

School should help students discover their interests and pursue their strengths.  
Letter published in the Los Angeles Times, November 18, 2021.

Letter writers (Nov 14) brought up important issues on homework and education. Missing, however, was the fact that students are different, with different interests and talents. The human race depends on this diversity.

As the late psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi pointed out: "If we were all more or less alike, humans would grow into narrowly specialized organisms. It would be difficult for us to adapt to changing conditions."

An important function of school is to help students discover and develop their interests and pursue their strengths. Overemphasizing "requirements" not only leads to boredom, it also doesn't result in as much learning as encouraging students to engage in tasks they find natural and interesting.

Plato understood this: "Bodily exercise, when compulsory, does no harm to the body; but knowledge which is acquired under compulsion obtains no hold on the mind."

*Stephen Krashen*

This letter originally appeared at <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2021-11-18/schools-teach-kids-not-to-slack-off-homework>

Response to: <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2021-11-14/are-students-served-by-homework-and-the-old-ways-of-grading>

Sources:

Csikszentmihalyi, M. Rathunde, K. & Whalen, S. (1993). *Talented teenagers: The roots of success and failure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Plato, *The Republic*.