

Research the Problem-The Problem and my Solution

Background

I decided to do some research on the negative effects of education of students, just to see the scope of the problem. From my findings, it seems that it can be broken down into two similar- but different effects:

First off is stress. Stress is a natural bodily response to something that is threatening or frightening. In students of all ages it seems that stress occurs most often before or during exams. Some studies show that levels of stress are also increasing in class. This is due to an increase of standardised testing- this then manages to perform as a platform in which to compare students with a numerical measurement. This has led to teachers at all key stage levels to *“orient students to performance goals and comparative standards of excellence instead of internal mastery goals,”* [Scott Paris, a professor of psychology at the University of Michigan]. This emphasis on external goals has created an ‘unhealthy classroom’ scenario in which, *“standardised tests provoke considerable anxiety among students that seems to increase with their age and experience.”*

Secondly, as this seems to be a longer terms effect of the ‘unhealthy classroom’, there is depression. Teenage depression can be triggered in the same way as adult depression can, but can also be triggered with such things as; social rejection, family turmoil or problems with schoolwork or exam pressure. Depression can lead to a list of negative effects. With this in mind, the need for students to start enjoying education and having fun in class seems a lot more important issue.

This issue is further inflamed by this idea of schools finding clearer ways to rank the students in terms of performance. If each test can be given a percent or a letter, then you have given students a clear classification that can be used to show their worth as a person whose future is determined by education. This can set up a class system, with each certain break in percentile forming their own groups. Much like the socioeconomic groups in society, you will see that while those at the top seem to have it better, the stress of on top and the fear of failing plague them. There is also the idea of the lower percentiles coping with the depression associated with being at the bottom position. Unlike these classes, in education there is also the middle classes that are constantly reminded that they are inferior to the top classes, and that their future will be out of their control unless they manage to raise their class.

While that situation is hard enough of a person, there is then the mechanic of test on consider. Unlike the class system that is a product of money that can be amassed at any time, your whole class is based on a test that will span between one and three hours. This short defining period can be extremely stressful. It is no wonder that both inside and outside the classroom, education is associated with negativity in the eyes of students.

Interpretation

While I have researched about stress and depression, the issue has little to do with those topics. Rather than tackle those huge issues, I plan to avoid it altogether. When faced with my client’s request of “Getting an online thing to...” I interpret that as a request to make an online resource.

This puts me in a bind. I need to make a resource for science without it having the negative association of education.

Upon thought, I pondered the idea of learning being second to enjoyment. Rather than looking at the other online learning resources available and trying to make a better version, I looked back at the problem and looked at other possible solutions. I don't have to directly tackle the problem if I can address it before it exists.

This means that I should target pre-GCSE students before the stress of exam can taint their judgement. When trying to think of fun while remaining educational, the idea of an education game comes into mind. Due to the increased bias towards fun rather than education, I will not attempt to create an 'interactive activity' that has shown in other games.

To summarise the points just made, if GCSE education is negatively linked due to exams and crippling pressure, I will try to promote GCSE science to pre-GCSE students by using a game that has Science based themes rather than a quiz that has some game-like features.