

EDUCATION

by Neil Farrelly

The word 'School' originally comes from the Greek language meaning 'leisure time, a spiritual experience.' Times have changed, and these days, most governments regard education as something compulsory that is open to all students. Schools are still places of learning but the focus is very much on passing tests and examinations that allow people to either get a good job or study further at a higher level. Hence, diplomas, degrees, MBA's and PhD's are becoming ever more popular; the piece of paper at the end of studying has never been more important.



The world of education itself is changing too.

The 'emerging countries,' such as China, India, and Brazil now have a thirst for knowledge allowing their populations to compete and overtake many of the western nations in qualifications. At the same time, education is lifting millions of people out of poverty for the very first time.

These countries have a drive to educate their expanding populations and do better in the world. On the other hand many richer countries tend to cut their education budget in times of recession.

Education, though, remains a problem for many repressive governments such as China, Iran and North Korea. If they educate their students and give them the tools to better themselves, these same people could begin to question their governments and demand some kind of change.

Furthermore, the Internet and other forms of 'new media' are also beginning to change the way students study and how populations get their information.

Finally, a question.

Is education simply to give people a chance to study something and obtain a qualification or is it something more important?

Comprehension Questions

1. Why do people want to take exams and pass tests?
2. What is happening to education in countries like Brazil and India?
3. What do richer countries do during recession
4. Why is education a threat to repressive states?
5. What other changes are there to the way people study?

Discussion Questions

1. The cost of higher education in most countries is very expensive. Is it worth it? Why / why not?
2. Higher education after a degree (MA, MBA's, PhD) is only necessary if you want to be an academic or an expert in a certain field. Beyond that, they are useless. Do you agree? Why?
3. Education should not be compulsory. People should only go to school if they want to. Do you agree?