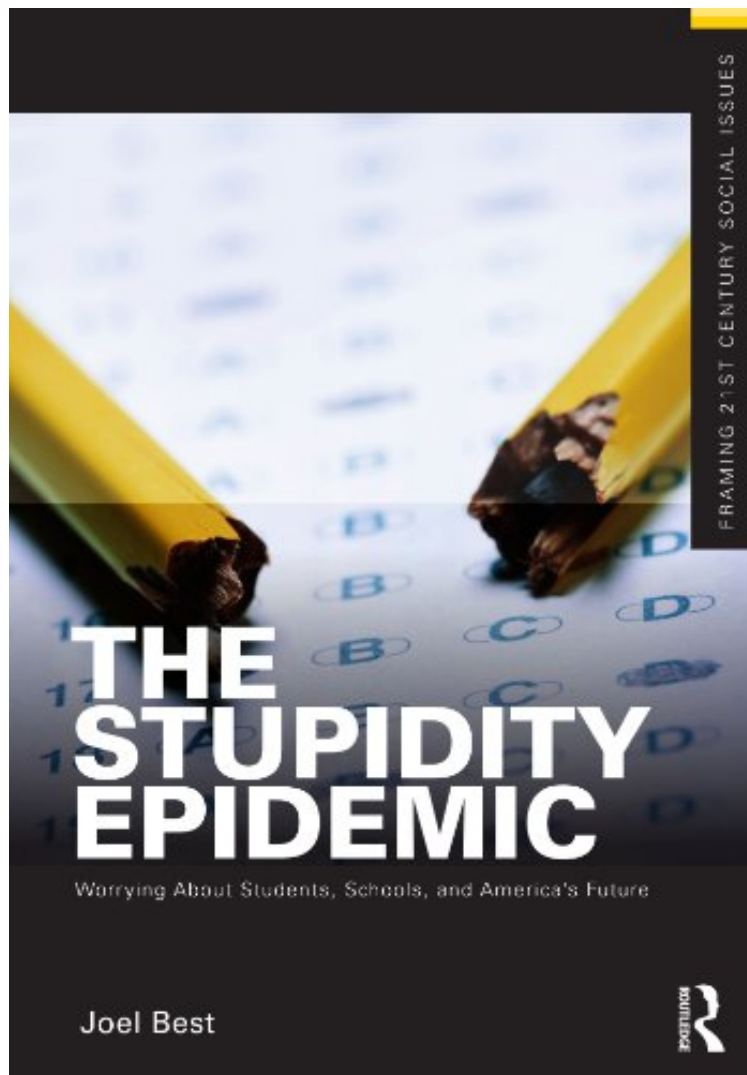


(Mobile book) The Stupidity Epidemic: Worrying About Students, Schools, and Americas Future (Framing 21st Century Social Issues)

The Stupidity Epidemic: Worrying About Students, Schools, and Americas Future (Framing 21st Century Social Issues)

Joel Best

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Joel Best : The Stupidity Epidemic: Worrying About Students, Schools, and Americas Future (Framing 21st Century Social Issues) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Stupidity Epidemic: Worrying About Students, Schools, and Americas Future (Framing 21st Century Social Issues):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Deceptive TitleBy Robin ArgeThe contents of this book are 100% opposite of the title of the book. The book is made by a textbook publisher. It takes a rosy view of education. There is

no stupidity epidemic, just a knowledge epidemic, so build more schools and buy more textbooks, from us. I'm not saying the product is a fraud. To buy a book is to accept a risk. People can title their books any way they want under the law. So, this book gets 1 star from me. Thousands of teachers will probably give it 5 stars. Let's ALL be free to say what's on our minds. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Ignorance Can Be Cured By Spock This book gives the ongoing, unresolved complexities behind schooling and academic achievement, above and beyond the diatribes of pundits and detractors. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Justification, not Scholarship By Mike Pickett The Stupidity Epidemic reminded me in one way of Dinesh D'Souza's What's So Great About Christianity in that it is an exercise in Apologetics. I wish I could have found something of value rather than a simple summary of a middle class suburban school system. Joel Best's book sites historical data to point out some of the obvious high points in education; more kids in college, the % of ignorance is not growing, etc., but offers a scant reference to the education gap or to our ever-growing class division that evolves when the prepared and the unprepared meet on the streets. There is no analysis of how much we spend vs. overall performance and no recognition that even though the % of ignorance is relatively unchanged, the number of ignorant people is in the tens of millions. We refuse to accept this metric when analyzing automobile deaths; why do we accept it in the preparation of youth for adulthood? I do recognize that his data is effectively 10 years old, but the high water mark of critical thought seemed to come in the last two pages when he makes the case that "education needs to be understood within its broader social context". What doesn't? Education, however, isn't a physical social resource or a philosophical perspective, it's supposed to be impartial food for the soul. The book devolves into the classic Relativist justifications that make the poor and underprivileged more vulnerable by accepting their plight as a statistically incurable condition (the victimization process). He turns legitimate concern on its ear by diminishing it to a Scare Tactic. Our (educations) job is to fundamentally instill the best of human characteristics (self-discipline, virtue, respect, compassion, humility, courage, confidence) to prepare children how, and why, to learn. This must be accomplished by 3rd grade or the success rates fall dramatically. Best sweeps this notion under the rug with a trite conclusion that critics of education are a bunch of Chicken Littles. I was hoping for revelations but was left disappointed. There is no recognition of the value of core fundamentals (very difficult for Relativists) and very few tangible takeaways as to why schools are good or bad. Ultimately, the book felt more like an NEA rationalization piece by a social engineer rather than the scholarly analysis of a sociologist.

Critics often warn that American schools are failing, and that our students are ill-prepared for the challenges the future holds, and may even be "the dumbest generation." We can think of these claims as warning about a Stupidity Epidemic. This essay begins by tracing the history of the idea of that American students, teachers, and schools are somehow getting worse; the record shows that critics have been issuing such warnings for more than 150 years. It then examines four sets of data that speak to whether educational deterioration is taking place. First, data on educational attainment show a clear trend: more students are getting more education. Second, standardized test scores suggest that American students are performing somewhat better; certainly most test scores do not indicate that students are getting worse. Third, measures of popular knowledge also show evidence of improvement. Fourth, there is clear evidence that IQ scores have been rising. In other words, the best available evidence fails to support claims about a Stupidity Epidemic. The essay then turns to exploring several reasons why belief in educational decline is so common, and concludes by suggesting some more useful ways to think about educational problems. The goal of this new, unique Series is to offer readable, teachable "thinking frames" on today's social problems and social issues by leading scholars, all in short 60 page or shorter formats, and available for view on <http://routledge.customgateway.com/routledge-social-issues.html> For instructors teaching a wide range of courses in the social sciences, the Routledge Social Issues Collection now offers the best of both worlds: originally written short texts that provide "overviews" to important social issues as well as teachable excerpts from larger works previously published by Routledge and other presses.

About the Author Joel Best is Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice at the University of Delaware. His work focuses on deviance and the sociology of social problems. His most recent books are "Social Problems" (2008), "Stat-Spotting: A Field Guide to Identifying Dubious Data" (2008), and "Everyone's a Winner: Life in Our Congratulatory Culture" (2011).