

Did you know that the school system is only able to meet 50% of student learning needs?

That's right! - only 50% of the student population is in an environment at school which enables them to be successful learners.

The reason for this is not because of bad teachers.

There are many excellent, dedicated teachers in schools, whose life's work and passion is to educate their students to the best of their ability. Teachers want to see their students successful, that is why they have given years to training and service. It is not the fault of the teachers that many students do not reach their potential in learning.

It is not a result of bad parenting.

Many parents spend a great deal of time and energy trying to ensure that their children have the best education possible. Parents help with homework, provide many extra-curricular opportunities and keep in touch with the teachers and school in order to help their child to be successful. However when all is said and done, it is the child who needs to be able to learn and pass the curriculum requirements.

Some parents themselves may have sailed through their own school experience and been successful in the academic requirements for graduation, and gone on to further education. Isn't it reasonable to expect that their children would follow the same path and achieve good grades? For some children, yes it is a reasonable expectation, and many, of course, do follow in their parent's footsteps. However this may not be true for every child, even in the same family. I, myself, was a good student, enjoyed my school experience and I love to learn. I went on to become a teacher for over twenty years in the school system, was a Principal of two schools, and successfully pioneered an independent school. All my three children are intelligent and have been given equal opportunities with regard to their education. Out of the three, only one is following in my footsteps. Was I less diligent with two of my children, didn't I help them? Didn't I give them the support they needed to be successful at school? Of course I did! Were their teachers uncaring and unsupportive of their education? Not at all! The problem is as parents we can't go to school for them. Sometimes it seems parenting would be easier if we could!

Is the school system bad?

There are many excellent schools, in which some students are able to thrive and excel in their learning. For those students the school environment meets the needs of their learning styles and motivates them towards success in their educational experience. The school system is not bad for these students, it is good. However the very nature and structure of the school system means it is only able to meet the needs of some styles of learning, and personality traits of its students. For a fairly large number of students to get through a school day is an achievement in itself. Intelligence and motivation to learn are not the issue for them, but the school structure and environment itself. An example of such a student was Albert Einstein. He found school incredibly boring, as the tools of learning in those days were to do with repeating and learning by rote. He learnt more from the reading he did outside of school, and talking with interesting people he met, than from school itself. He

spent most of the time in his classes day dreaming. The system had no room for creativity and imagination, or allowing him to learn about what interested him. There was no provision in his school system for people who thought differently.

Many students today, whose learning styles are not catered for in the school system, are prone to be dismissed or labeled as lazy, unfocused, and unintelligent, disorganized, ADHD, or have a learning disability. School for many of these students is an endurance test, which some fail. The school experience can devastate their self confidence and self esteem, due to their inability to conform or adapt to the expectations of the system, and those around them. Yet these same students in later life can become very successful because of their entrepreneurial spirit, their creativity, their ability to think outside of the box, and view the world from a different perspective.

If your child is having trouble at school, it may not be a reflection your parenting, their teacher or the school. Your child may be trying to learn in an environment that conflicts with his natural aptitude and learning style. For your child it could be like trying to learn to swim in an ocean of sand! Look outside of 'normal' expectations, and see the situation through the eyes of your child. You may be surprised!!! .....and why not do a little research in to the school experience of Albert Einstein, and many other notable figures in our history? I think you might see things from a different perspective.

Barbara White, an experienced educator and parent of three teenagers, speaks with humor, insight, and passion to both teachers and parents on the subject of learning and personality styles. Her latest presentation "Learning Through the Eyes of a Child" is both entertaining and inspirational. For more articles and information visit her website <http://www.livingbeyondbetter.com>