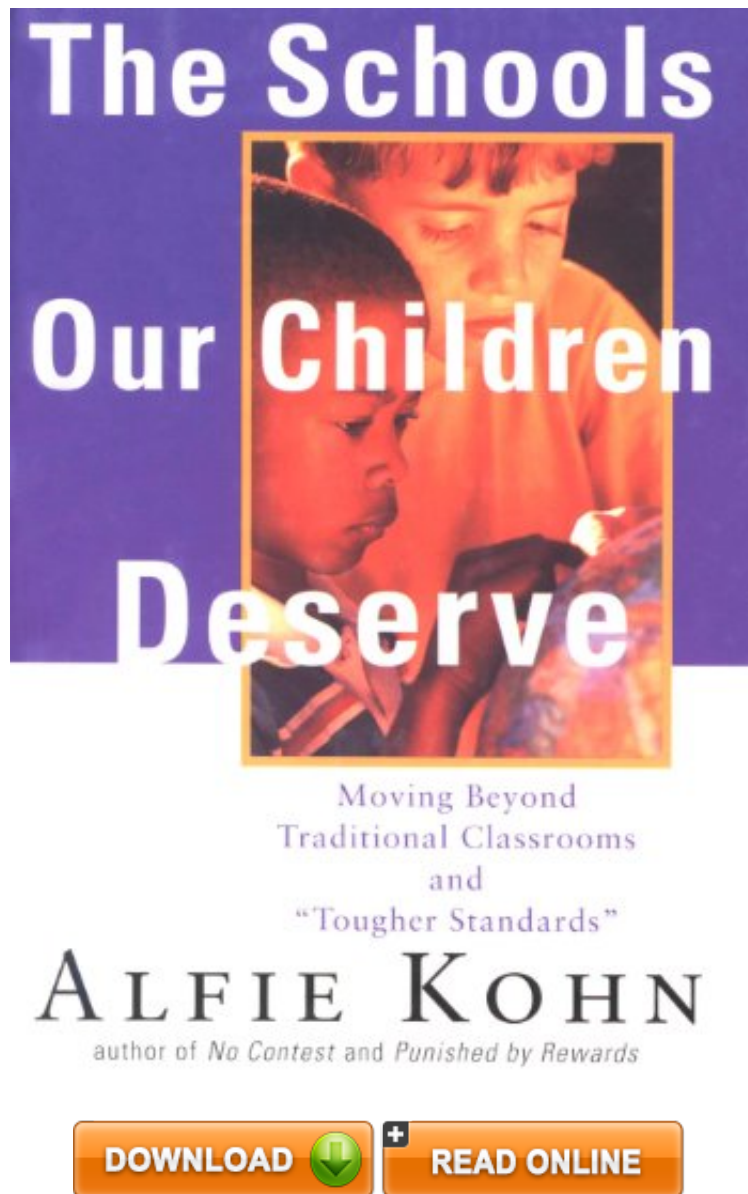


(Mobile library) The Schools Our Children Deserve: Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms and "Tougher Standards"

The Schools Our Children Deserve: Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms and "Tougher Standards"

Von Alfie Kohn

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Von Alfie Kohn : The Schools Our Children Deserve: Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms and "Tougher Standards" before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Schools Our Children Deserve: Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms and "Tougher Standards":

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. rigid "us" versus "them" outlookVon Benjamin CrowellAs a community college physics professor, I found Kohn's book interesting in some ways but unhelpful in others. He's right on target with his criticisms of bad textbooks, rote

memorization, and "drill and kill." However, he forces every issue into his predetermined framework of "us" (people who agree with Kohn) and "them" (the traditionalists). Many of the real issues that cry out for reform are not being realistically addressed by either camp:

- (1) The factory model. Both Kohn and the traditionalists implicitly buy in to the factory model of education, in which everybody has to move at the same pace because that's the speed of the conveyer belt. The traditionalists try to speed up the conveyer belt, but can only achieve that by turning learning into an exercise in memorization. Kohn wants to slow down the conveyer belt, condemning bright students to a day in school spent explaining things to their slower peers. In my opinion, the solution is a return to tracking.
- (2) Quality of teachers. The traditionalists don't want to address this because improving teacher quality would cost money, which is anathema to their politically conservative values. Kohn hardly mentions it either, which is amazing in a book of this length. In the sciences, there's a long history of failed reforms of the type Kohn describes, precisely because so few K-12 teachers are qualified to teach science.
- (3) Textbooks. Traditionalists don't want to admit how bad textbooks are. Kohn never wants to have a child read a chapter from a textbook -- apparently even in high school? As a boy in the California public school system, I never even had access to a textbook in any subject outside the three R's. At least the traditionalists recognize that schools need more books.
- (4) The disorganization of the curriculum. Although Kohn poo-poo's the popularly accepted idea that fuzzy-headed reformers took over education, there's more than a grain of truth in it. As a boy, I never saw any hint of a system when it came to subjects outside the three R's like science and history. Kohn is correct when he says standards should be far less detailed, but there is indeed a need for standards.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Kohn Opens the Standards Debate and Issues a Call to Action Von K. Rocap

Alfie Kohn's "The Schools Our Children Deserve" helps to make contentious educational insider debates on learning, standards and testing accessible to a general readership. Notably he does this, while making sure to bolster his ideas with copious references to educational research, encouraging more - and, importantly, more honest - appraisal of what research really tells us about learning, schools and the possibilities for public education. Kohn forcefully analyzes the "Tougher Standards" approach dominant in U.S. education reform, seeing it as fundamentally flawed. He describes faulty historical and research perspectives that have led to the standards fixation and describes five specific ways that "Tougher Standards" are troublesome: (1) they create a preoccupation with achievement, constantly focusing students on improving performance, which, according to Kohn, is "not only different from, but often detrimental to, a focus on learning;" (2) the approach favors "Old School teaching," as opposed to progressive, developmental learning, and creates a misguided focus on so-called "basic skills" and "core knowledge;" (3) the movement is "wedded to standardized testing," with teach-to-the-test activities routinely displacing higher level learning opportunities for children; (4) their implementation has created rationales for top-down control, "imposing specific requirements and trying to coerce improvement by specifying exactly what must be taught and learned;" (5) "Tougher Standards," so-called, create assumptions about "rigor" and "challenge" that can be summarized as "harder is better," with the notion that if teaching goes down like distasteful medicine that that is how it should be, regardless of whether it turns large numbers of students off to learning, and doesn't even succeed in providing the "just the facts" kind of education often touted by "basic skills" or "core curriculum" advocates. Kohn goes on to describe, in a "back to the future" way (citing John Dewey and Jean Piaget as representative educational thinkers) that good, progressive approaches point the way towards something better, something our children deserve. He hopes that there are three ways to convince skeptics: theory, research and examples from practice. Kohn's prose is written in a popular-style, generally stripped of jargon, in order to be more inclusive of parents and community members outside of the education system who may not be privy to many of the coded debates and conflicts that have taken place within the walls of the formal education system. Kohn takes on standardized testing and grading as central culprits in the education reform drama, even outlining social action strategies to oppose current approaches to standardized testing. Alfie Kohn's voice offers a refreshing counterpoint to the sea of unchallenged standards rhetoric, worth listening to, for its attention to both research and a genuine concern for our children's educational future.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Reflections Von JPL

i think the beauty in The Schools Our Children Deserve is the books ability to have the reader(s) reflect by asking questions that we ourselves as adults and past students have experienced and can relate to. Through power of the narrative, the author is detailed in presenting ALL views and therefore gives the reader the option to discover for themselves many paths. Kohn sets out and logically explains the Five Fatal Flaws (pg 21) in the educational process. This reductive (and really rather silly) premise Its first cousin is the idea that if something isnt working well - say, requiring students to do homework of a dubious value - then insisting on more of the same will surely solve the problem. (pg 22)

i live and teach English in Japan and can see how many of these flaws are interrelated and perpetuate the situation. The answer to measuring Tougher Standards maybe more standardized testing. This in Japan has created a subculture of expensive, private cram schools known as "juku." The sole purpose of these schools existence is in order the students pass entrance exams for university. These intensive after regular school cultures fail to address a rising increase in social problems and have been directly related to suicide, bullying and violence at school. What children learn here is very much in question. Tests in general are biased and subjective - i fail to see WHO decides what points/questions are important, relevant to the students and should therefore be on a test. Americanized standard testing seems to have no borders. There is much preoccupation in Japan with TOEIC scores

(for company) and TOEFL scores (for those who may wish to study at an English speaking institution). However these tests (nor their scores) with their emphasis on grammar and vocabulary do NOT necessarily mean these students speak English well. Only that they are better test takers. And for many Asian students, the art of taking tests has been refined and embedded earlier in their educational culture. I know from personal experience that Japanese students with high TOEIC/TOEFL scores lack the conversational ability to express themselves. So this focus on end results may NOT achieve its purpose. This easy-to-measure aspect of a student's schooling does NOT look at the student holistically as a whole. As any number of studies have found, a child's " thoughts and emotions while performing an action are more important in determining subsequent engagement than the actual outcome of the action." (pg. 26) This leads to the author's views in the latter chapters of the book. The so-called BIG Question: What is the purpose of schools? Refer to page 119, Table 1: The Purpose of Schools. Having a 3 year old child, it gets me thinking of the future of schools. Is a bit of all possible? If not, which will be important? Does it depend on each individual student? Or is it all related? The purpose of schools not being so concrete but to support the students to think on their own and make their own decisions, giving them the ability to be flexible in time of ambiguity. I'm not sure myself and it's nice to know that the author (one person) doesn't have all the answers and hasn't oversimplified it but instead has got us thinking about such concerns. I feel that it's a first step. I strongly recommend this book, not only for those with children but all those who are life-long learners. For this is a true constructivist book in which the exploration and discovery process may be just as important as the outcome.

Kurzbeschreibung In this lively, provocative and well-researched book (TheodoreSizer), AlTe Kohn builds a powerful argument against the back to basics philosophy of teaching and simplistic demands to raise the bar. Drawing on stories from real classrooms and extensive research, Kohn shows parents, educators, and others interested in the debate how schools can help students explore ideas rather than filling them with forgettable facts and preparing them for standardized tests. Here at last is a book that challenges the two dominant forces in American education: an aggressive nostalgia for traditional teaching (If it was bad enough for me, it's bad enough for my kids) and a heavy-handed push for Tougher Standards.