

*Using the discussion forum “Assignment 10.2: Changes in Education and Training,” discuss what you foresee to be significant changes in education and training within the next 30 years. Include the impact that the changes could have on the process of learning*

This is a good question, and I think if any of us truly knew the correct answer to it, then he or she would become very rich by being able to capitalize on educational trends before they come into existence and become prevalent. That is the key to most businesses, early adoption, before the market place becomes saturated. My estimation of the future of education will only apply to the post-secondary level, since this is where all of my teaching experience has occurred. I have very little knowledge of the primary and secondary educational environments and will not venture a guess as to where they are headed. With one exception, I do believe that primary and secondary education needs to be less “age” organized and instead should be organized by aptitude. The federal government’s draft of the National Educational Technology Plan released on March 3, 2010 makes a point of emphasizing the need for this change to take place as well.

The trend in post-secondary education appears to be in increasing asynchronous distance education. This is not to say that face-to-face classes will not exist in the future, they will. Educational facilities will most likely re-evaluate where face-to-face courses are most successful, like in the case of many of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs which require extensive hands-on components, i.e. nursing, EMT, welding, etc. I think that there is also a possibility that college instructors will be further divided into content experts and proctors. Many colleges already separate lecturers from lab instructors in courses that have labs. It is cheaper to pay graduate students to do the labs than it is to pay the full-time tenured professors. I think we could see the same thing happen with online courses; with content experts writing the curriculum and overseeing the implementation of the course, and with adjunct faculty or grad students proctoring the online course and answering student questions. Again, we already see much of this happening at the four-year colleges with professors lecturing and “mentors” handling most of the grading of student papers and answering of student questions. My thinking is that this will be a cost saving device for colleges and there will be a lot less full-time tenured faculty members employed in the college ranks. Distance education will also help to reduce the money spent by school districts to build new schools and additional classrooms. Education, like many businesses, is entering into a streamlining phase. Finding a teaching job will become more competitive and merit-based job security will more than likely replace tenure in the teaching profession.

I’m not trying to paint a bleak picture, I do think that education in America will benefit in the long run, it will just be re-focused. One of the big moves forward that I see education taking is the establishment of STEM programs in schools across America at all levels. Many of the administrators and department chairs that I know are already writing the curriculum and gearing up to meet government requirements in the areas of science, engineering, electronics, and math. I think this is a good thing; it reminds me of the efforts made in education after the Russians launched Sputnik. I also like the idea of trying to merge academics teachers with CTE teachers, and doing so will build stronger, smarter, critical thinkers to deal with the difficult challenges this country is bound to face in the future.

When I look back on the last decade and realize how far education has progressed in such a short time I am optimistic about what its future has to offer. With the amount of research being done into learning science, we can only imagine what new methods of teaching and learning could be on the horizon. Despite the economic tsunamis that lie ahead, I’m sure that education will not only survive the storm, it will also evolve into a leaner yet more productive system that will produce outstanding results and once again become a model excellence that we can all be proud of.