

# Critical analysis on the philosophy of education

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A philosophy of education, as a requirement for admission to any sort of education program, has within it the inherent fault that it may not be a truthful reflection of the applicant. Defining an instructor's philosophy, in regards to any area of supposed expertise, often results in page upon page of self-platitudes, false impressions and the required buzzwords. Does such an exercise actually reflect on the true actions and intentions of the instructor in regards to his methodology, success and creativity in the classroom setting? Does it accurately reflect his relationship to his students, and vice versa? Is such a philosophy something that can be accurately described in mere words, or is it something better viewed in the physical space of learning?

It appears that most philosophies beg, borrow and steal from the latest theories of what is considered to be the well-rounded educator. The writer is forced to fill the required assignment with various educational stances and statements while often never developing their own personal mission statement. They are often afraid to say what they truly believe in, instead stating what they think those that judge the work are seeking. Such a philosophy can be seen on paper, but is it visible in the classroom setting? Can you tell how talented, or horrible, a teacher I am from this simple reading? Or would a trip into my classroom for an entire day give a more comprehensive and factual assessment of my true educational philosophy.

My philosophy, or what I practice everyday in the educational setting, is simple and memorable. This philosophy, which has so far been successful in my short career, is to actually know your students and treat them as individuals. When teaching becomes difficult, always remember that they are

only kids. Each one is vastly different than the next, and no two are even remotely alike. Each has varied interests, faults, problems, successes and distractions. Each has different, though not necessarily wrong, expectations, results and goals. There are no perfect students, and each must be evaluated on their own personal gains.

The first step in accomplishing this philosophy of respect is focused, as everything should be, on the student. So often teachers grumble about the absence of respect aimed towards them, all the while ignoring the need for the student's own validation of worthiness as an individual and simply not an occupied seat. Every year, six or seven students are removed from other classes and placed into mine. In each instance, demeaning remarks from an instructor or lack of communication is the reason for the switch. I have found adapting my approach towards these students is often all that is needed to seem some educational gains. Does this mean that every student succeeds? Of course not, but those that make the effort without simply giving up do succeed, even if it is unnoticed by others.

I attempt to do simple enforcement of this philosophy everyday in, and out of, the classroom. For example, I attempt to avoid being patronizing and condescending. I recommend teachers actually listen to the students when they talk, and when they do not utter a word. Treat all students the same, but also as individuals who are each unique in their own incredible way. They are just kids, so don't expect perfection. It is fine to set reasonable and challenging goals for students in relation to their skills and talents, but to expect them to live up to unattainable standards, such as your own, dooms them to failure. Know their limitations, and your own.

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All of this involves the instructor to take the time, effort and interest in actually knowing each student as the individual they truly are, both in and outside of the school setting. Failure to do so limits the effectiveness of any type of learning endeavor. The only losers in such a situation are the students themselves and may be detrimental to the entire educational process. Such loss that may possibly be subtle enough to go unnoticed by all those involved.

My education philosophy is not one thousand words in length, nor do I believe that any such personal mission statement should be expected to accomplish this feat. To do so would cloud its importance in vague assumptions and possibly pompous platitudes. It should be seen every day in the success, failure, effort, sacrifices, and abilities of the individual student, not in words and phrases with questionable intentions. Such a value statement can only be seen in the educational setting.