

# The Novikov Experiment

About a year ago, educator and start-up engineer Lev Novikov bought a dozen copies of *The Case Against Education* and let them circulate around his school. Last week, he let me know what happened. Reprinted with Lev's permission.

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Just wanted to give you an update on what happened with a dozen copies of Case Against Education in one high school. I ended up buying every format of the book and had my staff read it and listen to it as well.

The short version is that there was a lot of interest in reading the book, but very little interest in discussing it. Several teachers "caught" students reading the books and asked to borrow them. I personally know 3 teachers who have borrowed the books, but only one actually came back to chat about it. Interestingly, the books have found their ways into the hands of principals and other faculty and I'm just going to let them roam about.

The students were extremely reluctant to discuss the book, especially in a group. I ended up having about a dozen 1-on-1 conversations with students most of which followed one of these (predictable) arcs:

- "I always knew school was wasting my time! Is this why you're trying to teach us to program and build stuff?"
- "I can't argue with his points, but I think he's wrong."

A few kids seemed genuinely despondent. They preferred complaining about how school is a waste much more than getting the full Bryan Caplan treatment about why it actually is. Nonetheless, even those students considered the last parts of the book a useful recapitulations of your point. For some, that was the first time they really understood your main thesis.

Anyhow, fun experience on my end. Sorry I couldn't gather more useful data. Perhaps another time.