

Personal Philosophy of Education

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Abstract

The purpose of schools is to give their students all the tools they need to learn and love learning for a lifetime in order to positively impact the world around them. In order to fulfill this purpose, teachers must treat every child as important and unique, taking into account the various learning styles and diversities represented in their classrooms. Using quality teaching methods and assignments, teachers shape the way their students learn about the world around them. By giving them the tools required to learn, they can take their knowledge and skills beyond the classroom.

The love of learning is what drives the human race to make advances in areas such as life-saving medical sciences, the understanding of the universe, and more accurate representations of history. In order to foster this love of learning, students must be educated by teachers who believe that learning is possible for every student and that the ways every student learns are unique and valid. The purpose of schools is to give their students all the tools they need to learn and love learning for a lifetime in order to positively impact the world around them.

Philosophy of Schools & Learning

Learning is the way we take in data and synthesize it into useful information; that is, learning is one part information acquisition and one part creating meaning (Braley, Layman, & White, 2003). As realists such as Aristotle and Aquinas claimed, we can learn from the world right around us, and nature is an integral part of understanding life (Braley, Layman, & White, 2003). I believe students learn most effectively when teachers wholeheartedly utilize and harness the students' natural curiosity, and connect their learning with real-life issues and topics (Braley, Layman, & White, 2003). Throughout their lives, students will be required to continue learning information and thinking critically. It has been shown that the more we learn about something, the more we tend to enjoy the subject and take pleasure in life in general (Bloom, 2011). Therefore, every unique child deserves the chance to learn how to learn, so that they may live life to the fullest. In respect to the various ways humans process information, Howard Gardener's theory is that we learn within at least 8 distinct types of intelligence: Verbal/linguistic, mathematical, visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist (Gardener, 1984). Students will generally have one or two types of intelligences that they are strongest in, and these are the ways their brains process information most effectively. For instance, if a student is strong in the kinesthetic intelligence category, they may

learn best by using movement in conjunction with the information they must learn. Additionally, teachers will most naturally teach out of the intelligence in which they are strongest, but by utilizing all of these modalities in the way they structure their school day and lessons, teachers can make learning understandable to all students. In the classroom environment, teachers are to do their best to meet the unique learning needs of each student, and the students are responsible for bringing their minds and wills to school every day and putting forth their best effort in all tasks and assignments. Because learning is a process, schools are to be a place of intentionality, where teachers plan and prepare quality lessons that lead to in-depth projects and students to take their time and ask thoughtful questions about the material. This means that it is in the schools' best interest to employ quality, qualified people to teach and inspire young minds as well as instill positive values. Both the teachers and the students in the classroom make up a close-knit community where they learn to share knowledge and sharpen each other as they grow, and then, if the schools have done their job, the students will take their knowledge and experience out into the world.

Instructional Practice

As mentioned before, learning has two parts to it: information gathering and creating meaning out of the procured information (Braley, Layman, & White, 2003). There are many methods a teacher can employ to accomplish each of these tasks. For the first, teachers can choose quality books and articles for students to read. By reading a variety of books- archaic, classic, and modern- students can gain a well-rounded understanding of our culture, world, history, science, and art. Detailed and effective experiments in science subjects are important for students in order to understand the true application of the knowledge they are given in the classroom. These experiments may include specific steps to a chemistry experiment or even a

simple observation of nature and the way it works. Research projects are crucial at all age levels, as long as they are age-graded and appropriate for the student's knowledge level. By becoming deeply involved in the research of a subject or story, students are able to practice critical thinking.

Teacher-Learner Relationship

Students are active participants in their learning but, unlike John Dewey's progressive education philosophy which implies children can lead their own learning with minimal teacher involvement (Braley, Layman, & White, 2003), students require boundaries and a measure of organized lessons; that is, they require their teachers to be more than discussion guides and group leaders. Although students have the capability to be self-taught and to learn from within, teachers are the academic leader of the school (Braley, Layman, & White, 2003) and are responsible for harnessing the natural learning potential in their students. The relationship between teacher and student is above all respectful, as well as professional and kind. It is the teachers, first and foremost, who holds the responsibility to maintain the professional boundaries and respectful tones they, in turn, expect from their students. This is because they are also role models for their students at all times (Braley, Layman, & White, 2003) in professional conduct and character.

Diversity

Teachers are required to be aware of many types of diversity in their classrooms. Diversity is found on many levels. The most obvious source of diversity is ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity. Teachers need to be aware of any biases they may have regarding ethnicity and culture, and be well-versed in the cultures that comprise their communities. Another area of diversity is in the way students learn. Although there are many theories about what learning style categories a student may fall into, the bottom line is that it is imperative that teachers understand

that every child learns differently. Knowing this, teachers must do their very best to include a wide variety of teaching tools and an array of varying assignments to ensure that every child has a chance at learning, no matter their style. The third area of diversity is the special needs of some students. According to the Child Trends Databank (2014), 7.5% of students have been diagnosed with a learning disorder, and about 1% of the population is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Additionally, 3.2% of children in the general population are diagnosed with depression and 7.1% with anxiety, and 7.4% with a behavior disorder (CDC, n.d.). These statistics reveal that there is more to the makeup of a school or classroom than meets the eye, and teachers must be prepared to take into account these special needs and more. This means that we as educators need to do our very best to care for our special needs students- as well as the variety of needs in *all* of their students- in order to ensure they receive the education they all need to grow in knowledge and wisdom.

Conclusion

A classroom is a place where teachers prepare their students to love learning so that in the future they are able to move society forward. The purpose of schools is to give every one of their students, regardless of background or skill levels, the tools they need to learn and love learning for a lifetime in order to positively impact the world around them.

References

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