

Read the following text and make notes:

HOW CHILDREN FAIL

Most children in school fail.

For a great many this failure is avowed and absolute. Close to forty per cent of those who begin high school drop out before they finish. For college the figure is one in three.

Many others fail in fact if not in name. They complete their schooling only because we have agreed to push them up through the grades and out of the schools, whether they know anything or not. There are many more such children than we think. If we 'raise our standards' much higher, as some would have us do, we will find out very soon just how many there are. Our classrooms will bulge with kids who can't pass the test to get into the next class.

But there is a more important sense in which almost all children fail: except for a handful, who may or may not be good students, they fail to develop more than a tiny part of the tremendous capacity for learning, understanding, and creating with which they were born and of which they made full use during the first two or three years of their lives.

Why do they fail?

They fail because they are afraid, bored, and confused.

They are afraid, above all else, of failing, of disappointing or displeasing the many anxious adults around them, whose limitless hopes and expectations for them hang over their heads like a cloud.

They are bored because the things they are given and told to do in school are so trivial, so dull, and make such limited and narrow demands on the wide spectrum of their intelligence, capabilities, and talents.

They are confused because most of the torrent of words that pours over them in school makes little or no sense. It often *flatly* contradicts other things they have been told, and hardly ever has any relation to what they really know - to the rough model of reality that they carry around in their minds.

How does this mass failure take place? What really goes on in the classroom? What are these children who fail doing? What goes on in their heads? Why don't they make use of more of their capacity?

This book is the rough and partial record of a search for answers to these questions. It began as a series of memos written in the evenings to my colleague and friend Bill Hull, whose fifth-grade class I observed and taught in during the day. Later these memos were sent to other interested teachers and parents. A small number of these memos make up this book. They have not been much rewritten, but they have been edited and rearranged under four major topics: Strategy; Fear and Failure; Real Learning; and How Schools Fail. *Strategy* deals with the ways in which children try to meet, or dodge, the demands that adults make on them in school. *Fear and Failure* deals with the interaction in children of fear and failure, and the effect of this on strategy and learning. *Real Learning* deals with the difference between what children appear to know or are expected to know, and what they really know. *How Schools*

Fail analyses the ways in which schools foster bad strategies, raise children's fears, produce learning which is usually fragmentary, distorted, and short-lived, and generally fail to meet the real needs of children.

These four topics are clearly not exclusive. They tend to overlap and blend into each other. They are, at most, different ways of looking at and thinking about the thinking and behaviour of children.

It must be made clear that the book is not about unusually bad schools or backward children. The schools in which the experiences described here took place are private schools of the highest standards and reputation. With very few exceptions, the children whose work is described are well above the average in intelligence and are, to all outward appearances, successful, and on their way to 'good' secondary schools and colleges. Friends and colleagues, who understand what I am trying to say about the harmful effect of today's schooling on the character and intellect of children, and who have visited many more schools than I have, tell me that the schools I have not seen are not a bit better than those I have, and very often are worse.

How children fail by John Holt, Pitman, 1965

Compare the information you wrote down with the suggested notes given on the second attachment.