

## 1 Purpose

The purpose of this puzzle is to explain to other students in Honors 394 about a potential topic for the final group project, and more specifically to convince them that this project is a good idea.

## 2 Context

The context is a class (Honors 394) at UW about pedagogy.

## 3 Materials needed

Either some sort of tablet or laptop (to show visuals/examples on the internet), or some sort of drawing device (whiteboard, paper).

## 4 Method

The first important question to ask (not just about education generally, but also specifically for this project) is: how can we make a project that will have lasting value for the world? Given that most school projects don't make it to the public, the only lasting value of a project is usually what the students learn from it (which is somewhat questionable, since memory decays), or, more cynically, what the students signal from having completed the project (e.g. their conscientiousness, their competence—either from the project itself or through a grade assigned to the project/course). So it seems like a good idea to “squeeze” more value out of any project by retroactively making it available publicly, or, even better, by choosing a format and topic deliberately to benefit the public more (and things like freer licensing also help).

A reasonable choice for a topic is unschooling, since it seems extremely underexplored, and since getting more students out of toxic school environments seems like a good idea. So the essential question is: to what extent is unschooling a good idea? This can be split into e.g. “When does unschooling go well/poorly?”, “What are the pros/cons of unschooling?”, and “How generally applicable is unschooling?”

The final product could be gathered onto a wiki, or published elsewhere on the internet. Some requirements, like the “personal reflection”, are probably not widely applicable, so these may have to be edited out in the public form.

The “lesson” itself will be an explanation and discussion, with lots of examples of similar projects and methods of content creation (like Quora, StackExchange, Subwiki, Open Borders [see the FAQ], Wikipedia, and so on).

## 5 Results

The general feedback was positive, and that the format and idea of the project are interesting. The only negative feedback I received were: (1) regarding my “lesson”, I received the feedback that I didn’t provide sufficient background information; (2) I used phrases like people being “ruined” by traditional schooling, and identifying people who are “high potential”, etc., which were vague and which I didn’t get to define very well (mostly due to time limitations). I also received feedback on some specific things to look into, like the ORCA program, which pull students out to give them an alternative education. In general, I felt like I perhaps talked too much, but since I had to present my topic I think this was justified. I asked for thoughts after an initial overview, which helped in soliciting feedback during the discussion.