

The Purpose of Education

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Reading a 1930 article written by Eleanor Roosevelt on the purpose of education was a real eye-opener. This article peaked my interest in finding out what others considered the purpose of education. The similarities in what was needed in education back then and what is needed today makes one think about how things change but how they also stay the same. Roosevelt thought that education should make informed and intelligent citizens. She stated that we are responsible for the trends of thought and actions of our times (Roosevelt, 1930).

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, in 1963, thought that people could use their minds and they would be able to accomplish all of their aims in life. Yogi felt that people who were enabled would use the full potential of their minds, bodies, and spirits.

In 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren stated that the most important function of state and local governments was education. Education was the foundation of good citizenship. In 1963, Justice William Brennan stated that schools were the most vital civic institution for the preservation of a democratic system of government. In 1973, Chief Justice Warren Burger felt that education prepared people to be self-sufficient and self-reliant participants of society (Fazzaro, 2007).

In 1786, Benjamin Rush believed that the economic wellbeing of the country depended on education. In 1779, Thomas Jefferson thought that people must educate themselves to keep others and themselves safe (Fazzaro, 2007).

In 1947, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. believed that education allowed people to become more efficient which would allow them to achieve the legitimate goals in their lives. People should be trained to be quick, resolute, and effective thinkers. If people were taught to think intensively and to think critically, it allowed them to become knowledgeable social beings.

In 2014, Nigel Smith thought that developing knowledgeable, skillful, and ethical citizens would produce citizens that had confidence about the future of society and the world.

Ultimately, Roosevelt felt that education produced good citizens as did the fathers of our country and the leaders of the United States and the world. This is an amazing revelation. The proverb by John-Baptiste Alphonse Karr (1849) stated "The more things change; the more they stay the same" (para. 1) is very true. It is imperative that everyone involved in education teach students to be thoughtful thinkers to become viable contributing members of society.

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