

The three r's

by BRIAN LOCKHART

Reading, writing, and arithmetic, - the three r's of a good education.

Yes, most likely all three skills will come handy at some time.

You might want to read a newspaper or a birthday card, or write an e-mail, and being able to calculate a measurement or make change will most like happen sometime in your life.

I was reading an interesting story on how education has drastically changed over the past 30 or so years, and how many things are simply not taught in schools any more.

Maybe some local teachers might disagree with the information, and that's okay because it is not a universal list.

In the age of tablets and keyboards, apparently cursive writing no longer has a place in a lot of schools. In a way, I can understand this because many kids now have no use for a pen or a pencil.

I did read a column about one parent complaining that when his son got his driver's license, he was required to write his signature. The kid printed his name in block letters because the concept of a written signature had never been taught to him.

It seems shop class is no longer offered in a lot of schools, and not for the reason you may think. It's not that it wasn't a valuable class, it's the fact that there are liability issues when it comes to youngsters using machines that can lop off a finger or ruin an eye.

True enough ? I saw my good friend put his thumb halfway through a band saw in grade eight.

With kids learning a keyboard from the time they are a toddler, there is no real need for a typing class anymore. Also, most kids have probably never seen an actual typewriter.

I did take typewriting class in grade nine as my mother thought it would be a good skill to learn.

It was. I still used the standard finger placement and can easily glide over a keyboard instead of hunting and pecking with two fingers.

This next one will probably make some librarians a little upset. I already had this discussion with a librarian friend of mine who gave me a solid lecture on why the Dewey Decimal System is still apparently one of the greatest inventions mankind has ever seen.

I learned the System in elementary school and was taught how to go to the card catalogue to look up book. That was during the time when speaking above a quiet whisper would get you a solid admonishment and a dirty look from the head librarian.

Is the Dewey Decimal System still relevant in a library when a computer can do it for you? Apparently even some librarians are saying it is now old technology.

The moon landing of 1969, were backed by a bunch of engineers in white short-sleeved shirts and clip-on ties who used slide rules to make calculations. I recall learning the slide rule in grade 12, and thought it was quite the amazing tool.

Slide rules are long gone so maybe they shouldn't even make this list. They were replaced by pocket calculators and then computers.

I still recall a kid at my high school who carried his slide rule like it was a badge of honour.

If you happen to ask someone for the time, most likely they will look at their phone for reference, and you will get a very exact reply, like 'it is 3:42.'

The new generation of kids have grown up telling time in a digital format. The analogue style with hands and numbers doesn't make sense to them.

I had this confirmed by a friend of mine who was a curator at a museum. He was showing a class tour an old clock, and he had to explain how it worked because the concept of the hands pointing to numbers didn't register with them.

Languages are still taught in schools, but apparently the classics, Latin and Greek, which at one time were offered in all high schools, are no longer on the list offered at many schools.

I'm not sure about Greek, but Latin may come in handy if you are planning to go into law, medicine, or botany. Although I have still not been able to work the phrase, 'veni vidi vici,' into a conversation.

That fact that some things in schools are disappearing doesn't mean it's a negative thing. After all, at one time kids brought their own slates to school to write on.

This is more like evolving education that keeps up with the times.