

bad or myth Good Perspective



“Education in America is Improving.”

Assuming the function of education is to prepare children academically for life, a staggering number of facts tells us that by any sensible measure, children in America are not getting a good education. Year after year, the reports from the public schools tell us that they are trying many things to increase test scores and the quality of education. An incredible amount of time, money, and gray matter has been wasted over the years as wave after wave of “new and better” ways to teach have come and gone. For example, experiments in teaching higher level thinking skills apart from foundational principles or sight word reading instead of phonics based reading, have given us generations of students who are not prepared to succeed. The 25 year long push for promoting self esteem has resulted in abject failure. Changing the truth and accuracy of grades, not using red ink when marking papers, or doing away with anything that may make a child feel badly has not resulted in children who are duped into feeling good and subsequently succeeding, but instead have lowered the bar of expectations and reduced healthy competition.

Even the students know that they are not being told the truth by the adults when clearly they are not succeeding in the classroom.

When we look at actual test results, they may be up or down a few percentile points from year to year, but there is little real improvement. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is based on good intentions, including a desire to raise standards of achievement and to bring all students up to those standards. However, as with many broad, sweeping laws, there are unintended consequences which actually prevent reaching those goals. Under NCLB, each state determines how to define “adequate yearly progress” – the improvement that should be seen, and how that improvement will be measured. In some cases, this is like allowing a math student to come up with the answer key for his own math test – there’s little doubt he will get a high grade on that basis! But even when the standard for progress is appropriate, the result is all too often that teachers reduce their teaching to just those things which will be on the test. Class time is spent on endless

drill and practice tests, just so the class and school will perform well on the all-important test, while the concept of a well-rounded, in-depth education is lost. So instead of producing students who know the content well and can apply that content in many areas of life, such classes produce students who are adept at taking tests.

The future of American competitiveness is in danger. Report after report is sounding the alarm bell that our children are woefully behind many other countries. For reams of data on the subject, you can go to web sites such as: <http://ncesed.gov/index.asp> or <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>

Send your child to a Premier school. No teaching or practice for the assessment tests, just teaching the curriculum.

*Results: CCS scores in the 97th percentile for grades Kindergarten through 11th**

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