What Does It Mean to Be Well-Educated? (**)

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No one should ever pronounce anything about what it means to be well-educated without first understanding the issue that you've been asked about. In my view, the most important thing is that people who have spent time, effort, and money on their education should be able to use it in such a way that they can be well-educated. However, she'll freeze up if you ask her what it takes to be well-educated. And forget about grammar. ("Me and him over her house today is fairly typical") or (as I often wonder, "Do you make of this paradox?"

1. **The Point of Schooling:** Rather than attempting to define what it means to be well-educated, should we instead be asking about the purposes of education? The latter formulation invites us to look behind academic performance, to check out why students are there, and why some schools might do better than others. The atmosphere in the classroom, the teachability of the teacher, the quality of the educational experience in general, and the role of the school in society; all these can be part of the mix.

2. **Evaluating People vs. Their Education:** "the main aim of education should be to produce competent, caring, loving, and lovable people." Alternatively, we might wade into "the debate" between those who see education as a means to creating or sustaining a democratic society and those who believe that the primary role of schools is to train students for jobs in the marketplace.

Pressing for these definitions will give us a better understanding of what your education could consist of. If you're on a mission to 'rediscover' your own personal definition of what it means to be well-educated, you'll have to decide for yourself. But it won't be easy. The system is sufficiently complex that there are no easy answers. And it's not easy to even phrase the questions accurately.

3. **An Often-Superficial Claim:** It is often possible to suggest that the term is merely relative: you are well-informed, I am not. Some criteria are more defensible than others. Nevertheless, I argue that there is a common sense of what it means to be well-educated that transcends any such debate. It's a matter of understanding the concepts, the application of the knowledge, and the ability to think critically about the issues.

4. **Some Particular Definitions:** Should we instead try to stipulate which attributes the informed individual lacks or don't share? (assessing them isn't enough to make one well-educated or otherwise; can be well-educated without possessing them) — or both. Let's therefore consider ruling out:

* Job skills
  * It would be a mistake to reduce social intermediary to formal qualifications, if only because we can easily imagine graduates who are well-prepared for the workplace (or at least for some workplaces) but who were not regarded as well-educated. In any case, prestige to redesign secondary education to suit the demands of employers reflects little more than the financial incentives — and the political power — of test scores.

**Text Score:** A discounting score, easy to standardize tests significantly simplify the task by taking the form, for example, of requirements for a high school diploma. There are other considerations, such as the real suffering imposed on individuals who aren't permitted to apply to medical school, among others who have not yet had the opportunity to engage in intellectual pursuits.

5. **Educating Themselves:** It is in essence possible to suggest that the term is merely relative: you are well-informed, I am not. Some criteria are more defensible than others. Nevertheless, I argue that there is a common sense of what it means to be well-educated that transcends any such debate. It's a matter of understanding the concepts, the application of the knowledge, and the ability to think critically about the issues.

6. The Good School:

> "the main aim of education should be to produce competent, caring, loving, and lovable people." Alternatively, we might wade into "the debate" between those who see education as a means to creating or sustaining a democratic society and those who believe that the primary role of schools is to train students for jobs in the marketplace.

The number of people who do, in fact, confuse the possession of a storehouse of knowledge with being "smart" — the latter being a disconcertingly common designation for those who fare well on quiz shows — is

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"How about across historical eras: would anyone seriously argue that our criteria for "well-educated" today are exactly the same as those used a century ago?" It's not necessarily always the case, in many instances. However, the term "well-educated" often refers to the quality of your schooling, then we'd have to conclude that a lot of "well-educated" people pass through schools that barely register, or at least are key to the point of failure for a few years. A substantial body of evidence exists to support the effectiveness of each of these approaches.

Beyond proclaiming "Pass this standardized test or you don't graduate," most states now issue long lists of curriculum standards, containing hundreds of facts, skills, and subskills that all students are expected to master at a given grade level and for a given subject. These standards are not guidelines but mandates (to which teachers are supposed to "align" their instruction). In effect, a Core Knowledge model, with its implications of students as interchangeable recepients into which knowledge is poured, has become the law of the land in many places. Surely even defenders of this approach can appreciate the difference between arguing in its behalf and requiring that every school adopt it.

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The assessments in schools are based on meaningless standards of excellence, standardize curriculum, test scores

The standard from the "micro-acts" approach is that on one thinks in a value, that cognitive skills are necessarily embedded with respect to particular issues of knowledge. You can't really define, a schema of information as what is in their. But this is a strange argument because we have to think about being taught that. (Frankly, it's not really clear that we'd be the same if it seemed like a good idea.) Rather, disappearance awaits regarding the extent to which well-educated individuals vary in their ability to analyze and synthesize information. The need to think carefully about the meaning of knowledge is often so often forgotten, particularly when they're treated as mere data in theory, and (as I often wonder, "Do you make of this paradox?")