

Artistic Educational Philosophy:

A Student-centered Gentle Approach to Education

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Abstract

Education that focuses on the student's environment and personal development will positively impact the student's academic learning and make them valuable assets to our society.

Instructional practices will include integrating art into scholastic learning, using objects to teach subjects, and using the scientific method in subjects other than science to grow students' curiosity. Also, incorporating the "riches," nature, and narration as key elements will assist students in grasping the concepts learned and applying them to their general lives.

Keywords: Environment, art, traumatic experiences, Charlotte Mason (and other pioneers of education), scientific method, nature/natural learning

Artistic Educational Philosophy: A Student-Centered Gentle Approach to Education

Education is a crucial part of a child's life. It can determine whether a child will grow up to be an adult who contributes significantly to society or an immature adult with no understanding or grasp of the world around them. A child can use education to grow their mind and build their values. However, without the proper type of education, a child can have the same results as having no education at all. Whether in the home or the classroom, a teacher must ensure their students are learning their academic skills and growing in their emotional and physical development.

The key element of academic learning is the student's growth and development. If a teacher is unaware of how a student's environment affects their knowledge, they could leave their student lacking in connection to academics and their life. Also, suppose a teacher cannot recognize the importance of growing a student's emotional and physical development. In that case, the student can feel disconnected between academic importance and personal needs. Education focusing on the student's environment and personal growth will positively impact their academic learning and make them a valuable asset to society.

Philosophy Of Schools & Learning

I wrote my philosophy of education a few years back while pursuing my bachelor's degree in Education. For me, education should focus on whether or not the student is grasping the concepts of academics and connecting personally to their learning. The great pioneers of Education highly influenced my philosophy. Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Dewey, Addams, and Mason. Although these pioneers had different ideas regarding the practice of education, they shared two things in common: a focus on the student environment and the learner's personal development. (Ornstien et al. 2017). Charlotte Mason, Comenius, Rousseau, and Pestalozzi primarily focused

on how students' connection to nature is essential to education. Natalie Rogers, a psychologist, added that aspects of art are integral to building a human connection to feeling and emotion. (Corey, 2023). Incorporating art into education builds students' emotional development and understanding. Which, in my belief, is essential before academics.

Charlotte Mason and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi are two of the people who inspire my beliefs about the purpose of education. The *Article Homeschool Methods 101: The Charlotte Mason Homeschool Method* states: “The primary goal of Charlotte Mason’s educational Model is to provide an environment that encourages self-discipline while allowing each child’s natural interests and capabilities to develop at their own pace” (*Homeschool Methods 101: The Charlotte Mason Homeschool Method*, 2023). Pestalozzi also created a method focusing on the sensory and building of fine and motor skills. He wanted his schools to be like “Loving families (who) would nurture children’s holistic development”(Ornstein et al., 2017, p. 93). The philosophy these two provide, along with the other pioneers mentioned above, will contribute to my instructional practice.

Instructional Practice

Learning can only occur when we meet children where they are and grow their minds based on their curiosity about life and how things work. We must be able to factor the student’s physical environment and home life into how their needs are met in the classroom. Incorporating a student's environment into Education is as simple as teaching at the child's pace, not rushing through the curriculum to meet a standard, but instead meeting the student where they are and setting a pace based on the student's ability. To do this, include academic testing to see where

they are in a subject, their comprehension, or their ability to figure out where they are in the subject, and what pace to set in learning new information.

Including nature or natural materials in Education encourages generalizing what is discovered in the classroom and can be easily transferred to the home, since students can use familiar objects to grasp a subject. For example, a baker's kid might be able to learn math concepts more quickly if we used baking analogies and tools to explain the idea. Taking classes outside, incorporating nature journaling and nature discovery, and developing the “riches” (folk songs, hymns, painting, poetry) can expose children to their outside world and how others see it. Also, using the scientific method in more than just the subject of science helps explore a child's natural curiosity and can help them better understand their world. Using art to teach subjects is another form of instruction that can help students grasp concepts. Taking subjects like painting, sculpting, drawing, dance, creative writing, singing, music composition, etc, and applying academic subjects to them will reach the audience of students who struggle with being able to communicate effectively how they are feeling or learning. For example, if a student is interested in painting, teach them how to paint, teach them the history of painting, how to use mathematics in painting, what is the science behind painting, and in all of that, use literature to get them invested.

It is essential to consider a student's culture when applying educational philosophy. For some students, structure is needed, while others require more freedom. Using the methods mentioned above in artful teaching is one way to provide differentiated instruction in the classroom. Using objects to teach subjects and incorporating nature journaling and nature discovery can help generalize learning to real-world experiences that the children can relate to. Teachers can even use the riches to enrich their students' knowledge of other cultures by

including poetry, folk songs, and paintings from around the world. In doing this, a teacher or school counselor can foster healthy and open relationships with all their students.

School Counselor-Learner Relationships

Because this Philosophy of Education focuses more on the student environment, the student feels like the school counselor is more humane and genuinely cares about them, not just their academics. The student will recognize that the counselors' priority is to grow the student's curiosity to learn, not only of the academic subject but of their culture, their world, the world of their classmates, and their future. Education, for the student, will become less of a chore and routine and more of a place to explore and pursue topics of interest to them.

There is less cause of stress between the counselor and the teacher if they are on the same page about how education should be met. If the teacher and counselor are on the same page, the student can feel like their needs are met in the counselor's office and the classroom. Students might also feel like they can advocate for themselves in their classroom with the teacher and counselor backing their cultural stories and allowing them space to share. The best way to gather data about the effectiveness of the study is through interviews or data collected from assigned homework to determine the level of comprehension and whether the student is enthusiastic about learning. Ultimately, the relationship between the teacher and student is restored, the counselor is a source of comfort, and there is a new drive for learning.

Diversity

Diversity is always a part of education. Teachers and counselors will get students from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and abilities. The Educational Philosophy of a counselor should also consider these diverse factors, as having different values can affect how a student learns or cooperates with you in the classroom, besides the abovementioned methods for

promoting equity and inclusion in the classroom and counseling office. The counselor should also be culturally aware and open-minded to how the student perceives the importance of academic achievement and college pursuits. ACA Code of Ethics A.2.c. Includes simplifying language to be understood on the level of the student and parents, or involving a translator in the sessions. ACA Code of Ethics A.4.b. It talks about recognizing personal values and ensuring they are not brought in or imposed on the client. Finally, the ACA Code of Ethics A.7.a. talks about the need for counselors to be advocates for their students in education. (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). As stated above, using data from interviews and questionnaires effectively tells whether these interventions work for the client.

My Calling

Growing up, I had a hard life. Before I was adopted, I had experienced extreme abuse and neglect from my birth mom. After I was adopted, my adoptive mom introduced me to Christ, and I was given a new life in him. My mom adopted many other siblings, and we grew up together trying to process the hardship we went through before coming to my adoptive mom. Further, our education and trying to grasp the hardship of our trauma was a balance that not all of us could take. Our mom homeschooled us because she feared that the schools would not know how to handle us appropriately, and when she did try to put some of her more challenging kids in school, she turned out to be correct. Many times, my mom had to pull my siblings out of school because the teachers could not handle their behavior issues.

I watched my mom struggle to figure out how to reach all of us and get us to a functioning level to grasp what we were learning independently. It made me desire to see a change in how the education system worked with hard kids like my siblings and struggling kids like me. That is when I got the call. I planned to attend college to become a vet when I was 14, but then one of

our dogs had to be put down, and I lost all desire to pursue that career. I was lost, and I heard Him call me in a dream. He showed me what I had been through, reminded me of my siblings and my mom's struggles, and He said, "You already know what it is like to go through the hard things and watch others struggle; be my advocate and help my struggling children have a voice." After that, I have desired to pursue a career that advocates for children. I was reminded of the scripture, which always comes to mind during trials. Psalms 23. Verse 4 reminds me of God's presence in my most challenging times. "Even though I walk through the Valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." (*Holy Bible: NIV: New International Version*, 1973). God put that verse there to remind me of how he was there for me on that day and said. "Help me be a shepherd to my struggling sheep." Every time I feel like giving up, I remember this experience, and it pushes me forward in my desire to see God's vision come true through me.

Conclusion

In Conclusion, my desire for the Education of students is to see them prosper into the blooming adults God created them to be. Teachers and counselors will guide children to see their full potential and recognize that no matter who they are, they can pursue their dreams if they have enough passion and desire to learn and grow. Allowing students to learn at their own pace, explore their curiosity about the world, and introduce them to the world's cultures will help our students become valuable members of society and leaders, contributors, and world changers for a better future ahead.

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