

There has been much disagreement over the years about the way students are being taught in school. Many people believe that schools should target individuality while others believe that conformity is the way to go. Personally, I believe that schools should focus more on a student's individual interests as opposed to having all students engage in one area of study. A big part of this issue has to do with required classes and the testing that accompanies them. There are many ^{sources} ~~articles~~ that show why these are ~~often~~ useless and often harmful to students.

Forcing students to take classes that do not interest them is a waste of time for everyone, students and teachers alike. The same goes for required testing. Forcing students to do these things makes school seem like a prison (Source E, Source A). Take source F for example. The picture shows students singing in music class. Now that class would be much more enjoyable if the students in it wanted to learn as opposed to being forced to learn. I personally believe that students' individual needs should be catered to by letting them select classes that suit their fancy. Required testing goes along with required classes in my opinion, it's not needed. Making a student take a difficult test on a



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subject that doesn't interest them is ridiculous. Of course they're going to perform poorly, because they don't care. Now I don't think it's fair that a student gets held back or ~~punished~~ ^{or} punished that. I think standardized tests should be banned completely (including in kindergarten which is clearly shown in source c), but if they must remain a part of ~~the~~ the schooling system, then they should at least be based on classes that let students explore their individual interests. That way students have a greater chance of ~~achieving~~ ^{a better outcome.} ~~achieving~~

Overall, I believe that schools should focus more ^{on the} ~~on~~ individual needs of students and less on having them conform to one main idea or way of learning. Sources show that ~~the~~ students are happier when school is centered more to their interests, and I personally believe that this, as opposed to conformity, makes ~~the~~ students happier and ^{will make} ~~will make~~ them better members of society in the future.

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I am now a junior at my high school. In order to graduate this particular high school, I must take a required course of 'Professional and technical studies.' This doesn't sound at all bad or make it seem like I am being suppressed to conformity, but it actually is.

My interests and goal as a major is to be in the communications area. I requested to take journalism as one of my classes to have experience in that field of study. It was to my dismay that I was no longer able to take that class for my senior year because of a required class I had to take. If schools traditionally have 2 goals, (1) To help each student gain personal fulfillment and (2) To help create good citizens, why are they forcing upon classes that you don't want to take? Why am I not able to take journalism when it is fulfilling my personal goals?

In source A, John Taylor Gatto makes the case that ~~education~~ schools aren't necessarily needed for education. He says, "And plenty of people throughout the world today find a way to educate themselves without resorting to a system of compulsory secondary schools that all too often resemble ~~a~~ prisons." He makes a very true point. Most kids today are living in a world where technology makes learning easy access. I believe I would've done very well at



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learning microsoft tutorials online rather than having to ~~sacrifice~~ sacrifice a class that would've helped in college. Education is everywhere, and people learn to find ways to it without having to go to school and be imprisoned for almost 8 hours every day.

we supposedly live in a democratic nation but ~~if~~ it is so often that tyranny and communism is being practiced, especially in schools. The structure of the school day and the classes you must attend are all forced onto students. It is like a routine they must follow, or their futures will be 'destroyed.' Source B shows a daily bell schedule of a public high school. Each passing time is 4 minutes long and the schedule doesn't even point out lunch. School schedules are so strict and confined, nothing must be out of place. If a student is a minute late they receive even more of a confinement — detention.

Schools should be there to support individuality and only conformity to a certain point. They are trying to ~~standardize~~ standardize all kids to be the same in order to 'fit into society.' They must all take the required courses, the standardized tests, and sometimes even wear the same attire.

~~Source~~ Source C shows a cover design for a kindergarten class in preparing for standardized tests.

Q2 @ Even at such a young age, are the schools trying to conform the minds from evolving into individuals. Conformity does not always mean it'll ensure socialization among students. Schools should help to ensure or ~~help~~ aid socialization but they should not go ~~to~~ deep as forcing them / students to be all alike. In source D, Neil Postman said, "But the idea of a school is that individuals must learn in a setting which individual needs are subordinated to group interests." In a way, schools should teach the students to get along and cooperate, but they don't need to go to an extreme as to suppress the individual's mind to conform to society. Isn't that what communism is?

Schools are there to teach students the ways to survive in a society and get along. The schools these days are getting stricter and stricter. ~~The~~ school hours are increasing, and students such as I, are being confined longer and longer. ~~It is~~ school should be a place where students want to go to be educated and develop their own thoughts. Not a place we feel we have to go in order to fit in. The feeling of being watched, controlled, and conformed isn't a feeling of nationalism or a feeling we'd want to have when asked why we defend our country.



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SOURCE G shows the list of expectations a public high school has for their students. All the "expectations" are more like laws a citizen must abide to in a society. "Respect the teacher's position as leader in the classroom -" sounds like a statement of a tyrant. These "expectations" seem forced upon with no freedom. If schools want students to be successful citizens, they should allow students to take the courses they want, ^{let them} breathe.

As a student, I understand the school wanting to educate us on Microsoft Word or Home economics, however forcing these courses on us and then threatening us that we won't be able to graduate if we don't, seems too controlling and unreasonable. Schools should support conformity to a certain level that will push us off into society where from then, our individualism determines our fate. They shouldn't suppress our natural character to what they think is acceptable to become a good citizen. After all, aren't the famous historical figures the ones who spoke out of conformity and embraced their individualistic thoughts? Like Martin Luther King, society and schools taught everyone to be quiet about race, but he didn't, and now look at the impact ~~of~~



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he has left on the world. Individualism is good, and student should embrace it. Schools should recognize the individual ability everyone has, without questioning it, or putting their own twist on it.

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Can a mind learn under bounds?

With such strict rules in schools today, children are facing bounds that strip them of their individuality. So which is more important; conformity or individuality? To succeed one needs freedom; they need to be able to exercise and stretch their reach.

Rules that constrict them in to tight spots are killing children's want to learn; uniforms, tight schedules, mandatory classes, dress codes are all taking the children's right to learn freely away. Individuality is more important than conformity and this ~~needs~~, individuality, needs to be recognized more by school.

Conformity does have its benefits. As can be seen in the photo of the young boys singing, conformity is nice on the eyes (Source F). Everyone likes neat and nice, and that is what conformity creates. A pretty eye-pleasing picture where everyone is safe. A ~~set~~ schedule where "1st Bell 8:16am" and the beginning of "Period 2" starts at "9:10" ensures order and that children will get equal amounts of education (Source B). This is good for some kids.



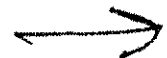
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they cannot get lost or stray off the path. At the same time kids are not being taught how to think for themselves. Instead they are simply showing up when expected and going through the motion as they were told to. They are told to "accept responsibility for their learning" and "cooperate with the specific rules of the school," all without thinking (Source G). Placed into groups and just being told to do, their individuality is being stripped away.

Children are not even allowed to choose their own clothes; they cannot express themselves through their dress no longer. Instead they are told to "dress in appropriate attire which does not distract or offend others" and dress like everyone else. ^(Source G) They are being denied the freedom to show their own style and thoughts, that is exactly what the dress code is doing.

By striving to reach conformity they are killing individuality. From even ~~kindergarten~~ kindergarten children are being molded. As seen in the book cover, kindergarteners are taking standardized test (Source C). They are being looked at as part of



a whole, seeing where they stand in the big picture. They are told to brush their hair a certain distinct way, or wear a specific color according to their gender. They are not being allowed to explore learn, which is the best possible way for a child to gain knowledge. Instead they are in "a setting in which individual needs are subordinated to group interests" (Source D). They are expected to learn as a group, they are looked down upon if not good enough and not given proper recognition if they can think abstractly or do stuff differently. Conformity is hindering the limits to what a child can learn.

If given freedom, a child can learn an infinite amount of things, but school is taking this freedom away. Tight schedules lock students in; mandatory classes kill motive to learn; boredom endured strips the curiosity; school is teaching them to learn as a group though "groups do not learn; individuals do" (Source D). When a mind can expand its horizons, wonderful



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things come out of it. Inventions never dreamed of came about because one thought out of the box. Some of our most revered people in history such as "George Washington, Benjamin Franklin... of them was ever graduated from a secondary school." Instead they were given the freedom to roam and explore, to let their mind wander and come upon its own conclusion. School is not allowing this; they call for certain subjects to be thought of at certain times. They want everyone to look the same; they do not allow the expression of style through clothes. School is harming individuality, which brings wonders, with their conformity.

When bounded, how can one move or do anything? They cannot! This is what schools are doing, they are binding childrens minds; they are not allowing them to think by their own. They need to let the children go, let them free. No more dress codes or mandatory classes. Allow them to study what they want as they so choose. Allow them



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to dress as they prefer. Free them
to think to their full limits

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