

The child's freedom of expression act was ratified by the UK in 1991 however, this is not common knowledge due to a failure in expressing the significance of this act by many. Is this act overlooked when it comes to education?

Education is compulsory from the ages 5 to 18 and from this exceptionally young age, children are labelled in many different ways ranging from 'talented and gifted' to 'no hope'. Once placed in these groups, any individual strengths or skills a child may be developing are disregarded and said child is identified as the group they are labelled as and only that group, possibly for the rest of their education. A disadvantage of these groups, along with the characterisation of pupils, is that if a pupil is falling behind from their group it may not be picked up on causing the pupil to feel unmotivated and possibly lose all interest in what they are being taught. A similar situation could be created for a pupil working above their groups level. They may be disregarded as they have been classified as a less able student and therefore may not be able to develop to their full potential. All individuality and other skills are taken away from a child and they are instead 'fed' information and involuntarily made to think and act a certain way based upon their group. Even the simple matter of being put into groups can cause a child to feel as if they have lost their freedom to choose what they become.

Within the United Kingdom, school uniforms are obligatory and despite the fact they can have positive effects, many negatives can also be produced, for example, by requiring students to wear them everyday, they are stripped of having the freedom to do something as simple as choosing what they wear. Strict school uniform policies often place a ban on things such as the dyeing of hair or wearing of makeup and jewellery - some even require specific coats and bags to be worn. Surely this is taking away any slight prospect a child has at self expression and enforcing the idea that students are being metaphorically 'cloned'. As long as it is appropriate and within reason, a child's choice of style should have no effect on their education or their peers and can even help them feel more confident in themselves. In addition to this, simple things like painting their nails can allow a person to express themselves while having no damaging effect on themselves or anyone around them, so why is it prohibited?

State funded schools (non fee paying) are required to follow the national curriculum which is a set of subjects and standards used by primary and secondary school so children learn the same things. This once again imposed the idea that children are being duplicated into the 'ideal student'. All around the world, creative subjects are discouraged or seen as less important than the 'core subjects' such as English, maths and science. Many interests a child picks up are lost as they get older and further into their education due to the fact they are taught that many of these interests are not relevant to their education.

The national curriculum also enhances the idea that children are taught what they need to know in order to work an average job instead of allowing them to work towards a particular career which they may have in mind or reaching their full potential thus once again imposing the idea of student 'cloning' into education.

Homework is another aspect of the curriculum that if overloaded onto students, can make them feel as if any out of school interest they may have are irrelevant and that schoolwork should be their only focus. As a child becomes a teenager, the workload increases heavily,

as do the punishments for not completing it, and this age is commonly where children begin dropping out of after school activities. A clear correlation can be seen between this increase in homework and the lack of participation in activities a child may have once loved therefore homework is another factor in a child losing the freedom to something that they may feel lets them express themselves or even just something that they love.