



Quotations on Education, Equity, and Multiculturalism

Compiled by Paul Gorski for **EdChange** the *Multicultural Pavilion*
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Our struggle today is not to have a female Einstein get appointed as an assistant professor. It is for a woman schlemiel to get as quickly promoted as a male schlemiel. –Bella Abzug

From cradle to grave this problem of running order through chaos, direction through space, discipline through freedom, unity through multiplicity, has always been, and must always be, the task of education, as it is the moral of religion, philosophy, science, art, politics, and economy; but a boy's will is his life, and he dies when it is broken, as the colt dies in harness, taking a new nature in becoming tame. –Henry Adams

The child becomes largely what it is taught; hence we must watch what we teach it, and how we live before it. –Jane Addams

The true teacher defends his pupils against his own personal influence. He inspires self-distrust. He guides their eyes from himself to the spirit that quickens him. He will have no disciple. –Amos Bronson Alcott

We are all creative, but by the time we are three or four years old, someone has knocked the creativity out of us. Some people shut up the kids who start to tell stories. Kids dance in their cribs, but someone will insist they sit still. By the time the creative people are ten or twelve, they want to be like everyone else. – Maya Angelou

I am playing with my Self, I am playing with the world's soul, I am the dialogue between my Self and el espiritu del mundo. I change myself, I change the world. –Gloria Anzaldua

Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token to save it from that ruin, which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable. An education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their choice of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world. –Hannah Arendt

I want American history taught. Unless I'm in that book, you're not in it either. History is not a procession of illustrious people. It's about what happens to a people. Millions of anonymous people is what history is about. –James Baldwin

The defect of equality is that we only desire it with our superiors. –Henry Becque

We must merge our traditional sense of schooling with the real world. What we do in school must not insult the child's past but must build upon his past and encourage future learning. –Sigmund Boloz

Race prejudice is not only a shadow over the colored--it is a shadow over all of us, and the shadow is darkest over those who feel it least and allow its evil effects to go on. –Pearl S. Buck

All generalizations are false, including this one. –Alexander Chase

The chief object of education is not to learn things but to unlearn things. –Gilbert Chesterton

Who dares to teach must never cease to learn. –John Cotton Dana

The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches, but reveal to them their own. – Benjamin Disraeli

Sixty years ago I knew everything; now I know nothing; education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance. –Will Durant

The secret of education lies in respecting the pupil. –Ralph Waldo Emerson

In place of equal respect, the nation offered women the Miss America beauty pageant, established in 1920-- the same year women won the vote. –Susan Faludi

Any attempt to disturb the deadly routine of instruction is looked upon as sabotage. And the notion that the aims and functions of education should be determined in the local community by a close and continuous discussion among students, faculty, administration, and citizens is so visionary that it is not even seriously considered. –Charles Ferguson

An education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don't. –Anatole France

Of course there's no such thing as a totally objective person, except Almighty God, if She exists. –Antonia Fraser

All children have preparedness, potential, curiosity and interest in constructing their learning, in engaging in social interaction and in negotiating with everything the environment brings to them. –Lella Gandini

It is not who you attend school with, but who controls the school you attend. –Nikki Giovanni

A teacher who can arouse a feeling for one single good action, for one single good poem, accomplishes more than he who fills our memory with rows and rows of natural objects, classified with name and form. – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

By the time they reach second grade, every child in the country knows what an Indian is. They wear lots of feathers, ride spotted ponies and shoot arrows. Indians who don't fit the type are invisible; they simply can't be imagined by the majority of white children or adults. –Rayna Green

I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something I can do. –Edward Everett Hale

So far, we do not seem appalled at the prospect of exactly the same kind of education being applied to all the school children from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but there is an uneasiness in the air, a realization that the individual is growing less easy to find; an idea, perhaps, of what standardization might become when the units are not machines, but human beings. –Edith Hamilton

Wherever there are beginners and experts, old and young, there is some kind of learning going on, some kind of teaching. We are all pupils and we are all teachers. –Gilbert Highet

The single largest variable that predicts SAT scores is family income. If you want higher SAT scores, you need to get your kids born into wealthier families. You know, it's great to tell kids to pull themselves up by their own boot straps, but you better put boots on them first. –Paul Houston

Sometimes I feel discriminated against, but it does not make me angry. It merely astonishes me. How can they deny themselves the pleasure of my company? It's beyond me. –Zora Neale Hurston

Most ignorance is vincible ignorance. We don't know because we don't want to know. –Aldous Huxley

Good words will not give my people good health and stop them from dying. Good words will not get my people a home where they can live in peace and take care of themselves. I am tired of talk that comes to nothing. It makes my heart sick when I remember all the good words and broken promises. –Chief Joseph

Though people with disabilities have become more vocal in recent years, we still constitute a very small minority. Yet the Beautiful People - the slender, fair and perfect ones - form a minority that may be even smaller. –Debra Kent

I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizens Council or the Ku Klux Klanner but the white moderate who is more devoted to order than to justice. –Martin Luther King, Jr.

More money is put into prisons than into schools. That, in itself, is the description of a nation bent on suicide. I mean, what is more precious to us than our own children? We are going to build a lot more prisons if we do not deal with the schools and their inequalities. –Jonathan Kozol

In the end, as any successful teacher will tell you, you can only teach the things that you are. If we practice racism then it is racism we teach. –Max Lerner

Because I am a woman, I must make unusual efforts to succeed. If I fail, no one will say, 'She doesn't have what it takes.' They will say, 'Women don't have what it takes.' –Clare Boothe Luce

One of the first things I think young people, especially nowadays, should learn is how to see for yourself and listen for yourself and think for yourself. –Malcolm X

People say, "I have heart disease," not "I am heart disease." Somehow the presumption of a person's individuality is not compromised by those diagnostic labels. All the labels tell us is that the person has a specific challenge with which he or she struggles in a highly diverse life. But call someone "a schizophrenic" or "a borderline" and the shorthand has a way of closing the chapter on the person. It reduces a multifaceted human being to a diagnosis and lulls us into a false sense that those words tell us who the person is, rather than only telling us how the person suffers. –Martha Manning

When a man tells you that he got rich through hard work, ask him whose. –Don Marquis

The problem with our education system is not that parents do not have a choice. The problem is that inequities continue to exist. –Patsy Mink

'Status quo.' Latin for the mess we're in. –Jeve Moorman

The function of freedom is to free somebody else. –Toni Morrison

Aye, fight! But not your neighbor. Fight rather all the things that cause you and your neighbor to fight. –Mikhail Naim

Illegal aliens have always been a problem in the Unites States. Ask any Indian. –Robert Orben

More non-fringe, non-radical homosexuals emerge into public view every day. As the stereotype of the homosexual as antisocial deviant crumbles, a (political) party or faction that tolerates gay-baiting rhetoric in the name of 'family values' makes 'family values' look more and more like common bigotry. –Jonathan Rauch

Brother, you say there is but one way to worship and serve the Great Spirit. If there is but one religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? Why not all agreed, as you can all read the book? –Red Jacket

Both class and race survive education, and neither should. What is education then? If it doesn't help a human being to recognize that humanity is humanity, what is it for? So you can make a bigger salary than other people? –Beah Richards

Mexico was most powerfully my father's smile and not, as you might otherwise imagine, not language, not pigment. –Richard Rodriguez

Let us reform our schools, and we shall find little reform needed in our prisons. –John Rushkin

Was putting a man on the moon actually easier than improving education in our public schools? –B.F. Skinner

The first problem for all of us, men and women, is not to learn, but to unlearn. –Gloria Steinem

I have no color prejudices nor caste prejudices nor creed prejudices. All I care to know is that a man is a human being, and that is enough for me; he can't be any worse. –Mark Twain

There are many humorous things in the world, among them the white man's notion that he is less savage than the other savages. –Mark Twain

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) said that homosexuality 'is a lifestyle I don't agree with.' This is a trope you hear from the religious right a good deal, and it seems to have entered the conservative mainstream, rolling easily off the tongue. But it is a very odd thing to say. No one (speaking rationally) says, 'I don't agree with the Pacific Ocean' or 'I don't agree with the Grand Canyon.' Facts are not things you agree or disagree with. You can agree or disagree with viewpoints, thoughts or ideas, but homosexuality is not a viewpoint or an idea. It is a thing, an attribute, a nature, a fact. –Paul Varnell

People call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat or a prostitute. –Rebecca West

Only that education deserves emphatically to be termed cultivation of the mind which teaches young people how to begin to think. –Mary Wollstonecraft

Teaching is not filling up a pail, it is lighting a fire. –William Butler Yeats