

Question This

- Dan Rosenberg

The question of whether or not school adequately prepares us for employment in a variety of fields is an interesting one. Many students leave high school and instead of attending college, they choose to enter the workforce. The skills they have learned in high school may be the only ones they have at their disposal while working. And yet while in school, there is no training for manual labor, there are no courses on landscaping, and perhaps the biggest travesty is the lack of classes related to interpersonal interactions. The fact is, no matter what field one chooses to enter, whether it be immediately beginning full-time work, or attending college, interactions with other people will shape and guide everyone's lives. More than English or mathematics, how one can communicate with others is the most important skill. What's the use of creating a great product if you can't explain it to customers?

And yet, nowhere in high school is there an opportunity to learn how to converse with and interact with others. There are no classes on how to handle a job interview, or how to please an employer or customer.

And if we are really trying to prepare students for successful, productive lives, aren't these skills the most important ones to impart of all? Marblehead High School has such a wide litany of electives and optional classes, all of which cater to different interests. And yet there is not one that manages to teach the most important skill of all, especially outside the realm of school.

All the time we are shown disturbing statistics by the media, statistics that show that America is "falling behind" in education compared to the rest of the world. And I would agree, that perhaps our math and science testing has been a little lackluster in recent years. But maybe the area that Americans can excel, the field that we can rise above China and India in, is interpersonal relationships. Perhaps we, as Americans, can learn to communicate, clearly expressing our intentions. An understanding of math is an incredibly valuable skill, but not one that will leave a lasting and positive impression on a prospective employer. And if, as an educational unit, we begin to focus on that, America will once again return to the front of the pack.