while chemistry involves memorization, and as long as the students can deliver what they have been told, they are successful in life.

The new English teacher, Mr. Keating, challenges his students to think for themselves and to resist conformity. He most memorably illustrates how easily conformity affects people during his lesson involving a stroll in the courtyard. He instructs three of his pupils to walk around the courtyard. The three boys march in unison, and the remainder of the pupils begin to clap in time with the marching. He asks why the boys are clapping, and they do not know. Perhaps they were clapping because everyone else was clapping, or perhaps they were just having a good time. However, it cannot be disputed that the group conformed without thinking.

All too often, the words of the textbook are considered undisputed fact. All chemistry textbooks will list the elements with the same symbols and all Latin textbooks will list approximately the same translations.

The poetry textbook, written by a Dr. Pritchett, attempts to lump words that are meant to touch the heart into the same factual categories of math and the sciences. Can Dr. Pritchett's method of analyzing poetry by graphing its importance and perfection be used to measure what one feels? More importantly, is Dr. Pritchett's method the only method that one must use when measuring the greatness of poetry and can poetry be looked at using only the mind and not the heart?

Mr. Keating did not feel that poetry was meant to be analyzed using measurable techniques but rather through the feelings of one's heart. He summed up his feelings on Dr. Pritchett's method of measuring the greatness of poetry in one word, "Excrement."

He took his class on a journey of self-discovery, a journey where they learned that there is not always a right answer or a wrong one. In order to find one's true self, one must learn to resist conformity and walk one's own way, as was illustrated in the lesson out in the courtyard. He taught them that just one perspective is not necessarily the only way of viewing a situation as was revealed in the lesson where he stood on his desk.

At Wellton Academy, individuality is strongly discouraged, and the fight for individuality often results in dire consequences. Mr. Keating became a mentor, as well as a teacher for his students, and he helped them discover the strength necessary to be one's true self. Individuality, unfortunately,

does not come without a price. Often the price is fear, especially fear of what others will think, but the cost is often much higher. Neil Perry, one of Mr. Keating's students, paid with his life. He committed suicide when his father insisted he conform, and go on to Harvard to become a doctor. Charlie Dalton was expelled from Wellton for his unwillingness to conform. Todd Anderson found the courage to stand up for himself and realized he had value in the world.

It is not just to say that education is only about textbooks and memorization. The memorization of the Periodic Table of Elements in Chemistry has very little impact on a large part of life; such as that of personal relationships, friendships, love, loyalty and trust. All the characters in the film are human, and therefore have the same physical components in their bodies, but their feelings and point of view are unique unto themselves. The true danger of education is the attempt to call for all people to see the world in the same way.