

# The Quality of Students Today

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*Note: It has been brought to my attention that my use of the word, crap, in the following is not politically correct and may offend some. It is also not considered to be a proper word and its use is frowned upon by various English language specialists. Frankly, I do not give a damn. Crap is a very descriptive word that precisely describes the subject. As used here it refers to low-quality or worthlessness. Good writing is descriptive and does not waste imprecise and moronic politically correct soft words when a hard word best does the job. Therefore, I will continue to use the word. Crap is as crap does and I do not care if crap is offended by being referred to as crap. Crap should strive to become decent and then it can earn respect like the rest of us.*

Much has been said and written about how the quality of students of today has declined from the quality of students of years ago. Such statements seem factually true as they are based on averages. Averages can not mislead, right? As someone who has been involved with education either as a student or as an instructor for over 40 years I am very much aware of what has really happened. Here is my observation.

The quality of good students today is as good as any good students of the past. Good students have always been good students. They achieve in spite of all the “excuses” created for them by incompetent bureaucrats and various other “experts” in education or sociology. The difference between today and yesteryear is that the work of these same “experts” has led to increase in the number of crap students in a class thus lowering the achievement average. These crap students, as I call them, have little if any interest in learning anything. They are only enrolled, if they are in class at all, to collect some kind of benefit for not having applied themselves previously. Anyone who extrapolates the previous sentence to imply that I am saying that all students receiving subsidies are crap receives either an 'A' in stupidity or an 'F' in logic – take your choice. In fact, I do have students who are on some kind of grant and who work hard, excel, and will become the movers and shakers of tomorrow.

Crap is not determined by the grade one makes. Crap is determined by lack of effort. I have some students who make low grades for entirely different reasons. They are trying but are overwhelmed by extra burdens in life and are often too proud to ask for a little help that would gladly be given. Those people have my high respect and they are good if not achieving students. I wish they would ask for help so that they could show up as above the crap. I wish the letter grade of 'E' could be assigned to distinguish students who put forth effort yet failed from crap that had no intention of learning anything. It is very wrong to promote crap up to the level of failure. There is a huge difference.

The problem is that the “experts” have rigged things so that on paper it is virtually impossible to distinguish the quality students making wise use of their assistance and the crap students squandering their assistance. I see the dramatic difference directly by doing something the “experts” can not do, work. In fact, according to the “experts”, my failing the crap counts as a failing of my teaching competence and a failure of the school. The

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“experts” then call for more "expertise" oversight of the schools and instructors. Thus, problems are exacerbated. Many of these “experts” tout their there various degrees and some even hold a Ph.D. I say that any degree, including a Ph.D. in stupidity is worthless – perhaps worse than nothing.

Before the rise of “experts”, schools would not allow crap to attend, would promptly flunk out those who failed to achieve, and would promptly expel those who would attempt to cheat their way through. Schools had a fine reputation for turning out quality students. Thanks to “experts”, schools must now accept crap meeting some specified minimum standard, must provide virtually unlimited resources and expense to assist those who are failing (for the most part being lazy), and must be very wary of expelling anyone lest a lawsuit be filed. The resulting problems are then blamed on the school and the instructors. Schools are held accountable to fix the problems without imposing the solution. Aren't the “experts” brilliant? Now, a degree from some schools is not worth much unless accompanied by other certifications.

In the old days students had to work hard to earn their degrees. Now schools have to work hard to give degrees. The good students of today still work hard to earn their degrees. Many of them are burdened with the frustration that other students who put forth minimal effort achieve grades not much below theirs. The value of their degree is diminished by those who were essentially given degrees. It is likely that some who may have become good students gave up because they felt they could not justify the burden of being a good student when doing less appears (however falsely) to get them just as far. I have a strong suspicion of that being the intent of the “experts” -- see my closing comments. An earned degree is always superior to a given degree and no amount of socialism can change that. Companies who hire graduates can tell the difference and definitely seek those who really earned their degree. The difference is not necessarily on paper – it may be revealed in subtle interview discussions. Often the resume or application reveals, “I dun real good in college.” (that is an actual quote from a famous pro basketball college graduate a number of years ago.)

In closing, allow me to make three points.

First, averages are always misleading unless the data points are all close – this is one of those little known truths in statistics. Averages applied to diverse test scores hides (probably with intention) the fact that some students are achieving – without any excuses. Thus, the lack of achievement by some students can not be the fault of the school or its instructors as might be misinterpreted from averages.

Second, the “experts” tend to send their children to either private schools that can escape the burdens of “expert” bureaucracies or to exclusive public school systems that achieve high test averages by making clever use of high property tax and fees to exclude those who would be a drag on the averages. Thus, high property tax and fees correlates perfectly with higher education (duh!).

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Third, the good work of the “experts” in making selected public schools more exclusive is to make other schools less exclusive by imposing “expertise” so that those schools are required to “educate” the crap. Crap can not fail – only schools and instructors can.

Thus, socialism benefits the rich “experts” while being a burden on those it purports to benefit. Few people figure this out and call for more socialism to solve the problems that socialism causes.