

The Nightmare That Is Public Education: An Expose of What Really Happens in Public Schools

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Reviewed by Deb Shunamon for Reader Views (1/08)

Anyone who is the least bit involved with their children's schooling will have some idea, and opinion, of how well the U.S. public education system is working. An educator with many years of experience in both the classroom and as an administrator, Dr. Renato Nicolai discusses why he feels public schools are failing to adequately educate American students, and what educators and parents must do to ensure that public education remains effective and relevant.

Dr. Nicolai does applaud the few dedicated teachers, politicians, and parents who are truly committed to, and are actively providing, an excellent education for students in the public system, but there is sure to be a lot of heated discussion because of his reasons as to why the majority are failing. One emphasized reason is the incompetence of teachers. Dr. Nicolai refers back to teacher education curricula and speaks to the absence, or low quality, of the basics in classrooms and schools today. From poor physical environments and classroom management, to inadequate discipline, relaxed attitudes towards dress requirements, and low expectations, he feels that it is America's swing alarmingly toward a liberal, permissive, almost-everything-goes bias (p.143), that is undermining the effectiveness of committed teachers, preventing students from learning, and is negatively affecting the entire country by encouraging disrespect and incompetence.

Dr. Nicolai uses a lot of alarming vocabulary to express his forceful opinions on the declining state of the American public education system, but also supplies quotes and a research bibliography to add support to his views. Agree with him or not, Dr. Renato Nicolai's "The Nightmare That Is Public Education" will most certainly get its readers thinking, talking, and most importantly from his standpoint, taking action.