

CHAPTER

6

The Modern History of Education in America



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Content Terms

Project Head Start	national standards
bilingual education	competency-based education
illiterate	standardized test
back-to-basics movement	charter school
educational standards	programs of study

Academic Terms

baby boom	civil rights movement
Holocaust	educational accountability
Cold War	global economy

Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

- 6.1 analyze** links between key federal education legislation and perceived threats to national security or prosperity during the 1940s and 1950s;
- 6.2 summarize** the impact of the civil rights movement on American education, citing examples of ways this movement prompted improved educational opportunities for other groups;
- 6.3 evaluate** the impact of educational reforms of the 1970s on teachers and students;
- 6.4 analyze** changes to the education system in the 1980s due to the back-to-basics movement;
- 6.5 distinguish** how educational changes in the 1990s continue to shape education today;
- 6.6 assess** how the educational changes made in the 2000s adapted education to fit an increasingly globalized society;
- 6.7 summarize** the changes made to education in the 2010s; and
- 6.8 analyze** how education is being shaped at the start of the 2020s.



READING PREP

After reading each section (separated by main headings), stop and write a three- to four-sentence summary of what you just read. Be sure to paraphrase and use your own words.

JOURNALING ACTIVITY

Scan the headings in this chapter. Before reading the chapter content, write about your prior knowledge, understanding, and feelings about education in America during the Modern era by responding to the following questions:

As you examine the Modern history of education in America, how do you think education has progressed since the 1950s? Which factors do you think most significantly influenced education today? How might these factors influence you as a future teacher?

After reading the chapter, review your initial response to the above questions. How have your knowledge and self-understanding increased about this topic? What do you feel you still need to learn on your journey to becoming a teacher?



As a class, read the case study and discuss the questions that follow. After reading the chapter, revisit the discussion questions. Have your answers changed? If so, explain how.



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Britta just found out who her lead teacher would be for her student teaching placement. Mr. Lee had quite a reputation as a well-respected and loved teacher. The school principal referred to him as a “master teacher.” When Britta met him, her first reaction was “but he is so old!”

She expected her lead teacher to be much closer in age—especially when hearing how well-liked he was—and had hoped that the two of them would become friends.

Discouraged but hopeful, she decided to find out more about Mr. Lee’s background. During their first meeting, she discovered that he went to college in the 1970s and began teaching in 1980. He reminisced about all the changes he had seen in education during his career—some good, some very challenging. Although eligible for retirement, he chose to keep teaching because he loved seeing and helping a new generation of teens achieve their learning goals.

Let’s Discuss

- What changes might Mr. Lee have shared about the influences on the state of education during his career?
- In what areas might Mr. Lee serve as a mentor to Britta?
- How might Mr. Lee and Britta create a strong teaching team together?

Why are math and science so important? Why do you take so many exams? When did schools start offering classes in languages other than English? Why did it take so long for schools to become desegregated? Who decides what should be taught in schools? In this chapter, you will learn the answers to these questions as you read about the history of schooling in America from the 1940s to today.

In the previous chapter, you learned about American education from the settlement of the colonies through the Great Depression of the 1930s. These beginnings shaped the structure and the role of the educational system that exists in the United States today. This chapter provides an overview of education from 1940 to the present. What happened during these more recent decades has had a direct effect on the policies, procedures, and issues of education today.

During every era, historical events and changes in American life impact expectations of the educational system and the public’s perception of it. New initiatives are tried, then revised and made in reaction to perceived

problems. Presidential beliefs and priorities determine their degree of federal involvement in education. Some presidents have believed in the importance of shaping educational policies, while others believed this should be left up to the states. During some periods in history, international conflicts or major problems within the country may deflect attention away from educational concerns.

6.1 American Education During the 1940s and 1950s

The first half of the 1940s was dominated by World War II. Production of war-related materials, from tanks to uniforms, helped pull the country out of the Great Depression. Thousands of young men left each month to fight the war overseas. This created job vacancies in factories, offices, and classrooms. These positions were filled by women and African-Americans (**Figure 6.1**). Both of these groups also had expanded roles in the military during the war. Never before had so many women worked outside of the home.

With the end of World War II (1945), the troops flooded back into civilian life. They looked forward to returning to normal life, but they, and society, had changed. Many war workers had to give up their jobs for veterans. Other soldiers took advantage of what was known as the *GI Bill*, federal legislation that included money for veterans to attend college or train to learn new skills. Young people married in record numbers. The result was a surge in the birth rate over the next 20 years. This is often known as the *baby boom*.

After the war, neither African-Americans nor women were willing to again accept the lower status they held during the prewar years. They had proven their capabilities in the workplace and in the armed forces. Long-held ideas began to change. Photographs and stories of the *Holocaust*—the mass slaughter of European civilians, especially those of Jewish descent, by the Nazis during World War II—made people more aware of the tragic effects of prejudice. These changes aided the subsequent *civil rights movement*.



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Figure 6.1 During World War II, women and African-Americans filled many workplace roles in factories, business, and education.

The period after World War II was a time of new ideas and technology. As factories stopped producing products for the war effort, consumer goods finally became more available. There were new options in housing, home technology, fashion, and even food. Industries grew, jobs were available, and Americans were hopeful. It was also a time of social and political conservatism and a fear of the spread of communism.

Education was not immune to this era of change. The children of the baby boom began to enter the public school system. Their sheer numbers resulted in the need for more schools and teachers. In addition, world events and social change had significant impact on American education.

Keeping America Competitive

In the late 1940s after World War II, tensions and competition increased between the Soviet Union on one side and the United States and its allies in Western Europe on the other. While no actual fighting broke out, this came to be known as the **Cold War**. This standoff continued for decades.

Both America and the Soviet Union had programs to develop and test missiles. Americans were alarmed when the Soviets launched the first satellite, Sputnik, in 1957. There was a fear that the Soviets' emphasis on math and science in their schools was giving them a technological advantage that could later translate into a military advantage.

In 1958, Congress passed the *National Defense Education Act*. This made money available to improve scientific equipment for public and private schools and to provide college scholarships and student loans. It encouraged schools to strengthen their math, science, and foreign language instruction. Schools responded by requiring students to take additional math and science courses. Foreign language programs were improved. Homework requirements increased in an effort to spur learning.

Brown vs. the Board of Education

In the early 1950s, many schools in America were still racially segregated based on “separate but equal” policies. Yet, African-American schools still were not equal in funding. Educational materials were inferior and usually outdated. African-American teachers were only allowed to teach in African-American schools, and they received significantly lower pay. School buildings were often in disrepair.

In 1954, the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case of *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. The court ruled that racial segregation of schools violated the Constitution because segregated schools were, by nature, unequal. As a result, public schools were ordered to desegregate (**Figure 6.2**). Some districts did so. Others used delaying tactics.



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Figure 6.2 As a result of a Supreme Court ruling in the 1950s, public schools were ordered to desegregate.

Although school desegregation has gone through many phases since 1954, this initial Supreme Court ruling was critical to the civil rights movement. The *civil rights movement*—a social movement in the United States led primarily by African-Americans and their supporters—sought to gain equal rights regardless of race. The push to integrate schools was the most radical, and potentially influential, aspect of the movement.

Behaviorism

Chapter 8 will describe a variety of learning theories, including B.F. Skinner's behaviorism. Behaviorism is the belief that how a person behaves is determined by that person's experiences. Skinner's book *Science and Human Behavior* was published in 1953.

Many educators embraced Skinner's theory during the 1950s. They believed that by controlling the classroom environment and experiences, they could produce educated, well-behaved students (**Figure 6.3**). Appropriate behavior and achievement were rewarded. For example, young students were often given gold star stickers when they performed well. Punishments were also common. This way of approaching learning was widely accepted, and influenced American education for decades.



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Figure 6.3 Education in the 1940s and 1950s focused on controlling the classroom environment and experiences.

6.2 American Education During the 1960s

The 1960s were a time of change. Those born during the baby boom were becoming teenagers and young adults. Many in this new generation questioned the conservatism of the 1950s and challenged the values, policies, and way of life of older adults.

The sixties were a decade of contrasts. They began with the optimism of newly elected President John F. Kennedy. Neil Armstrong walked on the moon in 1969. It was also, however, the decade America became involved in the Vietnam War, and John F. Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy were all assassinated.

The civil rights movement was especially active during this period. Its leaders favored peaceful methods, such as sit-ins and marches, to protest discrimination. In 1963, more than 200,000 people of all races marched in Washington, D.C. in support of civil rights. They heard Dr. Martin Luther King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

The civil rights movement spurred other groups to work for their own equality. These included women, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and people with disabilities. Like African-Americans, all had experienced discrimination in various ways.

The 1960s were a time of educational innovation. Schools and teachers had the freedom to try creative ideas in an effort to improve education. On the national level, the most significant changes affected students who were disadvantaged economically or educationally.

The Civil Rights Act

Although the Supreme Court decision in 1954 called for an end to segregation, many schools, especially in the South, were slow to comply. Even a decade later, many African-American children were still being educated both separately and unequally.

The *Civil Rights Act of 1964* formally outlawed segregation in the United States public schools and public places. School districts were ordered to end segregation. They were called to “undo the harm” segregation had caused by racially balancing schools. Federal guidelines were issued; however, some school districts continued to stall, and problems remained.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act

President Lyndon Johnson, who succeeded President Kennedy, pushed for wide-ranging reforms with his “War on Poverty” and “Great Society” programs. The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* sought to improve the schools most in need. Federal education dollars were given to school districts based on the number of poor children enrolled. This was a major boost to struggling schools and helped equalize educational opportunities.

Project Head Start

Project Head Start, still in existence today, also began in 1965 during the Lyndon Johnson administration. Its purpose was to help preschool children from low-income families develop the skills they needed for success in kindergarten and beyond (**Figure 6.4**). Students who begin with a good start in school are less likely to experience academic problems later.



anek_soowannaphoom/Shutterstock.com

Figure 6.4 This contemporary Head Start classroom is in existence today because of legislation passed in the 1960s to provide a high-quality educational environment for children affected by poverty.

Some Head Start programs are coordinated with other social programs. They may, for example, provide all-day childcare. These programs provide a positive, high-quality environment for preschool children. Today, the program is open to more families and serves hundreds of thousands of children each year.

6.3 American Education During the 1970s

During the 1970s, America had many foreign and domestic preoccupations. On the international front, after years of protests, the Vietnam War finally drew to a close. President Nixon visited the communist countries of the Soviet Union and China. At the end of the decade, United States citizens were killed and held as captives in the American Embassy in Iran.

At home, America was changing, and people faced many concerns. The divorce rate rose, and the number of single parents increased. Overall, there were significantly more women in the workforce in a broader range of jobs. An oil crisis sent prices soaring and created shortages. There was a push for conservation and finding alternative sources of energy.

Unemployment went up during the 1970s. So did prices as inflation hit home. People had less disposable income and were less willing to spend on education. Many schools suffered from inadequate funding.

Desegregation and Busing

The civil rights movement continued to push for equality. Desegregation at the school level had not solved unequal education. The problem stemmed partially from the tradition of neighborhood schools. By choice or lack of opportunity, neighborhoods tended to be divided by race. That meant that schools often had little racial diversity and those with primarily minority populations often had inferior facilities and lacked sufficient, up-to-date educational materials.

School districts were mandated to look at desegregation at the larger district level, rather than just school by school. This led the way to forced integration. School districts assigned students to schools in proportions that would achieve integration and bused them to those schools.

This plan certainly was not without controversy. Many families of all races objected to having children forced to take long bus rides to schools outside their neighborhoods (**Figure 6.5**).

Congress voiced the opinion that busing was not the issue, and that desegregation was not necessarily the answer to making schools equal. Injustices still existed, even in desegregated schools. The issue of inequality would continue for years.



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Figure 6.5 Busing was a controversial plan aimed at achieving desegregation in public schools.

Bilingual Education

Amid the controversy over school busing, the Supreme Court ordered that a group of Spanish-speaking students be granted **bilingual education**. That is, classes would be taught in two languages, both English and Spanish. In 1971, the Supreme Court ordered the joining of two school districts in Texas, one that had primarily Spanish-speaking students and the other mostly English-speaking. The Court found that language was a barrier for equal education. All students were taught both Spanish and English.

In 1974, the Supreme Court acknowledged the problems students face when they have limited English skills. The Court ordered schools to provide basic English language classes for children who had limited English skills. This ruling was based on the difficulty Chinese students were facing in San Francisco.

Gender Equity

The Civil Rights Act affected education in many ways. It stimulated a variety of subsequent laws that provided equal opportunities for other groups. For example, in 1972, *Title IX* or the *Equal Opportunity in Education Act* was passed. It prohibited discrimination based on gender in all programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. If a school, even a college, receives federal funds, every program and activity must be open to all, regardless of gender. One impact of this act was opening sports, even those formerly designated for boys only, to girls. The overall influence of the law, however, was much more far-reaching.

Tradition and discrimination had long limited the career options of women. This began to change in the 1960s and 1970s. Prior to that time, nursing and teaching were the two professions most available to women. It was unusual for women to enter professions dominated by males, such as law and medicine.

PROFESSIONAL TIP

Showing Respect

Professionals treat their colleagues and supervisors with respect. Many new professionals make the mistake of not acknowledging their place in the workplace organization. Even the most casual and unstructured organizations have hierarchies. They may just be more difficult to identify. Be sure you fully understand an organization's hierarchical structure when employment begins. Whether it is another professional, a customer, or your boss, you will be the one who benefits by understanding the importance of *deference*, or showing respect. Even more importantly, show respect to your students. When you model respect to your students, gaining their respect will be much easier for you.

Dig Deeper

What is your definition of respect? Compare your definition of respect to the definitions of *respect* and *deference* in the dictionary. How does your definition compare? To whom do you show respect to in your daily life? In what ways do you practice showing respect? Write a short essay on the importance of showing respect to post to the class website or blog.

Even when women held comparable positions, they were usually paid considerably less than men. Due to the combination of job options and pay discrepancies, in 1970, women earned 59 cents for every dollar earned by men. In 1978, more women than men enrolled in college for the first time.

Children with Disabilities

In 1975, Congress passed the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act*. For the first time, it guaranteed a free public education for children with disabilities. Further, it mandated that the education provided for each child be appropriate and take place in the least restrictive environment. Parents were to be involved in decisions about their child's placement.

Previously, most children with disabilities had been segregated in special classrooms. With this legislation, children are able to spend part or all of their school day in regular classrooms (**Figure 6.6**).



FatCamera/E+/Getty Images

Figure 6.6 In 1975, Congress passed legislation that guaranteed free public education for children with disabilities.

6.4 American Education During the 1980s

During the 1980s, there was less national emphasis on education. President Ronald Reagan believed the federal government's role in education should be reduced. His vice president, George H. W. Bush, who succeeded him, held similar views.

The 1980s were a time of growth and prosperity for some people, but the gap between rich and poor widened. Consumerism was at an all-time high. Buying on credit was a way of life for many. Those born during the baby boom had reached adulthood and many were raising families of their own. The families of baby boomers, on average, had fewer children. There were more single-parent families as the divorce rate rose. In addition, two-income families were more common than in previous decades as women gained more career opportunities.

The Back-to-Basics Movement

In 1983, a report called *A Nation at Risk* was published by a federal government agency. The report asserted that America's competitive edge was at risk. It said that the United States was falling behind other countries in business, science, and technology. There was concern that creative innovations in schools in the 1960s and 1970s had left many students lacking a good foundation of basic knowledge and skills in reading, writing, and math.

A number of indications of this gap were cited. American students fell behind students of other developed countries in math and science scores. College graduates were scoring lower on general knowledge tests than in prior years. The military reported that recruits had poorer reading and writing skills than the previous generation. Millions of Americans were **illiterate**, meaning they could not read or write.

There were calls for school reform. Many Americans believed that schools again needed to emphasize reading, writing, and math, leading to the **back-to-basics movement**. Critics of the movement believed that students needed more than basic reading, writing, and math skills to succeed in a complex world.

PERSPECTIVES on TEACHING

Graduation was finally here! Sasha could hardly believe how fast this monumental achievement had come upon her. She had accepted a sixth grade teaching position for next fall in a local school district. Yet, she remembered the early days during her last semester of student teaching when graduation seemed like a faraway dream. She knew she had come a long way in building skills and becoming more positive and receptive toward different expectations of teaching outcomes—especially those of her mentor teacher.

Sasha had been partnered with a very experienced supervising teacher during her student teaching semester. During those first weeks, she came home discouraged at the end of every school day. Her supervising teacher, Ms. Brown, was very particular and meticulous. She insisted that Sasha complete detailed plans and that the plans were followed. Sometimes students completed worksheets in class. It was not that students were complaining or that they were not learning, it was just that Sasha envisioned the class sessions being much more active, loose, and creative. Sasha found so many creative project ideas on social media and various blogs that she yearned to use.

What Sasha knows now is that Ms. Brown is considered a “master teacher” for a reason. This became more apparent as the weeks went by and students achieved learning goals and moved onto more dynamic application of the founding principles that they had learned well. Ms. Brown invited Sasha to experiment with her creative teaching ideas while staying true to the established learning outcomes. Sasha observed how the students were confident when standardized testing was done and how Ms. Brown really lived the adage “No child left behind.”



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Sasha's Thoughts...

I am so excited to have my own class next year. I have so many ideas—how my classroom will be arranged, what fun activities I will incorporate in my teaching, and even potential guest speakers. I also know that I still have a lot to learn. Ms. Brown taught me how to effectively manage a classroom; develop nurturing, encouraging, and compassionate relationships with students; and most importantly, how to teach core content to students in meaningful and lasting ways.

Analyze It!

After reading *Perspectives on Teaching*, reflect on how educational reform may have impacted Ms. Brown's teaching strategies. Why do you think Ms. Brown insisted that Sasha complete and follow detailed lesson plans? How might different generations of teachers learn from each other?

6.5 American Education During the 1990s

The 1990s were about technology. The internet changed the way people communicated, received information, shopped, and conducted business. It played a key role in education, as well.

The economy was booming and unemployment was at an all-time low. At the same time, the United States became involved in conflicts around the world, including in Bosnia and the first Gulf War.

The Computer Revolution

With computers such an integral part of education today, it is hard to believe that they played a minor role in learning until the development of smaller versions (very large by today's standards) in the 1980s. It was not until the mid-1990s that most classrooms were equipped with a single computer.

As more educational programs were developed and the price of computers declined, they became more available. It was the development of the Internet and search engines that turned computers into the powerful and essential learning tools of today. The ability to use computers skillfully soon became a key career skill. Today education, as well as information, is readily available via computer and other digital media (**Figure 6.7**). This makes learning available at a time and place convenient to the student.



FatCamera/E+/Getty Images

Figure 6.7 Computers, digital tablets, and other forms of digital media are essential learning tools in classrooms of today.

Educational Standards and Accountability

State governments and local school districts largely control the public educational system. Consequently, there has always been much variation in what is taught at various grade levels, in different courses, and in individual schools. Uniformity was promoted by state curriculum guidelines and textbooks used in schools across the nation. Beginning in the 1980s, the call for more demanding and uniform educational standards grew louder. *Standards* are agreed-on levels of quality or achievement. **Educational standards** refer to guidelines defining what students at various levels should know and be able to do.

In 1991, Congress established the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST). This group began asking questions. What should be studied? How should learning be measured? What standards of performance should be set?

In addition, teacher associations for various subject areas (such as history, physics, math, and others) voluntarily began to develop standards for what should be taught in school. They answered the questions about what should be studied and how it should be measured. They also set standards for performance in their subject areas. These are commonly referred to as **national standards**.

Teaching toward standards is often called **competency-based education**. That is, schools teach toward students demonstrating mastery and achievement of specified knowledge and skills in subject areas. Many people who support standards believe that they provide an objective way of evaluating student learning. In contrast, many who object to standards believe that real learning and creativity is lost and the only gain is memorization of facts.

In 1999, President Clinton made it clear that the role of the federal government was to establish guidelines for achieving excellence in education. Individual states would establish specific standards and objectives, testing to evaluate whether standards were met, and ways to measure whether schools met the standards. Although this seemed like a reasonable plan, it soon became complicated by politics.

Setting standards naturally led to the question of how to measure whether or not students had met the standards that had been set. There was a move toward *educational accountability*—measurable proof that schools and teachers were providing high-quality education. Beginning in the 1990s, many states began using standardized tests to measure success.

Standardized tests are designed to give a measure of students' performance compared with that of a very large number of other students. For example, they may measure reading comprehension skills of third-grade students across the country.

Standardized tests serve a variety of purposes in addition to measuring student achievement. They are useful to compare different groups of students or schools. They can help educators make decisions about which teaching programs are working and which are not. They can report on an individual student's progress.

Goals 2000 Act

During the 1990s, most Americans were feeling the impact of the back-to-basics movement. After wide distribution of the report, President George H.W. Bush and the nation's governors set six educational goals to reach by the year 2000. These goals, along with two additional goals added by Congress, gained wide approval and Congressional support in the *Goals 2000 Act of 1994* (**Figure 6.8**). Implementation of these goals,

National Education Goals

By approving the *GOALS 2000: Educate America Act*, Congress reaffirmed the six National Education Goals agreed to by the nation's governors under the leadership of Governor Clinton and then-President George H.W. Bush in 1990. In the Act, which passed with strong bipartisan support in 1994, Congress also added two goals—one on teacher learning and one on parent partnerships. Every major parent, education, and business group endorsed the National Education Goals and GOALS 2000 across the country. The goals stated the following:

By the year 2000

- All children in America will start school ready to learn.
- The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
- All students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, the arts, history, and geography, and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our Nation's modern economy.
- Students from the United States will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.
- Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.
- The Nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.
- Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

Figure 6.8 The *Goals 2000 Act of 1994* tried to remedy complex problems in education.

however, was up to the states and local school districts. Translating the goals into specific plans took time, and there was little opportunity to remedy complex problems within the last years of the twentieth century.

6.6 American Education During the 2000s

The first decade of the twenty-first century brought new challenges to the United States. After the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001, the United States went to war in Afghanistan and Iraq. At home, the economy seemed strong, with rising real estate values and high consumer spending, much of it on credit. In 2008, however, a financial crisis began that plunged the country into a period of financial uncertainty. Some financial institutions failed. Jobs were lost as spending slowed.

What was striking about this financial crisis was how quickly it spread around the world. It confirmed the existence and impact of the *global economy*. Finance, international corporations, and trade link the economies of nations around the world—particularly those of major countries. For example, computer links made it possible to move many of a business' functions to any country with an educated, but less expensive, workforce.

No Child Left Behind Act

In January 2001, just three days after taking office, President George W. Bush announced his plan for educational reform. The *No Child Left Behind Act* was passed later that year. The goal of this act was to improve the performance of schools in the United States. Important components of this act included increased accountability, more choices for parents when choosing schools for their children, and an increased focus on reading.

The underlying premise of the act was the belief that high expectations and goals would result in success for all students. One of the most controversial features was the expectation that every child should meet state standards in reading, math, and science. One method of measuring achievement was the use of standardized tests at specific grade levels. Standardized tests and other measures of evaluation were encouraged. The receipt of federal educational funds was tied to school performance. Schools demonstrating success in meeting high standards would receive more money. Parents would have the opportunity to move their children from low-achieving schools to higher-achieving schools.

While few argued with the need for higher achievement, many expressed concerns about the provisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Some pointed out that the characteristics of students and funding levels varied widely among schools. Those schools starting with a higher percentage of students already behind grade level would have difficulty meeting the goals, especially if their funding was poor. There were complaints that teachers were encouraged to spend much of their time specifically preparing students for the standardized tests at the expense of other content information and educational experiences.

One impact of the *No Child Left Behind Act* was an increase in the variety of school options. In some states, more charter schools were established. A **charter school** is a public school that operates with freedom from many of the regulations that apply to traditional public schools. Charter schools often use innovative teaching practices. Each has a charter that establishes the school's mission, goals, students served, programs, methods of

evaluating programs, and ways to measure success. Parents must specifically choose to send their children to charter schools.

Not all states have approved charter schools. Proponents believe parents need choices and competition among schools will improve public education. Opponents worry about schools becoming competitive in nature, and leaving some students behind. Others worry that experimental methods will not work or that long-established, traditional public schools will see reductions in funding.

Competing in the Global Economy

Schools play a crucial role in preparing future workers with the necessary skills to compete in a global economy. In the United States, even before the financial crisis, many jobs formerly performed by American workers had shifted abroad. Part of the reason was that wages and benefits in the United States were higher than those of other nations. The availability of many highly educated workers was also a major factor. In many countries around the globe, students and societies see education as their best hope for a better life.

With falling math and science scores and many students not completing high school, there has been real concern that the United States may lose its competitive edge. It may be one of the countries that fall behind economically. The most important factor in remaining competitive in a global market is having a skilled and well-educated workforce (**Figure 6.9**). This is the job of schools. As in earlier times, there has been debate about how education must change to meet these challenges.



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Figure 6.9 Preparing workers to compete in the global economy is a current challenge faced by educators.

Career Clusters and Pathways

Since a skilled workforce is a key to prosperity, one essential goal of education is to prepare students to succeed in the workplace. The United States government partnered with business and industry professionals, colleges, trade schools, and high schools to discuss how to help students prepare for successful careers. Based on predictions that today’s students will change careers a number of times during their working life, the group developed a system of career clusters.

Career clusters are a framework of 16 general career areas or categories (Figure 6.10). Each career cluster has a range of *career pathways*—or subcategories of related career options. By developing the essential knowledge and skills identified through industry validation for a cluster, students can pursue a variety of career options within the cluster and its pathways. Educators can use career clusters and pathways to design and create curricula. They also develop **programs of study**—rigorous sequences of career and technical and academic courses—to prepare students for successful transition from high school to postsecondary education/credentialing and employment.

Sixteen Career Clusters

Cluster Category	Type of Job Emphasis
Agriculture, food, and natural resources	Agricultural products such as food, natural fibers, wood, plants, and animal products; the production, distribution, marketing, and financing of these products
Architecture and construction	Design, plan, or construct building structures; building management and maintenance
Arts, A/V technology, and communications	Visual and performing arts, journalism, and entertainment; designing, directing, exhibiting, writing, performing, and producing multimedia
Business management and administration	Plan, organize, and evaluate business operations; sales, support services, and administration
Education and training	Teach in various learning environments; educational support services and administration
Finance	Investments, banking, insurance, financial planning, and financial management
Government and public administration	Local, state, and national government jobs
Health science	Health and medical services
Hospitality and tourism	Foodservice, lodging, travel, and tourism
Human services	Child and adult care services, counselors, therapists, home-care assistants, and consumer services
Information technology	Relate information through communication systems, computers (including hardware, software, and Internet), and other media
Law, public safety, corrections, and security	Public safety and security
Manufacturing	Production of goods; sourcing and distribution
Marketing	Sale of goods; advertising, marketing, forecasting, and planning
Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics	Scientific research, scientific services, and product development
Transportation, distribution, and logistics	Movement of people or goods through flight, rail, car, biking, trucking, walking, or by other means

Figure 6.10 The career clusters model lists the 16 areas that include a variety of career pathways and options.

PHILOSOPHY of TEACHING

Think about...

The following questions can help you on your journey to writing your philosophy of education. Reflect on the questions.

Why is teaching important to you? How do you hope to make a difference in the lives of students?

Write and discuss...

Take a few minutes and jot down your thoughts about these questions. Discuss your response with your classmates. Save your responses for future reference and reflection throughout the text.

6.7 American Education During the 2010s

President Obama signed the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* in 2015, a less prescriptive legislation than the No Child Left Behind Act. The ESSA gave more flexibility to individual states and offered grants for improvements. The ESSA created a federal government commitment to equal opportunity for all students regardless of race, geographic location, disability, or socioeconomic level. Each state was required to submit an ESSA plan to be approved by the U.S. Department of Education. In the years following its enactment and adoption by individual states, high school graduation rates rose, drop-out rates fell, and the number of high school graduates attending college increased. In 2018, the ESSA state plan requirements were revised.

In 2018, President Trump signed the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*, commonly known as the *Perkins V* as it had gone through five major revisions over the many years since it was first passed in 1984. The Perkins V Act identified funding expectations, both federal and state, to expand support for these programs, including support for integrated career pathways. In particular, funding is to be used to support programs that provide good quality academic and technology learning. Career and technical education is expanded to include middle school education, not just the upper grades. States are also given more flexibility to meet the unique needs of their students and educators when deciding how to use federal funds.

6.8 American Education During the 2020s

As the decade opened, the world was hit with a global pandemic. At the peak of the pandemic, schools were shut down, and in many countries such as the U.S., classroom learning was offered remotely. There were many challenges and opportunities. Challenges included making access available to all students. Computers, tablets or other devices, and online service were not equally available to all students, depending on social and economic factors, geographic location, and family support. As the pandemic spread, illness among teachers, staff, and their family members made it difficult to keep schools staffed. Teachers worked hard to provide quality educational experiences despite the challenges. Despite their heroic efforts, education suffered in many ways, including high rates of absenteeism, students' personal crises, loss of instructional time, and higher rates of student mental health issues, violence, and misbehavior. Test score gaps widened between students in lower- and higher-socioeconomic schools.

Through the many challenges, the pandemic provided new opportunities to reassess ways in which education is delivered. Teachers learned new skills for creating learning environments. Students often were recipients of more individualized instruction. For some, this ready access made learning more manageable and effective. Many school districts are focused on implementing new methods for closing learning gaps. Many schools are building back stronger with better ways of coping with changes brought on by societal changes or natural disasters. Teachers are becoming more technologically savvy. As schools recover from the pandemic, they may be more open to new ways of teaching that are more flexible and resilient.

Summary

- 6.1 During the 1940s and 1950s, World War II and the Cold War with the Soviet Union impacted education. African-Americans and women who assumed new jobs during the war wanted to retain their improved status. The Cold War prompted increased emphasis on American education, especially in science, technology, and foreign languages.
- 6.2 The 1960s brought demands for change. The Civil Rights Act became law. A war on poverty was declared, and schools began focusing on meeting the special educational needs of children living in poverty.
- 6.3 In the 1970s, educational issues focused on equity and the continuing desegregation of schools, bilingual education, and education for children with disabilities.
- 6.4 In the 1980s, concern deepened over students' perceived lack of basic knowledge and skills fueled by a government report titled *A Nation at Risk*.
- 6.5 In the 1990s and well into the 2000s, concerns about America's international competitiveness continued to affect education.
- 6.6 In the 2000s, preparing students to succeed in the workplace became a main focus of education.
- 6.7 During the 2010s, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) were signed into law to help increase student success and to help states meet the unique needs of their students.
- 6.8 The 2020s began with a global pandemic which offered many challenges to and opportunities for the delivery of education and student learning.

Review and Study

1. In 1958, Congress passed _____, which made money available to improve scientific equipment for public and private schools and to provide college scholarships and student loans.

A. the National Defense Education Act	C. the Civil Rights Act
B. <i>Brown vs. the Board of Education</i>	D. Project Head Start
2. _____ sought to improve the schools that most needed funds based on the number of poor children enrolled.

A. Project Head Start	C. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
B. The Civil Rights Act of 1964	D. The National Defense Education Act
3. Which of the following was *not* an issue for American education during the 1970s?
 - A. Busing of students to certain schools to achieve forced desegregation and integration.
 - B. The Supreme Court ruled that schools must provide English-only instruction to students regardless of their primary language.
 - C. The Equal Opportunity in Education Act was passed and prohibited discrimination based on gender in all programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.
 - D. Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, which guaranteed a free public education for children with disabilities.
4. Teaching toward standards is often called _____ education.

A. back-to-basics	C. standardized
B. competency-based	D. accountable

5. In the early 2000s, the _____ was passed with the goal of improving the performance of schools in the United States through increased accountability, more choices for parents when choosing schools for their children, and an increased focus on reading.
- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| A. Goals 2000 Act | C. Every Student Succeeds Act |
| B. Perkins V Act | D. No Child Left Behind Act |

Vocabulary Activity

1. With a partner, use the internet to locate photos or graphics that depict the *Content* and *Academic Terms* at the beginning of the chapter. Print the graphics or use presentation software to show your graphics to the class, describing how they depict the meaning of the terms.

Critical Thinking

- Analyze effects.** In teams of two, use the text and additional resources to investigate and analyze the effects of the influx of children of baby boomers on the educational system. Share a brief report of your findings in class.
- Analyze reasoning.** The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* gave more federal education funds to schools with higher enrollments of children from low-income families. The *No Child Left Behind Act* imposed penalties on under-performing schools, many of which had large low-income populations. Use the text and other resources to analyze the reasoning behind each approach's attempt to improve education for low-income students. Which method appears to be most effective? Discuss your answer, citing evidence to support your conclusions.
- Identify evidence.** Review the descriptions of major educational issues and changes since 1980. Which has had the greatest impact on your education? Cite specific text evidence to support reasons for your choice.
- Infer.** The civil rights movement continued to impact education, including bilingual education. Use the text and other reliable resources to make inferences about historical, societal, cultural, and political trends or issues that influenced bilingual education. How do these trends or issues continue to impact bilingual education today? Write an essay summarizing your inferences.
- Evaluate evidence.** Read the text passage on the *No Child Left Behind Act* in the text. Cite text evidence of benefits and controversies surrounding this act. Write a summary of your conclusions.

Core Skills

- Writing.** After reading the chapter, create an annotated time line—from the 1940s through the 2010s—identifying significant events in public education in the United States. Combine it with the time line you started in Item 17 of Chapter 5. Save a copy for later research.
- Technology application.** Create a digital poster showing significant events in the civil rights movement's push for equal education. Use the text and other reliable resources to identify events. Note reasons why it took so long to deal with this complex issue. Upload your digital poster to the class website or blog.
- Reading and speaking.** Review the text and research other reliable resources on gender equity as related to the *Equal Opportunity in Education Act*. How did this act change not only education but other areas of society, too? How did it open doors for women in education and careers? Give an oral report of your conclusions to the class.

4. **Writing.** Identify one aspect of your education that relies on computers or other forms of digital media. How would it have differed before computers were widely available in schools? Write a paragraph summarizing your response.
5. **Research and speaking.** Use online resources to research, access, and print an example of national or state standards for a particular subject area and level (such as health education, grades K–4). How are the standards organized? Are they written in language that is clear enough that teachers would know what to teach and how to evaluate learning? Do you think teachers are limited to teaching only what is in the standards? What questions do you have about this process? Discuss your responses with the class.
6. **Writing and speaking.** Often concerns about education focus on math and science knowledge and skills. Write an essay making a case for the importance of at least three other types of knowledge and skills that you think are essential to career success in a global economy. In class, discuss what role courses preparing students for careers such as childcare, building trades, and agriculture have in schools today and should have in the future.
7. **Research and speaking.** Research how much and what type of impact a new president can have on education. Consider the status of existing laws, government policies, funding of programs, and new legislation. What roles do Congress and the Supreme Court play in educational policy? Discuss your responses in class.
8. **Technology application.** Do a search for videos, apps, and computer games that are marketed toward early readers. Evaluate three items.
 - How does technology change how children are educated?
 - Is technology a distraction or an enhancement to a young learner? Why?
 - Do these toys and games meet the educational needs of primary school children? Are they stimulating? Are they interactive? Do they promote a love of learning?
9. **CTE college and career readiness practice.** Attempts to change education have very real consequences for students' lives. Choose two educational reforms. Research the main implications of these reforms on the classroom experiences of students. Use your research to write fictitious accounts of the experiences of two students. In the first, show how one reform positively changed the life of a student. In the second, relate how the other reform negatively impacted the student's life.

COLLEGE *and* CAREER PORTFOLIO

Arrange to interview a teacher or administrator who has been in education for a number of years. The purpose of the interview is to understand someone's personal experience in dealing with changes in the field of education. Prepare questions prior to the interview to determine what shifts in education the person has seen, the effects of those changes on teachers and students, and any patterns of change the person has identified over time. Take accurate notes. If possible, and with the person's permission, record the interview. Write a summary of the interview, including what you learned and your personal thoughts about educational change. Add the document to your portfolio.



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