

THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

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We will consider the progress of educational systems throughout the world for the last 3000 years starting with Plato's Academy and moving on to the present. While observing the progression from elementary education to universities and graduate programs, we see that a new phenomenon has developed during the last 20 years. This phenomenon is a new kind of school - the International School or University.

In the past, systems of education were strictly associated with the national, religious, social and political institutions of a particular country. Therefore, in most cases a school or university served as a political, social and religious tool of a region, irrespective of whether the region was a province, country or continent.

In the early 1960s, some American universities began operating campuses and teaching facilities mainly for United States citizens residing in European or Asian countries. These universities discovered that Europeans were also attracted to their system of education. Gradually certain American schools began offering a different system of higher education. Professors and students from different countries came together to create this new system of International Education.

International Education represents an educational system of one country introduced to another, irrespective of differences or common factors between them. This new educational system began with an emphasis on high technology and moved on to include subjects such as Business Administration and later the Liberal Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities. We have seen great progress; over 20 American universities have their own campuses in Europe. The same phenomenon is taking place in Japan and in the future will appear in China and other Asian countries.

American institutions are proud to be represented by students from more than 60 countries. What has happened is that either students of one culture or nationality travel to another country, or a university of a particular culture moves to another country. This presents something new. A new dimension of schooling and higher education for the next millennium. We must always keep in mind the important role of education.

Athens went through one of the most glorious periods in the history of the human race, the Golden Age. Optimal financial conditions paired with a good educational system, considering the standards of the time, allowed for the development of this Golden Age. Therefore, if we take for granted that we want to solve the problems of material resources, pollution and peace, it is evident that the role of education will be dramatic in the next millennium. This education will have the dimension of international education, which is the only way for progression and hope.

Today, it is easy to have American universities operating in China, Greece and Russia, as well as the other way round. We will first examine the technical problems, and then try to see how international education can help the objective viewing of negative side-effects. By standardizing technology and achieving an actual methodology of teaching, we can help the learning process, and aid faster learning through less effort.

Most countries have an 8 or 9 year compulsory education programme. A recent phenomenon in the "New World" shows that adults are continuing their education for either personal or professional reasons. Therefore, adult education is also considered another aspect of international education. A standard education or an adult one, can be optimized with the help of technological packages, computers and standardized packages meant for use. Better educated people translates into a better understanding of each other, an understanding of concepts and, therefore, a subsequent improvement of countries, provinces, nations and continents. A free man with a free will, can, therefore, think and decide.

The first impact of international education entails the increase of education levels the world over, thereby improving the conditions of each citizen. Free citizens with a better understanding of problems are closer to the solutions of their problems.

The second impact opens the borders of socio-economic and financial understanding. For example, most of today's young people dress alike, speak English, etc.. Europe has 320 million individuals trying to lead a Federal Republic called the "European Community".

International education may be criticized for being taught in a language other than the student's native one, and promoting a culture other than their own. Some may criticize heritage and tradition for being "homogenized", creating a world culture with no characteristics. However,

people may possess both their own native culture and their newly-acquired 'world' culture. This is a matter of delicate balance and priority. Of course, we have seen many people who now live in the United States and have lost their native language as well as some of their religious characteristics. Possibly this may be viewed as a focus of what may take place in the international educational system. However, individuals genuinely worried about national culture can promote their own culture by maintaining a better environment of understanding and promotion, thereby keeping their traditions alive.

Technological progress is not fostered in a region isolated from the rest of the world. Therefore, international education creates a world citizen who enjoys the knowledge from the area he likes, is able to exchange points of view, and understands citizens around the globe.

New technologies try to talk about computer-based structure, computer- aided structure and interactive education systems. This indicates combining video-cassettes with a world network of educational programs by using effective communication means, thereby minimizing distances and increasing understanding between people. For example, certain universities in Massachussetts broadcast a computer program after which, professors take telephone calls. Also, these universities are producing video-cassettes that are sent to other regions.

In the last 15 years, using computers to assist or substitute teaching has been fairly successful. This is the primary stage of an automated educational method where the teacher plays the role of coordinator, spending more time on the human element, while knowledge is processed through machines. In this way, a teacher may achieve and offer more to the students. This technology should be used internationally since the artificial intelligence of machines optimizes the efficiency of teaching scholars.

Over the next millennium, sciences will be represented by international education, because sciences have no nationality. Physics, chemistry, biology and fluid mechanics are represented by equations. Humanities and Social Sciences will be represented because communication through international languages serves as a very effective means.

Generally speaking, international education can promote and make feasible a high quality education for all people. Moreover, international education will help the understanding of world problems. In the next millennium, because of international education, we will have more educated people with more understanding and, therefore, a better living environment.

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