

# All

## SEMINAR 3 Education

**Task 1** – Read the quotes concerning education and choose one that you find interesting. Discuss your views with a partner and then discuss with the rest of the class.

**1** If you are planning for a year, sow<sup>1</sup> rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people. – *Chinese proverb*

**2** I am indebted<sup>2</sup> to my father for living, but to my teacher for living well. – *Alexander of Macedon, Great king living from 356 – 323 B.C.*

**3** An education isn't how much you have committed<sup>3</sup> to memory, or even how much you know; it's being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don't. – *Anatole France, French 19th and 20th century writer*

**4** I respect faith, but doubt<sup>4</sup> is what gets you an education. – *Wilson Mizner, American dramatist, 1876 -1933*

**5** Education is not to reform students or amuse them or to make them expert technicians. It is to unsettle their minds, widen their horizons, inflame their intellects, and teach them to think straight. – *Robert M. Hutchins, 20th century American educator*

**Task 2** – Look at the terms relating to **education**. Choose one or two that you find closest (or farthest) from your understanding of the word and explain why (using the expressions of opinion below).

schooling      instruction      training      culture      learning  
information      discipline      wisdom      knowledge      development  
guidance      brainwashing<sup>5</sup>      cultivation

I think / feel that.....

I would say that .....

I would imagine that...

Personally, I believe that....

It seems to me .....

If you want my opinion, I ...

In my view / opinion .....

If you ask me, it .....

My opinion is that ....

My feeling is that .....

**Task 3** – Read the approaches<sup>6</sup> concerning the idea of “**Educated vs. Uneducated**” and match them to the texts below.

The contrast between Educated vs. Uneducated is often used to suggest a continuum (*more educated > less educated*), and there are three broad **approaches** to their use:

1. the terms are self-evidently useful and neutral; they do not offend the self-esteem<sup>7</sup> of the people discussed or the reputation of those who use them.
2. the terms can be helpful but should be used with care, because they are social and scientific judgements.
3. the terms are best avoided, because they risk oversimplifying or distorting<sup>8</sup> complex issues and relationships; they may in effect be euphemisms for distinction of social class, appearing in some contexts to be stereotypical and patronizing<sup>9</sup>.

*Adapted from (ed.) Tom McArthur, The Oxford Companion to the English Language, Oxford University Press, 1992, p.338.*

**Texts:**

A “You uneducated people! You have allowed patriotism to be defined as waving a flag! ... You apparently don’t know much about democracy! Your fake American patriotism has turned America into a dictatorship! What a surprise! It’s not like this hasn’t happened in history before, where a corrupt government exploits the public’s ignorance and turns a relative democracy into an autocracy.”

*American citizen reacting to the U.S. plans to invade Iraq, February 2003. [Http://www.sooch.com](http://www.sooch.com)*

B The quality of raising<sup>10</sup> children in Brazil has a lot to do with their family life. Children that are raised in a family with uneducated parents tend to have a problematic childhood. A child’s survival is closely associated with the mother’s education (Lam and Daryea, 1999). Not only do uneducated parents affect their children, but they also affect Brazil’s fertility (Lam and Daryea, 1999). Uneducated families form the majority of those in poverty in Brazil.

*Adapted from [Http://www.tulane.edu](http://www.tulane.edu)*

C “Uneducated Workforce Threatens<sup>11</sup> Growth”  
Ireland’s future economic growth is threatened by inflexible and inadequate educational opportunities for adults, a new report warns. Actions for a Learning Society states that education levels among our workforce are inadequate for future economic growth. Adult literacy<sup>12</sup> is the biggest challenge<sup>13</sup> to be overcome<sup>14</sup> and is a barrier to industrial development in this country. The latest figures show that over half of the workers in this country are functionally illiterate<sup>12</sup> – meaning they cannot even follow the instructions on an aspirin box.

*Adapted from The Irish Examiner, May, 31, 2001*

**Task 4** – Read the text and do the exercises that follow.

## Poverty as a Problem in the Brazilian Educational System

Due to the large number of impoverished<sup>15</sup> children on the streets, Brazilian children have very little contact if any with school and education (Dimenstein, 1991). Illiteracy is a growing problem amongst Brazilian children (Jubilee, 1998). Statistics show that 76% of the children do not attend school, which leads to the cause of one million illiterate children between the ages of fifteen to nineteen in Brazil. Children who can read and write have a better chance of succeeding and getting off the streets.

The first solution to end child labor and to get Brazilian children off the streets is education (Diderich, 1999; Jubilee, 1998). The International Labor Office says that 16.1% of children ten to fourteen years old are working (Jubilee, 1998). This percentage represents the fact that 3.5 million children are working when they

should be in school. However, children are on the streets because they are forced to work and help provide for their families.

Illiteracy is not only a problem for children in Brazil but for many adults as well. This makes it difficult to teach children to read without the help of the government (Lam & Daryea, 1999). To combat<sup>16</sup> this problem, President Cardoso began a program to get children back in school. For each child a parent sends back to school, the government will give the family twenty-five reals (\$22.30 US) a month. This will hopefully eliminate the large number of children working on the streets. It will also give children the opportunity for a better future.

<http://homeport.tcs.tulane.edu>

**a) According to the article, decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).**

- 1) The text deals with the problem of education in South American countries. T/F
- 2) The number of children who cannot read and write is increasing. T/F
- 3) More than three million children work after classes in Brazil. T/F
- 4) Parents often do not support their children to go to school because they themselves have no education. T/F
- 5) Each child attending school will get money from the government to save for their future. T/F

**b) What is the reference from the text to the following numbers?**

- |        |                    |         |
|--------|--------------------|---------|
| 1) 25  | 3) 14              | 5) 1999 |
| 2) 76% | 4) 1 <sup>st</sup> | 6) 3.5  |

**c) Comprehension questions:**

- 1) What kinds of families do not send their children to school?
- 2) What is the primary meaning of education in the text?
- 3) In this text, what age categories does the term “children” refer to?
- 4) Why don't families send their children to school?
- 5) What is the government policy concerning education?

**d) Discussion questions:**

- 1) How does the situation in Brazil compare to that of the Czech Republic?
- 2) At what age should a child be allowed to work? At what age and what was your first job?
- 3) What do you think of home schooling?
- 4) Do you think that primary schooling should be geography-based?
- 5) How is the term “public school” meant in the U.K. versus that of the U.S.?
- 6) How should education be financed (private vs. state, rich vs. poor families, national vs. regional)?

## **Task 5**

### **Pre-reading questions**

1. How are public schools funded in your country? Who controls public education?
2. What is your perception<sup>17</sup> of public elementary and secondary education in the United States?

### **Pre-reading vocabulary**

**inner-city** – belonging to the older, usually poorer, central area of a city; many inner-city neighborhoods are inhabited mostly by minority groups.

**The Pledge of Allegiance** – a spoken oath of loyalty to the United States and its flag:

*“I pledge allegiance to the flag  
Of the United States of America  
And to the Republic for which it stands,  
One nation, under God, indivisible,  
With liberty and justice for all.”*

## Do the Poor Deserve Bad Schools?

Of course not. Equal opportunity is what America is all about. That is why there is growing criticism of the shameful disparities<sup>18</sup> in funding.

1 Before starting their morning lessons, children in public schools across the U.S. recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The familiar words echo<sup>19</sup> in perfectly clean suburban buildings with bright classrooms and labs where children study art and languages, learn on the latest computers, and play sports in well-equipped gyms. They also ring out in overcrowded inner-city schools where sewage<sup>20</sup> backs up in the washroom and where students share used textbooks and practice typing on handmade, fake<sup>21</sup> keyboards. Whatever the setting, the pledge ends the same: "...with liberty and justice for all."

2 The notion<sup>22</sup> of equal opportunity is central to the American ideal. To have any meaning, it must be rooted in an educational system that gives every child a chance to succeed. But for decades, the gap<sup>23</sup> has been widening between the quality of public schooling for children of privilege and that for those born into poverty. By relying on local property taxes as a crucial source<sup>24</sup> of funds, the U.S. has created a caste system of public education that is increasingly separate and unequal.

3 However, since the 1970s, 10 states have decided – or have been forced by courts – to overhaul<sup>25</sup> their methods of funding some of their school districts. "It is a conflict between equity<sup>26</sup> and excellence," says Tony Rollins, director of a teachers union active in the funding wars. These forces have now been joined by a powerful voice: education critic Jonathan Kozol, who has written *Savage Inequalities*, a searing exposé<sup>27</sup> of the extremes of wealth and poverty in America's school system.

4 Kozol observes that inner city schools are depressing places with rotting classrooms and few amenities<sup>28</sup> to inspire or motivate the young. One history teacher notes that he has 110 students in four classes, and only 26 books. "Every year," says another, "there's one more toilet that doesn't flush, one more drinking fountain that doesn't work, one more classroom without texts." Kozol compares these images with descriptions of luxurious facilities in nearby wealthy

suburbs where one school has seven gyms, rooms for fencing, wrestling and dance, and an Olympic-size pool.

5 For Kozol and many activists, the main problem of the education tragedy is "local control," America's decentralized system of school administration and its heavy reliance<sup>29</sup> on property taxation<sup>30</sup>. In most cases, about 6% of the money in any district comes from Washington, 47% from the state government, and 47% from locally generated property taxes. Kozol believes that the best way to improve schools – all schools – would be to do away with<sup>31</sup> property tax as a source of revenue<sup>32</sup>. In its place he suggests a progressive income tax to raise money that would then be distributed fairly among districts. For reformers, the chief ally<sup>33</sup> has been state courts, which have ruled in many cases that the inequalities<sup>34</sup> are unconstitutional<sup>35</sup>.

6 The reform movement is already producing some results. Under a plan in Kentucky, almost every school district now has at least \$3,200 (up from \$1700) to spend per student; decreasing the gap<sup>23</sup> between rich and poor districts. Children from low-income families now have new preschool programs, and there is a wide range of Saturday and after-school projects for students with special needs.

7 It is easy to condemn<sup>36</sup> those self-protective actions as selfishness, but as Kozol points out, in most cases, better-off Americans simply have a narrower view of what they are doing. "They do not want poor children to be harmed," he writes. "They simply want the best for their own children." Those thoughts are echoed by superintendent Timothy Brennan, whose district spends \$7,450 per pupil, vs. \$3,068 in the state's poorest area: "The point of reform was to make all schools quality schools, but I fear that everything will settle into "mediocrity<sup>37</sup>".

8 Yet anyone who has seen the shameful disparities<sup>18</sup> between public schools in rich and poor areas, or who has read Kozol's book, will find it difficult to deny<sup>38</sup> that the differences in funding make a mockery<sup>39</sup> of the nation's ideal. – by *Emily Mitchell*

### Comprehension Questions

1. What kinds of facilities do many schools in wealthy areas have?
2. What is the condition of many schools in poor areas?
3. According to Kozol, what is the cause of these differences in schools?
4. What three sources of funding do U.S. school districts have?
5. What do educational reformers want to change?

## Discussion and Analysis

1. Were you surprised to learn about the inequalities of education in the United States? Why or why not?
2. Do you think the reform movement will be successful? Explain your answer.
3. The writer uses many statistics in the article. Find some examples. Do you think they are effective?

Adapted from: Schinke-Llano, Linda (ed.), TIME - Reaching for Tomorrow, Authentic Readings for Language Development, National Textbook Company, 1994, pp. 33-36.

## Group Activity

In groups of four or five, discuss what facilities and courses you think the ideal elementary or secondary school should have. Do you know of any such schools? Describe your ideal school to the class.

## Listening – Factors Affecting School Performance

*Before listening to this interview with an American elementary school principal, read the following statements and predict what kind of information you will need to complete them; then listen and complete.*

1. Dennis has observed that in general, if parents have money and think that education is important, their children \_\_\_\_\_ in school.
2. He taught at a school where the students came from very \_\_\_\_\_ backgrounds.
3. He believes that having a computer at home \_\_\_\_\_.
4. According to Dennis, not all low-income children do \_\_\_\_\_ in school, and not all wealthy children \_\_\_\_\_.

## Listening Gap-fill

Interviewer: (I), Dennis: (D)

I: Dennis, let me ask you a different question and that is, do you think that a child's economic and maybe social background makes a difference in school performance?

D: Yeah, you know, there is a pattern<sup>40</sup>. The (1)\_\_\_\_\_ school where I had most of my teaching experience and where I eventually became (2)\_\_\_\_\_, was an interesting one, because it sat between two very different parts of this community. One part is a very (3)\_\_\_\_\_ neighborhood built around a world-class golf course and then the other part of the community is (4)\_\_\_\_\_ housing<sup>41</sup>, including a complex where families where the mother has just been released from the local women's prison, so, you know, I really saw a wide economic and social (5)\_\_\_\_\_ and I have seen low-income families that just do a great job of getting their kids to school and supporting them in their education. But, you know, I think the (6)\_\_\_\_\_ cliché there is true. That those kids who are supported do better, kids whose parents (7)\_\_\_\_\_ education do better.

And you know, another big economic issue is technology. (8)\_\_\_\_\_ to computers. The kids who have multimedia computers at home, in their bedrooms, they just do better. With computers, there is a (9)\_\_\_\_\_ starting to develop, that it's not just technological skills, but there are also some thinking skills that improve with being able to organize your information that way, you know.

D: Some of these kids can really turn out some (10)\_\_\_\_\_ work and the content has improved, too. Not just the presentation. So I think there are some real differences based on economic (11)\_\_\_\_\_ and they just compound with each generation. That's been my experience.

D: But you know, there is no (12)\_\_\_\_\_ because you have all this support at home that you're gonna do well, too. I mean I've seen some kids, pretty wealthy kids, just totally blow it<sup>42</sup> and not be productive and not even (13)\_\_\_\_\_ in school. Or there are the cases where you've got, you know, one kid who does great and then the other (14)\_\_\_\_\_ in the same environment is just totally, totally out of control.

I: Does that happen?

D: Well, it's kind of like a movie (15)\_\_\_\_\_ again. But, yeah, it does sometime happen.

I: Speaking of families, do siblings<sup>43</sup> usually (16)\_\_\_\_\_ at about the same level in school?

D: Yeah, in families usually there (17)\_\_\_\_\_ to be a pattern, I think.

Espeseth, Miriam, Academic Listening Encounters, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 76.

## Grammar – Prepositions and Numbers

### a) Complete the text with *at, on or in*.

There's one train from Prague which gets here \_\_\_ ten o'clock. That's \_\_\_ weekdays, but \_\_\_ the weekend there isn't any. But \_\_\_ Saturday there is one bus. It arrives \_\_\_ five thirty. But \_\_\_ summer it is better.

### b) Read the numbers in different ways, if possible.

1) 1980-1990

2) 1970s

3) -12°C

4) 437.56

5) 43,756

6) 50%

7) tel. # 540 776

8) (the year) 1805

9) 1,975

10) 0.25

11) 3<sup>rd</sup> February

12) (date) 3.2.2003

13) 2/3

14) 7/9

15) \$9,000,000,000

### c) Correct the mistakes (numbers, prepositions).

1) I could see the huge crowd. There were some sixty thousands people.

2) The exact population of that country is three million, five hundred sixty thousand.

3) My phone number is five thirty-four, nought nine two.

4) I was born on the twenty-one March, one thousand nine hundred and eighty six.

5) I got forty-one from fifty in my test.

## Vocabulary

1. to sow rice	sít, zasívat rýži
2. to be indebted to	být zavázaný komu (vděčností)
3. to commit to memory (memorize)	zapamatovat si
4. *doubt	pochybnost
5. brainwashing	propagandistické školení
6. *approach	přístup, postoj
7. to offend someone's self-esteem	urazit něčí sebeúctu
8. *to distort	deformovat, překrucovat
9. *patronizing	urážlivě shovívavý
10. to raise children	vychovávat děti
11. *to threaten	ohrozit
12. *literacy, illiterate	gramotnost, negramotný
13. *challenge	výzva
14. *to overcome	překonat
15. impoverished	zchudlý, zubožený
16. to combat a problem	zápasit s problémem
17. *perception	vnímání, představa
18. shameful disparity	ostudný rozdíl
19. to echo	znít
20. sewage backs up	zácpe se odpad
21. fake	nepravý

22. *notion (idea)	představa, dojem, pojetí
23. *gap	mezera
24. *crucial (essential) source of funds	zásadní, důležitý zdroj financí
25. overhaul	předělat, reorganizovat
26. equity	spravedlnost
27. searing exposé	skandální odhalení
28. few amenities	málo vybavení
29. *reliance (dependence) / to rely on	spoléhání / spoléhat se na
30. *taxation (taxes)	zdanění (daně)
31. *to do away with property tax	odstranit daně z majetku
32. *revenue	příjem
33. *ally	spojenec
34. *inequalities	nerovnosti
35. unconstitutional	protiústavní
36. *to condemn	zavrhnout, odsoudit
37. settle into mediocrity	ustálit se na nízké úrovni, prostřednosti, obyčejnosti
38. *to deny	popřít
39. mockery	výsměch
40. *pattern	typický příklad
41. low-income housing	vládou dotované bydlení pro ty, kteří mají nízké příjmy
42. to totally blow it (slang)	propadnout
43. sibling	sourozenec