


# What Are Some Characteristics of the American Education System?



## And How Does It Differ from a Sri Lankan Education?



Comparative Analysis of American and Sri Lankan Education



<u>American Education</u>	<u>Sri Lankan Education</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children develop at individual rates and we cannot expect them all to master the same material at the same rate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals have different strengths and weaknesses and the purpose is to identify both and sort students according to their abilities.</li> </ul>
	
<small>August 2006</small> <small>Janet Orr</small> <small>USAID/Sri Lanka</small>	<small>Janet Orr</small> <small>USAID/Sri Lanka</small>



<u>American Education</u>	<u>Sri Lankan Education</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive Secondary School               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A secondary school with a number of departments (e.g., academic, industrial, business, and professional/technical) offering a diversified program which meets the needs of students with varying interests and abilities.</li> <li>Often very large schools</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Secondary School               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment between secondary and university curriculum</li> <li>Selection process carefully controlled through an examination process</li> <li>Often assumes participation in supplemental education (Tuition)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<u>American Education</u>	<u>Sri Lankan Education</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Genuine learning consists of more than mere command of a body of facts; it consists of deep understanding of the significance of these facts and an ability to apply what one knows in a variety of situations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is important to commit to memory the wisdom of the past.</li> <li>Memorizing and reproducing by rote are important tools of learning.</li> </ul>
	
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<u>American Education</u>	<u>Sri Lankan Education</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding consists of the ability to construct personal meaning from what one is studying.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constructing personal meaning is not as important as understanding and accepting the wisdom of the past.</li> </ul>
	
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<u>American Education</u>	<u>Sri Lankan Education</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In order to construct personal meaning students are encouraged to ask questions and challenge ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asking questions or challenging a teacher's presentation of material can be disrespectful.</li> </ul>
	
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<b>American Education</b>	<b>Sri Lankan Education</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning is greatly enhanced by a process of individual or collective inquiry, exploration and thoughtful reflection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning is a social process that is greatly enhanced by respect for the past and understanding of the lessons taught by it.</li> </ul>
	
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<b>American Education</b>	<b>Sri Lankan Education</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher's role is to be a facilitator of learning rather than a dispenser of knowledge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher's role is to be a dispenser of knowledge and a model of scholarship and virtue.</li> </ul>
	
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<b>American Education</b>	<b>Sri Lankan Education</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students must be taught to take responsibility for their own learning. This means being responsible for recording their homework assignments, meeting deadlines, and for asking questions and for help when they do not understand something.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are not yet conscientious enough to take full responsibility for completing the school work required of them. Parents expect that teachers or the tutor will do whatever needs to be done to insure that students complete all assignments.</li> </ul>
	
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<b>American Education</b>	<b>Sri Lankan Education</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are taught to be and encouraged to be critical thinkers, creative problem solvers, and decision makers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ability to imitate and to produce accurate replicas of something is highly valued.</li> <li>Answers match what is given in the textbook.</li> </ul>
	
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<b>American Education</b>	<b>Sri Lankan Education</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are expected to be partners with teachers in their children's education. That means setting up a time and place for their children to study at home. It means parents are expected to monitor their children's homework completion and it means they are expected to stay in contact with their children's teachers in order to monitor how they are doing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers are responsible for insuring that students learn and do the work required of them. Parents entrust this responsibility to teachers and expect that teachers will do what needs to be done to insure that students learn.</li> </ul>
	
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<b>American Education</b>	<b>Sri Lankan Education</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History is linear and progressive</li> <li>The ideas that are most valued are those that have practical application.</li> <li>Change is desirable and good, especially technological change.</li> <li>Individual competition and team work/spirit are used to achieve rank and status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History is circular and repetitive.</li> <li>Philosophical wisdom as well as utilitarian knowledge is honored.</li> <li>Preserving and using the ancient wisdom is important.</li> <li>Parents are increasing competitive and instill this in their children.</li> </ul>
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**Sri Lankan Education**  
**and**  
**American Education**

may be different but ...  
both have much to offer.