

2016 International Essay Contest for Young People

【Children's Category – Honorable Mention】

Cultivate the Mind and Nurture the Heart
(Original)

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Our planet has faced a variety of obstacles these past few years, however, it seems like the problems of the future are getting more complicated than ever. The present generation has to apologize to the future generations for we have created an environment that is bleak and hopeless. Deforestation, climate change, poverty, discrimination, terrorism are just some of the predicaments that need to be confronted or else life in our planet is going downhill.

Humans are undoubtedly not enjoying these issues and have to find solutions. There should be a real change in our perspective and attitude, but how do we achieve this? Education is the key to building a better and bright future for the generations to come.

As a child, my parents always remind me that education plays an important role as it lays the path for a better quality life. It was just as simple as that. However, as I was growing up, I started to question what an educated person is. We have a lot of educated individuals who are ruling different countries, head of big corporations, doctors, lawyers, yet the world seems to be in the worst state ever. The schools are emphasizing more on academic achievements that create students who want to be successful no matter what it takes resulting in greed and corruption. Money becomes the most important goal in life. One of our biggest problems right now is deforestation. As Clive Anderson said, "If you look at it ecologically, deforestation is high on the list of things that would bring devastation, you cut down trees to build houses, for fuel and you end up having no more trees left, but you will have to move on. If you take the earth as a whole, eventually there is nowhere to move on to." However, people are still blinded by their greed not thinking of the impact they have created for our generation and the generation to come. Although I believe that education is the answer to our problems, there are some changes needed to be done in our education system.

Character education should be part of the school curriculum for it is an effective tool in developing students with good positive behavior, motivation, skills, and attitudes.

Incorporating character education in the academic curriculum will promote students desire to do their best in achieving their goals, but at the same time be concern about the welfare of others. It will also expand their critical thinking and moral reasoning such as being responsible for their learning and their actions. It will also teach them the core values of respect, honesty, courage, acceptance, tolerance, and love. These values will help their interpersonal and emotional skills that enable them to interact effectively with people from different background, race or religion in various circumstances. But most of all, school curriculum with character education will create a citizen who is committed to contributing to the betterment of the society. With the right course, we are developing a person who is intellectual, social, emotional and ethical creating an educated, moral human being.

As Nelson Mandela once said, "It is in your hands to make a better world and those who live in it." The future of our world is in our hands. Having the right knowledge and attitude will we be able to produce the quality of life we all longed for. Only through a comprehensive academic curriculum focusing on character education will we be able to produce a positive, competent, caring, and responsible citizen who can collaborate with each other to come up with a solution for the advancement of the human race. Theodore Roosevelt had a saying that could sum up what I think education should be, "To educate a man in mind, and not in morals is to educate a menace to society."