
The Raising Problem of Students' Boredom and Ways to Solve it

When it comes to education in America today, what matters the most to schools and education boards are test scores and grades. This is a huge problem because it causes students to get bored with learning, so they lose interest in it all together. "We could encourage the best qualities of youthfulness- curiosity, adventure, resilience, the capacity for surprising insight- simply by being more flexible about time, texts, and tests, by introducing kids to truly competent adults, and by giving each student what autonomy he or she needs in order to take risks every now and then" (Gatto 115). The only way to correct this newfound problem of boredom is to wipe away everything we have in place in the education system and start anew.

What Caused the Boredom?

"Our policy makers today think that what matters most is getting high test scores in mathematics and reading" (Ravitch 106). This has caused students themselves to believe that grades and test scores are the only thing that matters. In all reality tests measure memorization skills and not how smart the taker is and students have forgotten this. No test can ever measure their potential to be something great. John Taylor Gatto, a retired school teacher, said boredom was everywhere in his world as a teacher (114). When asked, the students would say that they are bored because "the work was stupid, that it made no sense, that they already knew it" (Gatto 114). The teachers are bored because the students are "only interested in grades" (Gatto 114). This boredom has derived from the fact that most schools have become a way to equalize large quantities of citizens.

Do We Really Have a Military State Education System?

Schools began to become compulsory between the years of 1905 and 1915 for three reasons: to make good citizens, to make good people, and to make each person his or her personal best (Gatto 117). This doesn't seem so bad, but many people such as H.L. Mencken and Christopher Lasch researched the origin of our education system and what that really means. The reality is that our education system is derived from the military state of Prussia (Gatto 117). The Prussians used schools to create an easy to manage population by "creating mediocre intellects, to hamstringing the inner life, denying students appreciable leadership skills, and ensuring docile and incomplete citizens" (Gatto 118).

Alexander Inglis, an author from the early 1900s, wrote about the true six basic functions American schooling had: the adaptive function, the integrating function, the diagnostic and directive function, differentiating function, the selective function, and the propaedeutic function (Gatto 119). These functions "establish fixed habits of reaction to authority", "determine each student's proper social role", "sort children by role" and teach them accordingly, "tag the unfit clearly enough their peers will accept them as inferior", and to teach a very small portion of the kids to become leaders (Gatto 119).

The Prussian system of education created an innocuous population of voters, a subservient

workforce, and what America is best known for, mindless consumers.

Are Children Really Not Being Left Behind?

Most schools in the United States have majorly cut back on subjects that aren't being tested since the No Left Child Behind Act was set into motion. It was put into federal law in early 2002 that all students need to be proficient in math and reading by the year 2014 and it was required to test each of those subjects in every state (Ravitch 106).

Due to the recession in 2008, schools received budget cuts. Ravitch states that these schools chose to cut back on the subjects that were not tested and laying off the teachers of those subjects to save money (106). This shows how little schools actually care about the well-rounded education most parents try to obtain for their children. "None of these studies should be subject to budget cuts. They are fundamental ingredients of a liberal education" (Ravitch 111).

Data

There is a sudden obsession with data related to test scores since the federal policies were put into place. States now receive federal funding to create a data "warehouse" where information on students and teachers is kept for future reference (Ravitch 107). The Gates Foundation and Rupert Mandoch's Amplify division have come together to create a database called inBloom that collects confidential information on students from many states. This database will include the student's birthdates, names, addresses, social security numbers, grades, test scores, disability status, attendance, and other information that is also confidential in nature (Ravitch 107). The obsession with numbers and scores in America is completely baffling and unnecessary. This focus on standardized testing has been in place even before the No Child Left Behind Act and the expense of this is "the more important goals of education, like character and love of learning" (Ravitch 112).

Money = Inequality

Schools that have parents that are strongly committed and receive a lot of taxes can afford curriculum that has "extensive offerings in the arts, languages, world cultures, history, sciences, mathematics, and athletics" (Ravitch 108). Most public schools can't afford the "small class sizes and rich curriculum" that is available to the wealthier students (Ravitch 108). Since most children only have access to knowledge that consists of the basic courses that are being tested and only a small portion are actually getting a balanced education we can't provide equal opportunity to education.

Online School

Many parents have acknowledged the problem in the current school system, so they try different methods to try and make up for it. Many pull their children out of public school and enroll them into online schools. This route of education may solve part of the problem because it makes each student's education more personalized to him or her. In most online schools you get many options when choosing classes and electives. Therefore, you can have a more well-rounded education. Students also are able to work at their own pace, helping them retain the information

instead of basic memorization that fades away with time. “One of the reasons that online schools do not succeed is that children and youths need social interaction to develop the soft skills that are needed in life and work” (Ravitch 112). Going to an actual school helps children develop ethical, mental, and physical skills. These skills children learn from being social will help them throughout their entire lives and cannot be learned through a computer.

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