**Chapter 11: Education:**

**What Are We Learning?**

**Web Exercises**

1. Education is an issue in this country that affects us all, whether we are students, parents, teachers, taxpayers, workers, or employers. [Public Agenda](http://www.publicagenda.org/) is a great place to visit to get information, opinions, and current statistics on current public policy issues. Visit the section of the site dedicated to education at <http://www.publicagenda.org/citizen/issueguides/education>. Under the“Get the Facts” section examine several trend charts for topics that seem interesting to you. Then write a paragraph on changes in education, including information you just retrieved.
2. Do a web search on “No Child Left Behind.” Visit several websites and make notes about how people tend to view the policy. Then visit the U.S. Department of Education's website at <http://www.ed.gov/news/opeds/factsheets/index.html?src=ln> and see if it addresses concerns and issues people have with NCLB. Using the discussion of NCLB in your text and this information, write a 1-page brief detailing whether you support NCLB. Some possible places to search include:

[Google](http://www.google.com)

[The Internet Public Library](http://www.ipl.org/)

[Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)

[Google Scholar](http://scholar.google.com/)

Your college online library database

1. Visit the [United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=29008&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) website and also visit their [Objectives for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development project](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=23295&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html). Then write a paragraph comparing the state of education worldwide. You may want to further explore the UN website and use information you gathered for other web activities for this chapter.
2. The [National Center for Education Statistics](http://nces.ed.gov/) is a great place to get the latest statistics and facts on current trends and conditions in education within the United States. Click the Elementary/Secondary link (found in the submenu of “Surveys & Programs” tab) on the [NCES](http://nces.ed.gov/) website and follow several links to examine the most recent data available. Specifically, you may want to explore public and private school comparisons, the condition of school facilities, and expenditures. Imagine that you are an applied sociologist writing a report on the state of compulsory education in the United States. What are 5 to 10 interesting facts you uncovered that you will be sure to include in your report?
3. Go to the [NCES](http://nces.ed.gov/) website and read this report: [Debt Burden: A Comparison of 1992-93 and 1999-2000 Bachelor's Degree Recipients a Year After Graduating](http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005170). Then go to your college or university's newspaper website and run a search for tuition, funding, or loans. What concerns do your colleagues have about paying for their education? Is this addressed by the NCES? What advice would you give your colleagues about paying for school based on your reading of the report? Write a 1-page brief summarizing your answers to these questions.

1. Visit your college or university’s website and read its mission statement. Assess how well the school is doing at meeting this mission. Discuss how it could institutionally address areas where it needs to improve and how it could do that.
2. Look up the graduation rates for you high school, city, state, or university through web searches. Compare this graduation rate with the graduation rate of other high schools, cities, states, or universities you are familiar with in the area. Assess why they are similar or different.
3. Visit the website for [The New Teacher Project](http://tntp.org/). Read “About TNTP” and “What we do.”
4. What are the primary goals of this organization?
5. If you were a sociologist employed by this organization, what theoretical perspectives would you utilize in order to acquire funding for projects?
6. How does this organization seek to level the playing field in terms of public education?

9. Visit President Barack Obama’s website that pertains to his ideas regarding education [here](http://l.barackobama.com/education/).

a. What are some of the goals of his educational plan?

b. Analyze the goals—do you agree or disagree with them? Why?

c. What additional suggestions can be made to improve our educational system?