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Summary Response Final Copy

What is the definition of an education? As in the dictionary, the definition of an education is as follows: *the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life.* When one thinks of an education, one may picture today’s youth wandering in and out of classes, preparing themselves for a job by acquiring knowledge via the schooling systems. Education truly lies upon the motivation of the learner and what they are truly striving for. Hundreds of years ago when education wasn’t mandatory; it was generally about discovering the world or one’s self to achieve something greater than any person before them and advance as a society. Today, in the modern world of education, going to school isn’t always about society or necessarily bettering as a whole. It’s less of a journey and much more about the end result. Education today is almost entirely about getting a job in the end and getting a paycheck, so people can settle for some sort of normalcy in life and be as carefree as possible. In fact, numerous students are going out of their way to skip an education; they’re figuring out loopholes and finding ways to do the bare minimum when it comes to working or thinking while still achieving a grade that they deem acceptable. Today’s education is all about the grade, it’s the dog treat people get for doing a trick: we don’t get better, we don’t advance as individuals; we just get our treat at the end for doing what we were told (Mandrell 379-383). I agree with Liz Mandrell’s model and proposal that maybe grades should be abolished, maybe we should instill a new system of education. Ultimately, the value of learning should be recovered to the standard that it once was held.

First, Liz Mandrell points out in her essay that grades have massive flaws within them, and she proposes that we come up with a new system of grading that relies all upon the learner. Grades will be automatically set to a standard “A” and from then on, everything that was to be accomplished in her class would be self-motivated and upon the interest of the class to do on the mere standing of learning (Mandrell 381). When we analyze the system we have now, we can observe that our modern schooling system isn’t one of pushing students through doorways of their own interest to achieve a career or lifestyle that truly motivates them to greatness. An exaggerated way to see it would be a mindless walking of zombies who go back and forth to required classes, doing as they are told simply to achieve a grade good enough to move onto the next step. Once they have completed all of the steps they further their education and repeat all of the steps to find a job, to ultimately get a paycheck, and from then on they just pay bills and die. For most of us, that might sound boring, sure some of the details are left out between gatherings and just those unforgettable moments, but the actual structure and framework of our lives reside in settling for a life of normalcy and never truly improve the quality of our lives.

When we look at our system now we can see that grades do have numerous flaws within them, so why do we use them? It’s true, grades do have their flaws, but they also have their merit and they seem to rebound off the old quote “if it isn’t broken, then don’t fix it.” When we compare America’s educational system to other educational systems, we can see that grades do have an impact on our job field and truly give us a more educated workforce. Although within that same standard, I believe a new system can allow people to further excel within their own job, social circle and overall life.

There is no doubt that grades have their advantage. They give the students motivation, and that motivation is handled one step at a time until they finally reach the end of the journey with a high standard, well paid job. Although, grades also force people to think very close minded, and to only see a small goal right in front them over and over again until they reach an ultimate goal, which most likely a lot less than their potential. Grades now in our modern system don’t allow people to excel, or look at the bigger picture of what true greatness can mean or how much they can really do for society. If we were to get rid of grades, then students would be more self-motivated to learn and do their work, rather than to do it for a treat. In the end, the students who focus in school will strive in college and the work force, while the ones who don’t will fall behind, and the blame will be entirely upon them. My prediction would be that motivation to work harder in school and at one’s job would greatly increase, and it would also give us an even more educated work force than we have now. Ultimately, eliminating grades might even launch us into a sort of Utopia where everyone learns at an exponential rate for the sake of learning, constantly pushing the potential of the human mind, forever improving the quality of society as we know it.