

What you learn at school

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Hello everyone. I am Aisa. I am 22 years old, and this is my last year at this university. If you're the same age as me, you have been in education for 15 years. That's a really long time and I'm sure you have lots of memories of your school life. So do I.

Do you remember your junior high school life? The reason I ask this question is because this past summer I returned to my junior high school; not as a student of course, but as a teacher. I was doing teaching practice.

And through that experience, I started to think about the true purpose of school education.

Schools these days have been changing a lot. With digital textbooks, online materials, and tablet learning, students use convenient tools and can learn at their own pace. In my practice school, a 3rd grade boy used Canvas to make posters to invite classmates to the Seinenkai (青年会), and students made PowerPoint presentations with more than 10 slides for their summer vacation assignments. They are very creative and maybe even more skilled with digital tools than us.

I once saw a short video on YouTube saying, "You can learn anything from online and digital tools, so you don't need to go to school". And yes, more families are choosing forms of education outside of traditional schools, such as homeschooling and online education. This shows that not only children, but also parents, are more and more aware of the options available. These new forms of learning allow for flexible education that suits students' personality and environment. Also, if students have already found their future dream, learning only the subjects they need might be more efficient. But yet, I believe school still has a special value even if you can learn the same things without school.

School is not only a place to get knowledge, but also somewhere to meet people, cooperate with them, have fun with them, and sometimes clash with them. A place to develop the ability to live with others.

John Dewey said, "school is a small society". Through school, we learn how to support each other, overcome difficulty together, and build relationships.

During my teaching practice, my idea of what makes a good teacher changed. I used to believe that a good teacher was someone who created a perfect lesson and taught perfectly to make understanding easy. But one of the teachers at my practice school often went to support his students' club activities even on weekends; not because he was required to, but because he truly cared. And the students naturally understood his care through his actions. That became love for their class and classmates, and I saw how they supported each other. From this, I realized that a good teacher is not only someone who gives knowledge. Teaching is also love, trust, and connection. Schools are places where you can learn these things.

So now, I want to ask, "What did you experience in school, and what did you learn from it?"

I am deeply thankful for the relationships I built over fifteen years of school life. Some friendships where there was less connection have faded. But some friends still spend time with me now. There were homeroom teachers, funny teachers, strict teachers, and parents who sent me off to school every morning. Standing in the actual field this summer, I realized how much I was supported.

School is a place where we learn who we are through others. And I believe that going to school, meeting others and studying together is very valuable and precious.

No matter how much education evolves, or what new styles of learning appear in the future, I believe there is a certain value that only an actual school can give us.

Next year, I will return to school again as a teacher. The place where I once laughed, cried, struggled, and was supported. This time, I will stand there to support, and I want to become a teacher who knows that time with students is precious.

Thank you.