

MLK on the Purpose of Education: 8 Quotes

January 15th marks the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the great leader of the American Civil Rights Movement.

As the quotes below illustrate, Dr. King promoted a traditional understanding of education in which students learn to think for themselves while simultaneously developing in virtue.

Are today's schools failing to give students the kind of education that Dr. King promoted?

1. "Education must enable a man to become more efficient, to achieve with increasing facility the legitimate goals of his life."
2. "To save man from the morass of propaganda, in my opinion, is one of the chief aims of education."
3. "A great majority of the so-called educated people do not think logically and scientifically. Even the press, the classroom, the platform, and the pulpit in many instances do not give us objective and unbiased truths."
4. "Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from the fiction."
5. "The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically."
6. "The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate."

1. "[E]ducation which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason, but with no morals."
2. "Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education."