

Finland has world's best education system

Sources: www.thelearningcurve.pearson.com www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=421944&c=1

A new report into world education shows Finland has the best system. The global study is called "The Learning Curve" and is from the British magazine "The Economist". It aims to help governments provide a better education to students. The 52-page report looked at the education system in 50 countries. Researchers analysed millions of statistics on exam grades, literacy rates, attendance, and university graduation rates. Asia did well in the report, with South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore finishing second, third, fourth and fifth. The United States came 17th in the study, while Mexico, Brazil and Indonesia filled the bottom three positions in the top 50. The Learning Curve reported on five things that education leaders should remember. The first is that spending lots of money on schools and teachers does not always mean students will learn. Second is that "good teachers are essential to high-quality education". The report said teachers should be "treated as the valuable professionals they are, not as technicians in a huge, educational machine". Numbers three and four are that a country's culture must have a strong focus on the importance of education, and parents have a key part to play. Finally, countries need to "educate for the future, not just the present." The report said: "Many of today's job titles...simply did not exist 20 years ago."

SUBJECTS:

What's the best thing for today's students to study? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- environmentalism
- English
- single-family farming
- maths
- community relations
- health and sports
- religious education
- software programming

TRUE / FALSE:

Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. The article says Finland's kindergarten education is the best worldwide. T / F
- b. A 50-page report looked at the education system of 52 countries. T / F
- c. Researchers looked at attendance figures during their research. T / F
- d. Mexico and Brazil were in the top 50 countries. T / F
- e. The report made five suggestions for decision-makers in education. T / F
- f. The report says spending more money will mean a better education. T / F
- g. The report states parents should keep away from schools and teachers. T / F
- h. It suggests we don't know what kind of jobs there will be in the future. T / F

GAP FILL:

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

A new report (1) _____ world education shows Finland has the best system. The global study is called "The Learning Curve" and is from the British (2) _____ "The Economist". It (3) _____ to help governments (4) _____ a better education to students. The 52-page report looked at the education system in 50 countries. Researchers analysed millions of (5) _____ on exam grades, literacy rates, attendance, and university (6) _____ rates. Asia did well in the report, with South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore (7) _____ second, third, fourth and fifth. The United States came 17th in the study, while Mexico, Brazil and Indonesia filled the (8) _____ three positions in the top 50.

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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the new report into?
2. What is the name of the report?
3. What two rates did the researchers look at?
4. In which position did South Korea finish on the list?
5. What was Mexico's position on the list?
6. How many things did the report want education leaders to remember?
7. What are good teachers essential to?
8. How should teachers not be treated as?
9. What must a country's culture have a strong focus on?
10. What did the report say about many job titles today?

MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

1. What is the report called?
 - a) The Learning Nerve
 - b) The Learning Curve
 - c) The Yearning Swerve
 - d) The Learner Cave

2. How many recommendations did the report make to education leaders?
 - a) Five
 - b) Four
 - c) Three
 - d) Two

3. Who made the report?
 - a) The United Nations
 - b) Finland's government
 - c) A Facebook group of students around the globe
 - d) A magazine from the U.K.

4. What does not always mean students will learn?
- a) Going to school six times a week
 - b) Using more technology in the classroom
 - c) Spending a lot of money
 - d) Doing extra homework
5. Which of these did researchers look at?
- a) The quality of pencil sharpeners
 - b) Classroom technology
 - c) Attendance
 - d) School meals
6. How does the report say teachers should be treated?
- a) As valuable professionals
 - b) As educational machines
 - c) As technicians
 - d) As parents
7. Which continent did well in the report?
- a) Asia
 - b) South America
 - c) Antarctica
 - d) Africa
8. What role do parents have to play?
- a) A safe one
 - b) A chain one
 - c) A lock one
 - d) A key one
9. Where did Brazil finish on the list?
- a) Three times
 - b) In the bottom three
 - c) Third
 - d) Third from bottom
10. What does the report say did not exist two decades ago?
- a) Education for the future
 - b) Simple education
 - c) Many of today's job titles
 - d) "The Learning Curve" report

EDUCATION & SCHOOLS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'education'?
- c) Why do you think Finland's education system is so good?
- d) What do you think of the education system in your country?
- e) What were (are) you happy and unhappy with about your education?
- f) How can schools provide a better education to students?
- g) How were (are) your exam grades and attendance?
- h) How different do you think education is in Finland from Asian countries?
- i) Are you proud of your school? Why?
- j) How important is education?

EDUCATION & SCHOOLS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
- b) Do you think spending lots of money on teachers and schools means the education is better?
- c) What were (are) you happy and unhappy with about your education?
- d) What do you think of your teachers?
- e) What three things can teachers do better?
- f) Should teachers get paid the same as lawyers, doctors and bankers?
- g) What is easy and difficult about a teacher's job?
- h) How important is using technology in lessons?
- i) What does "educate for the future, not just the present" mean?
- j) What questions would you like to ask the author of the report?

ACADEMIC WRITING

Schools are no longer necessary. Teachers should teach using iPads and computers with students sitting at home. Discuss.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE

A F
B F
C T
D T
E T
F F
G F
H T

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. World education.
2. The Learning Curve
3. Literacy rates and university graduation rates
4. Second
5. It was in the bottom three
6. Five
7. High-quality education
8. As technicians
9. The importance of education
10. They did not exist 20 years ago

MULTIPLE CHOICE-QUIZ

1. b
2. d
3. c
4. a
5. b
6. a
7. c
8. a
9. d
10. c

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