

A civilized community

Business



From the very beginning, we are told to be ourselves. Be yourself and you will make friends. Be yourself and you'll do fine in life.

This philosophy, however, is a paradox. By being told that we need to be unique individuals unlike anyone else is another way to conform children. It is the belief that a civilized and cohesive society depends on conformity and the way people behave in groups. By schools training children to be ' unique individuals', they are really training children how to behave properly in a group, not offend each other, and to be free thinkers, but not out loud. It is then my belief that rather than the conformity they are teaching in schools today, individuality should be promoted.

The conformity being taught is for the sake of an idea of a civilized community, however, this is a flawed idea. Conformity also does not bring the desired results of the school system and also, education should be about learning, not training to behave in groups. Conformity is encouraged in schools because in theory it will create a civilized community. However, this idea is skewed. School, secondary to actual education, is all about learning how act in a community, in the real world.

It is said that “ You cannot have democratic, indeed, civilized community life unless people have learned how to participate in a disciplined way as a part of a group.” (D). The idea is that if people all learn to behave and co-exist more or less, then we will have succeeded as a society. This is the idea that we have been enforcing for years in school with an iron fist, not giving any choice to the students or teachers. It even goes as far as document E saying that a we live in a society “..

. where teachers are no more free to respond honestly to the students than the students are to respond to teachers or each other..." (E) To see that this method isn't working, you really do not need to go far. Look at the news. We hear constantly of killings and outbursts. Look in the hallway and you'll find someone getting picked on or people fighting. Look at the country as a whole.

We are constantly at war with other nations. Within our government, we are at war with ourselves. This forced behavior in groups has not created the intended community that is spoken of. If we want a civilized community, teaching conformity clearly is not the way to get it. Perhaps the solution still is to learn to behave in a group, however, it is possible to do this as free thinking individuals. Conformity in schools is an attempt to create equals, and in theory, a better ' learning' environment and better citizens.

However, it is seen outside the school system, learning is still possible and even yields better results. We are trained to think that in order to be successful, we must be put through the system. Document A states, " We have been taught... (that) in this country to think of ' success' as synonymous with, or at least dependant upon ' schooling', but historically that isn't true in an intellectual or financial sense." (A). The document then proceeds to talk about former presidents and leaders that did not go through the rigorous system we have today and still did great things. We can tell through these facts that conformity doesn't bring results.

Rather, it seems like the easier thing to do rather than to let the public attempt to educate themselves. Conformity of the school system fails on

both the aspect of learning and the aspect of civilizing people. The structure of the school system is more to keep people under control rather than to teach. The school system attempts to conform everyone, equalize them, and put them into one school of thought. It is precisely because of this that people rebel against it. People do not want to be a group.

They do not want to be generalized or put down. They want to be themselves. They want to be individuals. It is because of this that conformity in schools fails to create the intended result and also why individuality should be promoted. While encouraged to be individuals, people are more inclined to learn and act civilized rather than being forced into something.

It has come to a point where schools are more focused on creating conformity and thus ‘good citizens’ rather than learning and teaching. School is more of a symbol of success than anything, the content or context does not matter. Promoting conformity in schools completely defeats the purpose of an organized education system. Schools should be centered around pure learning without the subtext of oppression. Document D states that “One might even say that schools have never been essentially about individualized learning.

It is true, of course, that groups do not learn, individuals do.” (D) If we promote individuality more in schools, then we will be able to actually learn. As the author stated, groups do not actually learn. Perhaps the intended purpose of the school system was not to teach, however. Because of this realization, it is clear that we need to adjust our school system and shift over to individualized learning for the sake of our future. Just because

something is the way we have been doing things for decades does not necessarily make it the right way to do things.

For years, we have been promoting conformity over individuality in schools. Because we have a skewed idea of a civilized community, the fact that conformity does not necessarily bring the desired results, and the matter that schools should focus solely on learning, educations should be more about individuality than conformity. All of these ideas connect in a disturbing way. The education system has set out to create this type of person who would build a “civilized community”. However, this idea is completely skewed. Any civilized community that I think of does not have all of the violence, separation, and blatant discrimination that this society has.

Conformity does not create this perfect citizen. It creates a small person that draws a circle around themselves, and anything outside of that circle is wrong. They have been taught this through a flawed education system that only teaches content with the ulterior motive of creating a cookie-cutter citizen. If we focus more on individuality in schools, then we may be able to create this type of “civilized community” we desire.