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Teaching Philosophy

### **Definition of Learning**

Learning is a common, primal trait to all humans and creatures. It is a very basic act because it happens with or without conscious thought. Learning is the act of becoming familiar with information to where it becomes stored as knowledge in our brains. What learning does is enable us to absorb information use it to help benefit us later. When we were in our early evolutionary stages as a species, learning what plants were harmful when we ate them allowed to us live longer and pass down our genes. Everything we learned, we learned to progress our species and to ultimately reproduce. In modern day society, the same subconscious thought of reproduction still exists. We learn all the information we are told to so that we can get jobs to support a family and pass on genes. Learning is the act of gaining new knowledge in order to know more about something. This could be mathematics, music, science, or anything about something. Learning is intentionally vague for a reason. Learning is not a taught skill, nor is there a concrete way to define the way something is learned. Knowledge can be gained from being taught, experience, or even by self-instruction. Learning is so fundamental to who we are as people that it would be hard to imagine not learning something.

### **Definition of Teaching**

Because learning is so natural to us as people, I believe teaching must be just as natural. Teaching is the facilitation of knowledge. Sometimes teaching and learning are the same thing. In fact, one cannot teach without learning. Teaching can be from an outside influence or it can be a self-induced act. Unlike learning, teaching requires conscious effort. Teaching is an application of known information to help pass the information on or to learn something new. Ancient forms of teachers would have been priests and philosophers. Before there was a good form of comparing and sharing knowledge between civilizations, knowledge was taught through mouth from old to young. This preserved knowledge for generations and allowed the knowledge to be handed down so that progress continued to be made. Teaching became an essential part of human nature just like learning did. I believe that teaching is just as fundamental to each of us as learning is; however, I think that each person is born with the ability to be better at one or the

other. Many great students in schools, such as valedictorians and salutatorians, I believe, are very good learners. They can absorb and apply knowledge very well, and they normally have high GPAs and IQs. Teachers are people who are apt at learning, but might not have as high of an IQ. These people tend to have a higher EQ, emotional intelligent. They are people who love to see learning taking place and can adapt themselves to help pass on that knowledge. While I do not believe that learning and teaching are mutually exclusive, I do believe each person has a natural talent for being one better than the other. Teaching, in my opinion, is the act of becoming an encyclopedia of knowledge for the purpose of passing on information.

### **Goals for Students**

Students entering a class or learning situation expect to be taught by conventional means to do well on tests. I want students to understand the value that assessment has for their education, but I want my students to enjoy class every day. My goal for them is simple; I want the students to become more informed people about a subject, themselves, and life. All three of these realizations do not need to become apparent at the same time. I want my class or teachings to teach more than just what the students thinks they are learning. I want my impact on students to be subconscious. Learning and teaching of lessons and information needs to be as natural and fluid as figuring something out for pure survival. I want my students to not only learn about music and the creative arts, but I also want them to become better people. If my teaching can influence students to become a better member of society and learn something about themselves, then I will feel like I have accomplished my goal as a teacher and that the students will have accomplished their goals as people.

### **Student Assessment**

I am a firm believer that student assessment should be holistic but subtle. Assessment in a classroom should not be standard among all students. This method of making things “fair” actually makes it completely unfair. Grouping students together that do not have the same skill sets and have different personalities is hardly a fair approach to assessing student knowledge and growth. I think that assessment should be done without student knowledge. Students should feel comfortable to perform their best and apply their knowledge all the time. Introducing a known factor of stress reduces our performance in specific areas. Stress kicks in our primal instinct of

focus. This focus can be good in some cases but when it comes to music, focussing on one thing intently ruins your ability to perform to the best of your ability. Assessing students is necessary to make sure that they are progressing and understanding the material taught, but individuality is something that is not taken into account as often as it needs to be. I believe the best way to assess is by means that the students can enjoy and not perceive as stressful or unordinary.

### **Professional Growth**

Professional growth is something that will never stop growing. In every aspect, professional growth will be ever-changing. Each day, you must be willing to learn from your students as they learn from you. Professional development means consistently raising your own standards so that you do not become accustomed to and bored with your profession. In music, the bar must always be set high and once goodness is achieved, greatness must be strived for. As humans, we are never stagnant. As soon as our professional lives become stagnant, every other aspect of our lives becomes stagnant. Emotions are dull, physical liveliness is shortened, and personal connections sever. In my small musical career, I have never experienced a time where I did not feel like I was the same day to day musically. Throughout my career, I want to feel like every day is a challenge and that I never have a lack of learning to do. Learning is an essential part of being a good educator and having a good career. Without it, we cannot hope to become better educators, artists, or people. Knowledge is power and the more you can learn and share with the world, the larger your world will grow around you.