

Teaching Philosophy Statement

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Submitted: 11th September 2020

Executive Summary

In this paper I present my personal philosophy of education. It stems from a libertarian heritage, where life, liberty and property are man's own, and free market forces regulate the education market. As a result, the teacher-student relationship would be similar to a service provider-client one, the material would focus on creativity and problem solving, skills that can be used again and again in an ever changing world. The philosophy that I have studied and resonates with me most is progressivism, but my own philosophy is a valid one as I know educators who share the same vision.

I firmly believe that man is born to be free. He has an unalienable right to life, liberty and property – to live freely, to act freely and own the fruit of his labour freely. In a truly free society individuals can voluntarily associate and satisfy any free market need they wish – and thus education is not regulated either. Teachers, educators, professionals can join their forces and open any kind of educational institution they think meets a market demand. As a result of this idea, there would be innumerable different „schools”, all of which teach relevant things learners want to learn – otherwise they were driven out of the market by market forces.

This also means that each educational institution would have not just its own curriculum, but also its own policies, and philosophy – or rather set of philosophies. There were conservative and liberal schools, there were creationist and evolutionist schools, there were religious and secular schools. And the people themselves – the market – would decide, where they wish to learn and what. (Or parents would decide what sort of education they wish to provide for their young children.)

As a result of the above, with my educational philosophy I would treat my students as partners, as equals, who came to buy a service (or whose parents came to buy a service for them); the relationship would be more like a service provider – client kind of relationship, in which both parties are equally relevant, they can not exist without the other. They paid for a service, my educational service, which they find valuable. Also, it would be a student-centered philosophy, meaning that students are not empty minds, whose brain has to be filled with knowledge, but thinking, feeling, diverse and unique individuals, who have an understanding of why they are in school and what they want from it. It follows that students would be drawn into the decision making processes, the setting up of their timetables, the fine-tuning of the syllabus.

Under this philosophy students would be taught material that they can use NOW in their lives, that makes them grow as a person week by week. Focus would be on creativity and problem solving, self-awareness and inspiration, infocommunication; skills that are vital for success throughout an individual's life in our fast-changing world, skills that can be used again and again. Not data, or mastery passages. There would be an emphasis on natural sciences and experiential learning. For nothing beats learning by experience. Let them be free-spirited and open-minded, brave shapers of the future, who live in harmony with the environment and society.

Teaching would take place not only within the four walls of the school building; rather mainly outdoors, with lots of teambuilding and leadership exercises, that are debriefed afterwards to let students reflect on their experiences, what they have learnt. „I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.” (Confucius) – Absolutely agree.

Probably the most influential philosophy for me was Progressivism. I liked reading about it and every word resonated with me.

My educational philosophy is a solid foundation on which I could build, was school curriculum not regulated. I try to implement as much as possible, even though classical school education is not quite like that. One needs to search out special camps, trainings and workshops to be able to really be in an educational environment described above.

If a teacher or educator does not have a formulated philosophy of education at all, or only a very vague one, it still makes that teacher a very good employee at any school, because it will be easy for him/her to adapt to the school's requirements. However, it is impossible to be the leader of a school, or open a school without a clear vision and a supporting educational philosophy.

My educational philosophy is not just an abstract theory, for I have been with people of the same ideas, and took part in trainings and workshops where this approach was used. Every member of the group enjoyed it and took home valuable personal learning experience and knowledge. I know for a fact that there are small institutions and learning centers where this philosophy prevails.

My philosophy is the result of decades of experience. This is how I think and this is how I see the world. I can not say that it will never change, but I am pretty sure that it will change only slightly.