On Education

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Introduction

If humanity has proved anything over the last fifty to sixty years, it's that we have potential, potential to do amazing things. Our grasp and control over technology and a multitude of things has only become more and more impressive over the years. But I'd argue we've been neglecting something and it's holding us back. We can't reach our potential because we are giving our young an extraordinarily inefficient kick-start in life by way of an inefficient education system. Now the way we go about education now isn't all that bad, fifty, maybe even up to thirty years ago this was close to the best we could do, but we've come a long way since then. Sure we've made some changes, more kids generally are getting education than before, and that's good, but still not all. And there are more issues that I'll come to later. The system has dug its heels in and I think it's due a flip on its head. I'll be keeping this piece short, because if I didn't I'd end up with a book no one would read, so I'll just write this and maybe someone will read it.

So what should we change and why?

What we teach

We need to change the focus on what we teach. Traditional subjects like maths, English, languages, history, art and the like have their advantages and disadvantages. The issue is that none of these on its own gives immediate benefit to the student. Schools should teach children from a young age things that will help them take control of their lives. Things like basic economics and money management and how to teach yourself would go a lot further than some subjects and would have a more positive effect than any amount of teaching of a traditional subject at school level.

Schooling needs to encourage creativity, imagination and innovation far more than it currently does. We are getting to an age where to progress as a society these traits are becoming more and more valuable. But they've always been an essential part of our progression, so it's sad we don't already target them more. However to promote these, schools will likely require an overhaul as they currently subdue and discourage them, though not on purpose.

How we teach

Teaching in the traditional way is a waste of money. Now before the pitchforks are raised against me. Teachers are arguably the most valuable profession. Some are good and some are bad but they all end up shaping almost everyone's futures in some way, small or large. However teacher's shouldn't waste their time trying to teach 20-30 students per hour. We've had books for centuries and do a good job at targeting a larger audience. The rise of video learning has been huge and will likely continue to rise and so it should, its more engaging generally than books and can hit that high audience count. Videos are also more versatile than in person lecturing and if invested in, can far exceed current teaching effectiveness, through editing and other techniques to visualise concepts better.

Now this is not an argument that we should get rid of teachers. Students, especially younger ones are hard to encourage to learn. Which is why we thought we need teachers to put in front of them so they at least pay marginal attention to their studies. But with more video learning how do you approach it? So my thought process here tends towards thinking about gamification of learning and skills gained. There is scope to make the education system a truly rewarding institution to be a part of. I have some ideas on how this could be done, I'm sure many people do, and it's time to consider doing it. This still doesn't cover teachers and why they are still useful. My vision of what teachers should be doing is acting as a guide to young students, helping direct their studies, giving advice, helping explain things or general moral and possibly emotional support. If teachers had the time to perform these duties

they'd be making better use of their time, becuase until now, we've never valued their time close to it's actual value.

The output of our teaching

Finally, I'll put a word in on exams. I've sat my fair share of them, I've even enjoyed them most of the time. But are they doing their job as well as possible? In a world where exam grades are forgotten as soon as you have 2 or so years of working experience. I'd argue things should be changed and rethought, innovated if you will. Again I have an idea or two when it comes to this, they may not be perfect but getting the thoughts out there is a start at the least. Having an education system built from the ground up to show off and celebrate one's learning, which inherently shows their strengths and weakness, work ethic and maybe even hinting at their potential is an obvious ideal. And I don't think that is beyond us, as so little is.

Wrapping up

These are some words I wrote about the subject. It took me about half an hour, but my ideas have been kicking around for a while now. I could go on and talk at length about exactly what we should do to these ends but I'll leave those opinions unvoiced to allow the reader to think about it without my ideas infecting your thought process. And I also ask the question to you, maybe I am wrong, there may be a flaw in my logic, I've considered many counterpoints to my argument so far, and still believe in the general idea I've posed. I welcome more discussion as well, as this idea has merit and I alone cannot make this happen.