

Topic: Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.

Outline:

1. Introduction

Thesis statement: Children should be equipped and enabled with all the cognitive capabilities required to make informed decisions.

2. Crunch paragraph

3. Effect of this trait on an individual

- a) Lack of mental capacity to analyse
- b) Weakness of effective mental deductions
- c) Inability to form an opinion
- d) Death of creativity in individual

4. Effects on society of teaching children what to think

- a) Society starts to express hard mentality
- b) Irrelevant skills not applicable anywhere
- c) Innovative ideas are looked down upon as impractical
- d) Harm to evolution and progress of society

5. Advantages of teaching ~~masses~~ ^{children} how to think on individual, society & state.

- a) Development of critical thinking ability
- b) Ability to adapt to changing circumstances
- c) Nurturing an individual's developmental needs
- d) Society's evolution into critical thinkers.
- e) Eradication of hard mentality from masses
- f) Promotion of tolerance and patience in society
- g) Children, as nation's future, begin questioning status quo
- h) Inquiry and curiosity make possible the progress of a state
- i) Awareness among children brings about informed decisions in ballots

6. Conclusion

Children must be taught how to think, not what to think. Children should be enabled and equipped with all the cognitive capabilities so that they can make informed decisions. This is important because children have to be transformed into conscientious and well-informed adults. The topic of the essay is a quote from Margaret Mead, an American anthropologist who worked extensively on these matters. Her findings led her to deduce that the individual who is taught what to do does not have the capacity to tackle any challenge which he hasn't seen. However, if that same individual is taught how to solve a ~~the~~ problem, that individual is much more likely to be able to face any hardship he or she might face. If a child is taught not how, but what, to think, she develops a lack of mental capacity to analyse and effective mental deductions. The child is also unable to form an opinion and lacks creativity. Teaching a child what, not how, to think also has broad implications on the society. Society expresses hard mentality and acquires those skills en-masse which are irrelevant. Innovative ideas are looked down upon as impractical and it hampers the progress and evolution of society. However, teaching children how to think has several benefits not only for the individual, but for society and nation as well. From developing various cognitive need of individual to catering to the requirements of a healthy society and contributing to the betterment of the society, teaching children how to think is the way to go.

It has been often observed that many a times, the educators of children - parents and teachers alike - tend to focus more on telling children what to do & what not to do, what is right and what is wrong, instead of telling them why they are required to do something or why something is right or wrong. The result is very clear; children either keep following this rationale for the rest of their lives and never care to think for themselves, or they revolt against the set rules and become deviants which might also cause them to turn into criminals. On the other hand, if children are taught how to think, if they are introduced to the "why" of things early on, they not only become conscientious citizens but also become responsible adults fully able to ponder over and take a rational decision.

Teaching a child what to think has a major impact on the individual identity of the child. When a child is taught what to think instead of how to, he develops a lack of mental capacity to analyse. This means that the child does not question - or is not allowed to question - the set rules and in this manner, he is slowly deprived of this ability. A big example of this is children who grow up in an authoritarian household or who get educated in such an institution. They are actively required to follow rules and order without a second thought. This stifles the natural ~~the~~ curiosity that a child has about different things and instead brings him to a stage where he only absorbs commands without analysing them. This results in the individual growing up with the same mind set and unable to independently analyse any new situation.

Another disadvantage of teaching a child what to think and not how to think is the weakness of effective mental deductions. All our lives, a person is presented with choices regarding one matter or another. And that individual has to pick ~~on~~ the most suitable one by mentally deducing the most beneficial one. If a child is ~~is~~ unable to analyse properly, he will undoubtedly have difficulty deducing the best choice. Since the child has not been able to analyse, he will not be able to build strong arguments for any decision he takes and this weakness causes major inconvenience to that individual as an adult while making important decisions.

Similarly, if a child is taught what to think and not how to think, he develops an inability to form an opinion over any matter. An opinion is the most potent weapon a person can wield, because opinions are based on ideals and ideals are what inspire other people as well. If a ~~person~~ ~~has~~ child is unable to form opinions, there is a huge possibility that as an adult, that individual will not have opinion - or personality - of his own. He will consume the opinions and ideals of others without a second thought and will be bound by the ~~the~~ limitations of imaginations of others. This becomes the root cause of fanaticism, which is extremely damaging to the individual.

When ^a ~~an~~ ~~individual~~ ^{child} is not taught how to think but what to think, it causes the death of creativity in that child. It is a well-documented and well-established fact that an individual is the most creative during childhood, since the brain is still developing and absorbing realities and surroundings and forming opinions and questioning everything. If this natural process is not allowed to take its course and instead the child is forced to learn and regurgitate some cherry-picked facts, the creative side of the child slowly fades away and by the time that individual turns into an adult, there is not a single trace of creativity in his actions and decisions. He acts as he has been taught to act in any and all situations. This leads to immense problems for that individual as he is then considered unsuitable for positions which require out-of-the-box approaches.

Teaching a child what to think instead of how to think has grave consequences for the society as well. Children are an integral part of society and as an adult, they emulate the same qualities they learn as children. In the absence of learning how to think, the society starts to exhibit a herd mentality. This means that the whole society adopts a single narrative and deems everything else to be wrong. Perhaps the greatest example is the preference of parents to have their children pursue a degree in medicine or engineering. From the earliest age, the child is conditioned and made to think that the professions mentioned previously are the only ones worth adopting. This creates a rat race and causes severe disappointment among youth who then have to opt for another degree.

Teaching a child what to think causes the child to be forced into skills that have little or no relevance in today's world. These skills which the child dedicates his childhood and teenage in learning turn out to be obsolete in the modern world. Even in today's world of AI where manual labour has all but vanished, a majority of parents push their children ~~to~~ into learning skills which are more easily and efficiently performed by a machine which does not even require any human input. This makes the skills of the individual redundant and causes high unemployment in the society.

A great misfortune of teaching a child what to think is that innovative ideas are looked down upon as impractical. The people and society becomes so set in their old ways that the advent of a new method to do something seems like an affront to the existing methods. A child who is taught since childhood what ~~is~~ the "correct" way is, grows up to believe that it is the ONLY way. Any new ideas or technologies are then ridiculed as impractical and a madman's dreams. The effect of this cannot be overstated. If the society had given even a little encouragement to them, those ideas could have done wonders for mankind with a little bit of research. A glance at the life of Nicola Tesla gives us an ample understanding of the scorn and humiliation he faced for his innovative ideas which are proving groundbreaking for science today.

When the children are not taught how to think, they keep following the traditions blindly. They refuse to reform because they are unable to think critically and make their own deductions. This causes irreparable harm to the progress and evolution of society. Any such community which does not evolve endangers itself by lagging behind others and possibly being wiped out altogether. History of the world is filled with names of the greatest civilizations this planet has seen and yet they all ended or died mostly because they did not evolve and hence did not progress. They became set in their ways and refused to allow people to think critically and bring about change that could improve the society.

On the opposite end, teaching a child how to think instead of what to think is beneficial not only for the individual, but also for the society and even the nation as a whole. Learning how to think develops in child the ability to think critically. The child is equipped at an early age with the tools necessary to analyse situations and given the confidence to use this approach in all aspects of his life. The results are that the child grows up to be a confident ~~and~~ individual who take a decision after due consideration and take responsibility for his decisions as well. All this is only possible when a child is taught how to think and not what to think.

A child develops the ability to adapt to changing circumstances if taught how to think. He learns that every situation is unique and thus requires a tailor-made approach instead of a one-size-fits-all solution. The biggest example in this case is the children studying in different education systems. It is a commonly known fact that children in the traditional education system of Pakistan are tested only on the questions and problems they have solved sometime in the past year or two. On the other hand, student giving the O/A level exams ~~for~~ attempts problems never seen before. This means that students of the traditional system are only taught what to think, and if they were to swap places with students of O/A levels, they would not be able to do well in those exams.

Teaching a child how to think nurtures his developmental needs. As soon as the child begins to take interest ⁱⁿ and show curiosity about his environment, he develops ~~a~~ cognitive abilities to absorb and interpret the information he is getting. It then falls on parents and teachers to fulfil those developmental needs of a child. Numerous studies show that children who are taught how to think are very well-adjusted compared to their counterparts. Their cognitive needs are met and they develop early on the faculties to think fairly, objectively and critically.

Teaching the children how to think also has a massive impact on the society. When the children are taught how to think, the society evolves into that of critical thinkers. This has major implications. The society no longer subscribes to any set rules and begins to devise new ones to meet the needs of individuals and times as they change. The children who are taught how to think are critical of ~~of~~ any step or development which they think is not serving their needs and when these children develop into adults, they take practical steps to ~~to~~ right the wrongs. Evolution of society into critical thinkers also means that everyone strives for different ideals while being aware and respectful of the limits and boundaries. This changes the society from being emotional and violent to becoming rational and peaceful.

The biggest advantage to a society of teaching children how to think is the eradication of herd mentality. Once a child is taught how to think, he then begins to focus on his own interests and aspirations instead of what the society tells him to be. The biggest area would be that of adoption of profession. A child who has been taught how to think will know his area of interest and will critically think about all relevant factors before choosing a profession. He will not be bothered by the "trend" a profession has. If this prevails over a society, there is no doubt that every person will adopt the profession they actually want to without giving a thought to what society expects him to be. Thus causing the members of society to escape the herd mentality and embrace their individuality.

Teaching children how to think is a great way of promotion of tolerance and patience in the society. Minds of young children are blank tablets. They acquire the ^{notions of} superiority of self and inferiority of others through active indoctrination of those around them. If, instead, the children are taught to think for themselves, they would always come to the conclusion that none of their peers are inferior to them. A great example in this case is the segregation of blacks and whites in the US. When the children were taught about the inferiority of blacks, they considered them lowly. But in the absence of such indoctrination, it was found that children did not care for the colour of their peers. The same concept is valid for different ethnic, lingual and religious factions that make up a society.

On a national level, teaching children how to think has great impacts on nation building. Children have the natural tendency to question everything. Equipped with the knowledge of how to think, these children as adults begin to question the status quo ~~and~~, the current practices of statecraft, and the policies of the states. These individuals then not only work to effectively deliver on the policies that are in favour of the nation, but also strive towards changing those which are redundant or not serving the needs of the people of the country. Thus chipping in their part in the process of nation-building.

Children who are taught how to think become individuals who take part in the progress of a state through curiosity and inquiry. Transparency and accountability are two of the most important parts of any process which takes place in a state. Children who are taught how to think go on to be those who ensure that these two things are taken care of in the affairs of the government and state. These individuals make the decision makers accountable for their actions and force them to ensure that there is transparency in the matters of the state. This practice of accountability and transparency not only makes sure that the resources of the country are going to the right place, but also contributes to the progress of a nation.

Those children who are taught how to think have the awareness to bring about change through ballots. Roald Dahl once wrote that somewhere inside everyone is the power to change the world, and this quote is especially true for elections. Elections of a country determine the type of representation people want as their government. When the children who have been taught how to think go for polling a vote, they elect someone who they know will alleviate their difficulties instead of increasing them. They elect a government which follows the true essence of democracy. This brings about real, tangible change in a nation by the people, for the people, from the people. And this is made possible by those who have the ability to think for themselves instead of those who blindly vote for someone.

Teaching children how to think and not what to think is the greatest education that can be imparted to them. Teaching children what to think not only hinders their personal development and abilities, but also causes immeasurable damage to the ~~society~~ progress of society. On the other hand, children who are taught how to think are not only the ones who excel in life as individuals, but also contribute towards development of the society and the progress of the state.