

Philosophy of Education

Often institutions and educators are so driven to have students learn the content of a subject they often forget about the students' ability to effectively understand and interpret the knowledge. Science has become increasingly interdisciplinary, a good scientist must be able to work as a team, to collaborate data, think critically, and communicate effectively. These same cognitive skills used in science are applied to everyday life. Not all students learn the same way or at the same pace therefore, the teacher must be able to adapt to classroom and individual needs. While students may learn differently, I strongly believe that students will understand the material better when they actively participate in the learning process and are challenged to use the knowledge through critical thinking.

As a teacher my goals for my students occur through a three-step process. I believe students must first gain a basic foundation of the subject matter, students must be able to comprehend the material and give their own definitions and thoughts on the content. This is followed by the ability for students to integrate and collaborate data. Integration and collaboration of data requires the student to be interdisciplinary in their approach and to communicate effectively with others. Finally, a student should be able to put his/her learned skills and knowledge to use through critical thinking. The key to each of these steps is to set a good foundation before moving onto the next step.

How does a teacher implement their philosophies successfully? I believe that teachers must engage the students in both an environment and fashion that encourages cognitive skills and becoming resourceful. Many teachers will lecture without interruption while their students phase in and out of listening. Lectures are an appropriate means of teaching, but lectures need to be designed to hold interest. Teachers should use different methods of media throughout the lecture, and engaging students in conversation and questions that require the entire class to actively participate, this includes using and having the students use new software, the Internet, and other technological resources. I also believe it is important for students to feel comfortable working with and talking in front of their peers; short presentations that require students to work as teams and think critically about a subject matter help improve these skills. Another useful tool to involve students in the subject matter is a real life scenario; this is especially useful for the Geosciences. The natural processes of the earth constantly effect our lives, where we build, the climate, natural hazards, the weather, and so much more are all important concepts students should learn.

Even with all these personal techniques no one teacher can 'go it a lone.' Teachers must present and atmosphere that makes the students feel comfortable and allows for an open exchange of knowledge and ideas. In my past teaching experiences, I have always looked for input from both the students and other teachers to enhance my style of teaching.

My personal goals as an educator are punctuated by the success of my students. The more I teach the more I enjoy the profession, I constantly revamp my teaching styles and hone my skills. As an educator I hope to set an excellent example for community service and extracurricular activities; for myself working with New Jersey Forest Fire Services and high school marching bands as a marching percussion instructor has given me a tremendous amount of pride and sense of teamwork. I hope to bring that pride, honor, and the experiences that go along with it to my students. As a student in college I learned what it felt like to help my colleagues succeed by tutoring them, the expression that lights up on a person face when they really grasp a concept is an ever driving force. I personally as an educator and as a scientist strive to push my knowledge and intellect, to be the very best. I wish to pursue my graduate degree in advanced igneous and metamorphic petrology, and continue the high level research I have begun.