

# The Differences Between a student and a Scholar

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I believe the word *Scholar* is completely misunderstood. It's more than the image of bespectacled academic elite, puffing away on his mahogany pipe and reading a leather-bound copy of Yeats in a dimly lit library.

The Oxford College Dictionary offers a definition that might challenge this image. *Scholar*: “a person who is highly educated or has an aptitude for study.”<sup>1</sup> The key word here is *aptitude*. Aptitude is, “a natural ability to do something.”<sup>2</sup> All people possess the natural ability to learn and this further means every person possesses the capacity to become a Scholar.

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<sup>1</sup> The Oxford College Dictionary. 2007. Second Edition, p. 1223.

<sup>2</sup> The Oxford College Dictionary. 2007. Second Edition, p. 58.

Thinking otherwise perpetuates the false and irresponsible belief that only a select few can become Scholars. Re-examining what it means to be a Scholar is the responsibility of every teacher.

Our schools are brimming with students – intelligent and talented students. But the world hungers for more. We need Scholars!

I always capitalize the word *Scholar*. Why shouldn't I? Scholars are capable of achieving so much. Have you ever looked at someone, who for the first time has been convincingly referred to as a Scholar rather than a student? There is something magical that begins to churn within them, something capital indeed.

So, what are actually the differences between a student and a Scholar? Once and for all I would like to declare these differences:

Students are motivated by grades. Scholars are inspired by learning, deep and profound moments of learning.

Students achieve for one's self. Scholars make noble contributions for others to savor and behold.

Students study theories. Scholars are its practitioners.

Students passively receive information. Scholars battle the adversaries of passivity, mediocrity, and indifference.

Students are confident and content. Scholars are doubtful and restless among the norm.

Students question authority. Scholars earn the right to speak with it.

Students find an existing pathway. Scholars construct one that is new and untraveled.

Students see the approaching wave and safely adjust. Scholars excitedly swim out and ride upon it.

Students are a part of life. Scholars *know* they are life size.

Scholars take risks, are creative, and embrace failure. For when Scholars fail, and all great Scholars do, they rise up and with an undaunted sense of optimism; they push forward until the answers are found. Scholars persevere and never give up. Never!

Scholars refuse to be satisfied with contributing to the world in small ways. Instead, they are adventurous pioneers – They seek out mysteries, ask questions, and create something new.

Students are wonderful beings. But Scholars are something special and unique because they serve humanity by making a difference.

It's time for teachers to reconsider how they address those in the classroom. Not only must teachers know the differences between students and Scholars, but their learners must as well. Cast aside outdated and woefully incomplete assumptions. It is time to believe in the power of *all* people and grant them equal opportunity to become a Scholar.