

Sample Formal Essay

Introduction

It is unfair to measure success at Year 11 through a series of exams in each subject. Exam success measures only the knowledge and skills demonstrated in subject areas while ignoring pupil achievement in sporting and cultural pursuits or social development. The exam system places unnecessary stress on students without providing an adequate measure of learning or work undertaken throughout the year. More than anything, it measures a student's skill in sitting exams.

Body

The stress of trying to prove their worth in just three hours can put quite a strain on some students. Everyone has heard of at least one student who, despite their hard work and intellect, has become overcome by the stressful nature of the exam and failed to write anything. Teenagers are undergoing major mental development at this stage on their lives and any stress they feel can cause long lasting or even permanent damage. Often it is the students who are most able who try the hardest and put the most strain on themselves who suffer the most. This stress can manifest itself in other areas of students' lives and cause problems outside of school. However, exam stress does not affect all students equally. Some students can handle stress better despite not being as able. This means that exams do not have the intended effect of testing student knowledge but rather student's ability to handle stress.

Conclusion

So, as you can see measuring success at Year 11 by using exams is unfair. It ignores other student achievement outside of the classroom, places unnecessary strain on already fragile students and really only determines who is good at sitting exams. Alternatives such as coursework which test student knowledge throughout the year and methods to measure student achievement in non-academic areas must be introduced to provide a fair representation of student ability. Student success and failure at Year 11 has a major affect on the options available to students beyond school and the current system disadvantages those who might otherwise go on to make major contributions towards society.