

EDCI 633: My Personal Educational Philosophy

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**What is the learner's role?**

Learners are the reason that public education exists. However, that focus seems to have been lost in our current age, where the focus gets a bit muddied chasing after “best practices”, curriculum requirements, and the like. While these are important, the student should always remain the primary focus. Ultimately, students should be actively engaged life-long learners, asking thought-provoking questions, giving consideration to where or how they are a participant in the world around them, in addition to developing an enduring perseverance and humility (in both education and life) as they transition to life beyond high school.

This transition to self-actualization however is often a challenge. It requires that students take ownership over their learning and have a good work ethic. Not all students are thusly motivated, and when they are not, even the best teachers can appear to fail such students. Nevertheless, students themselves must be self-motivated to reach their ideal potential and overcome the confrontations that life will inevitably throw at them, rather than give up at the first signs of difficulty.

**What is the teacher's role?**

My role as an educator is to provide guidance, leadership, counsel and expertise both inside and beyond the classroom. My classroom provides a respite from the storm of life that allows students to feel secure, respected, safe, and acknowledged, while simultaneously being a hotbed for critical thinking, synthesis and personal growth as they learn. I strive to provide a classroom environment that leaves each student feeling respected and respectful of their peers.

I am there to introduce new ideas, thoughts, and content that many of my students are only vaguely familiar with, and it is my role to help them learn and apply it both in the past, present and also the future. My role also includes having high expectations for my students, and helping them reach those heights, while also stretching themselves and their abilities, despite the varying levels each of my students may be at. I present my lessons utilizing a variety of methods and new techniques and new technologies, making sure that many learning styles are respected and addressed in my classroom.

**What is worthy of teaching (curriculum)?**

The curriculum is ultimately set by the State of Utah, but I don't use that as the limit, but instead as a beginning to build from; they are the basics that students should be learning. While some see such requirements as hindrances to learning, or perhaps “hoops to jump through”, instead I choose to view them as points along the journey of discovery and

application of the social sciences. My ultimate goal is for all of my students to leave my classroom better prepared to continue improving themselves, and in due course their community as well.

**What methods are preferred?**

Each student is an individual, and so while one method of teaching may work well for some, other students will require scaffolding, differentiated instructional methods and other supports to similarly understand the same lesson. Students learn in different ways (e.g. visual, social, aural, logical, etc.), and each has their strengths and weaknesses. As an educator I am constantly assessing my students & their learning, and also searching for ways that I can better make my teaching and lessons more diverse and easily understood by a variety of learners.

My lesson planning revolves around the twofold objective of teaching students to better help (1) themselves and (2) others. Therefore, I involve the students in several bigger projects that encourage them to investigate topics and content of their own choosing, while also learning valuable skills that will assist them later in life-- such as group work, organizational skills, presentation skills, etc. I believe that it is vitally important that students learn how to use and interact with technology (in new and improving ways year to year) in order to better prepare them for our increasingly technological world that we live in.

I work to integrate my curriculum across subjects, and even with other teachers, in a way that helps create connections with other fields of study and relevance. I use multiple forms of assessment to judge where the students are in their learning, including informal, formal, formative and summative. Student comments, products, group work, and other activity are also included along with the more recognizable forms of assessment that many are familiar with (such as quizzes, etc.). Thus, students are able to demonstrate their acquired knowledge in a variety of ways.

I require that students reflect on their efforts, and give and receive feedback in a positive and constructive way. By so doing, students better prepare themselves for the workforce and life that will inevitably contain many challenges, of which they will sometimes fail at, but also reflect upon and revamp, and then try again (several times at least), while learning the invaluable lesson that failure can be an incredibly effective teacher.

**What is the primary purpose of education/school (social policy)?**

Ultimately, American schools exist to create productive and innovative citizens that are actively involved in their community and economy. I don't believe there is a perfect "model citizen", but I do believe that schools work to create a system that, if followed, will lead to most of their students emerging from them as what could be deemed successes. Here are some of those traits / goals that I believe our education system exists to produce: We seek to cultivate young adults

that care passionately about their community, and are willing to do whatever is needed to help their fellow neighbors and community members to make this a better place to live in for us all. We seek to raise young adults that are productive and innovative in their chosen fields, and helping to answer tough questions, while raising others that need answering as well.

We seek to foster an environment where students-turned-adults are independent, self-sufficient and able to not only make a better life for themselves and their families, but ultimately the lives of others as well. We seek to generate young adults that are better aware of the impacts we as humans have on each other and our planet, and work towards mitigating those negative effects. Ultimately, we seek to create another generation of Americans that will not only preserve for the future the founding principles that make our country great (i.e., liberty, freedom of speech, the pursuit of happiness, etc.), but add to them, revise them as needed, and boldly go forward pushing towards new heights and possibilities.