



Stop pretending education is entertainment

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Quick question: When did entertainment become more important than education?

It doesn't matter if we're talking about the public schools, higher education or business and industry – there seems to be a growing consensus that traditional “teaching” is an outmoded concept that needs to be replaced by “facilitation.”

Most of you know exactly what I am talking about here. When I was on the student side of the equation, I would go to class, listen to someone lecture, take notes and, at some point, I would be tested over what I had been taught. Pretty good system. It produced an entire generation of people who knew stuff.

Sadly, well-meaning educational reformers and learning “specialists” are slowly but surely transforming this system into one that is far less effective – but much more fun – than what many of us experienced and ultimately appreciated.

We need to get back to basics when it comes to how we teach students or train employees. Pay attention: There are people in this world who know more than other people. The people in the latter group should basically sit down, shut up, focus intently and ask questions of people in the former group.

If you want to teach leadership, you don't put students in small groups and ask what leadership means to them. You tell them to listen closely while you explain what they need to know about leadership – and eventually you check to make sure they got it. How they “feel” about leadership is mostly irrelevant.

Over the years, I've seen too many “educators” who are more interested in making sure everyone is engaged and having a good time (which tends to precipitate good evaluations) than they are about making sure essential knowledge and skills are being mastered.

Education is not entertainment. Let's stop pretending it is.

Aaron W. Hughey
Bowling Green

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