

My Philosophy Concerning Teaching, I am an Educational Partner

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My Philosophy Concerning Teaching

A personal philosophy of teaching is difficult to define without determining how it is possible to have arrived at that philosophy in the first place. A theme that has resonated in my teaching and learning experiences has been the Socratic Method. From Moser and Vander Nat (2002), I understand the importance of inquiring about the unknown. Socrates, well known for asking questions in order to draw answers that encourage more questioning, did not write texts that gave wide-ranging answers to the questions regarding life, but his insight became known by way of questions that he would ask of his students. His way of questioning life is evident in his dialogues. His teaching was that of a partnership built with his students.

Early Life

I began my educational journey when I was quite young as my parents instilled in me a philosophy of knowledge that has guided my path. My parents like drill sergeants, put education first. The reasons were to have a good life so I sought after education in order to enjoy a better life. Although, I understand their reasoning, I now have different motives for seeking diligently after the knowledge that my parents hold so dear. I do desire a good life and I live one, but my purpose in life is to give back to my students. Having information is less important to me than sharing the knowledge I have gained with others. This is why I became a teacher; to give back.

Learning and Teaching Experiences

I need to explain my journey so that my philosophy makes sense. I wanted to be a chef. That is what I went to school to do. I envisioned becoming a master chef when I was just starting out. I still have that dream, but my career has taken a much different detour. I enrolled at the Culinary Institute of America right out of high school and graduated with a bachelor's degree in culinary arts management a little less than 4 years later. I worked in the industry for a few years,

and then returned to earn a master's in hospitality administration with a concentration in finance. I love the hospitality industry, but the long hours were taking me further away from my family. By chance, I landed a job as an adjunct professor teaching hospitality management online and this is where my career took a detour. From that little adjunct position, I took on several other adjunct roles and finally my current role as a faculty lead teaching finance to undergraduate students. In that time, I also earned a doctorate in organizational leadership with a concentration in management. A chef with a terminal degree? I never imagined being in this position, but it was the partnerships created with many past professors that ignited my passion to learn and to teach. Many teaching professionals have poured into me throughout my career and now, as a teacher it is my responsibility to create a partnership with my students.

My Responsibility as a Teacher

I take my job as an educator very seriously. It is my responsibility to open the door to knowledge and help my students ask important questions so that they can expand their knowledge, just like with the Socratic method. My job is not to dump information and leave, but knowledge and learning needs to be an ongoing conversation had between students, instructors, peers, professionals, and any other stakeholder important in the student's learning. My responsibility is to bring the information to the table and allow the student to let it take flight.

Partnership in the Learning Process

I inspire my students to reach for the stars and work hard to accomplish their goals, but I want them to put forth the effort so that when they reach those goals they will feel accomplished. As a teaching professional, I understand what it takes to work hard academically and then to enjoy career successes. I began my educational career in culinary school, and then through the process of working and practicing in my field, I began to understand how education could help

me accomplish my goals. I want the same for my students. I always tell them that they need to embrace every challenge that comes their way because these challenges will build character.

Ultimately, I am in partnership with my students. I want them to see me as a guide, a caretaker, a counselor and a friend in their educational journey. I encourage them to remain in touch with me on LinkedIn so that I can follow their careers. Even after they have long graduated, I want them to feel that they can still consider me an educational partner.

The Learning Environment

I was taught in traditional learning environments. I sat in classrooms and listened to lectures, watched teachers explain problems on the board and overhead projectors, and had many opportunities to use manipulatives. It was not until I began working on my doctorate that I had the opportunity to learn how my students learn, virtually. Gone are the days when students sit in a classroom and just listen. More and more universities are changing so that students are able to learn at anytime from anywhere. The new learning environment is a challenge, but it is one worth embracing. Out of all my educational experiences, I learned more sitting in front of my computer than I ever did sitting in a classroom listening to rote lectures. I embrace the virtual learning environment. This type of learning is here to stay.

Equality and Diversity in Education

As a minority, I understand the needs of the diverse student populations I teach. There are more minorities seeking opportunities in higher education every day (Auter, 2018) and my success inspires the students who look like me and who fit into any minority segment of the student population. I must be responsible with how I use my success, how I speak to my students, how I embrace them, and the compassion I show toward them as they work hard to

increase their academic standing. I am much more than a role model. I am an educational partner and it is important that I take my role seriously.

Conclusion

It is difficult to outline a personal teaching philosophy without going back through my career and identifying moments that set my journey on a path I could never have dreamed of. Socrates had it right when he taught by asking questions and allowing his students to ponder and have some responsibility for their own education. Like Socrates, I consider myself an educational partner with my students. I won't feed them information but I will lead and guide them while respecting their personal educational journeys. I have come a long way in my journey and I am not finished yet. I will be a lifelong learner forming partnerships with those who teach me and it is only fitting that I give back to my students in the same manner. My personal philosophy of teaching is that of an educational partner.

References

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