Educating at AdventHealth University

Educating: Teaching and Learning

"The building of a personal philosophy for both life and education is an ongoing process of thought and practice that becomes richer, deeper and more meaningful as you continue to grow" (Knight, 2006, p. 281).

Overview:

In his book, *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate,* Ernest Boyer stated that, "teaching is a dynamic endeavor involving analogies, metaphors, and images that build bridges between the teacher's understanding and the student's learning. Pedagogical procedures must be carefully planned, continuously examined, and relate directly to the subject taught (Boyer, 1990, pp. 23-24)." He continued, "good teaching means that faculty as scholars, are also learners." These continuous practices, when applied, enrich the teaching and learning experiences and their contexts. Furthermore, AdventHealth University (AHU) supports the practice of sound teaching and learning as one of the bed-rock tenets that guide institutional growth. In this discussion, the constructs, teaching and learning can be viewed as a single conjoined process as well as individual concepts based on the context of the discussion.

Critical Inquiries Within the Process:

Teaching and learning are active, social processes that engage both learner and teacher; these practices are guided by several foundational theoretical tenets. These

practices help to inform how teaching and learning take place and the context within which they are practiced (Perks, 2014). Critical reflection must be practiced by all stakeholders, in other words, the teachers and students who are engaged in the process of teaching and learning must constantly reflect upon their practice. There is the teacher/educator, who must ask critical questions such as: who is the self that teaches (Palmer, 1993; Palmer, 1998) What are the basic beliefs or tenets that they hold regarding the act of teaching? These and other critical inquiries include, but are not limited to the following:

- Why do I teach?

- How do I teach?

- What are my goals/expectations from self, students, and other stakeholders?

- How do people learn?

These questions help to frame the developing process of one's professional/teaching philosophy.

Other considerations include:

- What are the sociocultural and psychosocial aspects of teaching?

- What are some theoretical underpinnings that help to inform teaching and learning?

- What might be the role of Multiple Intelligences in the teaching/learning process?

- How might the integration of Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy revised by Anderson, L., et al (2001), or other relevant cognitive operations inform best-practice?

- What are other principles that guide learners?

Methodologies, Praxes, and Motivational Considerations:

In order to connect with as many students as possible, educators must employ various methodologies for educational and instructional delivery. Using tools for effective engagement in and out of the classroom (traditional or virtual) and in clinical settings is also fundamental. No single instructional method works. Rather, one must be eclectic in employing different educational considerations based on the content to be explored, the audience, evidence-based knowledge, and the context for instructional delivery. Some of these configurations include but are not limited to: the traditional direct teacher lecture style, teacher/facilitator role, the teacher as learner, students as facilitators, students as apprentices, and at other times, students as researchers which support the heutagogy principle of teaching and learning. In addition, other teaching and learning configurations should be implemented which, when used effectively, will facilitate the process as both teacher and student engage on the educational journey, regardless of context. All these components involve reflective practice on the part of both students and teachers and encourages accountability by everyone. In other words, there must be an evaluative component for both teacher to student and student to teacher, as well as a peer evaluation process for teachers and students.

The work of Malcolm Knowles explores the assumptions of learning through the foundational concept of andragogy. These assumptions include the role of the learners' self-

concept, the adult learners' experience, their readiness to learn, their orientation to learning, as well as their motivation to learn. These assumptions parallel the discussion of Schon (1987) as well as Ogle's (1986) work which are highlighted in this document. In addition, the work of Canning and Callan highlights the framework of heutagogy that allows for students to be autonomous and self-directed learners in face-to face and on-line contexts (Canning & Callan, 2010).

Critical thinking, exploration, and reflective practice permeate the classroom context; these are facilitated by the adoption of guided tools such as Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Operations revised by Anderson, et al. (2001); Gardner's (2000) Multiple Intelligences; and Ogle's (1996) KWLS strategy. The revised version of Bloom's classic taxonomy of cognitive operations by Anderson and others highlights the usage of distinct learning constructs that help in creating objectives that align with effective and appropriate instruction and valid and measurable assessments. The work of Howard Gardner highlights the strengths that individual learners and teachers bring to the teaching earning process; this is not limited to linguistic and mathematical intelligences but identifies the significance of other forms of intelligences in the 21st century classroom, virtual or otherwise.

Discussion on the three "tools' (Frameworks mentioned above):

- Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson, et al., 2001)
  The revised version of the taxonomy consists of six components that utilize terms that facilitate the construction of learning objectives that create the alignment of appropriate instruction and valid assessment. For example, in ascending order, the lower-order operations of **remembering** and **understanding** focus on measurable

terms such as: recognizing, recalling, classifying, comparing, summarizing and explaining. The higher order operations of **applying**, **analyzing**, **evaluating** and **creating** identify measurable terms such as: implementing, organizing, checking, critiquing, generating, planning, and producing.

- Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 2000)

  The intelligences discussed by Gardner posit that learners come to the teaching and learning experience with certain skills that are usually dominant; however, this does not preclude the acquisition and honing of new intelligences to aid in this process. These intelligences highlight the learners who acquire knowledge through their several learning inclinations; they are: **logical/mathematical** (quantifying information, inductive and deductive reasoning); **linguistic** (communication skills dominate); **musical** (not only musically inclined but also learn through this medium); **spatia**l (is able to use mental imagery, multi-dimensional awareness); **bodily-kinesthetic** (is able to use physical skills in the learning environment, hands-on); **naturalistic** (awareness and being in-tune with the natural world/environmental intelligence); **intrapersona**l (able to understand oneself, aware of one's strengths and limitations); **Interpersonal** (is able to understand and interact effectively with others, understands other perspectives); **existential** (sensitivity and awareness of issues related to human development).

- Ogle's KWLS Strategy (Ogle, 1986).

Ogle's strategy frames a series of questions that are guiding principles of the teaching and learning process which help to inform the practice of both teachers and students. She proposed a framework that expresses pathways to learning. She argued further that one does not learn in isolation but within an interconnected series of operations based on four distinct principles: What do students know? What do they want to learn? What have they learned? What do they still want to learn? A close examination of this model allows for students' accountability within the teaching and learning process.

What do students <u>know</u> (K)?

 In other words, the teaching and learning process builds upon students' prior knowledge and experiences (lived or otherwise); these may be cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and other types of learning pathways. This practice validates the strengths that students bring to the teaching and learning experience and can assist in activating the getting ready phase of learning, sort of like the "priming of the well"-phase. This process supports the prior knowledge that all learners bring to the teaching and learning endeavor and includes students' world view which is constructed from their social, psychological, spiritual and academic worlds. This can also be viewed as the *brainstorming/getting ready to learn phase*. Therefore, teaching and learning is connected to the state of the learners, that is, the prior knowledge that they bring to the experience.

What do they <u>want</u> to know (W)?

 This principle highlights the notion that students are stakeholders in their own learning process; it enhances the accountability aspect of teachers in the teaching and learning

process. It also provides the cornerstone upon which educators formulate plans of action within classrooms (face to face or virtual). This phase allows for students and educators' involvement in the teaching and learning endeavor. It is the *questioning phase* which allows the critical thinking period to be honed. Taking this concept further, it also allows for educators to understand the students with whom they work; an understanding of students' sociocultural backgrounds and an overall understanding of how students and teachers learn and teach.

What have they learned (L)?

Reflection is a most critical component of the teaching and learning process. It is during this process that all stakeholders reflect upon their own practice, examine strengths as well as limitations, make plans for remediation, further implementation, and at times revisit or rework the process. There is no finished product since the teaching and learning process is an evolving and dynamic progression. This phase includes the actual gathering of information through research, lectures, hands-on, and other interactive methods. At this stage, students and teachers are equally accountable for the success of the teaching and learning experience. In it teachers set up an environment that is conducive for the content to be presented and interpreted; this may be didactic, within clinical settings, service learning experiences, or otherwise. During this *making meaning or interpretive phase,* students interact with teachers, each other, and other sources of information through research and hands-on experiences in order to construct meaning.

What do they <u>still</u> want to learn (S)?

This question helps to inform practice and students' learning. Additionally, this question builds upon one of AdventHealth University (AHU) Learning Outcomes, which is, the concept of lifelong learning. AHU recognizes and encourages continuous learning as part of both the individual and the institutional requisite for continuous growth. One never stops learning. After students graduate, they will still be developing professionally. Teachers, too, are constantly learning, growing, and changing.

The figure below provides a schema adapted from Schon's (1987) Model of relevant concepts that can guide the teaching and learning process:

Understanding Self

Understanding Others

Being a Reflective Practitioner
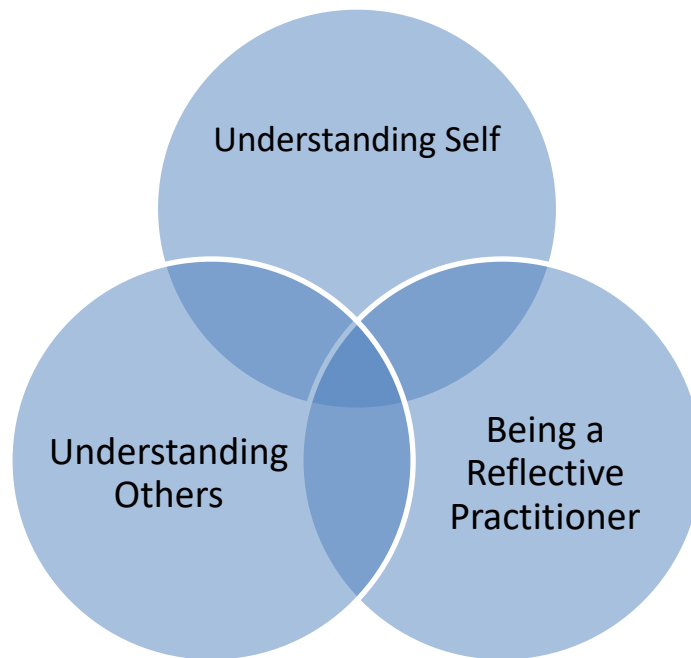
This model guides all stakeholders engaged in the teaching and learning process; it allows everyone to examine their own strengths and limitations as well as each other's. Additionally, it

emphasizes the need for continued growth as learners, in other words, the educator as learner as well as the student as learner. *Understanding self* provides a framework for both teacher and student to examine their individual strengths and limitations that they bring to the teaching and learning endeavor. *Understanding others* supports the importance of an awareness and sensitivity toward persons engaged in the teaching and learning process. The final frame, *Being a reflective practitioner* supports the significance of constant reflection as part of the educational process.

Standards of Educating for Faculty at AHU

Educating is the major function of most faculty at AHU. The categories and competencies discussed below provide faculty with the educating standards by which their rank promotion portfolio will be evaluated. These standards have been informed by the work of Lent and Gilmore (2014). They have been developed for the specific context of AdventHealth University, a faith-based health sciences institution (DeBique & Bursey, 2019).

I. Philosophy of educating:

A. Operates within a Christian view of education for service in this world, including the healthcare professions, and for service in the world to come

B. Articulates an understanding of teaching/learning as a symbiotic engagement to which both instructor and student contribute, based on their world view, life experience, and professional expertise

C. Understands teaching as a ministry embodying the highest ethical standards, including the pursuit of excellence in one's field of knowledge

D. Values various paradigms and multiple approaches best suited to student success

II. Course design and development

A. Engages in research appropriate to the field of study and program expectations

B. Develops measurable course objectives pertinent to the professional standards and abiding societal issues in the field of study

C. Exhibits authenticity and creativity, drawing on a rich and effective professional experience

D. Effectively organizes course content, assignments, resources, standards, and assessment

III. The praxis of teaching/learning

A. Creates a learning environment conducive to student success

B. Contributes substantially to student mastery of content, using multiple methods of delivery

C. Aids students in critically assessing and creatively applying course content

D. Effectively uses multiple tools in formative and other assessments

IV. Life-long learning

A. Maintains and models a sustained practice of professional development, including the areas of teaching and learning

B. Enlarges her/his knowledge base within and beyond primary areas of expertise

C. Effectively utilizes opportunities provided by the University for professional development including sabbaticals

D. Engages and collaborates with peers within and beyond the University

Philosophy of Teaching and Learning:

Educational philosophies are grounded on the who, what, why, where, and how of teaching and learning:

- The who describes the self that teaches and learns. This includes beliefs as well as cultural norms and expectations. Additionally, it provides a closer look at who the students are, whether they are traditional students or non-traditional students, including those who may be returning to school after hiatuses or those coming from different career experiences; these must be carefully considered so that students' prior experiences may be harnessed, thereby enhancing the teaching and learning process.

- The what is based on the content to be taught and learned. A grounded knowledge in the content to be shared is important.

- The why explores the significance of having a framework that undergirds the process of teaching and learning. It begs the question, why do I teach/practice?

- The where of teaching and learning explores the context, the environment in which teaching and learning is done, and the creation of an environment of risk-taking within the teaching and learning process.

- The how defines the methodologies used to enhance and augment the teaching and learning process.

An Example: Constructivist Learning Theory (Constructivism)

Although the term was not coined by the famous educator John Dewey, his teaching philosophy clearly expresses the theory of constructivism. This includes the interaction, analysis, and synthesis of information and practice within a contextual framework. Zahorik posited that constructivism is based on the model that "humans are constructors of their own knowledge; it helps learners focus on what they know, being receptive to new information, revise knowledge structure as well as being aware of what they know and how to do it (Zahorik, p.14, 1995)." Additionally, Jerome Bruner (1966) whose name is synonymous with constructivism agrees that there are several aspects that govern this theory of instruction.

These aspects include:

- Predisposition toward learning, or the interest, readiness and motivation that are brought to the teaching and learning experience.

- The ways in which a body of knowledge can be structured so that it can most
  readily be grasped by the learner. This involves the premise that methodologies
  are employed to ascertain that teaching and learning takes place with the
  awareness of varying learning styles and modalities.

- The most effective sequences in which to present material. This also includes
  methodology and the context within which learning and teaching occurs.

- The nature and pacing of rewards and punishments. This incorporates the
  evaluative processes of self, that is, the learner and teacher's overall performance
  within the context of teaching and learning (Bruner, 1966).

Overall, the principle of constructivism typifies the teaching and learning experience
inside and outside the classroom (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). This theoretical framework
functions across disciplines. Constructivism, though a theory, has become one of the many
teaching methodologies that when utilized, speaks of reflective practice within a contextual
framework.

Simply put, constructivism allows the learner to construct meaning and interact as they
learn. This is highly valued since focusing on students developing and honing critical thinking
skills and reflection are hallmarks of ADU's programs. Constructivism explores:

- How do people learn? This includes learning styles.

- What do people learn? This is the nature of the knowledge/information presented.

- The context within which this teaching and learning takes place; namely, the
  situation of self as learner or teacher, and the very nature of the teaching and
  learning environment (Bruner, 1966; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

Some Guidelines and Perspectives of Constructivism:

It is worth noting that the principles of constructivism compliment AHU's Vision Statement: Nurture, Excellence, Stewardship, and Spirituality.

- Learning/teaching is foremost a <u>social activity</u> (teacher/student, student/student, teacher/teacher, etc.). According to Dewey (1938), traditional education was geared toward one-on-one relationships between the learner and the material to be learned. On the other hand, Dewey (1938) also noted that, progressive education recognizes the social aspect of learning and teaching and uses conversation, interacting with others, application, analysis, and synthesis of knowledge/information as a critical aspect of teaching/learning (Sadker & Zittleman, 2007).

- Learning and teaching is <u>contextual</u>, we learn in relation to what we already know, its spatial and chronological. Context is not static; it encompasses time as well as environment/space. Context is also based on the type of platform, that is, face-to-face delivery or electronic delivery; this includes the methodologies used for delivery.

- Learning is an <u>active process</u>. Within this process, learning is not simply a passive acceptance of knowledge but includes the learner's involvement within the teaching and learning arena, both formally and informally. This active process allows for the implementation of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences-verbal, spatial, kinesthetic, logical, existentialist, inter and intrapersonal, and naturalistic skills. (Gardner, 2000; Ellis, 2009). These varying individual skills and intelligences that each person has in different measures must be honed to maximize the

teaching/learning experience. Furthermore, with learner-centered teaching, students become active agents in their learning; additionally, this model allows teachers to relinquish some of their control over the class (Weimer, 2002). This model does not negate the positive concepts within the traditional teacher-centered model of teaching and learning. Learner-centered teaching facilitates and emphasizes the application of information through experiences such as problem-based, service and team learning (Brackenbury, 2012). This is congruent with the constructivist paradigm that emphasizes the construction of new schema when joined with prior experiences and knowledge. Moreover, it supports the practice of self-determined learning of heutagogy (Canning, 2010).

- Motivation is a key component in teaching and learning. It does not happen in an ad hoc manner but must be paralleled with purpose. When there is a concrete purpose, or a reason why one wants to teach/learn, then motivation becomes a natural product. Therefore, motivation is essential to learning and teaching.

- Knowledge is another component of the learning and teaching process. In order to assimilate new knowledge, there must be some basis from previous knowledge on which to build. According to Ladson-Billings (1995), learners' ways of knowing may be incompatible at times; however, they bring cultural knowledge and experience that can be valuable to the teaching and learning experience. Therefore, efforts to teach must be connected to the condition of the learner and the prior knowledge that influences the teaching and learning experience. Students come from varying cultural backgrounds that may be similar or different

to those at AHU. It helps to understand these differences and similarities and to teach students in culturally relevant ways.

Summary

Learning and teaching involves a constant reflection upon thought and practice as teachers and learners construct meaning. Knowledge must be applied, analyzed, synthesized, and evaluated. What is taught and learned must be defined and redefined, as students engage in the teaching and learning process. Students draw on their prior knowledge, and skills in framing their learning experiences. Teaching and learning results in the confluence of old and new information and skills, and appropriately serves as an amalgamation of traditional, service learning, and other student-centered modalities.

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