

PROMOTING HEALTHY COMPETITION IN EDUCATION.

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We live in a competitive world. There is tough competition in every field such as in finding a job and applying for university. In such a competitive world, it is important to learn and experience victory and defeat to learn important life lesson since early on as a fact of life.

With ongoing debates on the good and bad sides competition can bring in education, it is important that we promote 'healthy competition' in school. Competition in any form brings out the best in people and pushes them to excel. In schools, if used effectively, it can enhance learning significantly. In a supportive environment, competition is good for children. In her 2011 book *Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades, And What You Can Do About It*, psychologist Dr Sylvia Rimm argues that competition is central to schooling because it teaches children the lifelong lesson that failure can occur, and when it does, they learn to 'identify the problems, remedy the deficiencies, reset their goals, and grow from their experiences.'

How to encourage healthy competition

There are different ways how healthy can be established within the classroom and also in school. It is most productive for it to occur among students of similar abilities. It can occur between the same group of students who achieved the same grades and also in the same subject areas. Grades are regularly assigned and students ranked against each other in class in most classrooms, hence we are all subjected to competition since we are young. The earlier we are exposed to it, it will better prepare us when we enter workforce. This can help us deal with the

disappointment of losing and how to take winning gracefully and learn the natural consequences of competition.

Some of the benefits of healthy competition in school are:

1. Children learn about themselves

During competition, children can learn about their strength and weakness. They can develop self-esteem by addressing their fears and confronting their insecurities during challenges.

2. Motivation thrives in competitive situations

Competition can be the source of motivation for children. It is a great way to challenge them to put their maximum effort to obtain great results.

3. Competition in schools leads to valuable skills

During competitive activities in school, children can also gain resilience and build interpersonal skills. They get to listen to others' point of view and learn how to take turns. These are skills needed in the workplace later in life. Working in teams will also teach children to work with other individuals of unique knowledge and different ability to achieve a common goal. These are skills needed in the workplace later in life.

4. Healthy competition boosts self-esteem and engagement.

As the students engage in a competition, they will naturally discover new skills. They will

develop new talents and hence experience higher self-esteem.

5. Children learn values that are best learned through competition

Children will learn to find solutions to problems instead of blaming others, especially during group work or team sports. They will also learn about effective communication and cooperation.

6. Children learn to cope with stress

Stress is our body's physiological reaction to helping us improve ourselves. Stress might be viewed as a negative thing as parents, stress occurs frequently in our adult lives. So it is invaluable for children to prepare for this reality and help them cope better in their future adult lives.

It's all about finding the right balance in competition. By teaching children to have 'healthy competition' in school, they will be able to apply what they've learned in their future adult lives and cope better with the real world challenges.

Adapted from:

'Why competition is good for student'
MINDCHAMPS 15 May 2017

'The value of competition in classroom'
JOYETTE FABIEN March 2018

"Healthy competition is good for children"
HANNAH PANDEL 10 February 2016