



Abandoning Competition

Sophia Wu, Grade 6

Have you ever gotten discouraged before? It's most likely that you have, and that discouragement a lot of the time came from a competition. Whether you know it or not, competition is a daily part of our life and can impact it in a good way, but also in a largely negative way. It also affects children in stronger ways than adults. The use of competition amongst children should be abandoned as it can break apart friendships, discourage the children that can't obtain success, and distract children from learning.

To start, children can get so focused on winning that they do not notice what they are losing, which includes close friendships. For instance, group competition can divide friends and allow school tasks to drive a rift into personal life by leaving children unable to distinguish their work-relationships from their personal-relationships. Likewise, individual competition is no different, other than more pressure being driven onto each individual to do better. Additionally, children who get a lower status in marks can feel inferior to friends that get higher marks than them, damaging a friendship even more.

Furthermore, children that don't get decent marks can feel discouraged and left behind. Students that don't live up to the standards set (either by themselves, parents, or/and their peers) may feel that success is not within reach, and therefore they should stop trying and give up. When they hear of their successful peers, their perception of acceptable marks can become limited to *only* high marks because they feel that everyone is reaching those milestones, which damages their drive even more.

Lastly, competition *can* make youth work hard, but that hard work does not always result in learning anything. The competition gives children good results when they work hard towards the right thing, but that is too often not the case. The right thing to be focused on is growth and learning, but the wrong thing to be focused on is the result. In most cases, students designate the learning as unimportant and are blinded by the latter. They lose focus on the purpose of competition altogether, which results in something with fewer ideas and almost no growth.

All in all, competition amongst children hurts more than it helps; it can tear apart strong bonds, dissuade unsuccessful youth, and cause children to lose sight of the real purpose of competition altogether. Competition is supposed to be beneficial to children, but is it really? Rather than letting students go through the pressure and burden competition brings, let them work on their own or collaborate with more ease, and incorporate less competition in each assignment. After all, in the end, it's up to the student whether they want to work hard towards the right thing or not.