Chapter 36
Combating the "Gimme More" Mindset in Modern Classrooms:
Citizenship Education vs. Entitlement

Marian Evelyn Irwin
University of Illinois, USA

ABSTRACT

A primary goal of this chapter is to explore the phenomenon of increased attitudes and behaviors of entitlement among youth in modern America. With a basis that the increase is a result of social mindset shifts of post-World War II America, instances of the "Gimme More" mindset will be explored using qualitative research methodology stemming from the author's experiences and research as an educator. Moreover, the author will provide ways in which educators can combat this character-threatening mentality and help develop more accountable and empathetic citizens despite grade level, race, socioeconomic status, and other elements that sometimes detract from a core issue and diverge from individual choice. This explanation will cover ideas that, if reflected accurately and consistently, can transcend to the human race, not certain races by exclusion or exception. While issues of intersectionality must be understood and discussed, they are not widely addressed in this chapter, and they do not ultimately thwart ambitions of global citizenship in the context that is explored here.

I have been writing about education, social justice, and democracy in the United States for over thirty years. I have done so not because I am motivated by some lofty notion of the perfect society, but because I believe that any talk about the future has to begin with the issues of youth, who more than any other group embody the projected desires, dreams, and commitments of society's obligations to the future. – Henry A. Giroux (2005, p. 213)

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, though it is argued that younger generations are growing increasingly narcissistic, the actual goals of this discourse do not include pointing a blind or unsympathetic finger of blame at any one group or movement in particular (except for perhaps blind capitalistic and materialistic ambitions). A house of cards has been built in America's social and educational systems. No one should be shocked that it is now falling apart;

however blaming the wind that blew over the house of cards is not necessarily as valuable as finding out how to ultimately build a sturdier house. Therefore, this chapter will conclude with possible solutions to the commodification of education that is being encouraged via modern systems and ideals, namely the unfortunate advancement of and requirement for market-models across many western educational levels. In his article *Changing the Subject: Neoliberalism and Accountability in Public Education*, John Ambrosio of Ball State University urges "that resisting neoliberal forms of accountability is crucial, not only to defending the right of students to a genuine and equitable public education, but to refusing the extension of market values and culture to education" (pp. 316). This chapter works to dissect the core issues and conflicts of neoliberal models for accountability in education, discuss how these models contribute to the entitlement mindset among today's youth, and what instructors can do to thwart an inflated sense of self among students.

The American Dream, specifically post-World War II, used to inspire that every household consist of a money-making, hard-working husband, probably dressed in a sophisticated business suit, a refined and resourceful housewife who was primped and proper, 2.5 kids who were well-behaved and god-fearing, a home (owned, not rented) with a white picket fence, and perhaps even a golden retriever. The children would be disciplined in all aspects of life, from chores, to schooling, to personal relationships. Priorities included the family image, ingrained work ethic, tradition, manners, education, likely the church, and citizenship, among others. While I do not want to spend time glorifying the American Dream as it was accepted and expected at that time or saying that it was flawless and that this is what the US should revert back to, time will be devoted to articulate some of the ways in which generations over time have shifted their life priorities, thus creating the comparatively less empathetic world in which we live. The images of post-World War

II American life-styles help to illustrate some of the notable changes that have taken place in the past six or seven decades. The ambition of this dream is even more fascinating when one considers its promises and connects them with the current stance and values of America. In a critical analysis of the history and influence of "the American Dream" and its evolution throughout the history of this country, Demetri Lallas, PhD in American Literature and Culture from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, articulates that " loose standards about "the American dream" are provocative during these days of record mortgage foreclosure, ruinous underemployment, rampant student loan debt, and the 99% movement" (2014). How have the goals of such an ideological dream become so unattainable and rare among its society members? Furthermore, how have we sacrificed the once strong and socially required expectation to be "good" to one another? The ripples made in a pond must begin with something falling.

In a chapter titled *Cultural Studies, the War Against Kids, and the Re-becoming of U.S. Modernity*, American scholar Lawrence Grossberg, Ph.D (2005) describes this shift as he states that "[f]or the past twenty years, we have been moving away from a middle-class society, the society of the American Dream" (p. 361). An exceedingly complex process of ever-changing lifestyle priorities and global shifts in the responsibilities of citizens has and continues to take place. This has absolutely siphoned into our educational system(s). To expand more on the historical connection of and the imperialistic advancement of neoliberal accountability policies in education, Ambrosio (2013) explains that,

… during Reagan's first term, the rhetoric discourse, and purpose of accountability shifted from a primary concern with optimizing the relation between resource inputs and educational outputs, to a relentless drive to create policies and practices that aim to produce social conditions and forms

11 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/combating-the-gimme-more-mindset-in-modern-classrooms/140775

Related Content

Transforming Instructional Design Ideas into SCORM-Conformant Learning Products
Vanessa P. Dennenand Kira S. King (2007). *Learning Objects for Instruction: Design and Evaluation (pp. 104-118).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/transforming-instructional-design-ideas-into/25534

Universal Design for Learning and Accessibility: A Practitioner Approach
Thomas J. O'Shaughnessy (2021). *Handbook of Research on Applying Universal Design for Learning Across Disciplines: Concepts, Case Studies, and Practical Implementation (pp. 25-47).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/universal-design-for-learning-and-accessibility/278885

Client Development for Online Computer Labs
Lee Chao (2008). *Strategies and Technologies for Developing Online Computer Labs for Technology-Based Courses (pp. 183-211).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/client-development-online-computer-labs/29832

Online Faculty and Adjuncts: Strategies for Meeting Current and Future Demands of Online Education Through Online Human Touch Training and Support
Kristen Betts, Ronnie Kramerand Linda L. Gaines (2011). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design (pp. 20-38).*
www.irma-international.org/article/online-faculty-adjuncts/58660

Paradigm and Architecture of Computing Augmented Learning Management System for Computer Science Education
Ebenezer Anohah (2017). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design (pp. 60-70).*
www.irma-international.org/article/paradigm-and-architecture-of-computing-augmented-learning-management-system-for-computer-science-education/176614