

Education for All
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1. Why are the majority of children on earth still not educated? What are the major impediments to global, universal education?

If the term education in this questions means modern, classroom learning, then the majority of children are not educated because they live in third world countries where schools have not yet been built or teachers have not been trained in colleges to teach the children. Also, if we use the word education as described in the two articles we read as a curriculum designed by policymakers who believe that progress is necessary to the “underdeveloped” countries, then the underdeveloped children are lacking a modern learning, classroom experience. However, I agree with Illich and Holt and the others in that classroom learning is not education, but rather learning through living is the way to teach our children. They must live in an interactive environment outside the walls of the classroom (except for special things like computers and videos about something they can’t visit), learning by doing, learning from their elders, and using technology only when it advances their experiential learning. Therefore, children in developing countries might be seen as “more educated” than those in the developed countries because if they were left in the woods to survive, they would have learned survival skills from their elders and be “educated” in learning by doing and living. The major impediments to universal, global education is the resistance of the uneducated to follow the Western model of walls, windows, doors, otherwise known as “cages.” There seems to be a grassroots movement spearheaded by the philosophies of Illich, Berry, Holt, Hoffman, et. al. to resist the hidden agenda of the curriculum, which throws out all non-classroom learning as irrelevant, when actually it is more relevant to living in the real world.

2. Why would Orr and Berry not want all the people on earth to be educated nationally and internationally, enlarging our system of education? What educational aims and means would they propose as alternatives to the dominant model of education?

Orr sees that in the classroom ecology is missing, except perhaps as a separate class, much like a person who claims to be religious goes to church once each week and thinks that's enough. I am sure that Orr would want to take students out of the traditional classroom and expose them to the real world, which would include visiting toxic waste dumps, land that has become barren by deforestation, erosion because of trees cut down by lumber companies, animals slaughtered inhumanely, factories that spew black smoke, etc. These would be his classroom and the students would learn first hand what kind of world our government is promoting in the name of progress and technology.

Berry would bring the people to his farm, and have them plant seeds, weed the garden, harvest and eat the foods of their labor in comida. In between he might have them read about certain aspects of farming as a part of the learning experience, but the emphasis would be on the "doing" of farming, not the reading about farming. He might also take the students to see farms that are sprayed with pesticides and how the surrounding water is polluted and ask them to come up with solutions.

In both cases, the world would be the "classroom," and the environment would be the "teacher." They would merely be the facilitators or guides to show the students that our world is becoming increasingly uninhabitable because of corporate interests and the emphasis on passive learning from books, instead of active learning in the real world.

3. Examine Ivan Illich and John Holt's counter arguments for Education for All global program. Why would they consider any universal/global program to be an immoral mandate?

Both Illich and Holt were against formal education of any kind that resembled the typical classroom with its hidden curriculum. Instead they celebrate diversity among peoples, which means that there cannot be a global educational program, but rather a pluriversal/local program that would address the needs of the common. I think they would consider the universal/global program as immoral because it would go against the basic human nature of the culturally diverse people still living in far off places without having been exposed to or oppressed

by “modern education”, taught by teachers who reiterate the rhetoric they were taught as children in the name of progress.

One of Illich’s quotes demonstrates this counterargument : “The deschooling of our world-view demands that we recognize the legitimate and religious nature of the educational enterprise itself. Its hubris lies in its attempt to make man a social being as a result of his treatment in engineered process.” (p. 81 *In Lieu of Education.*)

Holt’s quote shows his morality issue clearly: “Education---compulsory schooling, compulsory learning---is a tyranny and a crime against the human mind and spirit.” (p. 99 *Escaping Education*)

4. What types of damage and destruction has education imposed of the peoples of Mexico [and other so-called Third World countries]? How and Why? In which ways are they teaching and learning to resist the damage?

By packaging education in the Western model and promoting it to the so-called “underdeveloped countries”, we have imposed feelings of guilt on these people, because they are measuring their worth by our standards. Using Holt’s concept of the educational process that he wants to dismantle, “ learning is an activity which is separate from the rest of life and done best of all when we are not doing anything else, and best of all in places where nothing else is done.” (p. 98, *Escaping Education*) Therefore, in these so-called underdeveloped countries, unless the children are in school doing nothing else but listening to the teacher, they are considered uneducated. Thus, those not in school may suffer from lower self-esteem, triggered only by the advance of knowledge only through formal schooling. The example of people in southern Mexico speaking a multitude of languages and dialects is a perfect example of “uneducated” peoples communicating at many levels. How many “educated” Americans can speak more than one or two languages?

Those of us, who embrace the teachings of Gandhi, Illich, Berry, Holt, etc., are part of the grassroots movement that will transform the educational system from its “canned knowledge” to learning by doing, as so many third world countries

still do. I do not necessarily agree with Illich and Holt that all education should be thrown out, but rather some middle ground in which the home is the basis for learning skills for life and some formal education designed by the local community might be used to promote what grassroots educational concepts can be developed in each country, meeting the needs of the local people.