

## 2008 UF COE Writing Contest Entry

*(This is one of 27 entries submitted in the College's recent writing contest on the topic of "What's Good in Education?". Visit the [writing contest home page](#) for links to other entries, including the winning one.)*

# WHAT'S GOOD IN EDUCATION?

*We do it right, every single day.*

By **LAURIE CRAIG KITCHIE**

*7ED, curriculum and instruction*

Our country was formed on the principles of freedom – freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom to form our own thoughts and live within our individualized beliefs. The miracle of education is the celebration of a young child's first day of kindergarten - and in the blink of an eye watching that same child walk across a stage to receive a hard-earned piece of paper praising their name. In those 13 years, somewhere between the formation of letters, the multiplying of fractions, the intense classroom debates on history and the future, a child becomes an adult. A small student with a tin lunchbox becomes free. Knowledge is the foundation of freedom.

Nowhere in the world does every child have that same opportunity to grasp the very breath of freedom and engage in a path of teacher-guided self-discovery to carve a future that suffers not from limitations. Nowhere in the world can two people sit inches from one another to share ideas even though their religious beliefs and socioeconomic backgrounds may be vastly different. So many people point out what is broken in America's education system, but there is so much that is right. Our equality is unmatched. Our melting pot of dreams is embraced. As educators we can look in a child's eyes, past the mistakes of their parents, and the wrongs delivered onto their grandparents, and say to that child that there was a dream, there still is a dream, and every day we are achieving that dream.

A student spends just over 2,300 days of their life in school from the point that they learn to first write their name to at last signing their college applications. A teacher is generally with that child for just over 180 days. In that time there is the responsibility to instill in that child the knowledge that is deemed necessary to accomplish greatness. The opportunity to provide a future and then watch what you have provided flourish is awe-inspiring. It is fulfilling in every possible measure. It is what compels teachers to look beyond the flaws of the system and maintain their composure even at the times when the heart of that teacher witnesses the worst of humanity projected on the innocence of a child.

To look at that same child with the possibilities of the future and remind them that the dream is out there, and then to help that child rise above the baggage unfairly thrust upon them to take that dream and make it their own. That is education in America. That is how we do it – and we do it right every single day.

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