

The Main Purpose of Education in a Republic

When it comes to education, it seems everyone has a different idea as to the best course of action: Do we keep Common Core or ditch it? Should we test more, or do we have too many tests already? Should they learn critical thinking or should they be taught to memorize facts? And on it goes, with education becoming more complex by the minute.

Given this complexity, it's somewhat refreshing to hear the simple principle for education which philosopher Charles Montesquieu laid out in his famous work, [*The Spirit of Laws*](#). For a republican form of government like that which we enjoy in America, the goal of education should be to instill a particular virtue, namely, "the love of the laws and of our country."

Montesquieu goes on to say:

"Every thing, therefore, depends on establishing this love in a republic; and to inspire it ought to be the principal business of education: but the surest way of instilling it into children is for parents to set them an example.

People have it generally in their power to communicate their ideas to their children; but they are still better able to transfuse their passions.

If it happens otherwise, it is because the impressions made at home are effaced by those they have received abroad.

It is not the young people that degenerate: they are not spoilt till those of maturer age are already sunk into corruption."

In recent years, the education system has placed a decided

emphasis on multiculturalism and focused excessively on the sins of America even while downplaying her good qualities. But if Montesquieu is right, will such a practice eventually lead to the destruction of our nation? Does the survival of a republic like America ultimately depend upon teaching its young to love their country and its laws?

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