



CAN A RAISE IN TEACHER SALARY INCREASE STANDARD TEST PARTICIPATION ?

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KEYWORDS :

OUR PROBLEM:

One of the major changes seen in our grade over the past five years is the participation in Standard Test. Since 9th grade, the number of children taking the standard test has reduced substantially, and it is only falling lower.

Due to lack of participation or sheer disinterest, children remain unmotivated to keep themselves physically fit. Since they refrain from testing their physical capabilities, they remain unaware of their own body and health, henceforth resulting in a weak and unfit youth.

We would like to compare this to a classroom situation. Take a class where majority of the children do not give exams or are aware that they could get away without doing so. Since these children are not being tested on their knowledge, they do not feel the need to revise any topics being taught in class, pay attention in class or even attend classes for that matter. In such a way, the class IQ level remains minimal and it stunts the children's growth altogether.

MAIN CAUSES:

In order to find a solution to any problem, we think it is key to first pin point as to what the root causes of the problem may be.

We broke down our study in such a manner that we were able to identify three main reasons why people don't participate in such activities.

1. A small percentage of children have already attained their peak of physical well being and regularly train their bodies in school as well as outside school. Due to this, many of them are way above the average level required to pass the standard test and do really well. In other words, you could say they're bored of such a test which does not challenge them in any way.
2. Another small proportion of children find themselves in the physically unfit bracket and hence remain incapable to attain the minimum requirement of the standard test. Such students refrain from giving the test because they're afraid of either embarrassment or failing.

In such a case, it becomes essential for the kids to take this test in order to transcend their own social and physical barriers.

3. The largest number of children who do not participate believe that they have nothing to gain nor lose from taking this test. For them it's a mere waste of time. They have no motivation to take this test, not because they're not physically fit, but because of their attitude/outlook towards such activities. Although some of them may be very capable of doing well in this test, they continue to feel indifferent about the same.

SOLUTIONS:

Difficult situations can be summarised in four words: "People respond to incentives." The rest is commentary.

On the basis of the aforementioned causes, we have tried to work out some solutions for our problem by incorporating the use of incentives. There are two kinds of incentives-negative and positive. We're going to be using both of these to present a possible solution to our problem.

First, let's talk about the positive one. When in school, the one thing

that everyone craves and desires most is probably good food. A hot, delicious slice of pizza with a huge glass of iced tea to go with it during school hours is something that every single student would probably kill for. And this desire is exactly what the school and the PE Department can use to its advantage, in order to provide an incentive for the children to participate in the standard test. All we need to do is equate "Standard Test Day" to "Treat Day." For all those kids who participate in the standard test, a special meal after the test should be arranged in the Vasant Manch exclusively for them. This meal should include the kind of food that appears in the children's' cravings i.e pizza and a huge glass of iced tea. Apart from this, the amount of time they get to enjoy this food (25 minutes-the usual lunch break) should be increased to around 40 minutes for that particular day. For all those children who believe they have nothing to lose nor gain from taking the standard test will now have something to lose/gain- delectable, mouth watering food and a longer break to enjoy with their friends.

Now, let's come to the negative incentive. One of the major reasons why students of classes 9-12 today make an effort in class, participate in competitions and actually try to do well in school is because they get something out of it - good grades and awards. These good grades and awards then stand out on their resumes and college essays, helping them get into their dream colleges. College admission is probably one of the most important aspects of student life in high school. The underlying motive behind every action is almost always college admission. This very fact can be used to make sure children participate in the standard test.

The penalty for not participating in the standard test should involve two aspects:

1. Very low P.E grades in the final CBSE Marksheet of Class XII
2. Special comments about how the student is unenthusiastic when it comes to participating in school activities in the college recommendation letter.

The power that the teachers have over students needs to be used to the students' detriment. Low P.E grades in the final mark sheet would result in a lower overall score, something that would reduce the chances of getting into a good college, specially for those applying in India. For those applying outside India, recommendation letters are an extremely crucial part of the application process and a bad recommendation can have a serious impact on the chances of admission. Armed with power, teachers can exert a gigantic, if unspoken, leverage: fear.

Incentivisation can be done using not only the students, but also the teachers. Each class has a P.E teacher assigned to it, one that is responsible for all P.E related issues of that particular grade. If this P.E teacher manages to increase standard test participation from the previous year by enforcing it on the kids (something that is not done currently), he/she should be rewarded with a raise for that month. This would provide an incentive for the teachers to come up with new, innovative ways to motivate kids to participate in the standard test.

CONCLUSION:

As said by many before, economics is, at root, the study of incentives. As students of economics, we believe a solution can be mapped out for every single problem, irrespective of the nature of the issue. This very belief is what we have used to map out a solution for our own, minuscule problem. All you need to do is design the proper incentive

scheme and even the largest of problems can seem pretty small.

REFERENCES:

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