

Bruce Sabin's Teaching Philosophy

From infancy, humans are constantly learning and developing, progressing from ignorance to wisdom. Learning, as a concept, is not the product of schooling, but the result of living. Teaching is an important catalyst in learning, as teaching promotes, guides and cultivates learning. Teaching, by definition, requires student learning.

My teaching philosophy is founded on a liberal concept of humanity, which includes fundamental beliefs in the abilities of individuals to purposefully work toward personal growth, function in beneficially interdependent relationships, and guide their own lives through rational decision-making. Education is holistic. Because each student is a whole person, education is a whole concept. While schooling is composed of curricula, divided into fields and courses, education must be an overarching and unifying framework.

Education should involve three unique and independent human qualities: individual growth, social relationships and rational decision-making. Education should encourage the self-actualization of individuals. The liberal tradition of education is based on an appreciation for the wonderful capacity with which every individual is endowed. Education should help one realize his or her own potential. Because each individual functions in a society, education should facilitate the individual's process of building, refining, internalizing and applying a personal paradigm for social relationships. In other words, education should help one find one's place in the world. Additionally, education should strengthen the individual's ability to make decisions through rational processes. Life is fundamentally an ongoing series of decisions. Each of the three roles of education is unique, yet no role can be completed in the absence of the others.

I strive toward a pedagogy that treats each student uniquely. While my courses are designed with formal requirements aimed at course objectives, I allow students opportunities to personalize the education. I expect student participation in the educational process. My teaching is framed around discussion, during which I use questions to guide the process.

Since I view individuals and their learning holistically, I create holistic, interdisciplinary learning environments. Whether I am teaching Career Development or US Government, I seek to incorporate student learning from other courses. Academic courses are categorized into subjects, yet life is the integration of subjects.

I measure my effectiveness as a teacher by the work of my students. During class discussions, I observe students as they form, integrate and communicate ideas. I offer my students periodic opportunities to anonymously evaluate my teaching and the course. I involve students in the creation of portfolios, where each reflects on his or her individual learning and demonstrates individual cumulative progress.

I teach because I love to learn and I appreciate learning as part of humanity. I teach because I love to participate in the progress of individuals from where they are now to where they want to be in the future. My teaching philosophy is formed by my commitment to being a catalyst in that progress.