



Education: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)

By Gary Thomas

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Education is one of the hot-button issues of our time, heatedly debated by parents, teachers, local school boards, and national politicians. But despite the many measures taken to overhaul the educational system, student math and reading scores rarely seem to improve. Taking the reader from the schools of ancient times to the present day, this Very Short Introduction explains why education has followed the path that it has taken-and what we might do to improve it. Education expert Gary Thomas delves into some of the big questions of education and the twists and turns the field has taken over time, looks at the work of such key thinkers as Piaget and Vygotsky, and examines such recent innovations as the introduction of progressive education in the 20th century and the marketization of schools over the last few decades. Thomas repeatedly returns to the question of why education has recently become so test-orientated and he explores the consequences of this obsession with testing for children. He also looks at moves that teachers and policy-makers have made to try to improve what goes on in schools, from changing teaching so that it mirrors the way children learn, to making schools more inclusive and meaningful for a broader range of students.

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Oxford's Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, Literary Theory to History, and Archaeology to the Bible. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume in this series provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given discipline or field. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how the subject has developed and how it has influenced society. Eventually, the series will encompass every major academic discipline, offering all students an accessible and abundant reference library. Whatever the area of study that one deems important or appealing, whatever the topic that fascinates the general reader, the Very Short Introductions series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Thomas manages to cover all the bases...without devolving into encyclopedic minutia. Highly recommended." --B. Justice of Rutgers University, *Choice*

About the Author

Gary Thomas is Professor in Education at the University of Birmingham. He has published many books and articles on education and occasionally writes for the *Times Higher Education Supplement*.

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