

READING COMPREHENSION

PAID TO SUCCEED

It's not always easy for children from less well-off backgrounds to understand why they should study hard at school. A child from a middle-class background can see the benefits of a good education when they look at their parents' lives – a satisfying job, a nice house, an expensive car. But for a child from a poor background, the pay-off is not so obvious. For this reason, some sociologists have suggested rewarding children financially if they do well at school so that they can see an immediate return for their efforts. Professor Stephen Gorard of Durham University in the UK is one of these.

Professor Gorard recommends that schools set up a fund of approximately US 200 for each poor student. The school then sets targets for students' attendance, homework and reading time. Each time a student fails to achieve these targets, they lose a part of this money.

Gorard's conclusions are based on research carried out by various institutions in Australia, Britain and the US. The research also looked at whether offering money in return for passing exams was a good idea but concluded that it wasn't. One high school in Chicago offered first year students up to \$2,000 in exchange for good test results, but the incentive did not work: test results did not greatly improve. The reason for this, according to Professor Gorard, was that, although the children wanted the cash, they did not know the right steps to take to succeed in their exams.

In contrast, Gorard's own experiments showed that when schools rewarded students for attendance, good behaviour, reading and completing their homework, their reading and maths scores improved. In other words, results were improved by rewarding good study habits.

But others think that paying students is wrong. David Day, a UK school principal, said that the results did not justify the cost. He believes that praising students for good performance is a better way to motivate than by financial reward. He found that when teachers told students they were happy with their work, the students naturally became more self-motivated.

03. CHECK UNDERSTANDING

01 | Read the article again. Choose the correct option (a—c) to complete the sentences according to the article.

1. The idea that best summarizes Professor Stephen Gorard for motivating children is ...

- a. Pay students for getting good results in their exams.
- b. Pay students for attending school every day.
- c. Pay students for learning good study habits.

2. Middle-class children are more motivated to do well at school because ...

- a. their parents encourage them to work hard.
- b. they understand why a good education is important.
- c. their parents have the money to send them to good schools.

3. Professor Gorard's system works by..

- a. making students pay money if they do badly.
- b. getting richer students to give money to poorer students.
- c. giving money to students who come to school and work hard.

4. The Chicago example shows that...

- a. offering money to school children can be a good idea.
- b. offering money for good exam results can improve their marks.
- c. offering money for results doesn't make children better students.

5. David Day thinks that praising students is a better way than offering financial rewards because...

- a. it improves the student–teacher relationship.
- b. it helps students to become more motivated.
- c. it costs more, but it is also more effective.

02 | Find these words in the article. Then choose the correct meaning (a—c).

well-off

- rich
- poor
- negligent

pay-off

- gratification
- reward
- result

efforts

- hard work
- results
- scores

targets

- rewards
- decisions
- goals

scores

- results
- points

03 | Which sentences are TRUE according to the article?

- a. Students that come from underprivileged backgrounds find it harder to understand the importance of doing well at school.
- b. The rewards of making efforts are only visible in upper-class families.
- c. Professor Stephen Gorard is in favour of rewarding children financially when they do well at school.
- d. Gorard suggests that schools set money apart for poor students to pay for their lunch and other needs.
- e. Gorard's recommendation is that schools set targets for students to achieve, including attendance, homework and reading time.
- f. When a student doesn't achieve one of the targets, they lose all the fund.
- g. Offering students money for their exam results could be a great idea.
- h. Not everyone agrees that paying students is right.