



My Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

The journey of teaching and learning is continuous and lifelong. It is not only limited to what we learn in classroom settings but it is beyond that level. In this educational journey, teacher possesses a major role in building student's personality. By knowing that each learner has different strengths with different learning needs, it is the responsibility of a teacher to facilitate student in gaining knowledge, skills, and critical thinking by implementing various innovative strategies. Moreover, the positive and conducive environment along with teachers support creates a good milieu for student's lifelong learning. This paper addresses my teaching and learning philosophy under the perspective of student, teacher, learning environment, and teaching learning process.

Keywords

Philosophy, Teacher, Learner, Environment, Teaching Learning Process

Subject Areas: Education, Philosophy

1. Introduction

Philosophy is a determinant of what one thinks, values or believes. Every individual has its own distinct learning philosophy, but to learn one's philosophy is not easy. It requires a persistent reflection and a lot of work to reach and dig out the inner thoughts. My teaching and learning philosophy has emerged from values that are learnt from several exposures and life experiences *i.e.*, from my parents, my teachers, and from my own experience of working as an instructor. In this paper, I am presenting my educational philosophy with the context of teachers, learners, teaching learning process and the learning environment.

As per my educational philosophy, learning is a life long journey that can never be separated from an individual's life. The role of teacher in learner's life is to foster motivation and build insight among students by becoming a role model for them. Their role is to assist and facilitate students in acquiring knowledge and skills. Along with this, a positive and secured academic learning environment is very essential so that students feel

comfortable and attain maximum learning.

2. Teacher

I believe that the teachers must reflect upon their own philosophies and personal values. When knowing that, the feeling in each of us is a vital secret and is a way to find an echo of the own self; it helps teachers to determine and shape their own educational philosophy. It also helps them to grapple with their own thoughts. Sometimes it may either change their mind, or strengthen their viewpoint. If teachers will reflect on their own philosophy, then it will allow them to analyze their actions and help them to identify the discrepancies in their own principles, values, knowledge and practice [1].

I also believe that the teacher should be a positive role model for the student. If the teacher expects their students to follow certain rules, the same principle implies to them to set the example. In my view, what the student learns from a teacher is not limited to the formal syllabus; but the role modeling of the teacher should make students learn magnificent life lessons which shape their personality as a good human being. Here I would quote the words of Karl Menninger, that “What a teacher is, is more important than what he teaches” [2].

In the modern era, there is a growing demand of technology, and students are accustomed to virtual learning method. Therefore, I consider that teacher must take this change as a positive stance and keep them updated into the new trends, in order to assist students in their learning needs. Apart from this, I believe, teachers must be flexible. They must be aware that things do not necessarily turn out in the way they had expected. At times, things go the other way round. Flexibility requires teachers to modify their lesson plan and course to suit the learners’ needs.

The intimate element of passion and commitment is also an attribute which should be prominent in a teacher. If a teacher is committed, teaching would not be a job done by force; rather it would be an inspiration for students [3]. The passion for teaching would evoke a desire of a teacher to work hard and put extra efforts to maximize the student’s learning. This will also enable a teacher to be more creative in planning and implementing teaching learning strategies. For instance, committed and passionate teachers would have more optimistic attachment with their work; they would spend extra time with the students within or outside the classroom. They would also share case based and practice examples with their students to stimulate their thinking process and make them learn truly.

3. Student

Academic environment consists of students from diverse background and in my view, each one of them is a unique individual. Some students learn fast while others learn slowly. The pace may differ, but all students have the capability to learn. In my view, the students should not be thought as mindless; rather they must be viewed as individuals who share, contribute and gain knowledge from each other in the classroom. Therefore, to achieve the core outcome, of learning, the teacher must incorporate teaching learning strategies based on the students’ pace and level of understanding.

I consider learning as a deal, where the responsibility lies equally on both parties. If it is a responsibility of a teacher to make the sessions interactive then it is also a responsibility of a student to come up in class with pre reading and to be actively engaged in the learning process. Student’s active involvement in learning will permit them to think critically and will motivate them to make conscious efforts to know the purpose of education. However, this may not applicable be in all the scenarios, as there are times when students don’t come prepared in class. In these cases, teachers’ assessment plays a vital role. For example a teacher may first identify the reason for which students are not prepared before class. After this a teacher can facilitate students and utilize motivational strategies to deal with this. Provide students with guided readings only; omit unnecessary topics and grade some percentage for pre readings, may be used as motivational strategies to get students read before class.

I strongly agree with Brophy’s view that, the student can become a good learner by being open to criticism and being ready to change [4]. I also believe that if the student will not construe the feedback as negative, and rather take it as welcoming or an opportunity, it will enable them to further improve on their personal and professional areas. Yet, there may be possibility that student may take the feedback as negative. In these situations, teachers must modify their style of providing feedback. For example teacher may provide feedback in a more positive and motivating way in order to improve the performance and development of the student.

4. Learning Environment

An academic learning environment must be non-threatening, secured, and friendly enough so that students share their views and queries openly without any fear. Democratic learning environment allows the learners to freely express their ideas, which can promote self-confidence and balance the relationship of freedom between the student and the learner [5]. This will have a positive effect on the students' learning.

Social environment also plays a significant role through the accessibility of extracurricular activities. It is assumed that in an institution where there is an active participation in the academic and extracurricular activities, students tend to develop a sense of ownership [6]. Also, these activities tend to provide a platform for students whereby they get an opportunity to get socialized with the teachers. These relationships tend to smoothen the learning process as the students become more comfortable with the teachers and hence, the learning process is maximized. For example, small get together, party etc encourage students to have frequent talk with their teachers. This would create students to have a strong connection with their teachers. This comfort may increase interest and engagement of students towards studies.

5. Teaching and Learning

I believe learning and teaching are inseparable lifelong journeys. This journey is not limited to classroom setting, but it is also shaped up by other sources of learning, including social interaction. It is important that one should take all the opportunities of learning seriously and achieve maximum utility.

I also take the teaching learning process as a two way process where both students and teachers learn together and grow together. To serve the teaching and learning relationship better, I consider curiosity as an asset to generate knowledge and which requires questioning. Questioning skills of both the learner and the teacher play a significant role in enhancing critical thinking among students. This will serve as a cornerstone of the learning process and develops the skills of reasoning. Asking Questions provoke interest, stimulate depth thinking, and permit intellectual focus [7]. Reflecting upon this statement I believe in my teaching philosophy that knowledge should be transformed into students in a way that enable them to become critical thinkers rather than rote learners.

Furthermore, I believe that teaching is not a science that has a predetermined formula that fits into all students in every scenario. Hence, I consider that learning program should be structured based on two things. One is the content that is to be taught and another is student learning style. This is in line with the Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, whereby there are multiple ways in which knowledge can be gained and learning can be maximized [8]. The different strategies capture the student's attention and interest and aid the retention of critical knowledge. People easily learn what readily captivates their imagination [9]. Similarly, students learn a great deal when they are brought together into argumentative discussions such as debate, controversy dilemmas, and case scenarios. This will help them to build up their rationalization skills and provide an opportunity to avail multifaceted knowledge. For example, if a teacher is using the combination of traditional lectures with student debate, the student will learn from the teacher as well as from other students. Through this, they will also learn concepts from multiple perspectives. Thus, this multifaceted approach will help to create positive learning environment for all the students.

Besides, as a student, I have learned it from my teachers that learning is not significantly dependent on the content delivery, but it requires a comprehensive and thorough planning. I agree with the views of Bastable that the action plan is essential for the accomplishment of goals and objectives [10]. A good planning intends to keep the learner and teacher focused, achieve these goals within the time frame and provide maximum utility *i.e.* learning as an outcome. The steps of educational planning cycle include assessment, plan, implement and evaluate. In education, the first step *i.e.*, assessment is the process of gathering information from diverse sources regarding what students already know and what they need to know. Second step *i.e.*, planning, includes the development of appropriate goals and objectives relevant to level of students. Implementation, the third step, is to put plan into action or execution. Lastly, evaluation is the important part of planning cycle that includes identification of learners' strengths and weaknesses and measuring outcomes. The combination of different formative and summative assessments must be planned to measure the achievement of learning outcomes of learners [11].

6. Conclusion

In a nutshell, by exploring one's own philosophy of education, an individual becomes aware of their values and

beliefs. While reflecting on my own philosophy, I became aware of my of what values I actually had for a learner, teacher, learning environment and teaching learning process. At the end I would like to quote Alexandra Trentor words, “The best teachers are those who show you where to look but don’t tell you what to see” [2].

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