1 How does schooling i.e. formal education differ from the natural process of socialization in which a child acquires his/her L1? Discuss.

Ans: Formal education plays a large role in the socialization of students. Starting with the preschool years, children are taught to behave in certain ways, many are gender-specific, and long-lasting effects such as a negative self-image and the development of eating disorders are discussed here. Gender socialization is often reinforced by teachers and within the school environment as a whole, which can create an environment of inconsistency if the home culture suggests a different view. Students learning second languages also experience a period of socialization to the culture and behaviors (environment) of the second language in which they are immersed. In addition, research is presented showing that the inclusion of students with special needs in mainstream classes experience a process of socialization as well.

A school’s environment can change the way a young woman feels about herself. For example, if every time she turns around she sees signs for cheerleader try-outs, she will learn that cheerleading is a big deal at her school and she should participate, regardless of what she knows about the activity. At some point, the same young woman will probably be involved in a fundraiser for the cheerleading team to purchase better uniforms. In the discussion to come up with a better idea than a bake sale, the suggestion of sponsoring a Sadie Hawkins dance may come up. She will note that this event is outside of the norm because everyone will be talking about it, and it will be promoted with the utmost effort: handmade signs will cover bulletin boards, and doors at the school’s entrance will be plastered with notices advertising the dance. In addition, the event will be a notable addition to the social world of the school as its purpose is for the genders of the school to change places as young women will be encouraged to ask young men for dates.

Education is a social science that encompasses teaching and learning specific skills. Practicing teachers in the field of education use a variety of methods and materials in their instruction to impart a curriculum. There has been a plethora of literature in the field of education that addresses these areas. Such literature addresses the facets of teaching practices to include instructional strategies, behavior management, environmental control, motivational strategies, and technological resources. However, the single most important factor in any teacher’s effectiveness is the interaction style and personality of the teacher, for the quality of their relationships with the students provides the impetus for inspiration. The best teachers are able to translate good judgment, experience, and wisdom into the art of communication that students find compelling. It is their compassion for varied human qualities, passion, and the creativity of potential that assists teachers to invigorate students to higher expectations of themselves and society at large. The goal of education is the growth of students so that they become productive citizens of a dynamic, ever-changing, society.

Fundamentally, the imparting of culture from generation to generation promotes a greater awareness and responsiveness through social maturity to the needs of an increasingly diversified society.

Formal Education

Formal education occurs when society or a group or an individual sets up a curriculum to educate people, usually the young. Formal education can become systematic and thorough. Formal education systems can be used to promote ideals or values as well as knowledge and this can sometimes lead to abuse of the system.

Life-long or adult education has become widespread in many countries. However, ‘education’ is still seen by many as something aimed at children, and adult education is often branded as ‘adult learning’ or ‘lifelong learning’.

Adult education takes on many forms from formal class-based learning to self-directed learning. Lending libraries provide inexpensive informal access to books and other self-instructional materials. Many adults have also taken advantage of the rise in computer ownership and internet access to further their informal education.

While it has long been held that private schools provide better education than public schools, current research suggests that is not the case. Public school students test higher, on average, in math than do private school students when social and economic backgrounds are controlled. Longitudinal data illustrates that, while students beginning in public and Catholic schools test at about the same level in math, by the fifth grade the public school students make significantly greater gains, equivalent to almost an extra half year of schooling. While the limited number of private schools makes it difficult to compare a wide variety of religiously affiliated schools with public schools, conservative Protestant private schools show the worst math performance of all types of schools. Math is particularly telling in this regard as it is the subject least influenced by home environment and most greatly influenced by the effectiveness of the schooling environment. However, it should be noted that school type only explains about 5% of the variation in math scores; the bulk of the difference is explained by demographic characteristics. The implication of this research is that, while private schools may provide a specific type of schooling (i.e. one that includes religious instruction), there is little evidence that private schools in general provide better instruction or improve educational outcomes.

2 Do you agree or disagree with the view that the learner and learner variables/characteristics like aptitude, intelligence, attitudes, motivation, etc. are significant in second language learning? Give reasons to support your answer.

Ans: Yes, I agree with the view that the learner and learner variables/characteristics like aptitude, intelligence, attitudes, motivation, etc. are significant in second language learning because some students learn a new language more quickly and easily than others. This simple fact is known by all who have themselves learned a second language or taught those who are using their second language in school. Clearly, some language learners are successful by virtue of their sheer determination, hard work and persistence. However, there are other crucial factors influencing success that are largely beyond the control of the learner. These factors can be broadly categorized as internal and external. It is their complex interplay that determines the speed and facility with which the new language is learned.

Internal factors