



PRINCE

AVENUE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Learning is a complex, highly individualized process, and student and parent performance expectations of us as teachers are more demanding than ever. Effective teachers today must embrace a *student-centered approach to learning*. This requires a fundamental shift in philosophy and pedagogical practices as the authoritative-passive role of teacher to student is revised to reflect a more symbiotic interaction between us and our students. As Christ followers and servant leaders, *we must employ the use of instructional techniques that most effectively facilitate the learning process of our students* and not instructional approaches that we favor for personal reasons.



One thing I have learned in working directly with young people for over three decades is ultimately, a teacher cannot make a student learn; the desire to learn is a student's decision. I have also learned that developing strong interpersonal relations with students built on trust and mutual respect is critical to the teaching and learning process. This relationship is essential in order for our students to follow us as we lead them into uncharted waters and test their limits to prepare them for the rigors of college. To accomplish this, here are four characteristics employed by teachers which foster healthy relationships with students:

- **Honesty.** Honesty between people is important; honesty between students and teachers is sacred. Students will listen to honest teachers, even if they do not especially like them; but they heap contempt on the dishonest. Eventually students discover the truth and falseness of teachers. Everyone remembers their teachers, and students' lives are shaped by both good and bad teachers.
- **Passion.** Passionate teachers motivate students to learn, encourage them through challenging concepts, and keep them engaged in learning during periods of intellectual drought. The greatest teachers express high levels of passion and an eagerness to share it.
- **Purpose.** Today's students want to know how curriculum correlates with a useful life skill. They want to know the purpose for learning the content. Students respond more favorably when they are reassured of the usefulness of their efforts.
- **Discipline.** Social, moral, and intellectual discipline is the whetstone on which young people sharpen themselves. Aside from the normal complaining inherent with adolescents, students perform better when expectations are clearly articulated, understood, and enforced by teachers. Successful teachers understand that discipline creates sparks but it also produces a fine edge. They also wisely and judiciously employ grace and compassion within the construct of their relationship with their students.

As educational pioneers, *we must resist the comforts associated with recycling outdated approaches to teaching. Instead, we must promote student learning* by consistently seeking self-improvement, independent study within our respective content areas, and embracing change that improves the learning process for our students.

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