Lesson 4

How can education be improved?
Learning objectives

You will be able to:

1. Identify different ideas for improving education.
2. Conduct surveys to find out information.
3. Develop independent research skills.
Select your area of interest

Access to education

Education for employment

Inclusive education

Literacy & numeracy

Values-based education

School environment

Scholarships

Teacher training

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Why do some students dropout of school? The numbers of dropouts range from 6.5% in the high school system in the USA, and 9.1% of young people in the UK aged 16-18 classified as NEET (not in education, employment or training). Recent research by UNRWA has put the dropout rate for UNRWA schools between 1% and 2%, citing a variety of reasons including underachievement, financial pressures and marriage.

What might be some reasons why students might dropout? How could school be improved or changed to encourage them to stay?
Many school systems struggle with getting the balance right between vocational training (education that is more suited to work skills - anything from plumbing to computing) and academic learning (subjects like foreign languages, math and science).

Is your school getting the balance right or would you like more vocational training? How could parents and local businesses be a part of this initiative?

Could they offer apprenticeships, where a student learns a job for 3 days a week and studies at school for 2 days a week?
It is estimated that 2 in 3 secondary/high schools in England have a counsellor on site. This provides ease of access for the 60% of students who are thought to have long-term emotional difficulties. It is easy for students to refer themselves if the support is at school, rather than having to go to a separate office.

Should every school have a professional counsellor by law? What else could be done to provide for the emotional and psychological needs of students?
In 2011, the adult literacy rate globally was 84% (population aged 15 years and older).

In some regions, adult literacy rates were well below the global average: South and West Asia (63%) and sub-Saharan Africa (59%), where more than one-third of adults could not read and write.

What role could schools play in increasing adult literacy both in their own countries and overseas?
#5 Values-based education

For many students, dealing with conflict with their peers may be the most important issue.

UNRWA launched its Human Rights Conflict Resolution and Tolerance initiative for schools to help teachers support conflict resolution.

Should Conflict Resolution be a part of every child’s education? What other values should schools teach?
The school environment includes a lot of different factors. Is it a safe place for learning? Is it welcoming to students and the community? Is it accessible? Is it clean and beautiful?

How would you change your school environment? How might you paint your classroom if you were given the choice?
Scholarships are a way of giving children from less economically developed countries the opportunity to study at world-class schools and universities in other countries. Is this the best way of spreading a quality education? What scholarship program would you design and how would it be funded?
The quality of teacher skills has been identified as one of the main factors in student success at school. Some countries, including the United Kingdom and the United States, allow subject specialists without teaching qualifications to teach. How important is a good teacher and what should they have to learn about?
Your education focus

What is your chosen area of education to work on?

What can be improved?
Research task

Conduct surveys to find out what others think about this topic.

Find ideas about how education could be improved.
Conducting a survey

1. Choose your questions.
2. Choose your audience.
3. Create your survey.
4. Analyze the results.

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If you search online with the term “innovative teacher blog”, the top result is a blog by Lisa Nielsen.

Does this mean that this is the most innovative teaching blog?
Research skills: steps to success

1. Find more information
2. Keep notes
3. Cite your sources
4. Judge usefulness
5. Judge reliability
6. Synthesize

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What will each member of your team do next?