

2016 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – Honorable Mention]

Cooperating for a Better Future

(Original)

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Sometimes, I sit inside my classroom and think to myself; Why do we have to do our assignments by ourselves, when there are so many other students in the same room? Why can't we get help for homework from friends, or help others with their homework?

Three and a half years ago, my family moved to New York from Japan, where I had never been in touch with English before. When I walked into the classroom, I had no idea what to expect. I couldn't speak their language and I had no idea how to interact with the other students. However, as the weeks went by, my classmates helped me with a lot of my assignments which I couldn't have done by myself. It was only much later that I realized I hadn't been the only one gaining from these interactions. As I grew more fluent in English, I started to work on assignments and projects with the other students. Although there certainly was a language barrier setting us apart, my classmates had been gaining knowledge from myself, just as I was learning from them.

Through this experience, I learned something much more valuable than just learning another language; the importance of cooperation. Without the help my friends had given me, my three years of living in New York would have undoubtedly been much less significant. Through cooperation, I had gotten a taste of cultures, perspectives, atmospheres and so much more that I couldn't have found without the help of the people around me. Those people are the ones who have shaped my identity, and will continue doing so for the many years to come.

Thinking back, the number of events that have influenced my life had mostly been through the interaction with my friends in school, but nowadays, I have many more assignments, tests, and classes which I have to handle individually. When I was working on an assignment, an idea hit me. What is the point of coming to school, if all I do is work individually? Dozens of

students, each filled with unique ideas and creativity, gather in one classroom, studying with their mouths shut, heads down in 90 degrees. What a huge waste of opportunity! Instead of thinking within the limited range of an individual, we should expand on our ideas by sharing our thoughts. Although I am lucky enough to be in an environment where cooperation is encouraged, most students today spend much of their time in school learning by themselves. If there is a whole classroom filled with opportunities to better ourselves, why are we still staring down at our desks?

The world has grown into a place that is complicated beyond our fullest understanding, and it has become impossible to live detached from other people. However, this shouldn't be considered as a predicament. This is an opportunity for us to share our knowledge so that we can all gain new ideas, and lessen brutality through the understanding of each other. Education is crucial In order for this idea to become predominant in the society. Our futures will be shaped by the generations to come, and that is why education today must shift its focus onto gaining knowledge as a whole community. Cooperation has always led us to a brighter future. It has enabled humanity to make the most important advancements, and eluded us from vicious wars, meaningless harm, and sadness. We mustn't waste this opportunity to make our future a better one not just for ourselves, but also for the next generations to follow.