

An Education of Hope

Nia Statement of Purpose

Andrew S. Hecht

“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.”

- Malcolm X

Part I: Haiku

Education

History is hope,
Nothing is impossible,
Knowledge is power.

Part II: Spoken Word

The power of education

Education is my power. When I question who I am, my education provides me an identity. When times are rough, my education offers me hope. And when my future seems uncertain, my education guides me.

My first and greatest teachers were my family. They motivated me to follow my dreams and provided me the tools to gain self efficacy. From my family, I learned love, responsibility, perseverance, and empathy. The respect I have for their role in my life drives me to be a good friend, role model, and mentor.

My education has uplifted my soul and guided me toward history, the study of hope. Hope built not just on blind faith, but on facts.

In my studies of history, I have seen the horrible atrocities committed by humankind...the enslavement of our brothers and sisters, two world wars, genocide, the oppression of woman, and other horrific acts spanning throughout the course of human history.

Yet, I have also seen humans beings make enormous progress both on a micro and macro level...Jews and African Americans receiving their freedom... a world wide commitment to the end of genocide and a call for peace...the Civil Rights and Women’s Equality movements in the United States...Against all odds, human beings do great things everyday. Born with imperfections, we constantly repeat our mistakes. Yet somehow, whether it is by the grace of God and/or the result of the innate “nobleness of the human spirit (Maya Angelou)” we progress. Education is my power and history is my hope.

I plan to enter the field of education following my academic career. It is my goal to provide power and hope to children of my community, the greater South Florida area. Education is a human right and providing quality access to this right must be a central mission of my community, country, and world.

My four professional role models provide me guidance from a micro, macro, meso, and global level of analysis (Social Location Theory). My fifth grade math teacher Mr. Abney fueled my fire for education and ignited my passion for teaching (Micro). Geoffrey Canada's commitment to education and use of culturally sensitive programs influence my methodology (Meso). Professor Samuel Stafford's analytical approach toward law and its impact on society provides me an avenue to effect change (Macro). And finally from a global perspective, Martin Luther King Jr.'s commitment to equality in the United States is a model for social action and progress. Through education, we all have the ability to make a difference in our world. Education is our greatest power.

Part II: Essay

My education is the foundation of my unique identity. Through my education, I have learned from the mistakes, experiences, and choices of past generations. It is through their hand-me-down lessons and my own experiences that I derive strength, power, and knowledge. Additionally, my education illuminates my future goals and career path.

My family has had an enormous impact on my identity. From my father, I learned what it means to be a man. A man cares for others (empathy), provides for his family (responsibility), and never gives up in the face of adversity (perseverance). From my mother, I learned the meaning of unconditional love and support. And from my brother, I learned the importance of humility and friendship. These values are essential to the person I strive to become.

I am the product of history. I subscribe to the progressive theory (Rothbard, Murray N.) and believe that the conditions of humankind can improve over time. Though we constantly make and repeat our mistakes, I believe in progress and the innate good of the human spirit as a whole. This hope empowers me to strive for my dreams.

Malcolm X once wrote that "the future belongs to those who prepare for it today (Malcolm X)." My academic and professional goals define who I am and where I hope to go in the future. Currently, I am studying Political Science and History at the University of Florida. I chose to study in these fields because I am passionate about social action and improving the conditions of mankind through institutions such as

governments and schools. Studying political science will allow me to understand the institutions and norms through which social action occurs in society. As for history, it is the compass through which I will be able to best navigate the future

After college, I plan to apply for Teach for America, a program that aims to end education inequalities in the United States by providing inner-city youth with passionate and inspiring young teachers (Teach For America). If I am accepted into this program, I hope to emulate my fifth grade mathematics teacher Mr. Abney, who for the first time made math relevant and fun.

This past summer, I taught fifth grade social studies in Little Haiti, Miami for a program entitled Breakthrough Collaborative. Everyday my students inspired me. I learned that under the right conditions, all students can succeed. Great teachers can inspire greatness

Eventually, it is my goal to attend law school where I plan to model my professional demeanor and focus after University of Florida Professor Samuel Stafford. While a student in his class, I learned how the law and legal institutions can impact the education system. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court took a major step in providing equal access to education in its landmark decision *Brown v. Board of Education* (Davis and Graham). However, more progress needs to be made from a legislative level to ensure a quality education is provided to all youth in the United States.

Consequently, I hope to one day influence education policy in my community. Using a methodology of collective action and cooperation, I believe we can improve the conditions of our education system. Parents, teachers, community organizations, and local, state, and the national levels of government must all play a part in our youth's education.

I contend that education must be viewed from a research based micro-centered perspective where the best practices and programs are utilized. An example of such a program is the Harlem Children Zone founded by Geoffrey Canada. Though the program may not be economically feasible to implement on a macro scale, the Zone meets the specific needs of its community by providing youth with a quality education and a safe environment. I admire Canada's "whatever it takes" approach to education (HCZ History). He

champions, not only improving schools, but the culture of the community (NPR). This cultural sensitive approach counteracts barriers to success and empowers youth to gain self efficacy (Our Results).

Additionally, University of Florida Professor Carolyn M. Tucker's research into such culturally sensitive approaches further proves their success in promoting academic and social success among at-risk youth (Tucker and Herman).

Finally, I am inspired by the teachings of Martin Luther King Jr. His views on social justice, tolerance, and non-violent protest are a foundation for our society. The movement he and millions of other Americans helped create was essential to the progress of our young nation. I hope to one day be a part of a similar movement for education reform in the United States. This will be our country's greatest test. The key to unlock society's problems is education.

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