

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Education Evolution

By Eva Kaplan-Leiserson

It's time for a pop quiz: What U.S. institution has remained virtually indistinguishable from its early 20th-century counterpart? Is it banks? No. Grocery stores? Guess again. Hospitals? No. Give up? It's the U.S. educational system.

Daniel Pink, author of *Free Agent Nation*, writes in *Reason* magazine, "How many other places look and feel exactly as they did 20,

30, or 40 years ago?" Step into a high school classroom and you'll be transported back to your childhood; little has changed beyond the addition of some technological gadgetry.

Though the pedagogy and practice of mandatory education have remained static, much in the world has changed. A revolution has taken place: The currency of the 21st century isn't wid-

gets but knowledge. An economy based on manufacturing has been transformed into a knowledge economy, but, says Pink, we're still preparing our children to work in factories.

Sit down, be quiet, follow rules, do as everyone else does. Those are the principles formalized education teaches, says Pink. But, he argues, a country that's evolving to a free agent nation made up of

Illustration by Riccardo Stampatori

How many other institutions look exactly as they did 40 years ago?

freelancers, consultants, business owners, temps, independent contractors, and so forth should be educating its children differently.

More than 30 million people make up Pink's so-called free agent nation; that's one out of four U.S. workers. According to Pink, the quiet revolution that has been occurring in the way the United States works must now be reflected in its educational system. "Imagine how we'd prosper if we began educating our children more like we earn our livings," he writes.

Imagine an educational system, Pink says, in which freedom, flexibility, and self-determination—now afforded to consultants, part-time workers, temps, and so forth—were also given to children. Imagine if they could follow their own natural curiosities and interests, finding learning a joy rather than a chore.

Sound far-fetched? According to Pink, millions of children are already doing just that, as part of the homeschooling movement. Now legal in all 50 states, homeschooling has a constituency of about 1.7 million children, and that number is growing as much as 15 percent per year. Studies have shown that homeschoolers consistently score higher on standardized tests and are socialized just as well, if not better, than students at traditional schools, says Pink.

Other effects Pink says the free agent nation will have on education include

- a renaissance of apprenticeships
- a flowering of teenage entrepreneurship
- a backlash against standardized tests
- the devaluation of degrees and elite colleges
- free agent teachers matched with free agent learners on the Internet
- increased popularity of conferences and other types of learning communities.

Get ready. The times, they are a changin'.

More/ <http://reason.com/0110/fe.dp.schools.shtml> or *Free Agent Nation* (Warner Business Books, 2001)

Airport Training Ready to Take Off

Now boarding: New training for U.S. baggage screeners and flight crews. As we go to press, guidelines drawn up by the new Transportation Security Administration, the biggest U.S. government agency created since World War II, set the flight path for the new training. The guidelines:

- Training for baggage screeners will increase to 40 hours classroom time and 60 hours on-the-job training, up from 12 and 40 hours previously.
- Baggage screeners will receive technical training on metal detectors, X-ray scanners, and bag searching, as

Executive Update: Training Preferences

Of executives polled by Provant Vertical Market Solutions,

59 percent want blended learning that's provided online as well as by classroom instructors



36 percent want their training done solely by instructors



5 percent want it online only

63 percent go to training because they want to



11 percent because they have to



73 percent think training is necessary after a promotion



69 percent think companies fail to train the people who need it most



59 percent would like to use new learning technologies with their teams



E-News

Interested in learning more about knowledge management? The not-for-profit Global Knowledge Economics Council and Tucson, Arizona-based eKnowledgeCenter

announce the creation of master's and Ph.D. programs in knowledge management and knowledge science.

Ninety percent of each knowledge management program will be conducted via e-learning; for the final 10 percent of the course, students will join a residency program at various locations around the world. First enrollment is planned for May 2002. The GKEC also offers training classes for knowledge management certification. For more information, www.gkec.org.

well as learn what to report to supervisors or security officers and how to deal with difficult passengers and manage stress.

- Airlines must draw up a pilot and crew training curriculum covering every step from boarding to landing.
- Pilots and flight attendants will be trained to assess dangerous situations and react immediately using every tool at their disposal, including the assistance of passengers.
- Pilots who are properly trained may be authorized to carry guns and use flight maneuvers to counteract terrorists.

Private consultants have been helping the Transportation Security Administration design the baggage screener training, select applicants, and conduct skills tests. The training will last for just a few weeks and screeners will start immediately

after they pass an exam. Plans are in the works for screeners to be certified if they demonstrate competence over time.

The administration hopes to assign the newly trained screeners to airports over the summer, making airport security fully federalized. Airlines have 60 days to develop flight crew training.

Watch this space for more information as it becomes available.

 [More/www.dot.gov/affairs/briefing.htm](http://www.dot.gov/affairs/briefing.htm)
Source/ Washington Post

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Policy News

A snapshot of U.S. federal legislation and policy initiatives affecting workforce development and the HRD profession.

Bush's Budget Includes Job Training Reform

The President proposes a multiyear, comprehensive reform of federal job training programs in his FY 2003 budget proposal. The President's plan includes reducing the number of federal job training programs from 48 to 28, in keeping with his goal to eliminate ineffective programs and improve performance across federal agencies. Overall, the President's budget would fund U.S. Department of Labor employment and training programs at US\$4.9 billion in FY 2003, which is \$476 million less than estimated spending for those programs in 2002.

New Law Creates Fixed-Interest Rates for Student Loans

On February 8, President Bush signed into law PL 107-139, which amends Title IV (Student Assistance) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and sets interest rates at 6.8 percent for unsubsidized new student loans made after July 1, 2006. Savings for the typical student borrower is estimated to be US\$680 over the life of the loan.