

Children 'ignorant of British history' because of trendy teaching

Schoolchildren are increasingly ignorant of British history as teachers scrap traditional lessons in favor of trendy "skills-based" courses, according to academics.

Pupils' grasp of the past has been undermined because schools have "steadily downgraded" the importance of historical knowledge, it was claimed.

In a letter to Michael Gove, the Education Secretary, a delegation of academics and teachers called for history to be made compulsory up to the age of 16 to reverse a "catastrophic decline" in the subject.

They also claimed that the curriculum should be rewritten to expose children to a more coherent narrative of British history.

It was suggested that at the age of 11, pupils should learn about the Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, early medieval England and the Crusades.

At 12, pupils should be taught about medieval life, the English conquest of Scotland and Wales, the 100 Years' War, the Wars of the Roses, the Renaissance, the Reformation, Elizabeth I and overseas exploration.

The comments came just 24 hours after Mr. Gove pledged to review the National Curriculum.

An education white paper, published on Wednesday, outlined plans to slim down the curriculum document and emphasize the key "bodies of knowledge" children should master at each key stage.

In a letter, the Better History Group said: "We share the widespread alarm at the way history has been allowed to decline in the curriculum, with increasing numbers of children receiving less history teaching than their predecessors, or even none at all.

"Our central concern is that the importance of historical knowledge has been steadily downgraded.

"In particular, we believe that the teaching of British history has been allowed to deteriorate, to such an extent that substantial numbers of young people do not have that basic grasp of this country's history that they need in order to function as informed and active adult citizens."

The group - which was originally formed to advise the Conservatives on the history curriculum in 2007 - set out a series of recommendations to improve history teaching in schools.

Currently, around two-thirds of pupils drop the subject at the age of 14.

But in a report, it was claimed that history should be made compulsory up to 16 to give schoolchildren more exposure to the subject.

The report suggested that children should study all main subjects, including history, geography, religious studies, music and art, throughout secondary education. But teenagers should be able to take some at a "higher level" - part of a full GCSE course - while others contribute towards half a GCSE or are not assessed at all.

It also recommended that existing "skills" based lessons, in which students are taught to analyze and evaluate primary and secondary sources without learning historical facts, should be scrapped.

(Source: Daily Telegraph)

Why you aren't getting hired

Frustrated by unemployment?

Job hunting is tricky business. Getting hired is a subtle mix of the right qualifications, enough experience, interview chemistry, and a dash of luck. Assuming you're making all the right moves and avoiding the really obvious job seeker mistakes, there are a few points to consider that could be your ticket out of unemployment.

Get out of your job search rut and back in the game by fixing these mistakes you might be making:

1. Job description

Read it. Do you meet every qualification listed? If you think you can get away by not having that extra few years of experience or make do without the requested higher degree, think again. Job descriptions are a baseline for hiring managers. With so many job applicants, recruiters are naturally going to pick the best of the best, and that means you've got to meet every single one of the job requirements, at the very least. But that doesn't mean you should give up, either. If you find yourself not meeting a certain job requirement time after time, do something about it! Nothing shows dedication like taking action.

2. Word play

It's not enough to have a clean resume free of grammar and spelling errors; you've got to go that extra mile. No matter how amazing your resume looks, everything lies in the words. If the hiring manager has to decipher your resume jargon, don't expect a call back. Phrase your resume with the right keywords. Use powerful words that imply action and sell your experiences by highlighting specific achievements and accomplishments. The right keywords are your key to getting your resume on top of the pile.

3. Job search tactics

Browsing through the classifieds?



Going through Human Resources? Looking at company websites for job leads? One reason your job search may have hit a dead end is because your methods are outdated. Get with the 21st century and go online! The right social network can connect you directly with the job you want. Spread yourself out and try something new - you never know which method will work!

4. Not the right fit

There is no perfect recipe to getting hired. You could do everything right - dress your best, arrive on time, and come fully prepared - and still not get the job. Sometimes, it's just a matter of personality or a clash with the unstated corporate culture. At this point, qualifications don't matter. It's the sad truth - and completely legal. One consolation: It's not you, it's them.

5. Lady luck

You'd think if you did everything right you'd be guaranteed a job. But job hunting isn't always like an equation where the right steps will guarantee you the right

answer. The position might go to another, equally qualified, candidate, or the timing will simply be off. Family restrictions may prevent you from taking the job or the company simply can't afford to hire you right now. The best thing you can do in a situation like this is thank your contact for their time and keep that relationship alive. You just may be the person they call for their next opening!

6. High expectations

It's one thing to stay positive about your job outlook, and another to have false hopes about your prospects. Are you aiming at jobs out of your league? Expecting a certain salary range or health benefits? We'd all love to work at our dream job, but we take the job that's good enough - because it is. Ask yourself what you're willing to give up to get a job. Be honest with yourself. Changing your mindset can broaden your job search results drastically. You may find yourself on a regular payroll faster than you think!

(Source: Excelle)

Is your child spoiled? A four word test

By Michele Borba

Parenting advice that helps you see the dangers of raising a spoiled kid and a four-word review to assess whether your child just may be even a tad bit spoiled.

"Spoiled! Not my kid!" Right? Or would you admit that your child is just a tad bit spoiled?

All the polls say that most Americans feel kids today are more spoiled than ever. A TIME/CNN poll found that two out of three parents feel their kids are spoiled. A poll by the New American Dream showed 70 percent of parents believe kids are too focused on buying things. I have to say I agree with the polls. The truth is there is no gene for spoiled. We have ourselves to blame for this one. Spoiled is clearly a learned behavior and one that is none too pleasant.

But the good news is that this trait can be turned around. The first step to a makeover is realizing why spoiling our kids doesn't do them any favors. The second step is taking an honest reflection to see if your child is moving into the "spoiled category."

Here is how to get started:

The dangers of raising a spoiled child

Of course we love our kids and want the best for them. We don't want to see them unhappy for a single second. But indulging our kids' every little whim doesn't do our kids any favors. In fact, there are a few dangers to overindulging kids. Here are my top four concerns:

* Don't win popularity contests. Forget the birthday party invitations. Spoiled kids are not pleasant to be around. Other children do not like them because spoiled kids are often bossy and selfish. Who wants to be around a kid who always wants things to go his way, who rarely shares, and who considers his own needs first? Adults (especially teachers) are turned off to spoiled kids because they are often rude and make excessive demands.

* Reduces perseverance. Because everything comes a bit easier, a spoiled child has a tougher time handling the downsides of life. Spoiled kids are used to getting their way ASAP so they not only may have reduced perseverance when it comes to schoolwork, but also a tougher time handling adversity and the harder parts of life.

* Lowers self-esteem. New research shows that always getting what you want leads to depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, more psychosomatic complaints, and worse relationships with parents. You're also in danger of raising



A four word test for a spoiled child

There are four words that typically describe spoiled children. How is your child doing? Here is my four-word test for a spoiled kid:

"NO!" He can't handle the word. He expects to get what he wants and usually does. Take my toy store test. Your child is in walking down the toy aisle and wants a toy she doesn't need. You say no. Can your kid handle no (or does she beg, nag or have a tantrum to get his way).

"ME!" She is self-centered and thinks the world revolves around her. She thinks more of herself than about others. She feels "entitled" and expects special favors and generally succeeds in getting them. He watches TV. You do the housework. He doesn't like the dinner. You cook another meal just for him. She wants an extension on her homework assignment that she never got around to doing and expects the teacher to give it to her.

"GIMME!" A spoiled kid is more into getting than receiving, because he has so much and he just wants more. He's generally unappreciative and a bit greedy. You can't think of what to give him for the holidays because he already has everything. She requests things only by brand name. She bases her character on what she owns and wears instead of who she is. Do you feel more like an ATM machine than a parent?

"NOW!" A spoiled kid just can't wait and wants things A.S.A.P. It's just plain easier to give in to this child than to postpone her request. She interrupts when you're on the phone and expects you to stop. And you do. He whines to get the cookie NOW... and can't wait for after dinner.

Be honest... Do any of those words fit your child's typical behavior? Any one word could indicate that your child is moving into the "spoiled" category. Here is another quick test: Do you think an outsider would consider your child spoiled? If so, it's time for a serious makeover.

(Source: GALTime.com)

Money, work are top U.S. stressors, survey finds

For the third year running, money, work and the economy top Americans' list of stressors, according to a survey on stress released by the American Psychological Association.

In the survey of more than 2,000 U.S. adults and children, nearly three-quarters of the respondents report unhealthy stress levels in 2010, about the same as in 2009. Satisfaction with work-life balance drops from 42 percent in 2009 to 36 percent in 2010. Meanwhile, stress over job stability is on the rise, from 44 percent of people experiencing job stability concerns in 2009 to 49 percent in 2010.

Parents may underestimate the impact of stress on their families, the survey results revealed. While 69 percent of parents say their stress has little or no impact on their children, 91 percent of kids ages 8 to 17 report that they can tell when their parents are stressed.

The Stress in America survey was conducted online in August by Harris Interactive. Participants were 1,134 American adults, including 100 parents of children ages 8 to 17. In addition to that national sample, the survey queried 987 additional parents and 1,136 children ages 8 to 17.

Economic woes

As in years past, money woes were a leading cause of stress, with 76 percent of Americans reporting money as a significant stressor. Work stress was cited as significant by 70 percent of adults, and the economy was a significant source of stress for 65 percent of respondents. All three responses have topped Americans' list of concerns since 2007, with the exception of the economy, which did not appear on the survey until 2008.

Money is the most common source of stress for all generations except for the over-65 crowd, who are more likely to cite the economy as their major stressor.

Kids, weight and stress

The survey uncovered a link between stress and weight among both adults and children. One-third of the children in the survey reported being overweight. The overweight children were more likely to report that their parents were stressed (39 percent versus 30 percent for normal-weight children).

Overweight and obese kids were also more likely to experience health problems related to stress, the survey found:

- 48 percent of overweight kids had trouble falling asleep, compared with 33 percent of normal-weight kids
- 43 percent of overweight kids had headaches, compared with 28 percent of normal-weight kids.
- 48 percent of overweight kids reported eating too much or too little, compared with 16 percent of normal-weight kids.
- 22 percent of overweight kids reported getting angry or getting into fights, compared with 13 percent of normal-weight kids.

Parental stress can affect children of any weight in a big way, the results showed. One-third of children surveyed believed their parents were often stressed or worried, and 40 percent said their parents' worries made the kids themselves sad. While only 8 percent of parents believed their children were highly stressed, one in five kids reported lots of worries in their lives.

Toll on health

Americans perceive stress as taking a big toll on their health, the survey found. Only 40 percent of respondents thought they were in good or excellent health, a number similar to the 44 percent who say their stress levels have increased in the past five years.

Two-fifths of adults reported eating poorly or overeating in response to stress in the past month, while 33 percent had skipped a meal because of stress. Over 40 percent had lain awake at night due to stress, while 45 percent experienced irritability and 41 percent experienced fatigue.

Stress hit the unhealthy and obese harder, the survey found. Almost 30 percent of obese adults experienced high levels of stress, compared with 20 percent of normal weight adults. Those who rated their health as fair or poor had an average stress level of 6.2 compared to 4.9 for those who were in good or excellent health.

(Source: foxnews.com)

Couple guilty of assaults at Jersey children's home

A married couple were convicted of a string of physical assaults against vulnerable youngsters at a children's home in the 1970s and 1980s.

Morag and Anthony Jordan, both 62, from Kirriemuir, Angus, Scotland, were both found guilty on eight separate counts relating to abuse at the Haut de la Garenne home in Jersey.

But after deliberating for more than eight hours, the jury at the royal court of Jersey acquitted Morag Jordan on a further 28 counts and Anthony Jordan on four.

Both defendants remained silent as the verdicts were read, but a former resident who gave evidence during the trial was led from the public gallery in tears. The couple were bailed to return to the court for sentencing on 6 January.

During the two-week trial, the Jordans were accused of inflicting "casual and routine violence" while working as houseparents at the children's home. Prosecutors said they had acted like "intimidating bullies" and had carried out "frequent and callous" assaults on vulnerable residents. They were arrested following a multimillion-pound police inquiry into suspected abuse at Haut de la Garenne.

(Source: Guardian.co.uk)