

Why Can't Schools Produce Well-Rounded Adults?

While going about my morning duties, I happened to glance at the topics trending on Twitter. One particular hashtag stuck out: [#IWishSchoolHadTaughtMe](#). Intrigued, I clicked on the hashtag and began reading the very honest opinions of average individuals. Here are some examples:

[#IWishSchoolHadTaughtMe](#) How to find a job
[#IWishSchoolHadTaughtMe](#) About taxes
[#IWishSchoolHadTaughtMe](#) Techniques for handling trauma and depression
[#IWishSchoolHadTaughtMe](#) Things other than math, science, history, etc.
[#IWishSchoolHadTaughtMe](#) Important life skills

– Ammy (@Ammy175) [January 23, 2019](#)

[#IWishSchoolHadTaughtMe](#) how to do simple repairs
pic.twitter.com/0ns3ao5CJu

– jabar (@wrightjabar) [January 23, 2019](#)

1 [#IWishSchoolHadTaughtMe](#) about banking. About saving. About credit cards. The only reason I know any of the basics is bc I work at a bank now. It's PATHETIC how little ADULTS know about their accts. They can barely write out checks or understand their balances. If more ppl knew

– Jessica Lynn (@Jessi_monster) [January 23, 2019](#)

These examples aren't necessarily anomalies. Over and over Twitter participants bemoaned the fact that the skills they have found essential as adults were not taught to them in

school, but were instead gleaned in adulthood by sheer necessity.

I find this quite fascinating, especially since it seems to fly in the face of conventional wisdom. Spend a few moments talking to an “expert,” either political or educational, and one will get a completely different idea. As they frame it, education is the panacea for society’s ills. As such, if we can just get children out of the clutches of their home environment and into the care of the professionals for as many hours as possible, we will better prepare the next generation for adulthood.

But is the opposite really the case? Are so many children reaching adulthood without knowing basic life skills because they have spent most of their maturation years in a classroom learning things that are not always relevant to life in general?

The late New York Teacher of the Year, John Taylor Gatto, observed this occurrence during his years in the classroom. He [explains](#):

*I’ve noticed a fascinating phenomenon in my thirty years of teaching: **schools and schooling are increasingly irrelevant to the great enterprises of the planet.** No one believes anymore that scientists are trained in science classes or politicians in civics classes or poets in English classes. **The truth is that schools don’t really teach anything except how to obey orders.** This is a great mystery to me because thousands of caring people work in schools as teachers and aides and administrators, but the abstract logic of the institution overwhelms their individual contributions. Although teachers do care and do work very, very, hard, the institution is psychopathic – it has no conscience. It rings a bell and the young man in the middle of writing a poem must close his notebook and move to a different cell where he must memorize that humans and monkeys derive from a common*

ancestor.

Very few Americans would agree that this is the type of education our children should have. Yet when examples are raised of children who learn outside the classroom – [whether at home](#), or [in a museum](#) because their striking teachers aren't able to conduct classes – there is weeping and gnashing of teeth over the lack of opportunities and inadequate education they are receiving.

But is it possible we have it backwards? If we really want to equip our children to become effective adults, then shouldn't we allow them to learn the practical skills of life? Is it time we recognize that there are many things a well-rounded child can only learn outside of the restrictive education system?

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