



Philosophy of Education

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“The process of development should never be intrusive. It should never be about just filling someone full of facts or skills. It won’t work. Education should always be liberating. It should be about releasing what is already inside.” (Kouzes, 2002, p.391)

As an educator I have a strong commitment and the unique ability to help others recognize and increase their capacity to learn. I specialize in conceptual and critical thinking, large and small group dynamics and personal leadership development. At the heart of my work is the desire to help individuals optimize their personal capacity, while engaging in an ever evolving and changing world through increased self-awareness, effective communication, and innovative thinking. I embrace teaching as an opportunity to inspire and empower. As an educator, it is my goal to enhance student learning as a transformative experience.

I believe transformative learning is most likely to occur when students become personally engaged with the material and perceive the subject matter to be directly relevant to their own lives. I trust everyone to be capable given the right knowledge, skills and environment. With support and encouragement I believe all people can change the habits influencing their mental models and behaviors. I encourage students to function at their personal best. Allan Snyder in *Games, Mindset and Match* stated, “It is best to take on more mindsets. Because the more mindsets we imbue, the more different views we have of the world. So after mastering one situation, it is best to go and master another” (1999, ¶ 5).

I create and model a safe environment that enables learners to participate, explore and contribute through the integration of diverse learning strategies, experiential activities and traditional teaching methodologies. The process by which I work to stimulate student engagement is unique to each individual and classroom. While students must ultimately take responsibility for their own learning, as an educator, I believe I can influence this process by inspiring their desire to learn. “Teaching is igniting transformative learning; empowering students to take responsibility for their learning, inspiring courage to grow intellectually, cultivating curiosity, providing opportunities for developing relationships, clarifying values, uplifting the spirit

and igniting action” (Allan, 2008, ¶ 3).

I actively partake in courses, community events and volunteer opportunities, illustrating the value of taking risks, innovating and experimenting. I seek out conversations with others and invite individuals to share their visions, dreams and experiences. Understanding the diversity of learning styles and student experiences is key to enhancing this engagement. I set an example and build commitment through simple and daily acts that create progress and momentum. I instruct through example and dedicated execution while enabling individuals to reduce their personal learning barriers and unleash their hidden potential as learners and leaders in their field.

As an educator it is my goal to participate in creating an environment that embraces each student as a contributing learner, in addition to developing a more enabling global community. Achieving this objective requires curious, committed, motivated students who care about what they are learning and sharing. Michael Gelb stated that everyone has the natural impulse to learn but what is challenging is developing it. “We’ve all got it; the challenge is using and developing it.” (Gelb, 2004, p. 233). I create environments where students develop, challenge and create for themselves and others. My teaching philosophy rotates around five main beliefs:

- ***Learning is the heart and soul of teaching.*** To be an educator involves building capacity in learners. It is the ability to clarify and expand perceptions and to develop abilities and skills in learners which transfers into real life action.
- ***Learning is a partnership between teacher and student.*** A critical responsibility of an educator is to create an environment where learners are able to acquire knowledge, cultivate skills and enhance behaviors. This is done simultaneously while achieving curriculum objectives and maximizing learning opportunities for students with diverse learning and cultural needs.
- ***Quality of learning is dependent upon the teacher-student relationship.*** Quality teacher-student relationships are founded on the principles of authentic interactions: non-judgmental positive regard, empathetic listening, mutual-inquiry, reflection and the ability to receive and transfer knowledge between one another.
- ***Student engagement is crucial to learning.*** Learning is best facilitated when students and teachers are collaborators in the learning process. When educators and students work in unison regarding content, methodologies and assessment procedures, learning becomes a partnership from among, between and within a system.
- ***Self-knowledge is fundamental to learning.*** The ability to know one self is critical to understanding the world in which we live, learn and play. Self-knowledge incorporates ongoing reflection and refinement. The higher an individual's level of self awareness, the greater their capacity to learn and evolve as a capable contributing member of society.