

When I think of education, whether that be coaching or teaching, it is like a tree; in order for it to grow there must be a solid foundation. There must be good soil and strong roots that help the tree grow; this is the federal and state school board that provides the guidelines schools must follow. There must be strong bark to protect the inner workings; this is the school districts within the state that help provide a curriculum to its teachers. There must be branches that allow the tree to flourish and create new growth; these branches represent the teachers, who provide the knowledge to students in order to help them grow. Finally there are the blossoms, which represent the students learning in school. This is the ideal model of what we as teachers and coaches are looking to achieve in our schools and for our kids. For me as a coach I want to create relationships between players and help them to reach the best of their abilities and challenge them with fun and practical trainings that focus on becoming a creative independent person both on the field and for life.

Why:

Teachers need to know the reason of why education is important and must be able to explain to their students the reasons behind learning different subjects. The purpose of education, from my perspective, is to pass on knowledge to the younger generation so they can make informed decisions. Students are naturally curious but they want to know why they are learning these subjects and how they will apply to their life. The simple answer of “because it is important” or “it will be on the test” does not suffice. Students should be preparing for their future by learning about what is currently going on in society, as well as, past events that have affected us now; they should know the imbalances in society from politics to gender differences to economics. The problem

that arises, as Richard Wolff said in his Social Justice lecture, is the fear to teach certain subjects or stray to far from the norm of teaching standards. However, we as educators need to be the ones that stand up for our children and give them all the information in order to create well rounded people that have the ability to think critically about all topics (personal communication, February 27, 2017).

My purpose as a coach is to pass on the knowledge that I have acquired of the game and also create a passion for soccer and a passion for overall health. Currently I coach at the youth level and I try to get them to reach their best potential as a soccer player and help them understand the game and how it is played. I want to create players that are not just on the field doing what they are told; I want to create players that have ideas about the game and that can be creative themselves and express themselves through sport. I do this by asking them questions about what is going on around them and what options are available within certain situations of the game. From this I also hope that players gain the knowledge and passion for staying fit and having a healthy lifestyle.

My purpose will slightly change as I get to the college level but will have some overlapping themes from the youth level. Obviously the college level will be more competitive , however, I do not want this to be the only goal. What I have seen too many times at the college level is players losing the love for the game and ending their career earlier then normal. My goal at this level would be to keep practices fun and not overwhelm them every day with a competitive, must win mind set. The idea here is to incorporate an atmosphere that encourages that creative spirit and individuality of the game but also brings in the drive to compete at a high level.

What:

There is always this debate on what should be included within the curriculum of a district and what kids should be learning in school. Every day must there be the basic math, then english, then science lesson? Does there need to be this regimented mundane classroom structure? I do not think we need this set in stone structure and I believe not enough teachers hear what their students actually think of their class. Being a middle school, high school, and club coach I always hear from my players that their classes are so boring and that they have no interest in school due to the same progression they go through every day; the only interest, usually, is to make sure they get a good grade so they can play sports. One of the schools I coach at is in a working class neighborhood, which can play a role in what the children are being taught. As Jean Anyon says in her article, "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work", working class schools are structured in a very mechanical way of teaching, "involving rote behavior and very little decision making or choice. The teachers rarely explain why the work is being assigned, how it might connect to other assignments, or what the idea is that lies behind the procedure" (Anyon, 1980). This is exactly what some of the students describe as their classroom structure; to them they are being told what to do and not being engaged as knowledgeable students. The question is then, how do we include what needs to be taught but also engage our students?

I believe there should be a free flowing environment, where each day there is a mixture of structured learning, hands on learning, and free learning. Structured learning refers to the classical theory of teaching, which is teaching the standard english, math, social studies, and sciences that provides all students the ability to succeed in society

(Hirsch, 2011). However, there should be a connection between structured learning and hands on learning. The hands on learning, or constructivist theory, refers to the “forgotten subjects” like: music, art, mechanics, and cooking, which teachers can use to enhance structured learning concepts by incorporating english with lyrical writing for music or math concepts like fractions with mechanics or cooking (Glassman, 2001). As Mike Rose puts it, “if we don't appreciate, if we in some way constrict, the full range of everyday cognition, then we will develop limited educational programs and fail to make fresh and meaningful instructional connections among disparate kinds of skill and knowledge” (Rose, 2014). This relates to the Good Morning Mission Hill video, where the school reaches out to the community and shows their students what opportunities are out there for jobs; they not only show their students these jobs but bring people in too work with them so they can experience exactly what the job would entail (Valens, T. & Valens, A. 2001). Lastly, free learning, or progressive theory, means periods of the day where students get to choose what they want to learn; this can be anything from reading a favorite book, working/playing with friends, working on the computer, or working on art or music (Glassman, 2001). This allows the students a point of the day to express themselves and to do what they really connect with and what they are passionate about.

How:

As far as creating an atmosphere of conduct between teachers and students, I believe there should be mutual respect for one another and there should be a cooperative classroom environment that fosters creativity, curiosity, and questioning of ideas. Nel Noddings dives into this topic of how teachers and students interact with one

another. Nodding firmly believes that creating a caring atmosphere can be achieved in the classroom. Noddings suggests “taking care of affiliative needs. We must keep students and teachers together... for several years, and we must keep students together when possible... building relations of care and trust” (Noddings, 1995). I believe that Noddings idea provides more problems than solutions. Yes, students and teachers would become comfortable with one another, however, this dynamic could create more of a parent view of the teacher rather than an educator view of the teacher. Second the students do not get multiple perspectives on teaching and learning, which is very valuable in order to be a critical thinker.

I think Noddings was on the right track of creating care and trust and I believe that this can be achieved through an open discussion between students and teachers about the goals and rules of the classroom; that way the students feel that their voices are being heard. I will usually hear from players that their teachers are just dictators, which try to control their every move. The students feel as though they are talked down to or that they are made to feel incompetent in their ability to learn. Mike Rose in Chapter 2 of his book “Why School” touches on how teachers start with a view of students having no morals or values. Rose states that “the development of values occurs best in situations where young people are engaged in ongoing, meaningful activity” (Rose, 2014). If we do not treat our students as eager learners but instead as unmotivated individuals who hate school then there will always be this unnecessary struggle between the teacher and student. It comes down to the view we have of our students and how we talk with our students and about our students. Teachers and students should have a Respect / Care Contract that holds one another accountable but

also sets a standard of conduct between teacher and student and student and student. By the teacher simply acknowledging the students as capable beings this already creates a mutual respect because the students feel that they are being treated equally and fairly. What I discuss with my soccer teams is how we want to create an equal and fair environment, and we create a Respect Contract / Respect Rules, such as:

Be Respectful:

- Respect coaches
- Respect yourself
- Respect your teammates
- Respect the opponents
- Respect the officials
- Everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the team. Everyone must listen and respect what others have to say.

This Respect / Care contract closely relates to what John Dewey said in his 1902 speech at the National Education Association, “education must provide a means for bringing people and their ideas and beliefs together, in such ways as will lessen friction and instability, and introduce deeper sympathy and wider understanding” (Spring, 2016).

Which / Whom:

I feel that my personal philosophy aligns mostly with the work of Mike Rose and John Dewey. I feel strongly that we, as educators for the young, should provide the resources necessary for students to achieve their greatest potential. John Dewey has the same concept where he states that we as teachers should put students in “complete

possession of all [their] powers” (Dewey, 1897). Along with this Dewey says there should be a “psychological insight into the child’s capacities, interests, and habits” (Dewey, 1897). I believe this is hugely important because we can better understand what motivates children to attend school and what areas and pathways we should create in order to help them achieve their dreams.

Mike Rose provides many concrete examples that demonstrate the imbalance of teaching and the skewed view of the students that many teachers have. In chapter six, Mike Rose discusses the values and the behaviors of students and how teachers view that students are lacking in this category. However, he discovers the opposite when observing students and shows that students work hard in areas that interest them and will spend immense attention for the details within these fields. As teachers and coaches we need to be the positive catalyst and see the potential that every kid has; there will be those students that are difficult but we have to find a way to reach them. I think the best example of this is John Hunter, the teacher in the film “World Peace and Other Fourth Grade Achievements”. He used the world peace game that engaged the children in deep thought and complex reasoning and he challenged his students to figure out for themselves solutions to everyday occurrences, while being there as a guide and peace keeper for them when necessary. John Hunter says at the beginning of the film that “relationships are important in education” and “the key to teaching well is the relationship you have with the students” (Farina, 2010). Teaching and coaching are simply building relationships and passing on knowledge. There is the administration and the curriculum but within that we can be creative, we can be human, and we can change lives.

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