

My Beliefs About Teaching and Learning

Learners come to any learning situation with an existing set of beliefs, values, experiences and understanding and the teaching and learning experience they have with the teacher only makes sense in terms of what they already know.

My teaching begins with trying to understand the initial conceptual understanding of the learner. Teacher therefore is the facilitator of students learning.

In order to respond to the diverse needs of the learner, the teacher orchestrates, facilitates, encourages and challenges - while students engage in learning.

Learner centred and learner active teaching methods are essential if students are to be involved in meaningful events that increase their knowledge, understanding, competencies and capacities.

In view of the fact that students don't all learn in the same way and at the same rate, I have a broad instructional repertoire including instructional organizers / processes such as multiple intelligences, learning styles, higher order thinking questions, assessment / evaluation and human brain literature. Lesson types include cooperative group, lecture, role-play, group investigation, academic controversy, concept attainment, open-ended problem solving, and scientific inquiry.

Meaningful and responsible assessment and evaluation needs to be designed to encourage and enhance student learning. It is not for the purpose of memorizing facts, but rather development of understanding and the integration of knowledge.

Effective teachers challenge students to refrain from being complacent as learners - to move beyond their knowledge zone, to be open to new ways of doing and being.

Priceless teachers are reflective teachers, reflecting in action and reflecting on action. Action without reflection and reflection without action are both unacceptable stances in education - students are too important. Reflective teaching is thinking about how you think about teaching. It is making connections between core beliefs and teaching and learning practices.

Teaching therefore is about the artful and thoughtful integration of multiple approaches to teaching and learning - an integration driven by the needs of the learner. The more the teacher understands the learner and the teaching process the more effective she will be in selecting the appropriate teaching and learning skills, tactics and strategies.