The writer of the issue states that competing for good grades has a negative impact on the education of students, no matter what stage they are in. Some people believe that it’s beneficial for students to engage in rivalry for getting a better grade than other students. However, many feel that such traditional educational techniques will lower the quality of learning. As far as I’m concerned, although a competitive environment has some advantages, and helps a few students flourish, the disadvantages of such a system outweigh the benefits, reducing most students’ performance overall, especially the younger ones.

First of all, pushing students to get better grades than their classmates and comparing them to each other makes them get distracted from the main objectives of education which is learning. If an educational system focuses on students’ grades, they will be encouraged to do anything to have a good score, even if it’s not morally right. This is particularly problematic for elementary school students as they are not old enough to understand the value of gaining knowledge, so they will get accustomed to using any means for winning the competitions. For instance, some students might find cheating appealing as they can get a high grade with no effort in this way, and still be appreciated for their grades. These young students grow into the habit of cheating and will not focus on improving themselves. Consequently, they will graduate with limited knowledge and with the idea that they should progress in their careers by cheating as well. Had they found learning and improving rewarding instead of winning in contests, they would have graduated as more skilful and honest students.

Furthermore, not all students can win in contests, making them feel self-conscious and discouraged to study. There is always a losing side and a winning side in competitions. While students who get higher grades feel self-confident because of their success and become motivated to stay on top, students with lower scores usually think that they are not good enough to win in these competitions. Accordingly, these “loser” students will get disappointed and will not try to improve themselves, although they may have great potentials that are not discoverable in competitions. For example, some students don’t get good scores on exams because they don’t have a great memory to remember what was taught in school, but they might be creative individuals who can come up with great new ideas. Since these ideas usually don’t get any credits on exams, these creative students start to look down on themselves because they have lost the competition, and they don’t express their ideas anymore.

However, rivalries can be beneficial in certain conditions. It is normal for students to judge themselves against others to understand about their own performance. While these comparisons affect younger students negatively, as they might take it personally, older students think more clearly and can take advantage of a competition to be the best they can. With this in mind, only if teachers and professors support all students whether they get a good score or not, and make sure that students are in a healthy competition, rivalries can be helpful in higher levels of education such as college, but it’s not advisable to base the educational system on competition in general and make children go through such situations.

In sum, I believe competition for grades will decrease the quality of learning, especially for lower stages of education because students may get the idea that they should always win at all cost. Moreover, students who lose in these competitions may get unmotivated to improve themselves. Nevertheless, competition has some undeniable benefits and helps students constantly work to get better, but it is only possible in a supportive condition and for more mature students.