

Essay #3 (2023)

Children Must be taught how to think, not what to think.

1) Introduction: Cultivating Independent and critical thinking in children is more pivotal for their personal development and societal impact than merely instructing them on what thoughts to hold. It equips them with skills needed to adapt, innovate and make informed decisions in an ever changing world.

2) Nurturing Independent thought; Differentiating how to think from what to think:

- a) Balancing guidance with autonomy
- b) Navigating information overload
- c) Emphasizing process over content

3) Significance of fostering Independent thinking abilities in Children:

- a) Leads to cognitive development; Piaget's cognitive development theory
- b) Facilitates Independent problem solving; the Marshmallow test, by psychologist Walter Mischel
- c) Fosters ingenuity and innovation; Malawian child inventor William Kamkwamba's invention of electric windmill

- d) Contributes to knowledge economy of a nation;
Case Study: Finland as a knowledge economy 2.0 (World Bank)
- e) Promotes civic engagement and responsible citizenship;
'Ocean Cleanup Project' by Boyan Slat
- f) Creates thought leaders in society; Case of Malala Yousafzai and Greta Thunberg
- g) Cultivates Adaptability and resilience; 'March for our Lives' (activists) students advocating for gun control in US.

4. The Demerits Associated with indoctrination of young minds:

- a) Stifles independent thought process; Cornell critical thinking test
- b) Encourages conformity over individuality; the influence of schooling on autonomy and conformity in Portuguese children (study)
- c) Leads to social intolerance; Hitler Youth in Nazi Germany.
→ "Teaching hatred" - role of education in shaping intolerance among Israeli students.
- d) Suppresses Diverse perspectives; North Korean Education System.

(e) Undermines Personal autonomy; study on the effects of parental authoritarianism on Chinese adolescents.

45. Approaches to Promote autonomous thinking in Children:

- a) Problem solving pedagogy; The effects of problem-solving based learning on metacognitive awareness - (Eurasian Journal of Education)
- b) Socratic dialogue in classrooms; (P4C) philosophy for Children programs in schools.
- c) Creative exercises for stimulating critical thinking; Logic puzzles, Sudoku games, Duolingo app etc.
- d) Providing access to information and resources
Investment in educational and technological Infrastructure by Nordic countries
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5. Conclusion