

2016 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – Honorable Mention]

Investment in Holistic Education is Prudent (Original)

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We all live in a world with many problems, both simple and complex. To solve these challenging problems, everyone needs to realise that education is not confined to the four walls of a classroom. It is not like filling a bucket, but lighting a fire. Quality education is about promoting critical thinking, providing rewarding experiences, nurturing multiple intelligences and enacting real life situations or challenges. All of these lead to a type of education that I strongly believe in, that is, holistic education. Holistic education, in my view, is preparing students to meet the challenges of daily life as well as academics.

Holistic education provides opportunities for young people to learn about social and emotional development, about themselves, about the importance of being resilient in this rapidly changing world, and preparing them to face problems wisely. This view of education is aligned with the UNESCO „Education 2030“ Goal number 4 that recommends education that is “comprehensive, holistic, ambitious, aspirational and universal, and inspired by a vision of education that transforms the lives of individuals, communities and societies, leaving no one behind.” With this in mind, the following considerations are important in developing holistic education.

Most schools and teachers around the world, teach children only the core subjects, with little effort to connect or apply courses to real life situations. A good starting point for considering what young people need to learn, is having a dialogue on the local and global challenges. One important question to ask young people is, “What do you need to know to overcome the obstacles and challenges you face? This is because while schools teach us things like mathematics, there is little effort put to help young people understand why that knowledge is

important when they face problems and challenges that require logical thinking and reasoning. Schools are meant to prepare people for the world of work (the real world); to give them the skills that would help them up the ladder of success. An important quote by Alexandra K Trenfor for all educators to think about is "The best teachers show you where to look, but don't tell you what to look at".

Children need to develop multiple intelligences as these are required to live in the modern world. The essential learning that we all need should begin at childhood. Children need to start to learn about themselves. The value of knowing yourself is very important because it tells children that they are worth learning about, which leads to healthy self-respect and self-esteem. When people know who they are, and have high self-esteem, they will not be afraid to speak up for themselves. This leads to another point which is learning how to speak up, in order to face challenges and obstacles we go through in life. The International Baccalaureate spells out these key intelligences in what they term as learner profile attributes and international mindedness. Key to being balanced as one of these attributes is nurturing multiple intelligences by using varied teaching and learning approaches.

Holistic education programmes teach us things like how to deal with different aspects in life. In moments of frustration, science or math will not cater for all our needs. It is your inner soul that speaks and talks to you. For challenges or problems that have to be faced globally, we need to have the courage to speak up and give our opinions on how to address them. However, to be able to speak up, one needs to have profound self-esteem and respect. Clearly, everything that we do, and how we do it, is connected to our emotional development. This is why holistic education helps in every aspect of a growing child.

In conclusion, everything begins and ends in quality holistic education. Holistic education brings out the best in every child, and is the type of education that will eventually be needed to solve problems, both locally and globally. Along with academic subjects taught in school, students should develop skills such as public speaking and innovation that could change the world.