



The 10th SFLEP National Foreign Language Teaching Contest

第十届“外教社杯” 全国高校外语教学大赛

大学英语综合课组

授课文本

主办：

教育部高等学校外国语言文学类专业教学指导委员会

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上海外语教育出版社



授课文本 D

Reflecting on Education

Reflecting on Education

Overview

In this unit, you will:

- read about a professor's concern about today's college education;
- explore the culture of higher education and its value;
- reflect on the relation between grades and academic performance.


The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet.

— Aristotle

No graduation speaker will ever tell you that the future is anything but uncertain. It never is. But graduations need not only be obsessed with looking ahead; a graduation can be a day on which we turn back and trace our steps to see how we ended up where we are.

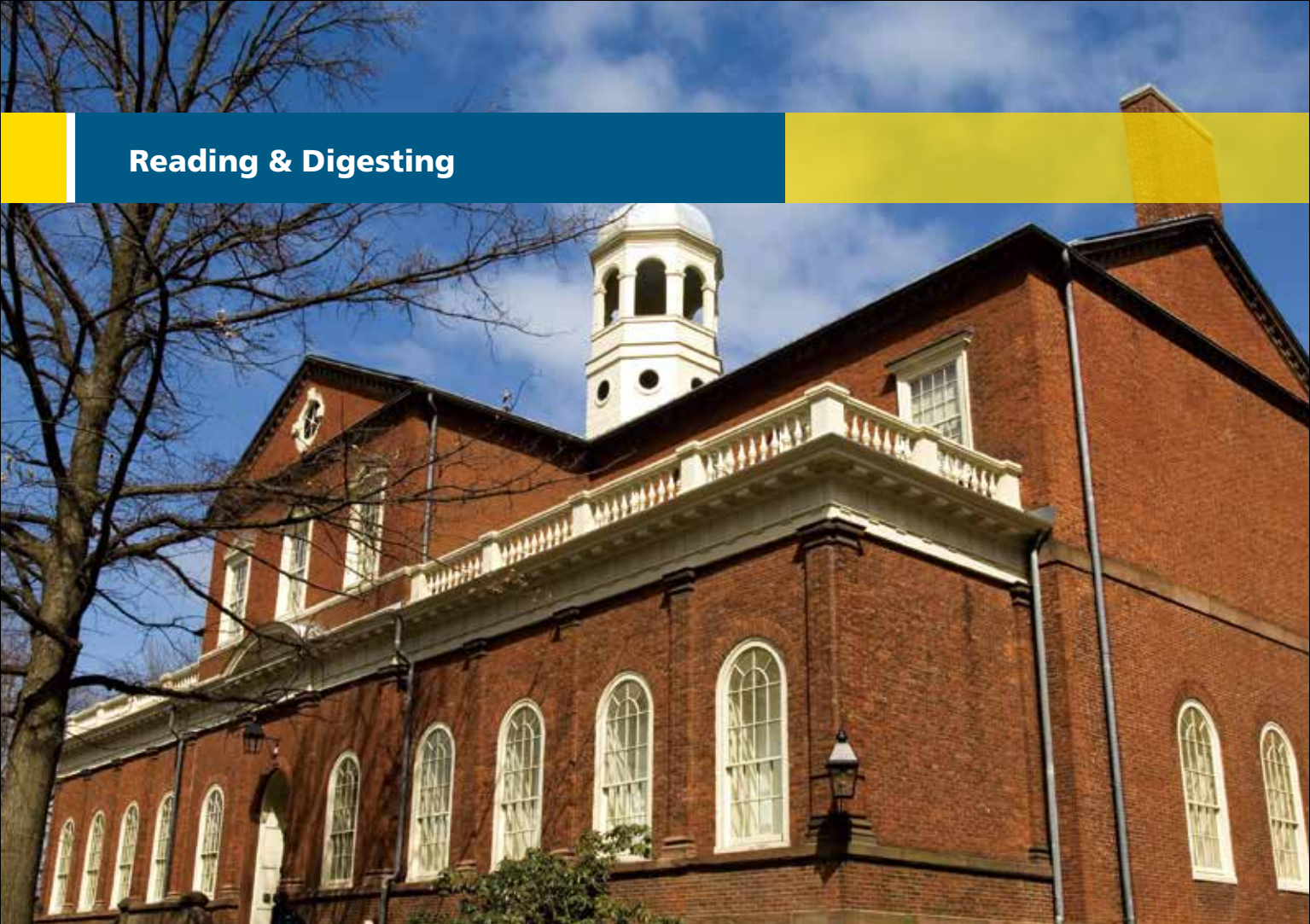
— Taylor Mali

Warm-up

 Watch the video clip and then answer the following questions:



1. What enabled Obama's wife to go to the best schools in U.S.?
2. Do you think university students should work hard?



Text

The Commencement Speech You'll Never Hear¹

Jacob Neusner

*Jacob Neusner was a professor and distinguished scholar at Brown University in Rhode Island when he wrote this essay. His numerous books include *How to Grade Your Professors*, *Other Unexpected Advice*, *Judaism² and Christianity³ in the First Century* and *World Religions in America*. As*

distinguished /dɪ'stɪŋgwɪʃt/
a. successful, respected and admired 卓越的, 杰出的

Brown University 布朗大学 (美国常春藤盟校之一)

Rhode Island 罗得岛州 (位于美国东北部)

essay /'eseɪ/ n. 短文, 论说文

numerous /'nju:mərəs/ a. many 许多的, 很多的

grade /greɪd/ vt. arrange people or things in groups according to their ability, quality, size, etc. (按能力、质量、大小等将……) 分级, 分等, 分类

1. The text was taken from the Brown University campus newspaper, *the Daily Herald*.
2. Judaism (犹太教) is one of the oldest monotheistic religions and was founded over 3500 years ago in the Middle East.
3. Christianity (基督教) is a monotheistic religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, who is the focal point of the Christian faith.



the title suggests, “The Commencement Speech You’ll Never Hear” was not delivered at a college graduation, but it was published in the Brown University campus newspaper, the Daily Herald.

1 We the faculty take no pride in our educational achievements with you. We have prepared you for a world that does not exist, indeed, that cannot exist. You have spent four years supposing that failure leaves no record. You have learned at Brown that when your work goes poorly, the painless solution is to drop out. But starting now, in the world to which you go, failure marks you. Confronting difficulty by quitting leaves you changed. Outside Brown, quitters are no heroes.

2 With us you could argue about why your errors were not errors, why mediocre work really was excellent, why you could take pride in routine and slipshod presentation. Most of you, after all, can look back on honor grades for most of what you have done. So, here grades can have meant little in distinguishing the excellent from the ordinary. But tomorrow, in the world to which you go, you had best not defend errors but learn from them. You will be ill-advised to demand praise for what does not deserve it and abuse those who do not give it.

3 For years we created an altogether forgiving world, in which whatever slight effort you gave was all that was demanded. When you did not keep appointments, we made new ones. When your work came in beyond the deadline, we pretended not to care.

4 Worse still, when you were boring, we acted as if you were saying something important. When you were garrulous and talked to hear yourselves talk, we listened as if it mattered. When you tossed on our desks writing upon which you had not labored, we read it and even responded, as though you earned a response. When you were dull, we pretended you were smart. When you were predictable, unimaginative and routine, we listened as if to new and wonderful things. When you demanded free lunch, we served it. And all this why?

5 Despite your fantasies, it was not even that we wanted to be liked by you. It was that we did not want to be bothered and the easy way out was pretense: smiles and easy B grades.

suggest /sə'dʒest/ *vt.* make sb. think that a particular thing is true 显示, 表明
deliver a speech 发表演讲
publish /'pʌblɪʃ/ *vt.* 刊登, 登载, 发表
the Daily Herald 《每日先驱报》(美国布朗大学学报)
take pride in... 为……感到自豪
mark /mɑ:k/ *vt.* 标志, 以……为特征
confront /kən'frʌnt/ *vt.* 正视, 面对
quit /kwɪt/ *vi.* 放弃, 停止做
quitter /'kwɪtə/ *n.* 半途而废的人
error /'erə(r)/ *n.* 错误, 差错
mediocre /,mi:di'əʊkə(r)/ *a.* 一般的, 平凡的, 平庸的
slipshod /'slɪpʃɒd/ *a.* 马虎的, 随便的, 草率的
distinguish...from... 把……跟……区分开来
ill-advised /ɪləd'vaɪzd/ *a.* 欠考虑的, 不明智的
deserve /dɪ'zɜ:v/ *vt.* 应得, 应受到
abuse /ə'bju:z/ *vt.* 辱骂, 谩骂
altogether /,ɔ:ltə'geðə(r)/ *ad.* 十分, 完全
slight /slɑ:t/ *a.* 轻微的, 微小的
keep an appointment 遵守约定
beyond the deadline 逾期
garrulous /'gærələs/ *a.* 饶舌的, 喋喋不休的
labor /'leɪbə(r)/ *vi.* 辛勤工作, 苦干
unimaginative /,ʌnɪ'mædʒənətɪv/ *a.* 缺乏想象力的
fantasy /'fæntəsi/ *n.* 幻想, 想象
pretense /prɪ'tens/ *n.* 假装, 虚假

conventional /kən'venʃənəl/ *a.* 传统的, 常规的

quote /kwəʊt/ *vi.& vt.* 引用, 引述

Rutgers University 罗格斯大学 (位于美国新泽西州)

spoil /spɔɪl/ *vt.* 宠坏, 惯坏, 溺爱

ill-informed /ɪlɪn'fɔ:məd/ *a.* knowing less than you should about a particular subject 所知不多的, 消息不灵通的

for the sake of 为了

deprive of 夺走

adequate /'ædɪkwɪt/ *a.* enough in quantity or of a good enough quality for a particular purpose 足够的, 充分的

attentive /ə'tentɪv/ *a.* making sure sb. has everything they need 照顾周到的

unchallenging /ʌn'tʃælɪndʒɪŋ/ *a.* too easy and therefore not very interesting 没有挑战性的

parlous /'pɑ:ləs/ *a.* 糟糕的, 危险的

tolerate /'tɒləreɪt/ *vt.* be able to accept sth. unpleasant or difficult, even though you do not like it 忍受, 忍耐

paralyze* /'pærəlaɪz/ *vt.* cause sb. or sth. to be unable to act or operate correctly 使……不能正常运作, 使……陷入瘫痪

be rid of 摆脱

unlearn /ʌn'lɜ:n/ *vt.* deliberately forget sth. you have learned, in order to change the way you do sth. 设法忘记, 抛弃

6 It is conventional to quote in addresses such as these. Let me quote someone you've never heard of: Prof. Carter A. Daniel, Rutgers University (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 7, 1979):

7 “College has spoiled you by reading papers that don't deserve to be read, listening to comments that don't deserve a hearing, paying attention even to the lazy, ill-informed and rude. We had to do it, for the sake of education. But nobody will ever do it again. College has deprived you of adequate preparation for the last 50 years. It has failed you by being easy, free, forgiving, attentive, comfortable, interesting, unchallenging, fun. Good luck tomorrow.”

8 That is why, on this commencement day, we have nothing in which to take much pride.

9 Oh, yes, there is one more thing. Try not to act toward your coworkers and bosses as you have acted toward us. I mean, when they give you what you want but have not earned, don't abuse them, insult them, act out with them your parlous relationships with your parents. This too we have tolerated. It was, as I said, not to be liked. Few professors actually care whether or not they are liked by peer-paralyzed adolescents, fools so shallow as to imagine professors care not about education but about popularity. It was, again, to be rid of you. So go, unlearn the lies we taught you. To life!

(659 words)



Reading Comprehension

- 1.** This unusual commencement speech talks about the truth of college education: the real world is harsh and the college is a safe harbor that protects students from the reality. It can be divided into three parts. Determine the topic sentences for Part II and Part III and give a headline for each part.

Part	Para(s).	Main Idea
I	1-3	Topic sentence: When students encounter problems or produce poor quality work at school, they can just drop out, but the world outside has no place for quitters. Headline: The world isn't forgiving
II	4-7	Topic sentence: _____ Headline: _____
III	8-9	Topic sentence: _____ Headline: _____

- 2.** Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

- 1) This commencement speech was delivered at Brown University. ()
- 2) The author is feeling sorry at the beginning for not preparing students well for the outside world. ()
- 3) The purpose of this article is to inform students of what professors really think of them. ()
- 4) Professors tolerate students because it makes their jobs easy. ()
- 5) According to the author, students resent people who don't meet their needs. ()

- 3.** Read the sentences from the text and choose the answer that best explains each underlined part.

- 1) It was that we did not want to be bothered and the easy way out was pretense: smiles and easy B grades.
 A. A positive attitude towards the professor will help students receive a B grade.
 B. The professor gives out B grades freely to students.

- 2) Confronting difficulty by quitting leaves you changed.
 - A. Quitting equals failure in the society.
 - B. Quitting equals uniqueness in the society.
- 3) When you demanded free lunch, we served it.
 - A. Universities sometimes give students credit which they don't deserve.
 - B. One of the university's benefits is sometimes providing free meals to students.
- 4) ...fools so shallow as to imagine professors care not about education but about popularity.
 - A. Students
 - B. Readers
- 5) ...why you could take pride in routine and slipshod presentation.
 - A. Careless display
 - B. Messy homework

4. Discuss the following questions with a partner.

- 1) Which do you prefer, a commencement speech like this or a “normal” speech given by, say, Steve Jobs at Stanford University years ago? Why?
- 2) If you were to speak at a college graduation, what topic would you choose to focus on and why?

Language Practice

Key words & expressions

commencement	grade	publish	mark
deserve	altogether	labor	predictable
unimaginative	fantasy	quote	adequate
attentive	unchallenging	unlearn	distinguished
numerous	suggest	confront	quit
abuse	slight	spoil	conventional
tolerate			
be rid of	for the sake of	beyond the deadline	deprive...of...
distinguish...from...	deliver a speech	take pride in	



Vocabulary building

1. Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate words from the box. Change the form when necessary.

commencement	grade	publish	mark	deserve
altogether	labor	predictable	unimaginative	fantasy
quote	adequate	attentive	unchallenging	unlearn

- 1) Good at poetry, music, painting and calligraphy, Li was also good-looking: every man's _____.
- 2) To be honest, I think that you should not _____ such articles that deal with gender roles.
- 3) The film's weaknesses include complex plotting but _____ characters and settings.
- 4) Typhoon Talim has been changing course and is not entirely _____. It's been expected to hit Taiwan directly, but its trajectory (轨道) has altered further eastward.
- 5) When I graduated from college in 2005, the _____ speaker told us to be lucky.
- 6) These children _____ our compassion and a chance at a safe future, not our ignorance and turned backs.
- 7) Bill regularly appears as a commentator on television and radio and is frequently _____ in the press.
- 8) Under the new system, teachers have to post comments and give grades according to the students' performance and students will be _____ for learning, motivation, habits and achievements.
- 9) Shanghai could obtain experiences and lessons from Tokyo, so as to facilitate a society with _____ infrastructures (基础设施) and services where "healthy aging" becomes possible.
- 10) The hotel has a pleasant atmosphere and _____ service.
- 11) A life that is static and intellectually _____ can quickly become boring.
- 12) It requires us to constantly learn something new and _____ something that can hold us back.
- 13) This does not prevent disease _____, but can reduce its severity.
- 14) Mr. Wilson experienced ups and downs when he was young. Tragedy _____ the later part of his life.
- 15) Women have _____ long and hard to secure equal opportunities, equal pay and equal recognition without having to forgo (放弃) dreams of motherhood.

2. Choose the answer that best explains each underlined part.

- 1) The third Silk Road International Symposium for Distinguished Young Scholars opened on Friday, with hundreds of young people sharing their ideas across a range of subjects.
A. Outstanding B. Skillful C. Talented D. Important
- 2) If he met someone on the street, he wanted to hear about their lives. There were numerous times he would invite people to his house for dinner.
A. various B. many C. common D. usual
- 3) The fact that so many people now seem so willing to share their most intimate information on social media platforms suggests that privacy concerns are not critical.
A. advises B. evokes C. promotes D. indicates
- 4) Federica Mogherini said that the EU will continue to stand with the Egyptian authorities and people as they confront the threat from terrorism.
A. face up to and deal with B. come up with
C. fight for D. get rid of
- 5) "I'm someone who's going to fight until I can't fight anymore," he says, "I'm not going to quit until they take me off the field."
A. stop B. regret C. leave a place D. obey
- 6) The referee had been threatened and abused.
A. supervised B. surpassed C. insulted D. mocked
- 7) Speaking Mandarin with a slight Beijing accent, he was in high spirits when asked to talk about his understanding of Beijing's urban space and city life.
A. small in degree B. minority
C. not deserving attention D. superficial
- 8) Susan Sontag also wrote novels and short stories in which she abandons conventional forms of narration in favor of a more experimental style.
A. traditional B. well-known C. formal D. popular
- 9) Being spoiled, "little emperors" often struggle to deal with the pressures of the real world.
A. frightened B. ruined C. over-protected D. self-satisfied
- 10) This sort of behaviour will not be tolerated.
A. suffered B. excused
C. accepted D. allowed

3. Fill in each blank with a preposition or an adverb. Pay attention to the collocation.

- 1) The world will not be rid _____ poverty, war or terrorism until almost everyone on Earth is in the middle class.



- 2) Hangzhou's bus operator will adjust some routes and services _____ the sake of passenger convenience during the Spring Festival travel season.
- 3) Retailers (零售商) are trying to distinguish themselves _____ each other through better customer service, product assortments (多样性) and advanced technology.
- 4) Today, the horrible truth is that worldwide about 61 million girls between the ages of 5 and 14 are deprived _____ educational opportunities.
- 5) The local authorities may not accept design submission for approval _____ the deadline.

4. Complete each of the following sentences using a compound formed by the words given in parentheses.

Word formation: Compounding

Examples:

adjective/adverb + present participle	funny-looking, bad-smelling
adjective/adverb + past participle	ill-informed, ill-advised, new-born
noun + present participle	English-speaking, life-saving
noun + past participle	ice-covered, hand-made

- 1) It seems _____ (ill, advise) for a college student to apply for student loans for luxury goods.
- 2) Freshly baked scones with jam and cream, savory sandwiches and _____ (mouth, water) cakes are the charms of an afternoon tea.
- 3) All the _____ (peace, love) people around the world should join hands to cherish the peace today and prevent war from ever happening again.
- 4) "Governments are expected to offer more guidance to garlic growers who are usually _____ (ill, inform) about the market," Liu said.
- 5) The beautiful princess is sent into _____ (ever, last) sleep until one day she is awoken by a heroic prince.
- 6) Meanwhile, 20 percent of the world's population will become _____ (self, employ) or freelance (自由职业者的) via the Internet in the next decade.
- 7) Wang Xizhi's influence on Chinese calligraphy (书法) is considered as fundamental and _____ (far, reach) as Shakespeare's influence on the English language and literature.
- 8) After hearing the _____ (heart, break) news, I managed to keep myself from crying.

Grammar exercise

5. Combine each pair of sentences. Use a preposition-led relative clause.

Example

It refers to a new healthcare system in Shanghai.

Traditional Chinese medicine doctors advise people on how to live a healthy lifestyle in the system.

→ It refers to a new healthcare system in Shanghai in which traditional Chinese medicine doctors advise people on how to live a healthy lifestyle.

- 1) Shanghai is looking into creating a school credit bank.

Students can deposit their credits gained from training classes in it and they can obtain an official diploma after accumulating enough credits.

- 2) You are applying for a position.

The position requires overseas experience and frequent business travel.

- 3) Valentine's Day evolves into a special day.

Lovers express their love to each other by presenting flowers and greeting cards on that day.

- 4) Hong Kong's high-street retail rents have never been cheap and this has been especially true in the past few months.

Rents have risen steadily higher in the past few months.



- 5) Next to the street is a wetland.

Visitors can float in wooden boats upon it to enjoy the sunset.

Integrated skills

6. Translate the following sentences into English. Use the expressions given in parentheses.

- 1) 他发表演讲，详细解释在工业机器人向服务机器人转变的过程中，机器人的安全需求也在不断变化。
(deliver a speech)

- 2) 许多人既不为自己的工作感到骄傲，也不关心自己的工作表现。(take no pride in)

- 3) 这项研究正在调查人们睡眠不足时会发生什么。(deprive of)

- 4) 有了手机上的日程表，准时赴约甚是容易，除非你把手机忘在桌上了。(keep an appointment)

- 5) 中国历史悠久，底蕴深厚，在世界之林独具特色。(distinguish from)

Window to the World



Orange, Tulips, Windmills and Bicycles

I am a Dutchman. I would like to share with you some cultural phenomena in the Netherlands. Many nations have their “national color”. In the Netherlands, orange rules. Orange is the color of the Dutch Royal Family. It symbolizes the country and the Dutch national pride in being Dutch. You can see a sea of orange in two times, on the King’s Day and at significant sports events. When we celebrate the King’s birthday, we always wear something orange. The Dutch national football team is nicknamed the *Oranje*, the Orange in English. Dutch fans usually wear something orange to support their teams during the Europe or World Cup football tournaments. The Netherlands is often noted as “the Garden of Europe”. The national flower of Netherlands is the tulip. As one of the world’s biggest parks, Keukenhof is most famous for different types of tulips. In spring, the Netherlands is permeated with tulips, on the streets, in people’s yards or homes. Since the Netherlands is often windy, another cultural icon of Netherlands is the windmill. Moreover, we love riding bicycles. In the Netherlands, you can see something special on the street, i.e. we have a separate plastic track for riding bicycles. You may often see some kids, even at five or six years old, riding their own bicycle on the street, together with their parents.



(Adapted from the personal account of a Dutch student at Tilburg University)



Task: Rethinking about Grades and Education

Step 1: Share Your Thoughts about Grades

Take a look at the picture and note down your opinions about grades and school education.



1) Can grades truly reflect a student's knowledge and competence?

2) How should students' academic performance be evaluated at school?

Step 2: Gain an Intercultural Insight



Listen and fill in the blanks.

The more others emphasize test scores, the more students become preoccupied with them as “definers” in the 1) _____ world of academics, scholarships and college acceptances. However, test scores should never “define” a person, no matter what they may 2) _____ about his or her intellectual or achievement potential. No single test can assess the broad range of 3) _____ and abilities that help to make a person successful and productive in society, a wonderful person to be around or even a person of eminence. All tests are imperfect 4) _____. Group ability test scores may be affected by any number of 5) _____, including test anxiety, fatigue, stress, low verbal skills, learning disabilities, room temperature, attitude toward test-taking, cultural experiences and cultural values that might not 6) _____ competitiveness and test performance. A score on an individually administered ability test might also be affected by the gender and manner of the 7) _____. It may not reflect many strengths important to success in the real world.

However, test scores can be valuable 8) _____ of who might benefit by special programs. Ability tests may find gifted individuals who 9) _____ would be missed because of poor grades. Achievement tests can identify individuals who are or are not 10) _____ the curriculum. Tests and grades certainly have their place and both are probably here to stay. But students should not be “defined” by either.

Step 3: Learn about the VALUE System



Listen to the audio clip about VALUE (the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) and decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. The system was meant to measure the skills students would need in the professional world. ()
2. The creators of the VALUE system simply wanted to ask if a student knew the right answer to a given question. ()
3. The system cannot be used to measure students’ critical thinking. ()
4. The rubric of the system measures from one to four with four representing the most basic ability level a college student should have in that skill and one representing the highest ability level. ()
5. Schools use the set of instructions of the system to examine projects and other assignments that students are working on. ()



Step 4: Compare and Contrast

Take a quick look of the following six pairs of pictures. Choose one pair and share your understanding with a partner of good and bad education illustrated in the pictures. Use specific examples to show your points.

GOOD EDUCATION	BAD EDUCATION
Teach them both soft skills and hard skills	Only focus on hard skills which are easier to be taught

GOOD EDUCATION	BAD EDUCATION
Encourage all-around development	Only focus on academic performance

GOOD EDUCATION	BAD EDUCATION
Encourage them to form their own opinions	Only allow standard answers and perspectives

GOOD EDUCATION	BAD EDUCATION
Help them develop critical thinking	Forbid them to challenge authority

GOOD EDUCATION	BAD EDUCATION
Teach them how to learn	Tell them what to learn

GOOD EDUCATION	BAD EDUCATION
Make them love learning	Make them fear learning

Good education:

Bad education:

Critical Thinking & Creative Writing

Grades Matter, but Only to a Point.

Step 1

Brainstorm in group the factors that might affect the grades a student gets and list them below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Step 2

Make an argument about the value of grades from the perspective of a student and a teacher respectively.

The value of grades is probably the most debatable topic at school. Teachers and students both have their say on whether they are important or not. In my opinion, grades matter, but to a point.

From a teacher's perspective, _____

While, in students' eyes, _____

Therefore, I think, _____



Text

The Educational Dilemma¹

Donald E. Simanek²

1 Thirty years of teaching in several universities inspires reflection on the past and the future of education. It's not a pretty picture.

2 At meetings of physics teachers we hear many uplifting anecdotal stories of new teaching methods and clever strategies for sneaking education into unwilling minds. Seldom do we hear about things that **don't** work in education. I often say that every coin has a flip side and you'd better turn it over and examine it before placing your bet. Today I want to look at the flip side of education or its dark underbelly. In short, I want to show how our best efforts and highest educational goals are doomed to failure, whatever we do.

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1. This text was excerpted and adapted from a talk given by Donald E. Simanek, a physics professor.
 2. Donald E. Simanek is Emeritus Professor of Physics at Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, USA.

uplifting /ˌʌpˈlɪftɪŋ/ *a.* making you feel happier and more hopeful 令人振奋的

anecdotal* /ˌænɪkˈdɔʊtl/ *a.* consisting of short stories based on sb.'s personal experience 轶事的, 趣闻的

sneak* /sni:k/ *vt.* hide sth. and take it somewhere or give it to sb. secretly 偷偷携带, 偷偷给

flip side* 负面, 反面

underbelly /ˈʌndəbelɪ/ *n.* 阴暗面

in short 简而言之, 总之

be doomed to failure 注定失败

intellectually /,ɪntrɪˈlektʃuəli/ *ad.*
in an intellectual manner 智力上

outmoded /'aʊt'məʊdɪd/ *a.* no longer fashionable or useful 过时的, 废弃的

criterion /kraɪ'tɪərɪən/ *n.* 标准, 准则

be faced with 面临, 面对

caliber /'kælɪbə(r)/ *n.* 能力, 才干

write off 把……看得无关紧要

mastery /'mɑ:stəri/ *n.* 掌握, 精通

mortal* /'mɔ:təl/ *n.* 凡人, 普通人

inflation /ɪn'fleɪʃən/ *n.* 通货膨胀

crack a book 打开书本读书, 学习

discipline /'dɪsɪplɪn/ *n.* 学科

annoy /ə'noɪ/ *vt.* make sb. feel slightly angry and unhappy about sth. 使恼怒, 使生气

instructor /ɪn'strʌktə(r)/ *n.* 大学讲师

indignation* /,ɪndɪg'neɪʃən/ *n.* 愤怒, 愤慨

measly /'mi:zli/ *a.* 微不足道的, 少的可怜的

score /skɔ:(r)/ *vt.* win a point in a sport, game, competition or test 得(分)

3 When I began teaching college physics nearly 30 years ago, we could count on perhaps 5 to 10 percent of the students in freshman physics being well-prepared, bright, intellectually curious and hard-working — capable of earning an honest A grade. About as many more were not so bright, but still hard-working and earned B grades. Teachers wrote off the rest as hopeless. They would never **really** learn physics. They'd probably “get the picture” soon and change to a major that didn't require physics, so no great harm would be done. One could confidently bet that they weren't doing well in their mathematics and chemistry courses either.

4 Now, in the school where I teach, it's not uncommon to have a class in which there's **not one** student meeting this outmoded criterion for an A or B student. One is faced with an entire class of the calibre of those we used to “write off” and ignore. There may be no one, save perhaps an occasional foreign exchange student, to set a standard of high achievement, demonstrating to the others that mastery of such difficult material is possible by mere mortals.

5 Today we are searching, like Diogenes³, for **anyone** capable of earning an honest A.

6 Try as we might to maintain grading standards in the sciences, we are under great pressure to adapt to the grade inflation that has caused some departments on campus to give nothing but A and B grades, even to students who never “crack a book.” In some “disciplines” the only way to get a C or below is to annoy the instructor or fail to attend class! It does seem that the disciplines that have shown the greatest grade inflation are those where the course “content” is mostly “hot air.”

7 I've even had students ask, with some indignation, “Why must we work so hard in a physics course to get a measly C when we can get A grades in non-science courses without ever studying?” I respond, “Why should there be **any** course on campus you can get an A in without studying?”

8 I once taught a course where one student scored nearly 100% on every

3. Diogenes (第欧根尼) (412 or 404 B.C.–323 B.C.) was a Greek philosopher and one of the founders of Cynic philosophy (犬儒哲学). He used his simple life-style and behaviour to criticize the social values and institutions of what he saw as a corrupt or at least confused society.



one of my exams while no one else could score above 50%. Several students got up courage to confront me and complain that I was making the course “too hard for **anyone**.” I pointed out that it was obviously not too hard for the student doing nearly perfect work. They responded, “That’s not fair — he studies all the time!” They were not at all happy when I suggested they try copying his method for success.

9 More and more we find students doing poorly in physics, yet getting fairly good grades in mathematics, say B grades. Yet they can’t seem to do any mathematics when the occasion arises. If given a formula and data, they can plug it into their calculators and get a correct answer at least half the time. Students did better than that back when they used only slide rules or log tables, for then they had to **think** while computing, so they’d get the decimal point in the right place. Today’s “students” seem totally unable to construct a mathematical proof of any kind, certainly not of a proposition they’ve never seen proven before (and they apparently haven’t seen many).

10 These same students often get good grades in chemistry. But ask them to do any problem requiring intelligent use of, say, the mole concept and they display total intellectual impotence. One tries in vain to find **anything** they **understand** about chemistry beyond mere recipes and computation.

11 And don’t try asking students anything requiring philosophical insight. For example, ask them to discuss whether the mole concept is fundamental and essential to chemistry or merely a convenience concept. The bottom line question is “Could we do chemistry without the mole concept?” One could ask students the same question about the energy concept in physics, with equally dismal results.

12 Obviously, the good grades nowadays do not necessarily show the ability of critical and analytical thinking. But we, teachers, should continue to strive for that.

13 When I write a physics exam and then score the student responses, I don’t award credit for skills. I don’t award credit for the student’s ability to correctly read the text of a problem. I don’t award credit for the student’s ability to add and multiply correctly. If the problem requires the solution of a quadratic equation, the student must know how to do this properly, but it isn’t worthy of credit points. Credit is awarded for higher mental abilities than mere mental skills. And the mere memorization of facts and

- formula** /'fɔ:mjələ/ *n.* 公式, 方程式
- calculator** /'kælkjuleɪtə(r)/ *n.* 计算器
- slide rule** 计算尺 (一种旧式计算工具)
- log table** 对数表 (数学术语)
- compute** /kəm'pjʊ:t/ *vt. & vi.* calculate a result, answer, sum, etc. 计算
- decimal point*** 小数点
- proof** /pru:f/ *n.* 验证, 证明
- proposition** /,prɒpə'zɪʃən/ *n.* 命题
- intelligent** /ɪn'telɪdʒənt/ *a.* having or showing intelligence, especially of a high level 有智力的, 有才智的
- the mole concept** 摩尔概念 (表示物质的量的概念)
- display** /dɪ'spleɪ/ *vt.* clearly show a feeling, attitude or quality by what you do or say 显示, 显露
- impotence*** /ɪmpətəns/ *n.* 无能
- in vain** 无效地, 徒然
- recipe*** /'resɪpi/ *n.* 诀窍, 妙法
- computation** /,kɒmpju'teɪʃən/ *n.* 计算, 计算的结果
- philosophical** /,fɪlə'sɒfɪkəl/ *a.* relating to philosophy 哲学的
- insight** /ɪnsaɪt/ *n.* 洞察力, 深刻见解
- dismal** /'dɪzməl/ *a.* 差劲的, 不成功的, 糟糕的
- critical** /'krɪtɪkəl/ *a.* making careful judgments about how good or bad sth. is 批判性的
- analytical** /ænə'lɪtɪkəl/ *a.* involving the use of logical reasoning 分析的
- strive for** 争取, 奋斗
- credit** /'kredɪt/ *n.* 加分
- multiply** /'mʌltɪplaɪ/ *vi.* 乘, 乘以
- quadratic equation** 二次方程(式)
- be worthy of ...** 值得……的
- mental** /'mentl/ *a.* relating to the process of thinking 智力的
- memorization** /,meməraɪ'zeɪʃən/ *n.* 记住, 熟记

academic /,ækə'demɪk/ *a.*
relating to education, especially
at college or university level 学
术的

reason /'ri:zn/ *vi.* think and
make judgments 思考, 判断

synthesize* /'sɪnθəsaɪz/ *vt.*
combine separate things into a
complete whole 综合

verbal /'vɜ:bl/ *a.* connected with
words and the use of words 词
语的, 文字的

analogous* /ə'næləgəs/ *a.*
similar to another situation or
thing so that a comparison can
be made 相似的, 类似的

hammer /'hæmə(r)/ *n.* 榔头, 锤子

carpenter /'kɑ:pɪntə(r)/ *n.* 木匠

screwdriver /'skru:draɪvə(r)/ *n.* 螺
丝刀

institution /,ɪnstɪ'tju:ʃən/ *n.* 机构

procedures is unworthy of academic credit.

14 I judge physics students on their ability to reason, synthesize and analyze mentally difficult problems. Verbal and mathematical skills are necessary to do this — these skills being analogous to picking up the hammer by the correct end. I do not give credit for remembering and writing down the correct equation that the problem solution might require. That's analogous to a carpenter knowing whether to choose the hammer rather than the screwdriver.

15 Academic credit should not be awarded for skills, even though skills are a necessary requirement for developing and using the powers of the mind. If educational institutions were to adopt this principle, the educational dilemma could be avoided.

(1001 words)

Reading Comprehension

1. Do the following statements agree with the author's claims? Please write:

- YES** *if the statement agrees with the author's claims;*
- NO** *if the statement contradicts the author's claims;*
- NG (not given)** *if it is impossible to determine the author's opinion.*

- 1) It is possible that no student reaches the standard and still gets an A or B. ()
- 2) The author doesn't give high grades to students like other teachers, which annoys the students. ()
- 3) The author claims that analytical skills are very important as they help students get high grades. ()
- 4) Students who get high grades by merely remembering formulas and computations may lack critical thinking skills. ()
- 5) The author argues that we will never be able to reach our educational goals no matter how hard we try. ()

2. Complete the following sentences based on the information given in the text.

- 1) Good grades cannot prove that students have the ability to think _____.
- 2) To get an A, a student needs to be well-prepared, _____.



- 3) Some universities tend to give A and B grades only, which causes grade _____.
- 4) The author cares more about students' ability to _____ mentally difficult problems.
- 5) Nowadays, students often do not engage in _____ reflection as they are busy reciting the mole concept, the energy concept and formulas rather than try to understand why they need to use them.

Translation

Translate the following paragraph into Chinese.

Try as we might to maintain grading standards in the sciences, we are under great pressure to adapt to the grade inflation that has caused some departments on campus to give nothing but A and B grades, even to students who never “crack a book.” In some “disciplines” the only way to get a C or below is to annoy the instructor or fail to attend class! It does seem that the disciplines that have shown the greatest grade inflation are those where the course “content” is mostly “hot air.”

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you think we face a similar educational dilemma in China? Why or why not?
2. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of having a National College Entrance Examination in China?

SCRIPTS

Warm-up

Transcript

I know that for many of you, today is the first day of school. And for those of you in kindergarten or starting middle or high school, it is your first day in a new school, so it is understandable if you are a little nervous. I imagine there are some seniors out there who are feeling pretty good right now with just one more year to go. And no matter what grade you are in, some of you are probably wishing it were still summer and you could have stayed in bed just a little bit longer this morning. I know that feeling. When I was young, my family lived overseas. I lived in Indonesia for a few years. And my mother, she didn't have the money to send me where all the American kids went to school, but she thought it was important for me to keep up with an American education. So she decided to teach me extra lessons herself, Monday through Friday. But because she had to go to work, the only time she could do it was at 4:30 in the morning. Now, as you might imagine, I was not too happy about getting up that early. A lot of times I fell asleep right there at the kitchen table. But whenever I complained, my mother would just give me one of those looks and she would say: "This is no picnic for me either, buster!" My wife, our first lady, Michelle Obama, she has a similar story. Neither of her parents had gone to college and they didn't have a lot of money. But they worked hard and she worked hard so that she could go to the best schools in this country.

Note: This speech was made at Wakefield High School in Arlington, Virginia.

Cultural Exploration

Task: Rethinking about Grades and Education

Step 2: Gain an Intercultural Insight

Key and transcript

The more others emphasize test scores, the more students become preoccupied with them as "definers" in the 1) competitive world of academics, scholarships and college acceptances. However, test scores should never "define" a person, no matter what they may 2) reveal about his or her intellectual or achievement potential. No single test can assess the broad range of 3) traits and abilities that help to make a person successful and productive in society, a wonderful person to be around or even a person of eminence. All tests are imperfect 4) measures. Group ability test scores may be affected by any number of 5) factors, including test anxiety, fatigue, stress, low verbal skills, learning disabilities, room temperature, attitude toward test-taking, cultural experiences and cultural values that might not 6) embrace competitiveness and test performance. A score on an individually administered ability test might also be affected by the gender and manner of the 7) examiner. It may not reflect many strengths important to success in the real world.



However, test scores can be valuable 8) indicators of who might benefit by special programs. Ability tests may find gifted individuals who 9) otherwise would be missed because of poor grades. Achievement tests can identify individuals who are or are not 10) absorbing the curriculum. Tests and grades certainly have their place and both are probably here to stay. But students should not be “defined” by either.

Step 3: Learn about the VALUE System

Transcript

So in 2008, the Association of American Colleges and Universities began working with professors across the country to create the VALUE system. The system was meant to measure the skills students would need in the professional world. These skills include critical thinking, written communication and problem solving. The creators of the VALUE system wanted to explore different parts of these skills. They did not want to simply ask if a student knew the right answer to a given question. To measure critical thinking, for example, the VALUE system examines how well students can explain issues. It also looks at how well students use evidence to explain their thinking. The professors created a rubric — or set of instructions — for each part of each skill. The rubric measures from one to four. One represents the most basic ability level a college student should have in that skill; four represents the highest ability level. Schools use the rubric to examine projects and other assignments that students are working on. They do this to see how much certain skills are progressing. Since 2015, more than 42,000 representatives from more than 4,200 educational organizations have downloaded the VALUE rubrics from the Internet. Rhodes says the AAC&U hopes schools share information from these assessments with professors and students. Students would then see how well their own skills are improving. And professors could make changes to their classes.

