Abstract

We teach too much and our students learn too little. That is more than a sound bite. It defines a very real problem and places an appropriate focus on the magic of learning rather than the rote process of teaching. Every teacher teaches and every student learns but we all know that the relationship between teaching and learning is not linear. Regardless of the way we present the material, understand learning styles or follow an accepted learning process, there comes a time when we face diminishing returns. Our efforts do not seem to produce the results we want. We still get asked, “Will that be on the test?”

Our students are too important and the challenges that face future generations too great to permit this to continue. We must understand what happens as we interact with our students and do everything we can to ensure that every minute we spend “teaching” causes learning and accelerates ability.

It seems simple – great teachers enjoy teaching – great students enjoy learning. Society desperately needs them both to succeed. What can we do?

We need to change from a teacher centered approach where the balance of power lies with the teacher and where the need to “cover the content” is paramount to a learner centered approach that emphasizes independence, self motivation and individual responsibility. We need to develop a learning process that survives, grows and flourishes throughout life.

Many have contributed to a substantial body of knowledge on teaching and learning. The pieces we need to assemble the jigsaw puzzle are available. Weimer ¹ reminds us that “Like other puzzles this one comes with a picture on the box: we know what learning looks like when it happens.” Our experiences, our anecdotes and the stories we tell help each of us assemble our own jigsaw puzzles, complete our own pictures and build on the personal talent we bring to the very best job of all – improving our students ability to learn.

It is so much more than “teaching.”

References


A really good description of things to shoot for. A valuable, easy and quick read. Probably #2 on my list.


Good airport reading. Broad and interesting subject. Not really about teaching – but worth a read.


A definitive paper on learning styles. I would see it as required reading for all faculty.


A follow up. Good but not required. Some somber thoughts about where we are.


Good fun. Lots of “how to”. Lifts your spirits. Quick and easy to read.


Virginia Tech Academy of teaching Excellence papers. Some, but not many good thoughts. Very folksy..


A serious read about our world. He uses lots of words but, in the end gets his message across. You will learn a lot.


Great if you are struggling to find balance in your academic life. Should be required reading.

Nice description of a nice case study. Read it.


A super “how to” resource. Read it, you will learn a lot. I wish I had seen it 40 years ago.


A classic – not really about teaching – more about lateral thinking. If you are into creativity – read it.


If you never read another teaching/learning book – read this one. My #1. Should be required reading