

2004-1 Text 4

1- Americans today don't place a very high value on intellect.

Our heroes are athletes, entertainers, and entrepreneurs, not scholars.

Even our schools are where we send our children to get a practical education - not to pursue knowledge for the sake of knowledge.

Symptoms of pervasive anti-intellectualism in our schools aren't difficult to find.

2- "Schools have always been in a society where practical is more important than intellectual," says education writer Diane Ravitch.

"Schools could be a counterbalance."

Ravitch's latest book, *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*, traces the roots of anti-intellectualism in our schools, concluding they are anything but a counterbalance to the American distaste for intellectual pursuits.

3- But they could and should be.

Encouraging kids to reject the life of the mind leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and control.

Without the ability to think critically, to defend their ideas and understand the ideas of others, they cannot fully participate in our democracy.

Continuing along this path, says writer Earl Shorris, “We will become a second-rate country. We will have a less civil society.”

4- “Intellect is resented as a form of power or privilege,” writes historian and professor Richard Hofstadter in *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, a Pulitzer-Prize winning book on the roots of anti-intellectualism in US politics, religion, and education.

From the beginning of our history, says Hofstadter, our democratic and populist urges have driven us to reject anything that smells of elitism.

Practicality, common sense, and native intelligence have been considered more noble qualities than anything you could learn from a book.

5- Ralph Waldo Emerson and other Transcendentalist philosophers thought schooling and rigorous book learning put unnatural restraints on children: “We are shut up in schools and college recitation rooms for 10 or 15 years and come out at last with a bellyful of words and do not know a thing.”

Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn* exemplified American anti-intellectualism.

Its hero avoids being civilized - going to school and learning to read - so he can preserve his innate goodness.

6- Intellect, according to Hofstadter, is different from native intelligence, a quality we reluctantly admire.

Intellect is the critical, creative, and contemplative side of the mind.

Intelligence seeks to grasp, manipulate, re-order, and adjust, while intellect examines, ponders, wonders, theorizes, criticizes and imagines.

7- School remains a place where intellect is mistrusted.

Hofstadter says our country's educational system is in the grips of people who "joyfully and militantly proclaim their hostility to intellect and their eagerness to identify with children who show the least intellectual promise."

36. What do American parents expect their children to acquire in school?

- [A] The habit of thinking independently.
- [B] Profound knowledge of the world.
- [C] Practical abilities for future career.
- [D] The confidence in intellectual pursuits.

37. We can learn from the text that Americans have a history of _____.

- [A] undervaluing intellect
- [B] favoring intellectualism
- [C] supporting school reform
- [D] suppressing native intelligence

38. The views of Ravitch and Emerson on schooling are _____.

[A] identical

[B] similar

[C] complementary

[D] opposite

39. Emerson, according to the text, is probably _____.

[A] a pioneer of education reform

[B] an opponent of intellectualism

[C] a scholar in favor of intellect

[D] an advocate of regular schooling

40. What does the author think of intellect?

[A] It is second to intelligence.

[B] It evolves from common sense.

[C] It is to be pursued.

[D] It underlies power.