

Benefits and costs of children joining the spelling bee essay

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Are Bees Good or Bad? Benefits and Costs of Children Joining the Spelling Bee

Hypercompetition has seeped into teenager and pre-teen life through the striped flying insect- the bee. “ Spellbound” (2002), directed by Jeffrey Blitz, is a documentary that follows eight finalists in their grueling journey to the national championship of the Scripps Howard national spelling bee championship in Washington D. C. The interviews with these candidates and their families reveal their beliefs in and attitudes toward the pressures of the competition. Indeed, the tremendous demands of the competition palpably manifests for these children and their families, because a one-letter mistake can immediately dissolve their quest of winning this prestigious contest.

Although the children work unnaturally hard and undergo fierce familial and personal pressure in the competition, these problems are overshadowed by the benefits of competition- the knowledge that accrues because of the intense study, self-confidence, sense of belonging, and strong sense of accomplishment. The costs of joining the spelling bee are normal to any competition- personal and familial pressures. Personal pressures take place, as students push themselves hard by foregoing socialization, such as going to mall or spending time with friends, so that they can study more. Even the parents of finalist April DeGideo are amazed, because their daughter has cultivated her study habits all on her own. She studies long hours, and does not mind having less time for her friends and family. She is eagle-focused on her prey, so to speak.

Many of these candidates put in extended hours of study, especially as they make it to the regional championship. They all want to win, and to do so,

they know that they must be acquainted with something that other students do not- that one word that can make the difference between winning and losing the spelling bee. At this point, the main costs are having fun with less stressful activities and spending time with loved ones. In addition, familial pressure is not that uncommon. Neil Kadakia faces tremendous pressure from his parents, who incessantly push him to focus on his review. Through parental pressure, it is evident that there is anxiety and strain on Neil.

Still, most parents are only supportive of their children and their love for them goes beyond the spelling bee. Despite the costs of joining a difficult competition, these problems are overshadowed by the benefits of competition. First, the knowledge that accrues because of the intense study is invaluable. These eight finalists characterize highly intelligent and motivated individuals, who are tirelessly poring themselves to know more. The knowledge they have gained is priceless in itself, because the children value them immensely. They also unmistakably enjoy the hot pursuit for knowledge, because of the competition side of learning.

They know that learning itself is a precious gift, and that win or lose, the knowledge and experience they have gained from the competition will last their lifetimes. Second, the competition boosts the confidence of these children. In this world of bees, they are one of the rulers, a king or a queen. It does not matter if others call them geeks, as long as they are the geek that made it to the Scripps Howard national spelling bee championship. At this juncture, geeks are valuable self-concepts.

In addition, these children are forming a strong sense of identity at an early age, because of the impact of the competition on their confidence. The spelling bee is not just any other contest, because so many join and only a handful survive, even to the regional championship. As these finalists finish one round to the next, viewers can feel how good the competition is to their self-esteem. These children have developed a healthy sense of confidence too from participating in the competition. Third, the competition fosters a sense of community. These children come from different walks of life. They come from single-head households or traditional mother-father families, cities, and small towns, and they have rich, average, or financially struggling parents.

They are white, black, Hispanic, and Indian. No matter how outwardly different they may be, the bee unites them and allows them to walk on a common path. They are united by the same devotion- experiencing and winning the spelling bee.

The bee represents an equalizer of society, wherein different children from various classes, races, and family background can share something so excitingly and powerfully similar. Fourth, the competition promotes a strong sense of accomplishment. Students, during the interviews, exhibit their love for the spelling bee. They know that just being part of the contest makes it a life-changing moment for them.

Viewers can sense that though these children are disappointed when they make mistakes, they still relish the experience. They are even more mature

than sports players, who are sore losers. These children know that their game has only winner, and the rest are losers, but they feel that they have won, just because they have been part of it. These children also feel that the process of elimination may be taxing for them, but the sense of achievement makes everything worthwhile.

Furthermore, the achievement comes also from knowing that they are doing something meaningful. They are not idling around like other kids, doing something bad like smoking or gallivanting. They spend time doing productive things that help them feel more accomplished in life. The spelling bee portrays the ideals of young students from different backgrounds. It feeds their confidence, learning needs, sense of community, and sense of achievement. At times, the pressure can be strenuous and the socialization costs are undeniable. Nonetheless, the competition does not evidently harm the children in any way, psychologically or physically, and instead, they are transformed into mature adults, who love the game for itself and who can be dedicated and focused enough to try winning it.

Work cited Spellbound. Dir. Jeffrey Blitz. Perf.

Angela Arenivar, Ubaldo Arenivar, & Jorge Arenivar. Blitz/WelchSee, 2002. DVD.