Growing Humans, Not Just Students

Learning is a collaborative process, not an individual one. Learning occurs both in and out of the classroom. Technology is an important tool for learning and education should be led by those who are continuous learners as well. I think learning should be differentiated, so each student can be matched to their own readiness and needs. When teachers adapt to their students' differences, they can ensure every student is appropriately challenged and has multiple ways to engage with and demonstrate their understanding. I really think this leads to improved learning and greater student commitment. Supportive experiences foster critical thinking and self-esteem, both components of the learning process. Early childhood experiences that are positive, such as stable relationships and supportive environments, are critical for all future learning and health. Last, but not least, I think hands-on activities play an important part in the learning process, especially since it stimulates and promotes motivation.

Learning is a personal process, and everyone has the capability to learn. Growth mindset encourages focus on growth rather than the inability to learn. Teaching and learning are inseparable and constantly influence each other. The teaching and learning relationship must have interactive exchanges between teacher and student because it is crucial for the process to be effective. Educators must be flexible and have the ability to adapt to each student's needs, such as how they learn and recognize what's working for each student. Teachers themselves are lifelong learners, often described as learners of learning, which is a continuous cycle of improvement for both educators and students. I believe teaching and learning go hand in hand where the primary goal is for each to enable the other.

I seem to be more of a visual learner, but I am not ruling out the fact I may be on the edge of the kinesthetic style of learning! I do enjoy hands-on activities, but honestly, I tend to be a social person, and that could be more of a hindrance at times! The most noticeable thing about me is my organizational skills. I have a love of highlighters, and I color code everything! According to Klein (n.d.), "80% of what people learn is visual," I find my highlighter-and-color-coded system especially effective. Throughout my work area and even my school papers, highlighters prove to be invaluable! It is true, visual support should coincide with lectures or spoken directions to be more effective for more people. In my classes here, I have learned utilizing multimedia increases my engagement and comprehension. Making my slide presentations has shown me the effectiveness of integrating all types of information. It also makes for easy connection and the process tends to flow more smoothly. Multimedia gives me the ability to share different thoughts, and facts, to help connect ideas so the "big picture" is seen.

A learning philosophy focuses of how people learn, but a teaching philosophy focuses on the teacher/educator and how they teach facilitating the learning process.   These two philosophies can blend together, yet they are very different. I believe individuals learn through a combination of things. All students learn differently, depending on their way of processing and understanding information, such as learning through seeing, hearing, doing

things or just interacting with others. A teaching philosophy is an application of a learning philosophy. To be effective, they both should be consistent. I really think a good teacher wants to teach, wants their students to succeed, and will go over and above their duties to reach all their students. The learning philosophy explains how one believes students acquire knowledge while the teaching philosophy explores the strategies used to help students learn. They are cohesive, yet individual.

Humanism is my choice of learning theory, or as close as I can come! I believe this theory of learning focuses on the learner's individual needs, potential for growth, emphasizing self-directed learning and personal choice in education. It engages a learner's intellect, feelings and social capacities. The main goal of fostering self-motivated, lifelong learners is important to me. Teachers act as facilitators, providing guidance and creating an environment conducive to the student's overall wellbeing. This particular theory was developed by psychologists, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. It emphasizes the goodness and potential of individuals, focusing on internal motivation and emotional wellbeing, rather than external rewards or punishments.

Humanism is a marketplace of ideas. In the modern education system, critical thinking and the open exchange of ideas has come to be accepted and even expected! The principles of humanist influence are seen and has impacted legal systems, emphasizing individual responsibility and social justice. Feelings and knowledge are both important to the learning process and should not be separated according to humanistic psychology. Cognitive and affective learning are both important to humanistic learning. Lessons should focus on the whole student, their intellect and feelings, social development and intellectual growth. The goal is to prepare students for living meaningful, moral, and content lives, not just studying for exams. Learning is connected to so much more. Abraham Maslow (1943) states his "hierarchy of needs" (physiological, safety, love, and esteem), must be met before individuals can strive for their own full potential. Carl Rogers(1957) stated "A teacher should allow his real feelings to show to his students … He should prize the student as a person of worth." The importance of a teacher's empathy, genuineness and unconditional positive regard for their students to foster a trusting and supportive environment. If these conditions were met, a person-centered approach would be born.

The benefits of humanistic education have shown to result in

- Higher levels of self-directed learning and autonomy
- Increased emotional engagement, empathy, and social responsibility
- Improved critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills
- Enhanced student motivation and self esteem

At the heart of humanism education lies a deep respect for human dignity and the belief that every child possesses unlimited potential.… emotionally, mentally, physically, socially and spiritually. It is a reasonably grounded approach that shows conscious awareness and

thoughtful development of the mind. It also believes children are not passive recipients of knowledge, but natural thinkers, eager to explore and construct understanding through real world engagement. This educational philosophy emphasizes the value of cultivating wisdom, which to me is thinking clearly, reasoning with empathy and making decisions with logic and compassion. If we try to understand that humans think and act in different ways, I think students would become more tolerant, respectful and insightful. Maslow (1943) suggests "that students are inherently good and will make good decisions when all their needs are met." He also believed "humans are driven by their feelings more than rewards or punishments."

The more theories of learning we are familiar with, the more strategies we will have to connect with the students. There will always be a diverse range of students, from different backgrounds, with different abilities to learn, not to mention academic challenges or obstacles.   I plan to use many positive points of the five most used theories. I understand each student won't benefit from the same theory, but Humanism in education will be my starting point. I'll try to reach each student with the same positive attitude, sharing new technology and providing the support and motivation needed for their success. I truly believe a teacher can affect eternity. Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

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