

An outline of the british education system



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This essay is entitled ' An outline of the British education system.' and it especially concentrates on explaining some relevant issues concerning primary schools in this country. The essay talks about three topics, all of them divided in three paragraphs: the first one is a historical background and a key element that may help us clarify today's structure, referred to in the following paragraph. Since we are living in a society ruled by the new technologies, the last paragraph focuses on the importance given to the ICTs in British schools. The essay concludes by highlighting what, in my opinion, are the main strengths of the educative system in the United Kingdom.

As stated by some historians, the roots of British education can be found in the mid sixth century. It was not however until the seventeenth century, when the first ' schools' were built. At that time, education belonged to the Catholic Church which was committed to teaching the principles of Christianity, by building schools. According to the author Denis Haye, the XIX century saw the birth of the first state schools. At that time, these were still controlled by the Church which used to introduce poor children to the main matters of Church's beliefs. However, it was not until the mid-century when the State starts gaining some control over education, introducing a wider variety of subjects.

Among all the education acts that have passed in the history of British education, it is important to focus on two of them, since they may help us clarify the roots of today's structure. The also referred to as ' The Scottish Act', is born in 1872 and according to the on-line article ' Key Dates in Education' it is known for making ' school attendance compulsory from the age of 5 to 12 years old'. Another education act to be drawn up took place in

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1944, and is in my opinion, important to highlight because from this time on primary school children are exempted of paying tuition fees. With this new education act a tripartite system was introduced in British education system, and this led to the creation of so-called technical, grammar and modern schools. While analysing the history of the education system, it is decisive to go back to the year 1988 when the national curriculum is introduced in British schools, including English, Maths, Science, and Religion as compulsory subjects. From 2010 'MFLT', which stands for 'Modern Foreign Languages Teaching' is also an obligatory subject.

It is indeed the creation of the national curriculum, probably considered the most important fact that may help us achieve a better understanding of today's system. The author Denis Haye who wrote 'Primary Education: the Key Concepts', claims that in the 20th century, just after the introduction of the national curriculum, children were obligated to study in school from 5 to 11 years old and this 'primary stage' was followed by a specific education which would end at the age of 16. It is because of the national curriculum that today's pupils go to school at the age of 5 and leave when they turn 11. The author also claims that there is a minor quantity of educational centres which accept children from the age of 8 to 12 called 'deemed middle' in his words, while others referred to as 'first' accept 5-8 or 9 year-old pupils.

Today's British primary education's structure could not be analysed without bearing in mind what is in my opinion the main strength of the British system: the variety of schools offered to parents and British pupils. On the Department of Education's webpage, some of the main types of schools can be found, establishing a division in three sections: 'mainstream state

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schools, state schools with particular characteristics and specialist schools' in the first section. 'Trust and Voluntary controlled/aided schools' in the second. Faith schools, academies and grammar schools also belong to the second section. In the third group the Department includes 'Independent schools'. This last kind, as its name shows, is governed by an independent body which according to the Department of Education have their own 'curriculum and admission policies'.

Since we are living in a society ruled by the information technologies, without a doubt a valuable aspect to be drawn up, is the use of information and communication technologies in the British education system, paying a special attention to schools. The British Department of Education claims that the adoption of the information and communication technologies (ICTs) to today's primary schools radically improves the education centre's level. It was in the year 2002, when the Education and Training inspectorate wrote a report which highlighted the positive aspects of integrating the ICTs in the UK schools. In most schools, both the student's learning and the quality of teaching were shown to be 'satisfactory'. Most of them used a great number of applications such as developing web pages, using social networks for educational purposes, sending electronic mails and using web-cams, to mention but a few of them. This report also indicates that the introduction of the ICTs in primary school's classrooms and lessons notably increases the pupil's motivation and enthusiasm to learn. The Department of Education also claims that the information and communication technologies have been adapted to the curriculum of several schools in the UK for the past 5 years, including ICT as a compulsory subject. In my opinion, the main advantage of

the ICTs probably relies on its positive effects on children's attention and interest, and this is one of the reasons why there are an even higher number of centers which are incorporating them.

While looking for information on this matter, I found two relevant articles in two different newspapers which show a clear example of how these technologies are being adapted to education. The first article belongs to the journalist Borland, and appeared in 'The Guardian'. It talks about a school in the UK which bought a couple of Wiis in order to 'boost pupil's enthusiasm for sport' using the new Wii Fit Plus. This new Wii application, the writer claims, is focused on various fitness exercises proved to be beneficial for the children's health, especially for sedentary ones. Borland also states that although this initiative firstly received a very positive feedback from most people, there were other voices alleging that a video console should never take the place of traditional drills or exercises. Another article to be taken into account, was written by The Telegraph's education editor Graeme Paton who states that a school in the UK has decided to introduce Twitter, the UK's widely known social network as a subject. Children, however, will not only be taught how to use this network for academic purposes (if there are any) but also to communicate by using Skype and develop on-line blogs.

To conclude this essay, it is important to mention that the British education system probably stands out for the enormous variety of schools offered to children and parents while in other countries only three or four types of schools. Furthermore, the last paragraph can indeed be interpreted as an example of the adaptation of this system to today's new generation of

children, enhancing educational perspectives, and finally catering for wider needs.

1, 200 words.

Group Research Proposal

Research problem:

What are the main types of bullying in primary and secondary schools? How can this problem be tackled?

Why is this argument important?

Bullying is a problem present in current primary and secondary schools, normally affecting children from four to sixteen years old. Not only pupils are involved, but also parents and teachers who, in most cases, do not even know the truth or conceal the abuse. There are different kinds of bullying which, can be divided into five groups: verbal, physical, emotional, cyber-bullying, and homophobic. In the verbal and emotional bullying, the bully uses disrespectful remarks and threatening words which intend to harm the victim. This is probably one of the worst kinds since children are physiologically affected, creating in most cases traumas leading to social issues such phobias to develop relationships with other classmates due to a low self-esteem. In physical bullying, the perpetrator intends to affect physically the target by resorting to violent acts such as hitting, punching or pulling without having a necessary reason to do so. Cyber-bullying is considered to be a relatively new kind, due to the development of new technologies. It not only affects pupils in the classrooms but outside in the

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real world, by using slanderous videos publishing the abuse on the internet. The last type, homophobic bullying, is related to the child's sexual orientation using derogatory terms such as gay or even the despicable 'faggot'. These are but a few of an endless list of other kinds of bullying. Studying this problem is important since it not only might help those who need it most, it can also clarify one of the darkest aspects of human behaviour towards the others.

Methodology

In order to carry on this research, it is vital to access to different sources of information. Not only books can help us with this matter; articles published in scholar or public newspapers, as well as television interviews or scholarly programs can be very helpful. A very relevant documentary on matter, entitled 'The Red Balloon House' aired on the BBC last month will be born in mind while developing the research. This is a charity organization aiming to help children who suffer from school phobia due to bullying abuses. This documentary offers a close expose of this matter, clarifying many aspects about the principal effects of this kind of abuse. Another useful method to be taken into account, however difficult and risky, is carrying on a private interview with a primary source, a victim.

Literature Review

' Aspectos psicológicos de la violencia juvenil' <http://portales.educared.net/convivenciaescolar/contenidos/biblioteca002.pdf>

' Bullying'

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<http://portales.educared.net/convivenciaescolar/contenidos/biblioteca003.pdf>

‘ Convivencia escolar y prevención de la violencia’

<http://portales.educared.net/convivenciaescolar/contenidos/biblioteca015.pdf>

‘ Convivencia en los centros educativos’

<http://portales.educared.net/convivenciaescolar/contenidos/biblioteca011.pdf>

‘ Acoso escolar. Guía para chicas y chicos’

<http://portales.educared.net/convivenciaescolar/contenidos/guia.pdf>

‘ La actuación ante el maltrato entre iguales en el centro educativo’

http://www.obrasocialcajamadrid.es/Ficheros/CMA/ficheros/OSSoli_MenorMaltrato.PDF

Conclusion

Bullying is a social problem that affects more frequently all cycles of education. Everybody should become aware of this problem and try to end up these abuses by the application of methods and efficient solutions to it.

Individual Research Proposal

Research Problem

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Tackling bullying in the U. K. primary schools. What are its roots and types?
What are the principal effects on the psychological health of today's pupils?
Why is this argument important?

Bullying in primary and secondary schools in the UK, is indeed a problem that has been haunting British pupils since the first schools were built in the nineteenth century. This leads us to question ourselves about bullying's roots, what they are and how they can help us eradicate this problem from scratch. According to the education reporter Kristin Rushowy from the US newspaper 'The Star', bullying's roots can be found in the bully's family relationships. In most cases, Rushowy claims, bullies come from 'blended' or 'single-parent' families, and feel they can't rely on their parents who act in an overprotecting way. Although it is a fact that schools are built in order to provide a good education for our society's children, parents also have the duty to educate their children in tolerance, and respect towards their classmates and all the members of society. However, it is not always this way and it is indeed an issue to be analysed in depth.

The rise of the new information and communication technologies which as I stated in my essay, are being adapted to today's primary schools in the UK, have a negative effect on this matter. Pupils who are taught how to use social networks as 'Twitter' unconsciously tend to use this knowledge to harass other children. This is a relatively new type of bullying referred as 'cyber-bullying'. As happens to other kinds of bullying such as, homophobic, it has indeed an adverse impact on student's mental health. According to Doctor Marc Dombeck in his article 'The long time effects of Bullying' short-

termed effects such as anger, depression and suicidal thoughts can lead to the long term ' increased tendency to be a loner' self-esteem problems, and difficulty in trusting people. These are but a few of the negative impact of Bullying and it is indeed a matter to be researched on.

Methodology

To carry out this research, I will bear in mind some on-line articles published in British and American newspapers, as well as some guides published by the British Department for children, schools and families and an essay I wrote concerning British primary education.

Literature Review

The first source to be considered is a guide published by the Department for children, schools and families, entitled ' safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying in Schools', since it is a perfect outline of this issue. Another guide published by the previous department entitled ' homophobic bullying' is also to be considered. Various online articles written by experts on this matter as Dr. Marc Dombeck ' The long time effects of Bullying' are also to be born in mind. An essay written by myself entitled ' An outline of Primary education in the UK' which is focused, among other issues on the adaptation of the ICT in today's schools, may help us clarify the roots of cyber-bullying.

Conclusion

Although Bullying is a problem that has already been researched on by many experts, there are some main issues such as its roots or psychological effects that still need to be examined in depth.

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Self- Assessment

The Cardiff University's module entitled ' Introduction to Academic Study in the UK' has notoriously helped me develop and improve my research skills. Although in the degree I am currently studying I had already been taught how to cite using the Modern Language Association (MLA)'s style, it is always useful to learn how to quote using the Harvard style, since it is the one that is normally used in the United Kingdom. The ' Research skills' seminar, was also decisive since it taught me to research using academic sources and databases. I had no previous knowledge about it and it helped me while planning essays for some of my modules. The lecture on critical thinking was indeed very advantageous since it was an enormous help while writing my two critical analyses for the module ' The Victorian Novel' from a subjective and critical point of view. The lecture on the ways UK' students are assessed and the marks used, was also very appealing and interesting since I come from an overseas' University with a totally different structure. To end up I would like to mention that although unfortunately I could not attend the ' peer-review' seminar and therefore it has been impossible for me to analyse other student's proposals including my findings in this piece of writing, I have taken into account some feedback I received from the classmates I worked with, in order to write my own research proposal. I have considered rewriting the proposal, being specially focused on changing the research question because ' it was too broad'.