

# Objective of post compulsory education education essay



Post compulsory education is optional, but to enter a respectable career individuals usually must continue their education in order to achieve their financial and/or personal goals. The primary objective of post compulsory education is surely to enhance an individual's potential for their future, to add value to themselves and make them a more attractive proposition for a potential employer. Post compulsory education has become an essential part of the educational system in our society by being the right step for many different people with many different circumstances. For some students it provides a vehicle of transition from school to university.

For those people that are considering a career change, the post compulsory education provides the opportunity to learn a new skill or trade at a every reasonable cost, more importantly if employers can be persuaded to contribute financially there is the prospect of increasing the pool of well qualified people at reduced cost to the exchequer.

Given the above it may be an idea for the Government to take care of the initial set up and then leave market forces to prevail and see to what extent further education attracts the interest of the people who will ultimately test the skills of the student, the employers. The rules of the game will need to be clearly defined and held up for scrutiny, the most important in my opinion – only fund what is required and works, there's nothing that focuses the mind like traceability and accountability!

Education is important in life. Had there not been a community college system, many people would not have realised their educational goals. As research has shown, without a formal education, most people are less likely

to reach their full earning potential. It is important to look at the positives that the community college system provides to communities across the nation. If the people who discredit the community college system would take a deep look into it, they too would see the great fulfilling value of this institution.

In recent times education has been viewed as the great leveler with respect to social parity. Throughout Britain and indeed the developed world, education has been the means for increasing human capital resources and the route into the middle class for many millions. Education plays a pivotal role in many communities desire for social improvement. Families will make almost any sacrifice to assure that a family member obtains the opportunity to gain the skills and qualifications that will maximize the potential of social advancement. These capital resources include:

**Cultural Capital** – According to Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, children from middle-class families are advantaged in social and intellectual knowledge gained due to their possession of cultural capital. I agree, cultural capital is conveyed within the home environment, which can have, in my opinion, a significant effect on performance in the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations and has a fundamental affect on the achievement of students thereafter, particularly those who unfortunately have little ability and come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

**Social Capital** – Social Capital is an important part of Labour's community cohesion agenda, highlighting the shared values that can give rise to bonding within communities. Friendships in schools can develop from an

early age bridging ethnic, background and religious divides, which in turn can result in parents developing a respect of people as a consequence of their children's new found associations. Maybe more emphasis should be placed on breaking down the barriers between different fractions of society rather than activities such as school twinning.

Human Capital – The acquisition of human capital will usually increase the lifetime earning capacity and employability of any individual who acquires it, and ultimately it could be argued controlling the level and distribution of income in society. In my commercial experience it is both profitable and productive to embark on both the training of young people (apprentices) and more experienced personnel, supplementing their skills ensuring they are kept in touch with modern manufacturing techniques and technologies. In addition the trainee would normally benefit from a feeling of being valued by the company and a sense of personal achievement, ensuring a greater awareness of the benefits associated with success, leading to a thirst for increased personal development.

### **Post war developments in education.**

Education in Britain has changed greatly since World War II, mainly due to the 1944 Education Act which made a provision for statutory secondary education for all. One of the main changes it made was that the system of public education was reorganised in three progressive stages: primary, secondary and further education. The school leaving age was raised to fifteen and later to sixteen. The educational system created by this Act had three main features:

That there should be a division between primary and secondary education at the age of 11.

That there should be three types of secondary schools designed to meet three different types of children, namely the grammar schools, the secondary technical and the secondary modern schools.

The appropriate school for a child should be determined by tests at 11 years of age.

On closer inspection education and its importance in national, political and economic terms have changed a great deal since then with each new government; there have been loads of good intentions, but in my opinion too few initiatives taken to achieve the ideal system.

In his study ' Education in the Post-War Years' (1988) Lowe comments that politicians who were in favour of the tripartite system genuinely believed that such a differentiated secondary system offered the best education to disadvantaged children. They saw the establishment of a universal secondary school system and the raising of the school leaving age as the key to removing class distinctions. It was hoped that the 1944 Act would lead to a greater flow of working class children to grammar schools.

The main achievement of the 1944 Act was the attempt to relate the level of secondary education received by children to levels of their intelligence by excluding the fee-paying pupils from the grammar schools. In this way access to grammar schools would be limited to those who could pass the 11plus and those who failed would not be able to buy their way into the

grammar schools. As was shown by M Sanderson in his study ' Educational opportunity and social change in England' (1987), the distribution of opportunities was in a much closer relationship to that of ability than ever before. Yet the difference in chances of getting to grammar school remained very wide across the spectrum of social class. Children from the working classes had only a third of the likelihood of selective secondary education of the children from the professional classes.

There was not a uniform national test which led to differences and unfairness between different educational authorities. A study by Lowe (1988) shows that selection criteria varied considerably between different educational authorities and were always determined by the availability and not the demand for the grammar school places.

The whole primary curriculum was distorted by coaching for the 11plus test. In reality the process of dividing children into more and less able was taking place not at 11 but at much earlier age of 8 or even 7. The more intensive teaching was invested in the upper stream and less able children were often neglected

The selection did not give a desirable result. By 1949 it began to emerge that about 20-25 percent of the apparently carefully selected grammar school pupils could not cope with an academic education and were leaving schools early. Some modern secondary schools were more successful in terms of the examination results than some grammar schools. Ample evidence was emerging that many very able children whose ability

developed strongly after the age of 10 were being misallocated by 11plus tests. This dissertation from

Another unfortunate result of selection was that some 70 percent of all 11-year-old children who went to the secondary modern schools started their secondary education with the stigma of having failed the 11 plus. There was no clear concept of the secondary modern schools which were just what was left after selecting the more able children to the grammar and technical schools. Young people were leaving their schools at 16 without any recognised qualifications.

The third part of the tripartite structure, the secondary technical schools, failed to materialise. Secondary technical schools took about 4 per cent of the children compared with 70 percent for the secondary modern and 20 percent for the grammar schools. There were simply very few of them. The grammar schools with their academic values had a disproportional prestige compared with their technical counterparts.

The only solution to this entire problem seemed to be abolishing selection at 11 and sending all the children to the same school. In 1965 Circular 10/65 was issued requesting Local Education Authorities to organise a system of comprehensive schools. By 1979 comprehensive schools become the predominant state sector norm. Nevertheless in my opinion perfect equality of opportunity has not been achieved. Firstly the remaining grammar and independent schools still creamed off high ability middle class children reducing comprehensive schools to secondary modern. Secondly, the comprehensive schools could not remove those characteristics of

disadvantage in society which affected children's response to education.

Comprehensives did not widen cross-class friendships nor did they widen the career aspirations of working class children.

'The notion that social structures can be changed through educational reform is a liberal myth'. (Sanderson, 1987 p 64).

The present comprehensive system made educational opportunities of working class children even worse. In theory all comprehensive schools are equal, but in reality schools situated in the more affluent catchment areas became more academically orientated as more parents expected their children to continue their education at University. As a result bright children from the deprived areas are forced to attend schools that are inadequate for their needs and unable to fulfil their potential. The only way for them to be accepted to more academically oriented school is to move to the 'leafy lane' area which is much more difficult for a child to do than to pass a 11 plus test. There is an opinion that such children would have benefited from returning to the selective system.

Should the country return to the selective system?

Clearly, present comprehensive system needs reforming, but on the other hand there is a body of evidence against the tripartite system. There are arguments in favour and against either of these systems. The selective system provided a better education but only for the minority. The comprehensive system seems to offer equal opportunities but has been accused of holding back development of more able students. In my opinion



the solution lays in developing a system which would accumulate strengths of both the selective and comprehensive ideas.

Educational systems should provide all children with knowledge and skills which should help them develop their potential and should prepare them for their adult life. I believe that the best way to achieve it is not to go back to the old selective system, even though I was a product of it, nor would it be wise to keep the present 'non selective' system. In my opinion children should be selected into different groups but selection should not be made on the basis of different abilities or aptitudes, which has been proved difficult if not impossible to measure, but on basis of achievement. I can imagine a system where pupils are transferred along the educational ladder not in accordance with their age but in accordance with what they have learned. The examination system should be designed in such a way that it does not put unnecessary stress on the students but it should be clear that they could not move along before being able to show solid knowledge of the curriculum. Such a system would give a reward and encouragement to the students that are actually learning at school. It would allow the more able pupils not to repeat time after time what they already know but to study with the older students. In my opinion children that have not passed the standard test for 11 years old at the end of the primary school should not be automatically transferred into secondary school but should stay in primary school for another year. The aim of the test should not be about selecting the most able pupils but checking that every child going to a secondary school acquired a basic knowledge without which he or she would not be able to study further, surely then we would not be in the absurd position of having to

support students in gaining qualifications in foundation skills and employing a selection procedure which fails to recognise GCSE's at what ever grade, necessitating an initial assessment test to ensure students are able to progress.

One of the advantages of the tripartite system was the attempt, if not successful, to establish a system of the technical schools. I think it is very important to continue expansion in this direction and to develop different types of secondary schools. One type of school should have more academic orientation and another one more technical or vocational, in short starting the work of vocational colleges in advance and allowing successful students to progress earlier than would otherwise have been possible. Both of them could be a part of one comprehensive school.

The decision on which school each particular child is going to attend should be left to the parents and the children. I believe that such system would be more just and would give a better chance of quality education for all students regardless of their social status cumulating in the progression to a productive, profitable and fulfilling career choice.

My specialist area prepares students for a vocational career where the development of skills is paramount, this is an area which was scrutinised by Lord Leitch who was asked by the Government in 2004 to consider what the UK's long-term ambition should be for developing skills in order to maximise economic prosperity, productivity and to improve social justice.

Lord Leitch, placed great emphasis on the skills agenda, often referred to as the 'employer engagement' agenda reflecting the Government's belief in the <https://assignbuster.com/objective-of-post-compulsory-education-education-essay/>

importance of employer input. I must admit to finding it difficult to understand Lord Leitch's model as the report itself contains no details of the modelling that led him to his conclusions, (' working towards' is in my opinion not a target at all), putting this aside I can only go with his findings one of which is the target that 40 per cent of the 19-65 population should hold a level 4 qualification by 2020. Lord Leitch adds,

' This challenge is formidable. Skills matter fundamentally for the economic and social health of the UK. I have listened to key stakeholders and eminent thinkers at home and abroad. There is consensus that we need to be much more ambitious and a clear message that the UK must ' raise its game'.'.

2006. p 5

I feel strongly about the content of this report and hope that the targets are achieved. We can not be a nation of service industries, more needs to be done to ensure that we hack stuff out of the ground, add value to it and sell it on at a profit, ok this is slightly flippant but the principle holds true.

Education in the 60's in my opinion was perceived as a means of supporting the countries economic prosperity rather than adding value to the student supporting them to fulfil their dreams, ambitions and potential. The move to comprehensive schools accelerated in the 70's, ensuring the demise of a large number of grammar schools. Mrs Thatcher was Education Secretary at this time, I think she did very little to improve community regard and spirit relating to education, her first act was to abolish free school milk for the over sevens, a departure from the values of 1944.

During the 80's education became more centralised with increased emphasis placed on parent involvement. The provision of free school meals was removed and The 1988 Education Act set out the National Curriculum, giving increased power to governors and the ability to opt out of Local Education Authority control.

The purpose of education in Britain in my opinion has changed significantly since 1945; this I think has resulted in improvement for the majority of students. However, if Britain is to make the most of its students, it is essential that changes continue to be made so that the potential of students is both satisfied and increased.

## **Professionalism**

Like many Teachers, I live and work among public servants and professionals. Most of us I think work to serve the public conscientiously. Many institutions enjoy excellent reputations and carry out outstanding work. Yet during recent times we have all found our reputations and performance doubted, we increasingly hear that we are no longer trusted. Is this true? Of course not. The reason for this mistrust is not easy to understand, but it seems that the remedy lies in sanctions and prevention. Government, institutions and professionals should be made more accountable and increasingly this has become the case.

‘ the quest for greater accountability has penetrated all our lives, like great draughts of Hieneken, reaching parts that supposedly less developed forms of accountability did not reach’.

O’Neill, O (2002). *A Question of Trust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 45.

Professional practice is deemed to be supported by new methods and requirements, the accountability revolution may be achieved if this were so. In my opinion I think it often obstructs the proper aims of professional practice. Exams are more frequent subsequently time for learning shrinks. Professional practice used to focus on interaction with those whom we serve, students. Now less time is available due to increased form filling requirements, record details what we as teachers do, how and why we do it and if things go wrong ensure that we have the evidence to protect ourselves from what can be far-fetched complaints. Targets seem to be in a state of flux constantly being re-defined ensuring a constant focus on an institutions performance up the league table, teachers can either view these as demoralising and cry for increased support, or to quote modern manufacturing rhetoric ‘ an opportunity to shine’.

Serious and effective accountability, I believe, needs to concentrate on good governance, an obligation to tell the truth and on intelligent accountability.

O’Neill, O (2002). *A Question of Trust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 59.

Professional practice is heavily influenced by organization structure, these can be many and varied, however usually a business is organised by its functions, e. g. marketing department, accounts department and so on. This is because being grouped together allows the functions to benefit from

specialisation and division of labour. This leads to lower unit costs and a greater efficiency, however it can mean that there is departmental rivalry.

A tall organisation has a larger number of managers with a narrow span of control whilst a flat organisation has few managers with a wide span of control. A tall organisation in my experience can suffer from having too many managers (a huge expense) and decisions can take a long time to reach the bottom of the hierarchy, however a tall organisation can provide good opportunities for promotion and the manager does not have to spend so much time managing the staff.

Castle College is currently going through a time of change, one of which is organisational, one level has disappeared and new positions created. My opinion is that it is a positive move allowing decisions to be made faster and without the influence of 'committee' which usually ensures that information exchange is protracted and positive focused direction can be more difficult to come by, only time (and successful candidates) will tell.

## **Differentiation**

When planning the differentiation for the lessons I decided to adopt the strategy of 'Differentiation by Outcome' suggested by (Pollard, 2008). This strategy involved students being differentiated based on the level of understanding/knowledge they demonstrated when completing set tasks, contributing to class discussions and answering directed questions. This links to my previous recommendations relating to student progress being limited to attainment of the required level prior to moving on. It did not require separate tasks to be created for particular individuals or groups of students.

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This method of differentiation compliments vocational education as 16 to 19 year olds are not enthusiastic about being identified as different to their peers.

The differentiation worked as follows:

More able pupils would display a good understanding of the concepts and be able to provide detailed answers to the worksheets, class discussions and directed questions. Their answers will demonstrate clear examples and links to real-world scenarios.

Less able pupils would show less understanding of the concepts and might not be able to word their answers, verbally or written, to a standard appropriate to level two. Their answers may lack detail and students may not be able to compare the concepts to real-world scenarios.

## **Inclusion, equality diversity**

Culture and learning are connected in important ways. Early life experiences and a person's culture affect both the outcomes and processes of learning. If this relationship is true, could we then assume that students who share cultural characteristics have common ways of learning?

They are important because we need all the information we can get to help every student succeed in college.

An understanding of both culture and learning style differences is important for all teachers. The relationship and values of the culture in which a learner is currently living, or from which a learner has roots, and the learning

expectations and experiences in the classroom is directly related to the learner's success academically, socially, and emotionally.

It is important to support learners in every way in class or in its surroundings. Having a classroom climate is one step to supporting a learner. The room needs to be of three climates, relaxed, warm and supportive. If the tutor is relaxed then the students in the classroom feel relaxed and may not even think of misbehaving. Warmth can be seen by the student when the teacher is expressing their kindness, for example 'do you need any help?' in a soft relaxed tone. Supportive meaning encouraging the students to meet their outcomes and giving prompt and accurate feedback.

By being there for the students and supporting them through difficult tasks is only way to pass on the knowledge and skills that the teacher possesses even if you are mentoring. Demonstration is the key word especially if I'm conducting practical training/learning. However Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs makes the point that the lower needs are identified first before rising upwards step by step.

The aim of inclusive education is surely to encourage colleges to reconsider teaching approaches and pupil groupings so that they support and respond to the needs of all pupils (Farrell, 2000 p 77). An inclusive classroom is one where the needs of all pupils are taken into account and individual differences are valued, irrespective of social or cultural backgrounds, disability or learning difficulties. The factors affecting inclusive education are vast and include curriculum content and organisation, attitudes of staff and pupils, quality of teaching, standards of attendance and behaviour (Alban-



Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2001: 21). It is the responsibility of both colleges and teachers to develop the best possible environment for all students, and how inclusive a particular college is, is not easy to gauge. Richards (1999: p 99) believes it can only be achieved by colleges that are committed to maximising inclusion and minimising exclusion.

I believe and understand all pupils have the right to be educated along with their peers in mainstream college. However, my college experiences to date have resulted in mixed opinions about the extent of inclusion. It is important to state that this is not from a prejudicial view point, simply a practical one. From my observations a class may consist of many pupils with differing special learning requirements and many more that are categorised as 'normal'. I have regularly observed pupils who become disengaged because they do not understand the work or are frustrated by receiving little support. This often manifests itself in unruly behaviour and in extreme cases large portions of a lesson can be disrupted for the whole class. If the pupil had been given the attention and support they require then in some cases the poor behaviour may have been averted. I believe managing the conduct of pupils in the classroom is often pivotal to the learning experience which the majority of them receive. Van Acker & Wehby (2000: 93) believe

“ some of the greatest concerns expressed by educators throughout this country involve finding ways to effectively address the needs of students who display challenging behaviour within the school setting”.

Van Acker, R. W., & Wehby, J. H. (2000). Exploring the social contexts influencing student success or failure. Michigan. Heldref Publications

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I have also observed pupils in lessons continuously struggle because the teacher simply does not have the time to give them the additional support they require. When this occurs, what do these pupils gain from being in large, diverse groups? In my opinion they are being disadvantaged by being denied specialist, segregated provision.

I can see both positive and negatives, principles and practicalities of inclusion but unfortunately I can see no ideal solution. Maybe an education which involves a mixture of both mainstream and specialist teaching would be best.

Teachers now had direct responsibility for their pupils learning. We are in a key position to observe SEN pupils' responses in class and should recognise learners who are experiencing difficulties in learning. We should try out different teaching methods to help meet their needs. In addition teachers should be encouraged to keep full records of their pupils' progress to include information about professional consultations and assessments.

### **The student's perspective**

Whatever we choose to do as teachers, we must begin with the students' own view of things. What do they know, or think they know, about the topic? What differentiations do they make, and what values do they place on these differentiations? Journeys always begin where you are.

We must adapt not only to the students' understanding of the topic, but to their understanding of the world. Some will have more experience of methods of problem-solving or creativity or have more general background to draw from. We can't take these things for granted.

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Also part of this background are their native abilities, whether truly genetic or simply learned at a tender age, rapid versus slow capacity for learning, learned or inborn energy levels etc. In other words, we must be aware of all those various and contrasting things we often label intelligence.

The question remains (and it is a difficult one): How do we as teachers become aware of the students' view? One answer is to test them. We have arrived at the point where we see tests as feedback rather than purely evaluative instruments. But why not see tests as feedback for the teacher? Sadly, many teachers see poor test performance only as indications of a lack on the student's part. I believe that it's time for these teachers to begin taking some of the responsibility.

There are for students and teachers, more immediate and continual forms of feedback. Teaching is an interaction, and if you are aware of students' responses to your presentation, you will receive important information, their understanding. If they laugh when you expect them to, look puzzled when you expect them to; ask questions when you expect them to, and so on, it is at least more likely that you and they are "in sync."

But we can be more direct, we can ask. We can ask them for their views, ask them if they understand, ask for examples, and ask them to explain to others (for in teaching we learn'), and so on. Education should be a reciprocal process. If you are not learning something in your classes, your expectations will undoubtedly not be met.

## Tests and feedback

Some things, such as learning to drive a car, give immediate and continual feedback: When you don't steer properly, you wind up on the pavement or worse. The driving test that comes afterwards is not intended to be feedback to improve learning; it is intended to keep incompetent drivers off the roads. Video and computer games similarly provide immediate and continual feedback, so parents seldom need to encourage their children to practice harder at the Nintendo. The involvement turns what might otherwise be construed as the rote learning of eye-hand coordination, into something meaningful.

I don't know that much academic rote learning could easily be converted into video games. Frequent, informal "quizzing" — admittedly nowhere near as much fun as Pacman — provides good feedback. With computers, feedback can be used to alter lessons to emphasize practice of weak skills, as in many of the typing-tutor programs.

But, with non-rote, intrinsically meaningful learning, feedback can certainly be made more immediate and continual by engaging students in meaningful projects and simulations. If the material is without doubt meaningful, the student will be intrinsically motivated to do better, which in turn means he or she will be motivated to notice and even seek out detailed feedback. In other words, if you care about what you're doing, "testing" takes care of itself.

The most important feedback is actually from my students themselves. For example, what aspects of their learning are they enjoying or how are they responding to the learning materials and resource that they are utilising.

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Feedback must be given in order to progress to competence and the student has a right to give feedback too. Reece and Walker write:

“ Alternatively, you can ask students themselves what kind of feedback they want. If it is what they have asked for, they will be motivated to take it more seriously. They are in the best position to know what their difficulties are and to judge what kind of feedback is helpful.” (Reece and Walker, 2000, p470).

### **Assessing learning, evaluating teaching**

In order to assess learners, evidence of performance and knowledge is required. It is important to be clear what the fundamental difference is between evidence and assessment. Although the two terms are often considered to be virtually synonymous when used in common language, they have radically different connotations when used in an educational or training context.

By assessment we mean those activities that are designed to measure learner achievement brought about as a result of an instructional programme of some sort. Evaluation, on the other hand, refers to a series of activities that are designed