

Reforming Education – Teacher’s Notes

Level: Intermediate +

Time: 1 hour approx.

1. Write the following quotes up on the board before class.

"Society produces rogues, and education makes one rogue cleverer than another." -Oscar Wilde

"Children enter school as question marks and leave as periods." - Neil Postman

"We are shut up in schools and college recitation rooms for ten or fifteen years, and come out at last with a bellyful of words and do not know a thing." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

"The founding fathers in their wisdom decided that children were an unnatural strain on parents. So they provided jails called schools, equipped with tortures called education." - John Updike

2. When class begins, call on students to read the quotes aloud. Have more than one student read out each quote.

3. Ask students to tell you what each quote means. Then ask them what they have in common.

4. Write on the board this question: "HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THIS COUNTRY'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM?"

5. Give each student 10 index cards and have them write out some ideas, one idea per card.

6. After 10 minutes, tell them to stop. Put them in groups of 5 and tell them to share their ideas, and rank them in order of importance.

7. When they are finished, tell them to choose the 5 best ideas, and give you the other cards.

8. Take the remaining cards and spread them out on a table.

9. Invite your students to stand up, and walk over to the table. They can choose any extra cards they want from the table.

10. Next, in their groups, they should choose the 3 best ideas, and create a 2-3 minute presentation of the ideas.

11. Give them 15 minutes to prepare then have each group come to the front of the classroom to do their presentation.

Acknowledgement: This lesson is based on clustering, a common technique in creativity training, where groups share ideas in response to a problem.