

Competitive World Needs Competitive Students: Keep Class Ranking

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In 2006, non-fiction author, Erik Larson released *Thunderstruck*, a parallel account of the notorious murderer, Hawley Crippen and the Italian inventor Guglielmo Marconi. Though Crippen and Marconi never met in real life, Larson shows how the lives of both men are inextricably linked through innovation and unstoppable progress. As Crippen flees the island of his crime, he is trapped on the high seas by Marconi's invention—the wireless telegraph. The story of Marconi's invention delineates the doggedness of the entrepreneur as well as the ruthlessness of the competition (Larson, 2006). He also demonstrates what Friedman (2005) earlier coined as the “flattening of the world” (p. 5). Global competition and developments in technology are turning the world from a globe to a village. Though Crippen's grand plan, escape authorities by traversing the Atlantic Ocean, might have been an adequate or even ingenious plan two years earlier, Marconi's new invention rendered Crippen's strategy obsolete. Technology caught the criminal. Geography, the once reliable ally was no match for the technological advances of that era. Today, the world continues to shrink. No longer does the United States maintain a geographical advantage. No longer does living in America deliver an edge to those in competition for jobs and college openings. American workers, and by extension, American students now compete with individuals from all over the world for jobs at the best companies and for slots at the best universities. Competition rules the world. If American students want to succeed at the university and in the workplace, then they need to compete in a vigorous and thoughtful manner. It is therefore incumbent upon public schools to not only instill a sense of what competition is and what it means, but also to reward those students who consistently strive to be the best. Because competition to gain entry into the best colleges and to obtain the best jobs has increased drastically over the last decade, a class ranking system that rewards hard work and competition is crucial to our students' long-term success and should be maintained as is.