

# Online Think Tank Explores Ways in Which Education Can Shape the 21st Century

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Jan. 7 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – The Institute for the Future of Education, a new online discussion group initiated by students and educators around the globe, is asking how tradition-bound schools can evolve to meet the changing needs of the new Millennium. It can be found at [instituteforthefutureofeducation.org](http://instituteforthefutureofeducation.org). The forum addresses questions like:

Why do schools still place so much emphasis on the memorization of reams of facts, when the Web makes much of this unnecessary? Why do educators not seriously investigate how to save costs by pushing laptop and smartphone technologies to their limits?

Why, in our electronically interconnected age, are curricular and budgetary decisions in school districts made on the basis of the standard model of one teacher in a classroom of 30 students, which hasn't changed in 2500 years?

Why do educational systems in North America, for example, leave students largely ignorant of the history and cultures of huge swaths of the globe, like Africa, Asia, and the Islamic world? In foreign language study, why do French and Spanish represent 85 percent of classes taught in America, and Chinese less than 1 percent, despite the fact that in the 21st century China has a far greater influence on the planet socially, economically, politically, and culturally?

Why is Environmental Science largely ignored in most schools? Or economics? Why are geometry and calculus, which are thought to build problem-solving skills but are of little practical value to most students, still taught instead of Java, BASIC, or HTML, which could develop the same skills but also be immediately useful?

The group grew organically out of various on and offline discussions occurring among students, postdocs, research fellows and professors at Teachers College at Columbia University, the University of Tokyo, the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris, Kansas State University, the Graduate School of Education at Harvard, Hong Kong University, and the University of Cambridge, among others.

Comments are welcome, and can be made on the site or by writing [futureofeducationinstitute@gmail.com](mailto:futureofeducationinstitute@gmail.com).

Visit: [www.instituteforthefutureofeducation.org](http://www.instituteforthefutureofeducation.org).

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