

## Hickory Stick Education

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When asked to write a few words on education, a childhood chant came to mind. This chant is actually an American folk song by Will D. Cobb and Gus Edwards.

School days, school days, dear old Golden Rule days,  
Reading and writing and 'rithmetic,  
Taught to the tune of a hick'ry stick ...

Education starts almost before we are born and as far as we know, may not ever stop. I cannot claim to know what is good for anyone else, therefore it seems inappropriate to comment on what I feel is right or wrong about formal education. There is, however, one point that I would like to make.

From my experiences in many different schools and colleges, I have reached a conclusion that schools and their teachers are geared to teaching in the way that they feel is best for the students. I think that schools should concentrate on helping the child/adolescent/young adult find out what method is best for each of them, and encourage, rather than discourage, each pupil to use that method.

When I started to discover the form of education that suited me the best, it didn't coincide with the 'standard' form of education in my country, and I don't think it would have here either. So, I was told that I was wrong, and, of course, I believed what I was told - at least for a while. I then continued going to classes and daydreaming. I continued studying for exams the night before, passing them, and then forgetting everything. It wasn't until recently - within the past few months - that I really have begun to enjoy education.

History, classical novels, politics and economics have all stopped being a form of punishment and started being enjoyable. I am no longer in a school or college setting, and I am just beginning to learn about all the things that I neglected before because I was being forced to do them. I am learning because I want to, and not because my teachers, parents, employers and peers feel I should.

This form of education is certainly not right for everyone, and may not be right for anyone else. But each person needs to find his/her own way of getting the most out of an education and life. Please let them do it!

The 'hick'ry stick' mentioned earlier was a form of punishment that is now obsolete in most countries. Is it truly obsolete, or just hiding under some disguise?