

Timeless Quotes for Teaching and Learning Inspiration

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One of my New Year's resolutions was to reread some of my favorite teaching and learning resources, especially those I haven't looked at in a while. I'm enjoying these revisits and decided to share some random quotes with timeless insights.



“All discussion of reform must begin with the ordinary student, not the genius, not the prospective scientist or professor of abnormal psychology but the citizen of the republic who must earn a living in addition to living a humane life.”

– Paige Smith, *Killing the Spirit: Higher Education in America*, 1990, p. 200

“Good students are those who *learn*. Whatever their preconceptions, barriers or deficits—whatever their story—they take new information and new experiences, and to the best of their ability, make them tools for transforming themselves and their world. And at last I've learned that a good teacher is someone who can recognize and connect with good students—in all their forms.”

– Mark Cohan, “Bad Apple: The Social Production and Subsequent Reeducation of a Bad Teacher,” *Change*, November/December, 2009, p. 36

“Our students live in cacophony. Clamour, chatter and din fill their ears, and may even injure them. To many, a moment of silence is unendurable. I cannot ask them to put their heads down on their desk and be quiet, as Mrs. Morgan commanded me to do in Grade 2. But we can educate ourselves to be models of intellectuals who trust and value silence, who practice what we have always known; when no one is speaking, someone is learning. We can

create oases of silence where cool springs of insight trickle and flow.”

– Ron Marken, in *Silences*, 2008, p. 115

“Most teachers resist showing students the dirty part of real learning and by the dirty part I don’t mean the hard work.... I mean the part where we fail nine times in a row before we find a good approach. I mean the parts where we are confused about our project, defensive in the face of criticism, doubtful of our abilities.... Whatever the venue ... teachers like modeling their knowledge, not their ignorance, and they avoid referring to the muddy paths, fear-filled moments, and just plain failure that are the unavoidable parts of getting the knowledge we possess.”

– Marshall Gregory, “From Shakespeare on the Page to Shakespeare on the Stage,” *Pedagogy*, 2006, p. 324

“Skills as complex as questioning, listening and response are learned step-by-step; mastery is a climb up a ladder, not a pole vault.”

– C. Roland Christensen, *Education for Judgment: The Artistry of Discussion Leadership*, 1991, p. 156

“If members of another profession—say surgeons—were like college teachers, they would perform in isolation without apprenticeships, learning to cut and sew by trial and error. They would know anatomy but be ignorant of biology. They would hold colloquia discussing incision tips and suture innovations. To demonstrate the quality of their work, they would ask surviving patients to fill out bubble-sheet questionnaires with items like: ‘Does the surgeon demonstrate a commanding knowledge of his field? Is the surgeon well organized? Did she show respect for patients?’ No one would look at survival rates.”

– Larry D. Spence, “The Case Against Teaching,” *Change*, November/December, 2001, p. 14

“Research is about as compatible with undergraduate teaching as lions are with lambs. Only by one devouring the other are they likely to lie down comfortably side by side

– Kenneth E. Eble, *The Craft of Teaching*, 2nd ed., 1988, xiii

“The teaching life is the life of the explorer, the creator, constructing the classroom for free exploration. It is about engagement. It takes courage. It is about ruthlessly excising what is flawed, what no longer fits, no matter how difficult it was to achieve. It is about recognizing teaching as a medium that can do some things exquisitely but cannot do everything.”

– Christa L. Walck, “A Teaching Life,” *Journal of Management Education*, November, 1997, p. 481

“Learning is my daily bread. It is wholly selfish, I fear, but I feel more alive in a community of learners than anywhere else. I am a voyeur, a peeping tom. I like to watch other people doing it almost as much as doing it myself. But unexpected (yet dependable) flashes of intuition or dogged discoveries or familiar ideas enlighten and warm me and make my joy complete. Every day.”

– Peter G. Beidler in *Distinguished Teachers on Effective Teaching, New Directions for Teaching and Learning, No. 28, 1986*

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