

# Teacher Explains Why Schools Can't Produce Well-Educated Minds

In recent years, a number of Americans have been awaking to the realization that today's children are not receiving a high-quality education. The [nation's test scores](#) in everything from reading to science are evidence of that.

But while many Americans now recognize what a good education is *not*, many are unsure exactly what it *is*.

Former New York school teacher of the year John Taylor Gatto once answered that question in his book [Weapons of Mass Instruction](#). According to Gatto, the sign of a well-educated mind is one that can make connections and is connected to four different things:

1. Connected to Different Human Styles
2. Connected to Complex Experiences
3. Connected to Intellectual Ideas
4. Connected to Itself (i.e. self-knowledge)

These four connections, Gatto noted, are not a part of the normal educational system. In fact, today's education system seeks to do just the opposite:

*"School disconnects, as it was charged to do. It is Caesar's 'divide and conquer' strategy brought to peak efficiency. Children are divided from their families, their traditions, their communities, their religions, their natural allies – other children – their interests and on ad infinitum. They are, as Walter Lippman deplored, disconnected from the entire Western intellectual tradition which gave societies the greatest gift of personal liberties they had ever seen, disconnected from the experiences of risk-taking and*

*adventure in which the grand discoveries of history have been fashioned; young men and women emerge from school unable to do much of anything....”*

The “disconnection” strategies of public schools are almost the exact opposite of those practiced by homeschool families, who, incidentally, seem to be [doing quite well](#) when it comes to churning out well-educated minds.

Given that, perhaps it’s time we stop pretending that the public school system can be the surrogate parents for the nation’s children. Perhaps children have been provided with the best educators they can have from the moment they were born.