

Failed exams leave 27 per cent of teens ‘ashamed,’ YouGov survey reveals



Teenagers who fail to get five top-grade GCSE passes are more likely to feel “ashamed” and believe they have no talent, according to a survey of 2,161 16- to 25-year-olds carried out by YouGov.

It showed that while 15 per cent of young people “always” or “often” felt ashamed, the figure rose to 27 per cent amongst those who failed to get five A* to C grades at GCSE.

Again, when asked if they believed they had no talent, 35 per cent of those without the exam passes said “yes” compared to 21 per cent overall.

The five A* to C grade measure has been used for ranking schools in league tables, which means teachers are under pressure to get as many pupils to achieve it as possible.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers said that “The important thing is we should recognise great artists, highly talented musicians and good sports people – rather than just academic success,” he added. “When you give children the chance to show off a different worth, it builds their confidence – and they can also shine academically as a result.

The consequences of failing to spot talent, the report argues, could lead to long-term unemployment, reliance on anti-depressants (unemployed young people are twice as likely to be reliant on them) and potentially suicide (one in three unemployed considers this).

Martina Milburn, chief executive of the Prince’s Trust – joint sponsors of the research –, said: “Unemployment is proven to cause devastating long-lasting mental health problems amongst young people. Thousands wake up every day believing life isn’t worth living after struggling for years in the dole queue.”

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