



# Why Teach?: In Defense of a Real Education

By Mark Edmundson

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Mark Edmundson's essays reclaim college not as the province of high-priced tuition, career training, and interactive online courses, but as the place where serious people go to broaden their minds and learn to live the rest of their lives.

A renowned professor of English at the University of Virginia, Edmundson has felt firsthand the pressure on colleges to churn out a productive, high-caliber workforce for the future. Yet in these essays, many of which have run in places such as *Harper's* and the *New York Times*, he reminds us that there is more to education than greater productivity. With prose exacting yet expansive, tough-minded yet optimistic, Edmundson argues forcefully that the liberal arts are more important today than ever, and a necessary remedy for our troubled times. *Why Teach?* is brimming with the wisdom and inspiration that make learning possible.

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### Editorial Review

#### From Publishers Weekly

As he headed to college, Edmundson (Why Read?) told his father that he might pursue a prelaw track. Though he wasn't sure he wanted to be a lawyer, he figured that lawyers made decent money. His father, he says, detonated: He told me that I was going to college only once, and that while I was there I had better study what I wanted, which was literature. In this collection of 16 essays, some of which have appeared in Harper's and the New York Times, University of Virginia English professor Edmundson explores how higher education has devolved into a place where preprofessionalism is the order of the day; where the study of literature has become arid and abstract; and where universities behave like corporations, teachers like service providers, and students like customers. He offers, at turns, a meditation, a jeremiad, some musings, and some possible solutions. The questions (what to teach? what to study?) find answers in the values Edmundson discovers in becoming an English major: Love for language, hunger for life, openness and a quest for truth or truths. Addressing teachers, students, and parents, Edmundson defends the intellectual and spiritual value, even the usefulness, of the scholarly enclave and seeking knowledge so as to make the lives of other human beings better. (Aug.)

#### From [Booklist](#)

\*Starred Review\* Edmundson, professor of English at the University of Virginia, laments the erosion of a college education from a search for learning and meaning in life to a search for career training, online courses, and inflated grades. Exploring education's changes in recent decades from a purely intellectual pursuit to one that is commercially driven, Edmundson points to demographic and market forces, including the decline in birthrates since the baby boom and the incredible competition for students that has resulted in treating students as consumers. As professors and colleges feel compelled to keep their customers happy, there is a decidedly adverse impact on the quality of education, with less emphasis on the philosophical and more on the practical or even the entertaining. The consumer ethos is overtaking even the left-leaning politics and political correctness that have so worried academia's critics. He ends each essay with a declaration to fight against the trend (e.g., "No more laptops in class"). With literary references spanning from Homer to Joyce Carol Oates, Edmundson's essays are filled with ideals, recollections, and poetry. To read this book is to experience just the kind of course Edmundson admires, one that provokes thought and self-examination. A heartfelt, beautifully written, profound, and often hilarious appeal to rage against the machinery of modern education. --Vanessa Bush

#### Review

"Mark Edmundson's lively account of the way we educate now offers enjoyment and enlightenment."  
?Harold Bloom

"A heartfelt, beautifully written, profound, and often hilarious appeal to rage against the machinery of modern education." ?*Booklist (starred review)*

"Edmundson's accessible prose will motivate both students and teachers. Highly recommended for all involved in higher education; an enjoyable and inspiring read." ?*Library Journal*

"[A] deeply felt collection of explorations and reflections on an education in the liberal arts." ?*Kirkus Reviews*

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#### Rodney Mitchell:

In this 21st one hundred year, people become competitive in most way. By being competitive currently, people have do something to make these people survives, being in the middle of the actual crowded place and notice by surrounding. One thing that oftentimes many people have underestimated this for a while is reading. Yep, by reading a e-book your ability to survive enhance then having chance to remain than other is high. To suit your needs who want to start reading some sort of book, we give you this particular Why Teach?: In Defense of a Real Education book as beginning and daily reading reserve. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

#### Mary Sims:

Exactly why? Because this Why Teach?: In Defense of a Real Education is an unordinary book that the inside of the book waiting for you to snap the idea but latter it will surprise you with the secret this inside. Reading this book close to it was fantastic author who write the book in such wonderful way makes the content on the inside easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning fully. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This phenomenal book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book possess such as help improving your expertise and your critical thinking method. So , still want to postpone having that book? If I were being you I will go to the book store hurriedly.

#### Doug Herring:

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#### Michelle Mills:

In this period of time globalization it is important to someone to obtain information. The information will make a professional understand the condition of the world. The fitness of the world makes the information simpler to share. You can find a lot of referrals to get information example: internet, paper, book, and soon. You will see that now, a lot of publisher in which print many kinds of book. The actual book that recommended to you personally is Why Teach?: In Defense of a Real Education this e-book consist a lot of the information with the condition of this world now. This kind of book was represented how does the world has grown up. The dialect styles that writer use for explain it is easy to understand. Often the writer made some exploration when he makes this book. That is why this book appropriate all of you.

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