

Philosophy of Teaching

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Teaching for me is turning a thorough knowledge of my subject into talk! At times the talk is formal, sometimes it is conversational, and sometimes it is aided by technology. It is always tuned to the course outcomes and conducted in a supportive environment of learning—learning *to do* and learning *to become*.

Students are learning *to do* when they identify important melodies in a sonata of Mozart, recognize the recurrences of a motive in a Beethoven symphony, compare two works of a single era, contrast the lives and music of a diverse list of composers, practice the techniques of analysis, or use scholarly online resources to research and write program notes for a recital. Learners construct understanding through “to do” lists of each course or discipline and learn to think about information and ideas the way scholars, practitioners and artists in the discipline do outside the course. The results of successful teaching can be observed in students who have learned to do serious course-specific and discipline-specific things.

Learning *to become* is more transformative, it is that part of the process of learning that nurtures personal and professional success. My courses are a part of that process—a process

of education where learners undergo changes, transformations that affect both the habits of the heart and mind and the capacity for continued growth. It has been my experience that students who develop good habits of the mind, especially the reasoning abilities associated with higher-order thinking, will be transformed in some way by that course. I can imagine a university where students have such transformational experiences in all courses. It is that university that gives students the foundations *to become* successful and to be lifelong learners.

Thinking in the discipline, especially the higher-order thinking of analysis, synthesis and evaluation, coupled with the affective domain, feelings about a subject or topic, solidifies that subject as a personal one. If it becomes personal, it becomes permanent! Thinking and feeling are the first two of three functions of the mind. The third is decision making. How a person thinks and what a person feels will guide the decisions of that person. If our students are to become successful and their education is to be transformational, they must make good decisions—decisions to research the topic, analyze the symphony, go to the theater, become a volunteer, promote diversity, respect all people, and respect the heritage of the university.

*...learning to do
and learning to
become.*

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