

Is American Education Missing This Important Component?

With achievement gaps growing, proficiency scores stagnating, and other countries getting ahead of American students, it's easy to frantically search for the latest and greatest solution to our education woes.

But do these latest and greatest solutions really get us anywhere? Do we actually need to re-examine some tried and true educational principles of the past?

In a recent article in Forbes magazine, Jordan Shapiro points to one of these tried and true principles. [He writes](#) (emphasis added):

“Education is not just about retaining facts, understanding theories, gaining skills, or even experiencing the world. It is not just about books smarts or street smarts. Thinking about it in these ways is fundamentally problematic. ...

*What is the real thing? About 2,500 years ago, Plato argued in Republic that **education turns students toward the truth.** ...*

*For Plato, **a real education always moves students from the darkness of the shadows to the brightness of the light.** Each step closer to brightness involves waiting for the eyes to adjust.”*

Seventy years ago, Martin Luther King, Jr. also argued that helping students recognize truth was a key goal of education. [He said](#) (emphasis added):

*“Education should cause us to rise beyond the horizon of legions of half truth, prejudices and propaganda. Education should enable us to ‘weigh and consider,’ **to discern the true from the false, the relevant from the irrelevant, and the***

real from the unreal."

Truth. Is this a principle which is fostered in today's schools? Considering that many students are now taught that everything is relative and that truth is whatever is right for the individual, then it would seem we would have to answer this question in the negative.

Perhaps, then, the solution to our educational woes is not the new, up-and-coming curriculum that every school is following, nor an increased emphasis on testing, nor the latest and greatest tech devices. Perhaps students just need truth.

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