



Chapter 1: Education and Student Life

Education: A Reflection of Society

Visit schools anywhere in the world, and you will probably notice a number of similarities. There are students, teachers, books, blackboards, and exams everywhere. However, a school system in one country is not identical to the system in any other country. It cannot be exactly the same because each culture is different. The educational system is a mirror that **reflects** the culture. Look at the school system, and you will see the social structure and the values of its culture.

Mexico

In Mexico, the educational system reflects some of the country's many **contrasts**. **On the one hand**, it is believed that the nation can achieve equality of rights for everyone through education. The basis of the Mexican educational system is the country's **constitution**, which was written in 1917. It requires education to be free, **compulsory**, and **universal**. It also states that education should support national unity and lead to social, economic, and cultural improvement of the people. At lower levels, this means that there is emphasis on the country's rich cultural history. Children read about national heroes –especially **native people** (Indians). However, it is often difficult to provide education in rural areas, where many of the **indigenous people** live. People in these areas are poor and isolated geographically. There aren't enough schools, and rural teachers must be able to teach all six grades of **primary school**. Also, **traditions** among some indigenous people do not typically include school attendance.

Japan

The Japanese value education highly. One statistic reflects this: the Japanese place such importance on education that 88 percent of all students complete not only primary school but also high school. Public schools are all both free and **egalitarian**; all students are considered equal and learn the same material. For social reasons, it's important for a student to receive a university degree – and a degree from “the right university”. To reach this goal, students have to go through “examination hell”. There are difficult exams for entrance to all universities, to many of the better primary and **secondary schools**, and even to some kindergartens! Japanese students need great **discipline**; in order to make time for their studies, they need the self-control to give up hobbies, sports, and social life. Results of these exams affect the **entire** family because there is high status, or social position, for the whole family when the children have high test scores.

Britain

In the United Kingdom (Britain), the educational system reflects the class system. All state schools – primary, secondary, and university – are free, and the first nine years are egalitarian; all students learn the same material. At age eleven, students take an important national exam. After this, they attend one of these three possible secondary school: college preparatory, **vocational** (for job training), or comprehensive (with both groups of students). However, 6 percent of British students attend expensive private schools. These are students from upper-class families. Half of the students at Oxford and Cambridge universities come from such expensive secondary schools. It might seem that anyone can afford to go to a university because all universities are free, but only 1 percent of the lower class goes to university. Because graduates from good universities get the best jobs, it is clear that success is largely a result of one's social class.



The United States

Education in the United States is available to everyone, but not all schools are equal. Public primary and secondary schools are free for everyone; there is no **tuition**. Almost 80 percent of all Americans are high school graduates. Students themselves decide if they want college-preparatory or vocational classes in high school; no national exam **determines** this. Higher education is not free, but it is available to almost anyone, and about 60 percent of all high school graduates attend college or university. Older people have the opportunity to attend college, too, because Americans believe that “you’re never too old to learn.” **On the other hand**, there are also problems in U.S. schools. In many secondary schools, there are problems with lack of discipline and with drugs and crime. In addition, public schools receive their money from local taxes, so schools in poor areas receive less money. As a result, they don’t have enough good teachers or laboratory equipment, and the buildings are often not in good condition. Clearly, U.S. education reflects both the best and the worst of the society.

Conclusion

It is clear that each educational system is a reflection of the larger **culture** – both positive and negative **aspects** of its economy, **values**, and social structure. Look at a country’s schools, and you will learn about the society in which they exist.

Campus Life is Changing

For many years in the United States, most undergraduate students (in their first four years of college) were 18 to 22 years old. **They** attended college full-time, lived **in** a dormitory **on** campus, and expected many “extras” from their colleges, not just classes. But things began to change in the 1970’s, and are very different now. Today, these “traditional” students are less than one-quarter (1/4) of all college students. These days the nontraditional students are the majority; **they** are different from traditional undergraduates in several ways. They are older. Many **attend** (v) college part-time because they have families and jobs. Most live off campus, not in dormitories. These traditional students don’t want the extras that colleges usually offer. They aren’t interested in the sports, entertainment, religious groups, and museums that are part of most U.S. colleges. They want mainly good-quality classes, day or night, at a low cost. They also hope for easy parking, access **to** information technology, and polite service. Both time and money are important to **them**.

Psychological tests reflect different learning styles in this new student population, too. Each person has a certain learning style, and about 60 percent of the new students these days prefer the sensing style. This means that they are very practical. They prefer a practice-to-theory **method** of learning, which is experience first and ideas after that. They often have difficulty with reading and writing and are unsure of themselves. Most of these students are attending college because they want to have a good job and make a lot of money.

In contrast other students (but not as many) prefer the intuitive learning style. These students love ideas. They prefer a theory-to-practice method of learning and enjoy independent, **creative** thinking. These “intuitive” are not very practical. They are attending college because they want to create unique works of art or study philosophy or someday help in the field of science.



There is a **drawback** for the students who prefer the sensing style of learning. A majority of college professors prefer the intuitive learning style. These teachers **value** independent thinking and creative ideas. Students in the sensing group are **at** a disadvantage because **their** way of thinking doesn't match their teachers'.

Politically, too, students these days are different from students in the past. In the 1960s and 1970s, many students demonstrated against the government and hoped to make big changes in society. In the 1980s, most students were interested only in **their** studies and future jobs. Today, students seem to be a combination of the two: they want to make good money when they graduate, but they're also interested in helping society. Many students today are volunteering in the community. They are working to help people, without payment. For example, they tutor (teach privately) children **in** trouble, or they work with organizations for homeless people. In these ways, they hope to make changes in society.

On all college campuses, student life is very different from what it used to be because **of** technology—specifically, the Internet. At most colleges, all entering first-year students receive an email address. Dormitory rooms offer high-speed Internet access. Computer systems are available **to** everyone in computer labs, the library, and student centers. Application for classes and registration are usually now possible online. Most schools offer entire courses online. Many professors still have “office hours,” when students can come to talk with **them** about class work or ask for help. But increasingly, students can contact professors 24 hours a day, thanks to emails. In many classes, students complete **assignments** and even **take** exams online. Perhaps most important for both students and professors, research is now easier and faster because of the new technology.

In a western society, such as the United States or Canada, that has many national, religious, and **s** differences, people highly value **individualism**- the differences among people and independent thinking. Students there do not memorize information. Instead, they find answers themselves, and they express their ideas in class discussion. At an early age, students learn to form their own ideas and opinions.

In most Asian societies, by **contrast**, the people have the same language, history, and **culture**. Perhaps for this reason, the educational system in much of Asia reflects society's belief in group **goals** and **tradition** rather than individualism. Children in China, Japan, and Korea often work together and help one another on **assignments**. In the classroom, the teaching **methods** are often very formal. The teacher **lectures**, and the students listen. There is no much discussion. Instead, they recite rules or information that they have memorized.

Chapter 2: City Life

A City That's Doing Something Right

There's good news and bad news about life in modern cities—first, the bad. People who study population growth **predict** a nightmare by the year 2025: the **global** population will be more than 8 billion, and almost 4 billion of these people will be living in cities in **developing countries** such as India and Nigeria. Population growth is already causing unbelievable **overcrowding**. Due to overcrowding, these cities have problems with air **pollution**, disease, and crime. People spend hours in **gridlock**—that is, **traffic** so horrible that it simply doesn't move—when they **commute** daily from their homes to their work



and back. There isn't enough water, **transportation**, or housing. Many people don't have **access** to health services or jobs. Now the good news: in some cities, instead of **worsening** urban life is actually getting much better.

A city and Its Mayor

It might not be a surprise to find that life in **affluent** cities is improving. But what about cities that aren't rich? The city of Curitiba, Brazil, proves that it's possible for even a city in a **developing country** to offer a good life to its **residents**. The former mayor of Curitiba for twenty-five years, Jaime Lerner, was an architect and a very practical person. **Under** his leadership, the city planners **established** a list of **priorities**—in other words, a list of what was most important to work on. They decided to **focus** on the **environment** and on the quality of life. With an average **income** of only about \$2000 per person per year, Curitiba has the same problems as many cities. However, it also has some **creative** solutions.

- Main Idea: It's possible for even a city in a developing country to offer a good life to its resident.

Garbage Collection

One creative solution is the method of garbage collection. In neighborhoods that garbage trucks can't reach, poor people bring bags of **trash** to special centers. At these centers, they exchange the trash for fresh **produce**—such as potatoes and oranges—or for bus tickets. At a **recycling plant**, workers separate bottles, plastic, and cans from other trash. Two-thirds of Curitiba's garbage is recycled, which is good for the environment. And the plant gives jobs to the poorest people, which improves their lives.

Transportation

Due to careful planning, Curitiba does not have the same traffic problems that most cities have. The **statistics** are surprising. The population has grown—now twice the size it was in 1974—but traffic has actually decreased 30 percent. Curitiba needed a **mass-transit** system but couldn't **afford** an expensive subway. City planners began, instead, with an unusual system of buses in the center lanes of five wide major streets. At each bus stop, there is a factory-foot-long glass tube. Passengers pay before they enter the tube. Then they get on the bus "subway style"-through wide doors. This allows people to get on and off the bus quickly and **efficiently**. people don't **crowd** onto the bus; loading and unloading takes only 30 seconds. This makes commuting more **pleasant** and also helps to solve the problem of air pollution.

A Creative Social Program

There is an **agricultural operation** just outside Curitiba that looks like other farms but actually helps to **solve** a social problem, in addition to growing **crops**. At Fazenda da Solidaridade (Solidarity Farm), the workers are not experienced farmers. Instead, they are drug addicts and alcoholics who volunteer to spend up to nine months in a program called Cerde Saude (Green Jealth). The program helps them in two ways. First, it gives them jobs. They **cultivate** medicinal plants and then process them into herbal teas, syrups, and other products that are sold in health food stores. Second, it helps them to get off drugs and alcohol and to turn their lives around. In exchange for their labor, they receive counseling, medical care, and job training.

The Environment



To make the environment both cleaner and more beautiful, Curitiba has strict laws against polluters. But it also has low taxes for companies that have green areas, so several hundred major industries such as Pepsi and Volvo have offices in the city. Bringing natural beauty into the city is a priority. For this reason, Curitiba gave 1.5 million young trees to neighborhoods to plant and take care of. And the downtown shopping area is now a **pedestrian zone**—in other words, for walkers only, no cars—and is lined with gardens. Curitiba provides the city people with 22 million square meters of parks and green areas—more than three times the amount that the World Health organization recommends for **urban dwellers**.

A Symbol of the Possible

Clearly, overcrowding in big cities **worldwide** is the cause of serious problems. However, the example of Curitiba provides hope that careful planning and creative thinking can lead to solutions to many of them. Curitiba is truly, as Lewis Mumford once said of cities in general, a "symbol of the possible".

Sick-Building Syndrome

Elizabeth Steinberg was a healthy sixteen-year-old student on the tennis team at St. Charles High School, west of Chicago, Illinois. But in the fall of 1977, he started to have strange health problems. The same thing happened to dozens of teachers and students at the school. They went to doctors for treatment of a number of **symptoms** such as **sore** throats, tiredness, headaches, and respiratory (breathing) **difficulties**. Doctors treated respiratory infections with antibiotics, but the condition didn't seem to improve, except—mysteriously—on weekends and over vacations, when the symptoms disappeared. Experts came to investigate and find the cause. They discovered that St. Charles High, like thousands of other schools and office buildings nationwide, is a "sick building"—in other words, a building that creates its own indoor air pollution.

People have worried about **smog** for many years, and the government has spent billions of dollars to try to clean up the air of big cities. But now we find that there is no escape from unhealthy air. Recent studies have shown that air inside many homes, office buildings, and schools is full of pollutants: chemicals, mold, bacteria, smoke, and gases. These pollutants are causing a group of unpleasant and dangerous symptoms that experts call "sick-building **syndrome**." First discovered in 1982, sick-building syndrome most often includes symptoms similar to the flu (watering eyes, headaches, and so on) and respiratory infections such as tonsillitis, bronchitis, and pneumonia.

Although most common in office buildings and schools, the indoor pollution that causes sick-building syndrome can also occur in houses. Imagine a typical home. The people who live there burn oil, wood, or gas for cooking and heating. They might smoke cigarettes, pipes, or cigars. They use chemicals for cleaning. They use hundreds of products made of plastic or particleboard—that is, an inexpensive kind of board made of very small pieces of wood held together with a chemical. These products give off chemicals that we can't see but that we do breathe in. In some homes, carbon monoxide from cars in the garage can enter the house. And in many areas, the ground under the building might send a dangerous gas called radon into the home. The people in the house are breathing in a "chemical soup."

Then what causes sick-building syndrome in an office building or school, where people don't smoke or burn oil, wood, or gas? Experts have discovered several sources of sick-building syndrome among these



are mold and bacteria, synthetic products, and lack of ventilation a system of moving fresh air. In many buildings, rain has **leaked in** and caused water damage to walls and carpets. This allows mold and bacteria to grow. Air conditioning systems are another place where mold and bacteria can grow. Synthetic (that is, unnatural) products such as paint, carpeting, and furniture can be found in all offices and schools. These products release toxic (poisonous) chemicals into the air. Per-haps the most common cause of sick-building syndrome, however, is lack of ventilation. Most modern office buildings are tightly sealed; in other words, the windows don't open, so fresh air doesn't enter the building. In a building with mold, bacteria, or toxic chemicals, lack of ventilation makes the situation more serious.

There are several solutions to the problem of sick-building syndrome, among them cleansing the building. First, of course, experts must determine the specific cause in any one building. Then workers probably need to take out carpets, wallpaper, and ceiling tiles in order to remove mold and bacteria. Also, they need to clean out the air conditioning system and completely rebuild the system of ventilation. They should remove synthetic products and bring in natural products, instead, if they are available.

All of this sounds difficult and expensive. But there is another possible solution that is simple and inexpensive. NASA (the National Aeronautics and Space Administration) was trying to find ways to clean the air in space stations. One scientist with NASA discovered that houseplants actually remove **pollutants** from the air. Certain plants seem to do this better than others. Spider plants, for example, appear to do the best job. Even Defoliated plants (without leaves) worked well! In another study, scientists found that the chemical interaction among **soil**, roots, and leaves works to remove pollutants.

This seems like a good solution, but we don't know enough yet. There are many questions. For instance, which pollutants can plants remove? Which can't they remove? How many plants are necessary to clean the air in a room one or two or a whole forest of plants? When we are able to answer these questions, we might find that plants offer an important pollution-control system for the 21st century.

Chapter 3: Business and Money

Banking on Poor Women

For many people, there seems to be no escape from poverty; in other words, they are poor, and they have no hope that this will ever change. In addition, they have the social problems of poverty— among them, low social **status**, violence, poor health, and lack of education.

Imagine this situation: a poor woman has an idea for a small business to **lift** herself and her family out of poverty. She needs a little money to begin this business. She goes to a bank to borrow the money, and the banker interviews her. At this bank, as at most banks, the borrower must meet three necessary conditions: **character**, **capacity**, and **collateral**. That is, if this woman wants to borrow money from the bank, she must show that she (1) is honest (has character), (2) is able to run her business (has capacity), and (3) owns a house, land, or something valuable (has collateral) for the bank to take if she can't pay back the money. So what happens to the woman? The bank won't lend her the money because she doesn't have any collateral. In such a situation, there seems to be no way for the woman to break the cycle of poverty and the problems that are associated with it.



Microlending

One possible solution these days is **microlending**. This is a system of special banks and programs that are loaning money to “the poorest of the poor.” The idea began in Bangladesh, with a man named Mohammad Yunus, who founded Grameen Bank. The bank lends small amounts of money to people who want to go into business. These are people who could never receive a loan from a “regular” bank. To receive a loan through Grameen Bank, people still must have character and capacity, but collateral is not necessary any longer. There is a different **requirement**: each borrower must join a “borrowing group.” This small group meets regularly, follows a list of rules from the bank, and offers advice and support to members. Instead of collateral, there is **peer pressure**; i.e., group members make sure that each person pays back his or her loan. They want to keep their “good name” and continue doing business with the bank.

What Works, What Doesn't

Grameen Bank has had many successes and only a few failures. In a developing country such as Bangladesh, a person can buy a cow or a sewing machine and begin a small business with only \$20 to \$50. Today, there are 8.35 million borrowers in 81,379 villages in Bangladesh. The bank makes over \$123 million in loans in a typical month, and the repayment rate is an amazing 96.67 percent. At first, the bank lent half of the money to men and half to women. Unfortunately, most of the Bangladeshi men spent the money on themselves, not the business. Now, 96 percent of the borrowers are women. In Bangladesh—and other countries that started similar microlending programs—the bankers soon learned that urban programs were not as successful as **rural** ones. Borrowers in cities did not always repay the loans. Because of the importance of peer pressure, microlending is more effective in small villages, where everyone knows and depends on everyone else, than in urban areas (where it's possible to be **anonymous**—unknown).

Subsidiary Effect

The primary goal of this and other similar programs is the **eradication of poverty**. However, as poverty has decreased, there have been some surprising secondary effects of microlending programs. Perhaps the main **subsidiary** effect has been a change in the social status of women. Traditionally, in some societies people thought of women as **worthless**. But when a woman has **access** to money and is able to demonstrate her capacity for business, she often receives more respect than before from the male members of her family and from the entire village.

Global Fund for Women

In any country, women are the poorest of the poor. They produce more than half of the world's food, but they own just one percent of the world's land. They are 51 percent of the world's population, but very, very little money goes to programs to help them. In the late 18980s, Anne Firth Murray **took the initiative** and began the **Global Fund for Women**. Unlike microlending programs, this **fund** gives **grants**, not loans. The money is given, not lent. Another difference is that unlike Grameen Bank, which helps people begin businesses, the direct focus of the Global Fund for Women is to help find solutions to **social ills** - e.g., violence against women, lack of health care, and lack of education. Since 1987, the fund has given \$37 million to over 2,500 women's groups in 160 countries. For instance, the fund has helped the Petersburg Center for Women in St. Petersburg, Russia. This center cares for women who are the victims of violence and abuse from family members. In Kenya, the Global Fund supports a program that gives health care and education to women with AIDS. In a village in southern India, it is **funding** a woman who has started a **literacy** program to teach poor women to read.



Breaking the Cycle

Grameen Bank and the Global Fund for Women may use different methods, but they have the same goal—the eradication of poverty. They also have a lesson for banks around the world: it's good business to give a chance to the poor. With careful planning, education, and cooperation, most people use the money well and then **plow** the money and knowledge back into their communities. There is hope that they can begin to break the cycle of poverty for themselves, their families, and society.

Consumerism and the Human Brain

We are all **consumers**. We all buy and use products and services; that is, we **consume**. The word comes from the Latin *consumere*, which means “to use up, to waste or destroy.” Most of us don't think of ourselves as wasteful or destructive, but the world economy is based on consumerism. Today, people worldwide have greater access than ever before to a huge variety of products and, often, to dozens of brands of the same product. What makes us decide to buy Brand A instead of Brand B, when the two items are really **identical**? Why do we buy things that we don't actually need? The answer lies in marketing—the advertising and selling of products. Successful marketers use their knowledge of psychology and, increasingly, of recent studies of the human brain, to persuade us to consume more and more.

A good understanding of human weakness is essential if a company wants to sell a product. One way that advertisers persuade us **to** buy a product is by **targeting** our **dissatisfaction with** ourselves, our gears. Consider for a moment a typical fear—fear of being offensive **to** other people. Advertisers persuade us, for example, that if we don't buy their mouthwash, we'll have bad breath and offend other people. Dentists tell us that mouthwash is actually unnecessary; they explain that we need only simple **dental hygiene**—regular correct use of a soft toothbrush and of **dental floss**. But we continue to spend money on mouthwash, breath freshener, and breath mints. Our **fear of** offending people outweighs our dentists' **logic**.

In a similar way, advertisers also **take advantage of** our need for a good self-image, our desire to appear attractive, successful, and even exciting. Take the example of Marlboro cowboy. For years this famous image has appeared everywhere, in even the smallest rural villages. Many men see it and think that's the kind of person they would like to be—strong handsome, and adventurous—a person with an exciting life. Although it's irrational—impossible to explain reasonably—they buy the cigarettes because they want to be like the Marlboro man. It's **common knowledge** that the original model for these advertisements was a man **addicted to** smoking who **died of** lung cancer. However, this brand of cigarette remains very popular. Another example is the recent popularity in the United States of SUVs—sport **utility** vehicles. These vehicles are more expensive than most cars. They use more gas and create more pollution than most cars. They take **up** more space than most cars. But TV commercials show them climbing rocky mountain roads and crossing rivers, which seems exciting to many people. Most people who buy an SUV never get **out of** the city. They spend their morning **commute** in **gridlock**, not driving up and down mountains. Although it may seem irrational, advertisers persuade them that SUV owners are people with an exciting life .

With so many different (but almost identical) brands of the same product, what causes us to choose one brand instead of another? According to Dr. Alan Hirsch, our sense of smell actually influences our



opinion of a product and our decision to buy it. A scientist at the Smell and Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago, Hirsch ran a careful, well-organized study. There were two identical rooms with an identical pair of Nike sneakers in each room. There was only one difference: he sprayed one of the rooms with a scent of flowers. Volunteers entered each room and answered questions about the sneakers. The result was that 84 percent of the people preferred the sneakers in the room with the floral smell even though they were exactly the same as the ones in the other room.

There is also the effect of self-fulfilling prophecies. A self-fulfilling prophecy is a situation in which people cause a prediction to come true. (For example, a teacher tells a class that they are especially intelligent, and that semester the class does especially well on exams.) In marketing, a successful advertisement persuades **consumers** that a product works well; their belief causes them to use the product in such a way that it does work well. For example, the ads for Brand X of a diet pill say, “Take this pill, and you will lose weight because you won’t be hungry.” So people buy Brand X. Because they believe it will cause weight loss, they begin to eat less. They establish a new habit of eating less. The result? They lose weight. Is this because of the pill or because they are eating less?

Most of us like to think that we are reasonable, independent thinkers. We like to believe that we have a good reason for our choices. We don’t want to buy products because of some strange compulsion—some irrational desire that we can’t control. The truth is, however, that with their increasing knowledge of what goes on in the human brain, marketers might have more power over us than we realize.

Chapter 4: Jobs and Professions

Changing Career Trends

A hundred years ago in most of the world, people didn’t have much choice about the work that they would do, where they would do it, or how they would do it. If their parents were farmers, they became farmers. The society—and tradition—determined their profession. Twenty years ago in many countries, people could choose their **livelihood**. They also had the certainty of a job for life, but they usually couldn’t choose to change from one employer to another or from one profession to another. Today, this is not always the case. **Career counselors** tell us that the world of work is already changing fast and will change dramatically in next 25 years.

Job Security

The situation **varies** from country to country, but in today’s **economy**, there is generally less **job security** worldwide. Even in Japan, where people **traditionally** had a very **secure** job for life, there is now no promise of a lifetime **job** with the same company. One reason for the lack of **job security** is the worldwide decrease in **manufacturing jobs**. Another reason is employers’ need to hold down **costs**. This has resulted in two **enormous** changes for the **workforce**. First, employers are **creating** more and more **temporary** jobs because they don’t need to pay health insurance or other **benefits** to employees in these positions, as they would to people in permanent **posts**. Second, more and more companies are **outsourcing**. In other words, they are closing offices and factories and sending work to other **areas** of the country or to other countries where **labor** is cheaper. This happens with factory work and **computer programming**. Also, the call center industry is **on the move**—mostly to India. Increasingly when customers



in Canada, the United States, England and Australia call a company to order a product or ask for help with their computer, they actually speak with someone in India, although they might not know it. India is popular with companies because there is a well-educated workforce, salaries are much lower than in other countries, and educated people are already fluent in English. New call center employees in India spend months in training. They learn to use the accent of their customers—Australian or American, for example.

The Effect of Insecurity

On the surface, it may seem that lack of job security is something undesirable. Indeed, pessimists point out that it is certainly a cause of stress. Many people find an **identity**—a sense of **self**—through their work. When they lose their job (or are afraid of losing it), they also lose their **self-confidence**, or belief in their own ability. This causes worry and depression. In Japan, for example, the daily newspaper Asahi reports a sudden rise in the number of businessmen who need psychological help for their clinical depression. However, this decrease in job security may not necessarily be something bad. It is true that these days, workers must be more **flexible**—able to change to fit new situations. But optimists claim that flexible people are essentially happier, more creative, and more energetic than people who are **rigid**.

Job Hopping

Jumping from job to job (or **job hopping**) has always been more common in some professions, such as building **construction**, and not very common in other professions like medicine and teaching. Today, job hopping is increasingly common in many fields because of **globalization**, technology, and a movement from manufacturing to services in developed countries. For example, people with factory jobs in industrial nations lose their jobs when factories move to countries where the pay is lower. The workers then need to **upgrade** their skills to find a new job. This is stressful, but the new job is usually better than the old one. Because technology changes fast, workers need continuing education if they want to **keep up with** the field.

Telecommuting

In many ways, technology is changing the way people work. There are advantages and disadvantages to this. In some professions, for instance, **telecommuting** is now possible. People can work at home for some—or all of the week and communicate by computer, telephone, and fax. An advantage of this is that it saves them from the **stress** of commuting to the workplace. It also allows them to plan their own time. On the other hand, it is difficult for some people to focus on work when they are at home. The refrigerator, TV, and their children often **distract** them. Telecommuters must have enormous **discipline** and organizational skills. Technology is changing the way people work in another way—in the use of **cell phones**. There is an advantage: customers and clients have access to businesspeople at anytime, anywhere. However, there is also a **drawback**: many businesspeople don't want to be available day and night. They prefer to have a break from their work life.

Workaholism

In the 21st century, **workaholism** will continue to be a fact of life for many workers. Workaholics are as addicted to their work as other people are to drugs or alcohol. This sounds like a problem, but it isn't always. Some people **overwork** but don't enjoy their work. They don't have time for their family, friends, or **leisure** activities such as hobbies, sports, and movies. These people become tired, angry, and depressed. The tension and stress often cause physical symptoms such as headaches. However, other people love their work and receive great **pleasure** from it. These people appear to be overworking but are actually very



happy. Psychologists tell us that the most successful people in the changing world of work are flexible, creative, disciplined, and **passionate** about their work. But they are also people who make time for relaxing activities and for other people. They enjoy their work and enjoy time away from it, too.

Looking for Work in the 21st Century

Not very long ago, when people needed to find a job, there were several possible steps, They might begin with a look through the **classified** ads in the newspaper. They could go to the **personnel** office at various companies and fill out an application, or they could go to an **employment** agency. They could even find out about a job opening through word-mouth-from another person who had heard about it.

These days, job hunting is more complicated. The first step is to determine what kind of job you want(which sounds easier than it is) and make sure that you have the right education for it, Rapid changes in technology and science are creating many professions that never existed until recently. It is important fastest-growing areas for new jobs are in computer technology and health services. Jobs in these fields usually require specific skills, but you need to find out exactly which skills and which degrees are necessary. For example, it may be surprising to learn that in the sciences, an M.S. is more marketable than a Ph.D.! In other words, there are more jobs available for people with a Master of Science degree than for people with a doctorate. (However, people who want to do research still need a Ph.D.)

How do people learn about "hot" new professions? How do they discover their "**dream job**"? Many people these days go to a career counselor. In some countries, job hopping has become so common that career counseling is now "big business." People sometimes spend large amounts of money for this advice. In Canada and the United States, high school and college students often have access to free vocational counseling services on campus. There in even a career organization, the Five O'clock Club, which helps members to set **goals**. Members focus on this question: what sort of person do you want to be years from now? The members then plan their careers around that goal. All career counselors-private or public-agree on one basic point it is important for people to find a career that they love. Everyone should be able to think, " I'm having such a good time. I can't believe they're paying me to do this".

After people have determined what their dream job is, they need to find it. The biggest change in job hunting these days is the use of the Internet. More and more employers are advertising job openings on their computer websites. More and more job hunters are applying for jobs **online**. There are also several thousand job boards, among them HotJobs.com, Jobjobsjobs.com, and Monster.com, Some people think that online job hunting is only for people in technology fields, but this isn't true. Over 65 percent of online job seekers are from nontechnical fields. Even truck drivers now find jobs on the Internet!

So how does this work? A job seeker can reply to a "Help Wanted" notice on a company's website. This person can also post his resume (page with information about education and work experience) on one-or many-of the online job boards. If a company is interested, the person still has to take the next step the old-fashioned way-actually go to the job interview and perhaps take a skills test. However, even this might soon change. In the near future, companies will be able to give the person a skills test and check his or her **background** (job history and education) online. But what about the interview? Companies will soon be able to interview the person by video link, so people can interview for jobs in other cities-or even other countries-without leaving home. Clearly, job hunting is not what it used to be.



Chapter 5: Lifestyles Around the World

Trendspotting

These days, urban **lifestyles** seem to change very fast. It is more than just clothing and hairstyles that are in **style** one year and out of date the next; it's a whole way of living. One year, people **wear** sunglasses on top of their heads and wear jeans and boots; they drink white wine and eat sushi at Japanese restaurants; for exercise they jog several miles a day. However, the next year everything has changed. Women wear long skirts; people drink expensive water from France and eat pasta at Italian restaurants; everyone seems to be exercising at health clubs. Then, **suddenly**, it has changed again. Men shave their heads and wear earrings; people wear only natural fabrics (safe for the environment); they drink **gourmet** coffee and eat Thai food; for both leisure and exercise, adults may go bicycling; and some younger people may go skateboarding.

Fads

Almost nothing in modern life escapes the **influence** of fashion; food, sports, music, exercise, furniture, places to visit, even names go in and out of fashion. For a while, it seemed that all new parents in the U.S. were naming their babies Heather, Dawn, Mike, or Adam. These names were "in." Then, suddenly, these same names were "**out**," and Madison, Amber, and Jason were "in." It's almost impossible to write about specific **fads** because these interests people **enthusiastically** follow can change very quickly.

The Essence of a Fad

This is the **essence**, the central quality, of a fad; it doesn't last long. Some fads disappear before we have even heard of them. How many people remember Green Peace swimsuits? (They changed color to indicate polluted water.) **And then** there was "Beethoven Bread." Popular in Japan in 1994, it was expensive---\$20 for one loaf. It was made while classical music played in the kitchen. The woman who created this bread emphasized a new toothbrush, "Tooth Tunes," which brought music "from the teeth to the ears." These fads quickly disappeared.

The Reason for Fads

What causes such fads to come and go? And why do **so** many people **follow** them? Although clothing **designers** and manufacturers **influence** fads in fashion because they want to make a **profit**, this desire for money doesn't explain fads in other **areas**, such as language. For example, why have English-speaking teenagers in the past 25 years used-at different times- the **slang** words groovy, boss, awesome, rad, or tubular instead of simply saying "wonderful"? According to Jack Santino, an **expert** in popular **culture**, people who follow fads are not **irrational**; they simply want to be **part** of something new and **creative**, and they feel good when they are part of an "in group." Santino believes that fads are common in any country that has a strong consumer **economy**. However, because of TV, movies, and the Internet, fads are now common **worldwide** and spread very fast. Increasingly, they seem to begin in Asia, especially in Hong Kong, Japan, and Korea.

Fads and Trends



Santino points out that it's sometimes difficult to see the difference between a fad and a **trend**. A fad, he says, **lasts** a very short time and is not very important. A trend lasts much longer. A recent trend is the interest in good health, but many fads come from this trend; aerobic exercise, kickboxing, organic vegetables, or special diets like carbohydrate-counting. A trend in the 1980s was the use of personal computers; certain computer games were fads. However, these days we can't really continue to call computers a "trend" because now they have become an essential part of everyday life.

Trendspotting

Trendspotting is the ability to identify a trend at an early stage-an extremely important skill in the business world. The first company that can correctly identify a new trend (and do something with it) has a **competitive edge**-an advantage- over other companies. The person who **founded** the Starbucks chain of coffeehouses was able to **spot** a trend-interest in quality and variety in coffee. Today, people buy Starbucks products in **shopping** centers, airports, and supermarkets everywhere. But when a development in popular culture is new, it's difficult to **distinguish** between a fad and a trend. Trendspotters need to ask themselves; will this become an important global trend, or is it just a passing fad? "Hello Kitty" began as a fad but became a trend. People who **invested** their funds in Green Peace swimsuits, however, probably regret their decision. Clearly, they mistook a fad for a trend.

Popular Culture and the University

Possibly because of the importance of trendspotting in business, more and more universities are offering classes in popular culture. Some even offer a major in popular culture. Parents of students at New York University have sometimes been surprised to find their children **taking** such classes as "Inside the Mouse" (about the influence of Disney). "Golden Arches East" (about McDonald's in Asia), or "Hope in a Jar" (about the cosmetics industry). At Bowling Green State University, in Ohio, there has been a course on Pokemon, found in Japanese culture. At other schools, students might **enroll** in "The History of Rock 'n' Roll," "Addiction in Literature," and "Smoking and Advertising." Many people don't take such classes seriously. However, companies are seeking out graduates of Bowling Green, which actually offers a master's degree in popular culture. These graduates find jobs in advertising, television, publishing, and manufacturing. With an understanding of popular culture, these graduates are becoming the new trendspotters. The question now becomes this; Are courses in popular culture just a fad or a real trend?

Fads and Trends in the 21st Century

The 19th-century American philosopher Henry David Thoreau was famous for saying, "Simplify, simplify." Unfortunately, the trend these days seems to be "complicate, complicate" instead. Many people are working longer hours, spending more money, and getting in more debt than ever before. They are also relaxing less and spending less time with family and friends. However, there is also a countertrend-atrend toward voluntary simplicity. People in the voluntary simplicity movement take various steps to make their lives both simpler and more enjoyable. Some people work fewer hours each week. Some move close their workplace. to avoid a long daily commute; they walk or ride a bike, instead. Some plant a vegetable garden; this gives them fresh air, exercise, and time with their families-not to mention organic **produce**. But all people in the voluntary simplicity movement try to cut back-to buy less; they cut up their credit cards and stop buying unnecessary **items**. In short, the priority for people in the voluntary movement is to follow Thoreau's suggestion: simplify.



A popular fad for many teenagers was tattooing. Parents were usually horrified by these permanent designs on their children's skin, but the young people saw them as a fashion statement. In the new millennium, parents were greatly relieved when their teenage children found a new fad, a temporary form of decorating the hands, feet, neck, or legs-mehndi, a method of painting beautiful designs that last only about three weeks. his "new" fad is actually very old: for hundreds of years in India, a woman's friends have painted her to celebrate her wedding day. Another fad from India, however, causes parents more worry-bidis. Children and young teens are attracted to these thin cigarettes in candy flavors such as orange, chocolate, mango, and raspberry, The problem?

Bidis contain more nicotine than regular cigarettes. Unfortunately, many children think these are "cool"-fashionable. So until a new fad comes along. "Indian chic is hot," as one radio commentator observed.

Another ancient art-aromatherapy-is also popular today. Of course, people have always used perfume to make them more attractive to other people. When we smell something for the first time in many years, a sudden rush of memories comes to us. We remember where we were and how we felt all those years ago when we first smelled it. In aromatherapy, floral scents and the smell of such things as lemon, pine, and mint are used to make people feel better in a variety of ways. Some scents make people more relaxed. Other scents make them more alert, more awake. As you might imagine, the market **reflects** interest in this trend. Business people are happy to make scents available to their customers, for a price.

Another fad from the 1990s-dangerous sports-seems to be turning into a trend in the new millennium. People began to make traditional sports such as skiing and bicycling more **challenging** and dangerous. Some thrill seekers-people who want more and more excitement and danger-have actually created new "extreme sports." One of these, sky-surfing, combines sky-diving(jumping out of an airplane with a parachute) with surfing. In another, waterfall-running, a person rides a kayak off a high waterfall. The thrill seekers who are **addicted** to such sports don't seem to feel fear. They say they need to "focus 100 percent" in order to **survive** their experience. But they also say they feel "100 percent alive" only in those few moments of falling through air or water. But the question remains: Will this trend disappear, change into a different trend, or become part of the culture?

Chapter 6: Global Connections

Global Trade

For the first time in history, almost the entire world is now sharing the same economic system. Communism began to **fall** in the late 1980s, and since then, capitalism has spread to most **corners** of the world. The basis of a "pure" capitalist economy is free trade, also called "open trade". There are **benefits** of open trade for both rich and poor countries. For developed countries such as Japan and England, free trade brings with it more competition, which **in turn** brings advantages such as lower prices and more choices of products for **consumers**. For developing countries, open trade means that people have access to essential **goods** such as food, clothing, and **fuel** (for **transportation** and heat). An open economic system can be a **key** to improving the lives of people in both poor and rich countries because it can **reduce** poverty and improve living conditions.

"Leaking boats"



This is apparently very good news. Optimists often say that “the rising **tide** lifts all boats.” What do they mean by this? Imagine a **harbor** filled with boats – some small ones, some medium-sized, and some huge ships. As the ocean **tide** comes in every twelve hours, the water rises and literally lifts all boats – both large and small. In economics, this expression means that in good **economic** times, poor countries benefit as much as rich countries do. However, pessimists point out that many of the “small boats” seem to be “leaking” – have holes in them – and so are going down instead of up. In other words, the **gap** between rich and poor – the **economic** difference between them – is wider than it was in the past. The contrast can be **startling**. A former U.S. president, Jimmy Carter, once put it this way: “Globalization, as defined by rich people, ... is a very nice thing ... You are talking about cell phones, you are talking about computers.” However, he went on to point out that this “nice thing ... doesn’t affect two-thirds of the people of the world.” In fact, according to the World Bank, more than 1.1 billion people live on less than a dollar a day.

The influence of Geography

Why is this happening? What causes this **gap** between rich and poor? Many of the poorest countries are at a disadvantage because of geography, which is the **root** of several problems. First, a country that is **landlocked**, with no access to an ocean, has a disadvantage because it cannot easily transport its products to other parts of the world. Second, many – but not all – countries in **tropical** regions (near the equator) have the disadvantage of heavy, heavy rains that often **wash nutrients** from the land. Without these **nutrients** in the soil, agricultural development is more difficult. Another **obstacle** for many countries is the problem of infectious diseases such as malaria, schistosomiasis, and dengue fever, which are found only in **tropical** climates. It **goes without saying** that people weak with disease cannot **contribute** to the economy of the country.

Protectionist Policies

Another cause of the growing gap between rich and poor countries is protectionist policies. In other words, many rich countries have governmental plans that give special help to their own people, so trade isn’t actually completely “open”. One example of protectionist policies is an agricultural **subsidy**. This is money that a government gives to farmers; unfortunately, governments in poor countries can’t pay these subsidies to their farmers. Therefore, the farmers in rich countries have a competitive edge in the **global** market. Other protectionist policies are “hidden”. For example, Country X (a rich nation) might say their trade is open. However, it will not buy products from Country Y (a poor nation). Why? It says that Country Y does not have high enough health or safety **standards**.

A way out

It may sound as if the situation is hopeless for developing countries ever to have a competitive edge in **global** trade – but perhaps not. East Asia, for example, has found far more **economic** success than Africa has. The key to success seems to lie in each government’s economic **policy**. Malaysia and Thailand have the same tropical climate as many African countries, but their economies – unlike those of Africa – are growing fast. The reason? Their governments have **created** an economic **climate** in which people can move from agriculture to manufacturing. Geography is not the **terrible** obstacle to manufacturing that it is to farming. To help new **entrepreneurs**, these governments pay careful attention to **areas** such as **infrastructure** (harbors, railroads, and so on) and telecommunication. In other countries, such as India, information technology (**infotech**) is **driving** the economy in some cities. Computer **technology** doesn’t depend on geography, but it does **require** educated workers. Therefore, education must be a **priority**. In addition, governments of developing countries must work with developed countries and **persuade them to drop protectionist policies**. Clearly, it is possible for government policy to prepare a **path** out of poverty in even poor countries.



Global Travel ... and beyond

When some people think of global travel, they think of expensive cruise ships and hotels or sightseeing tours to famous places. However, global travel has changed a lot in recent years. Now, not all travel is expensive, so lack of money doesn't have to **hold people back**. And these days there is an enormous variety of possibilities for people of all interests. Are you looking for adventure? Education? Fun? Do you like to travel with a group? Do you prefer to travel **on your own**? Would you like to get "inside" another culture and understand the people better? Would you prefer to volunteer to help others? Are you **in the market for** something strange and different? There is something for almost everybody.

Train travel used to be simply a means of getting from one place to another. Now, for people with money, it can also offer education or adventure. The Trans-Siberian Special, for example, is a tour that runs from Mongolia to Moscow. The train stops in big cities and small villages so that passengers can go sightseeing, and there is a daily lecture **on board** the train, in which everyone learns about history and culture. For people who are looking for fun and adventure, there are the Murder **Mystery** Trains of Western Australia. These trips interest people who love Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot, and Miss Marple. They are for people who have always secretly dreamed of being a **private eye** and solving a murder mystery right there on the train. During the train ride, for instance, there might be a gunshot; soon everyone learns that there has been a "murder", and they exchange this information and their opinions, and solve the **whodunit** by the time the train has pulled into the station. Of course, no real crime takes place. The "murderer" and several passengers are actually actors. The trip is a very creative game.

Many people don't realize that the world's largest industry is tourism. Clearly, tourists have a big impact on the environment. Perhaps, then, it's fortunate that there is interest in ecotourism; approximately 20 percent of all international travel is now nature travel. Serious ecotourists are interested in preserving the environment and learning about wildlife. Most also want to experience a new culture. Although it's possible to be very comfortable on an ecotour, many travelers choose to **rough** it; they don't expect hot showers, clean sheets, **gourmet** food, or air-conditioned tour buses. They live as villagers do. They **get around** on bicycles, on foot (by hiking or trekking), or on the water (on a sailboat or river raft).

For people who want a valuable experience abroad, there are exciting opportunities to study and volunteer—at the same time. Are you interested in the arts or in learning about another culture? At the Vijnana Kala Vedi **Cultural** Center in India, you can study two subjects from a list of possibilities including Indian music, dance, theater, cooking, or yoga. The tuition for these classes and room and board is very low because you volunteer one hour each day to teach English to children in the village. Are you interested in science? Through an organization called Earthwatch, you study a specific science in a **hands-on** experience as you volunteer on a research project. The projects change from year to year, but among typical possibilities are digging up dinosaur bones in Montana, U. S. A., building solar ovens in Indonesia, or studying medicinal plants in Kenya, bees in Brazil or the ecology of Lake Baikal, Siberia. It may surprise some people that so many are willing to pay over \$1,000 and agree to work hard, usually for two weeks. The Earthwatch director of Public Affairs says that there are two main reasons: "One—it's a really exciting vacation. And two—they can try out a potential career."

Volunteering is a good way to experience another country without paying for expensive hotels or tuition. But how can a person get to another country cheaply? One possibility is courier travel. For a low fee



(\$35-\$50), a person can join an association that sends information about monthly courier opportunities. The passenger agrees to become a courier (i.e. carry materials for a business in his or her luggage) and can then receive huge discounts on airfare—for example, \$250 from Los Angeles to Hong Kong round trip or \$400 from London to Tokyo round trip. People who enjoy ocean travel but don't have money for a cruise ship might try a freighter. Although freighters carry cargo from country to country, most also carry eight to twelve passengers. For people who want to **take their time**, it's relaxing way to travel and is less expensive than taking a crowded cruise ship.

Travelers who return from a vacation often answer the question "How was your trip?" by saying, "Oh, it was **out of this world!**" By this idiom, they mean, of course, that their trip was amazing or wonderful. However, people will soon be able to use this expression literally, but it will be expensive. Already, it's possible to go through the same training that astronauts go through. Just go to Star City, Russia. In addition to astronaut training, it's possible to experience one of their "Space Adventures." On one of these, for example, you can enter a special plane that gives you the feeling of weightlessness that astronauts experience—several minutes of zero-gravity. (Gravity is the force that keeps us on the Earth.) Two private **individuals** have already spent a week at the International Space Station, at a price of \$20,000,000 each. A number of companies are now planning projects to commercialize space in various ways. A California company, Scaled Composites, and a British company, Virgin Galactica, are working on the creation of reusable vehicles that could carry passengers in the near future. Even the Hilton Hotel chain is considering building a space hotel. The main attractions will be the view (of Earth), the feeling of weightlessness, and the chance to take a hike...on the Moon. It **goes without saying** that the price will also be "out of this world."