

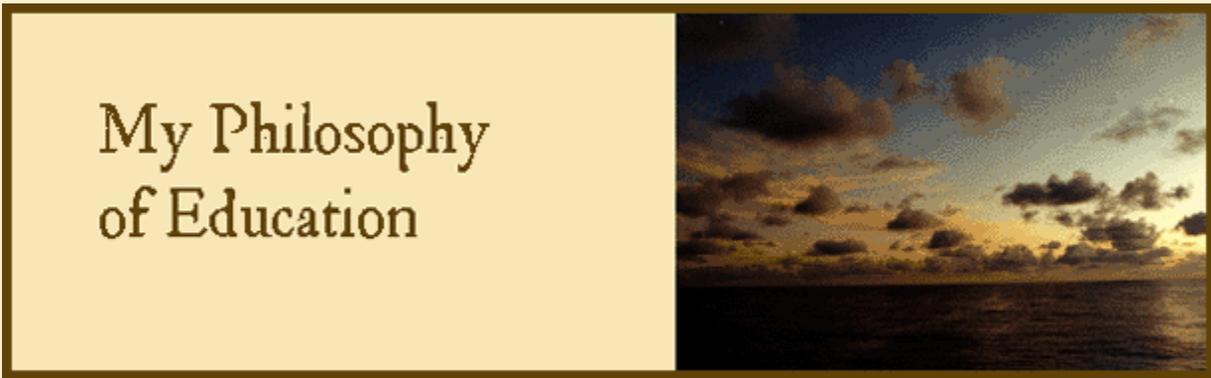
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Each day holds the promise of learning and adventure, no matter how old we may be. Education is a journey from the dark night of ignorance towards the sunrise of enlightenment and knowledge. Each dawn is as dramatic a beginning as was this morning off the coast of Florida on the edge of the Gulf Stream.

"I regard it as the foremost task of education to ensure the survival of these qualities: an enterprising curiosity, an undefeatable spirit, tenacity in pursuit, readiness for sensible self denial, and above all, compassion."

- Kurt Hahn (founder of Outward Bound)

"The teacher who is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind."

- Khalil Gibran

"To Serve, To Strive, and Not To Yield."

- motto of the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School

Although my understanding of the techniques of teaching and knowledge of the theories of learning have both grown and developed over the years, my beliefs about the purpose and philosophy of education have remained remarkably constant. For me, education is the sine qua non of human existence. To be fully human, we cannot live isolated lives; our existence is communication and our communication is continual instruction. In order to develop our full potential each of us must be both learner and teacher daily and throughout life.

Learning and teaching for me have always been connected in some way with adventure. I believe that the sense of adventure and discovery is a critical component of any learning experience. While students may learn for any number of reasons, even for fear, the best motivators for learning are joy and excitement. While no teacher can excite passion for his subject in every student, he should strive to keep burning the flame of his own enthusiasm and to kindle at least a reflection of this in each. I believe that every student has the ability to learn, and it is the responsibility of the teacher and the education system

to help each student to discover her best learning style for success.

The role of the educator is that of a guide and facilitator. The real work of learning can only be accomplished by the student. A teacher provides logistical support, guidance, and encouragement to ensure success, but that is only one part of the process. A student who will not respond might be considered unteachable, but that does not imply unreachable. It is the responsibility of the educational system to make a maximal effort to draw each student into the learning community. Professional educators must recognize the fact that there is more than one type of intelligence and more than one type of learning style. They must be flexible enough to welcome, nourish and cherish those who do not fit into the usual patterns.

With the recognition of the individuality of learning style, the modern educator must be able to adapt assessment methods to take into account the discrete intelligence types of their students. A modern educator must recognize that differing intelligences will demonstrate content mastery in different ways, and must therefore have ready a palette of assessment techniques with which to gauge his students' progress.

Ultimately, the learning community consists not just of the schools in a district, but every person, business and social group in the larger community. The job of the schools is not just the teaching of content, but also to serve as a conduit for the values of the surrounding community. By this I do not mean a particular political or religious orientation, but the principles of good citizenship like community involvement, compassion, service, stewardship, responsibility for self and others. By embodying these principles, each professional educator serves as a model for positive growth in addition to her role as a source of information on a particular subject.

Just as the head of a patrol or the lead boat of a journey must be the exemplar to those who follow, the teacher must also set an example of right behavior. He must be firm in his resolve, indefatigable in his mission, willing to make sacrifices and to exhibit what Kurt Hahn called "sensible self-denial." He must be unconditional in his compassion, unyielding in his condemnation of injustice, and without favorites in his teaching. He must guide each student through to success and leave them safe on shore.