

WHAT I THINK THE GREATEST BARRIER TO EDUCATION IS IN 200 WORDS

Empathy

Education is one of the most important things any individual can receive. According to Our World in Data, a high level of education is strongly correlated to an individual's income and prosocial behaviours, such as feeling trust for others and participating in volunteer activities. Despite this, receiving a comprehensive education can be difficult.

I believe that the greatest barrier to education is a lack of empathy. More empathy would benefit many aspects of teaching and life in general. However, most significantly, we need systems to teach us to meet students where they are.

According to Our World in Data, East Asian countries, such as Singapore, have higher percentages of high achieving students than Western countries, such as the USA. For example, 70% of students in Singapore are high achieving, contrasting to 45% in Northern Ireland (the highest scoring Western country).

According to the World Bank, East Asian countries focus heavily on teaching students to "know themselves", "relate well to others", and "how to learn". Thus, future teachers are empathic to their students, and current teachers show empathy by admitting: "we do not know what your future holds, so we will equip you with the tools to learn whatever you need".