



Things That Can Be, and Tend to Be, True (1980s)

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Re: Formal Education – “Good News”

- Springboard for life-long learning.
- Provides common pool of knowledge.
- Trial with error.
- Development of theory.
- Visible, identifiable entry.
- Certification of achievement.
- Socially legitimate.
- Group identity.
- Highly organized/structured.
- Comfortable and convenient.
- Concentrated time, termination point.
- Provides context for enhancement of thinking.
- Efficient, especially in numbers of people served.
- Greater amount of content covered.
- Builds discipline, habits of learning.
- Preparation for highly complex tasks, facilitated.
- Allows for integration of various disciplines.
- Stabilizing force for society.
- Public funding, provides resources.
- Perpetuates/reinforces culture.
- Maintains order.
- Control of specific outcomes—testable.
- Quality control of staff, programs, and students.

Re: Formal Education – “Bad News”

- Guardianship of the certification process tends to de-motivate learning; perpetuates the idea that certification equals competency.
- Certification stimulates and rewards only the formal system learning objectives.
- Can lead to an “education society” which is a poor and limited substitute for a “learning society”.
- Lends itself to dysfunctional governmental management of learning.
- Once the student is inside the school, all behavior is determined. One goes where one is told to go.
- Teachers are almost as externally controlled as the student with respect to materials, time allotment, and procedures.
- Maintains the status quo through bureaucratic organizational structure and systems.
- External control is the chief reason for the limitation of learning outcomes.

- Has an extreme focus on preparation to solve future problems instead of present problems.
- Teacher-oriented, rather than student-oriented.
- Dominates the student through control of curriculum design, place and time, hierarchical order, textbooks, and so on.
- Curriculum done to learner, rather than designed with his or her help.
- Teachers “know” the answers and students do not; this represses student engagement.
- Can perpetuate incompetence at teacher level by assuming that certification procedures need not be questioned.
- Tends to frustrate good teachers, so they leave; untrained or partly trained teachers take the place of trained teachers.
- Administrative expenses, bureaucracy, institutions, facilities, and teachers are very costly.
- Confuses education (teaching) with learning.
- Creates tension between instructional or custodial or “babysitting” functions.
- Propagates the idea that learning only happens in school.
- Can standardize how we learn by assembly-line process; differences in how we learn and what we learn are often overlooked.
- Can alienate students who don’t have the social support to take advantage of its strengths.
- May cause people to feel marginalized; the rich stay rich, the poor stay poor.
- Tends to de-emphasize experiential (holistic) learning.
- Aims at producing skillful elite through the absence of participatory methodology.
- Target population is identified, rather than being self-selected. Target population based on false proposition that only children are capable of significant learning.
- Solutions for solving problems are pre-devised and “laid upon” the target group.
- Fixed locations, specialized buildings must be built.
- Teachers are trained in and by formal education, with no alternatives available to them.
- Reinforces the ladder effect: the higher you get, the better you are; progress up the ladder is the goal, rather than learning.
- Can be limited to standardized grading system based on testing.
- Education done in groups with no individual attention; learning, however, is solely individual in character.
- Heavy dependency on reading, hearing, and seeing. (10% - 50% effective, while “say and do” are 70% - 90% effective.)
- Assumes mastery of reading and writing.
- Traditional relationship between the student, the book, and the teacher is maintained.
- Students are to learn the material without questioning or changing the material itself.
- Supports the belief that teaching and learning are inseparable.
- Rich communities maintain rich schools, not the reverse.
- Imposing these same limits on the basis for employment and promotion within society, as a whole, can only curtail that society’s diversity and resilience.

Re: Non-Formal Education – “Good News”

- Encourages holistic learning.

- Fosters interdependence or independence, rather than dependence.
- Liberates, rather than domesticates.
- Encourages individuality in learning: learner is subject, rather than object.
- Humanizes: accepts the value and contribution of each person.
- Leads to maturity because learner takes responsibility for learning and behavior.
- Motivation internal to learner.
- Encourages learner uniqueness, creativity, and imagination.
- Sees learning as a life-long process.
- Experiential.
- Learner a participant in determining direction and means of learning.
- Promotes dialog.
- Encourages reflection.
- Integrated with real life.
- Flexible regarding time, space, participants and learning materials.
- More oriented toward developing critical thinking.
- Active learning.
- Not locked into a hierarchical progression.
- More adaptable and diversified than formal education.
- “Teacher/learner” roles interchangeable.
- Based on good relationships, which foster co-operative learning in community.
- Personal; responsive to learner needs.
- More relaxed regarding structure and expectations.
- Requires fewer funds and structures dedicated to learning.
- Universally applicable; cross-cultural.
- Conducive to specialization.
- The teacher is a servant, rather than authority.
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Re: Non-Formal Education – “Bad News”

- May omit some areas of knowledge.
- Tendency to be too pragmatic.
- Tendency to learn what is comfortable and to avoid what is difficult.
- Low in broadening the individual and in disciplining the mind.
- Problem of isolation, duplication, and a lack of universal perspective.
- Source of teachers is limited, especially at the beginning.
- Demands an alternative paradigm from which to operate in order to be effective.
- Low status in Western and/or “developed” countries.
- Assumes that there are learners who want to learn.
- Can be relativistic and diffused.