

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Overview of Instructional Ethos

Only after his death in 1824, did anything written by French essayist, Joseph Joubert get published. To seed discussions, I sometimes pair students and have them select maxims from Joubert's posthumously published notebooks to extract the common truths he was attempting to convey. His sayings vary from the ironic, "Ask the young. They know everything," to the slightly more reflective, "The imagination is the eye of the soul," ascending to the more profound, "Are you listening to the ones who keep quiet?" and "God made life to be lived and not to be known" (Joubert, 1898).

Early in my teaching I was introduced to another Joubert truism, "To teach is to learn twice over." Teaching is the dynamic outcome of re-learning, reflection, doing, and then effectually crafting opportunities to invite others into the journey of discovery.

My philosophy, principles, and praxis of teaching have emerged from:

- Teaching 70 sections of undergraduate and graduate coursework including 30 sections of the "Senior Leadership Seminar for HR".
- Over 4000 hours of platform in leadership and management practices.
- Launching and program management a global mentoring program for 1600 mentor/mentees on 7 continents.
- Coaching, mentoring, and advising thousands of young adults and seasoned leaders.
- Graduate education and training in Organizational Development and Training Design.

Philosophy, Principles, and Praxis

When it comes to piloting students toward learning outcomes, I have found L. Dee Fink's, *Taxonomy of Significant Learning*, the most adaptable to contemporary curriculum design and classroom instruction (Fink, 2003). Two components of Fink's ideology resonate particularly well with career and leadership studies. First, there is the simplicity and singularity in Fink's definition of learning: "Learning is change." The change to have impact must be "significant," or measurable and meaningful in some way.

Much of what we teach and coach leaders today concerns *leading through change*. In particular, we put a heavy focus on forward change or *innovation*. I believe it not coincidental that author and lecturer Scott Berkun uses

language similar to Fink when defining innovation. With equal economy, Berkun states that innovation is simply the improvement to a product, process, or service that demonstrates a "significant positive change" (Berkun, 2015).

Learning and innovation have an equifinality in their pursuit of significant change. Change is about movement. Getting from *here* to *there*. Fink's taxonomy, in the context of change, recognizes six domains or categories in which learning is manifest. These domains embody the relational, interactive, even interpenetration of each dimension into the others. The dimensions are inter-relational and interdependent.

In both course design and instructional strategies, I intentionally address each of the domains, at least in part, to move learners toward a "whole person" learning, i.e. innovation, i.e. significant positive change.

The emergence and use of the "flipped learning" model has greatly enhanced (innovated) much of my curricular leadership design. Leadership and career instruction lends itself extremely well to an experiential student-centered environment. Phenomenologically, students are exposed readily to leadership and career in their everyday life— instructionally their environment becomes their laboratory. Most leadership, human development, career, and spiritual formation published content is well-written, produced, and consumable, making it well-suited for delivery, both outside the classroom, as well as, through use of blended strategies using a Learning Management Systems, LMS (ie, Blackboard or Moodle). The in-class experience is freed for more discussion, small group, individual coaching, mentoring, and differentiated instruction.

My instructional praxis has matured through the amalgamation of solid instructional theory, training design and delivery, counseling individualization, and the practical field immersion from my corporate, consulting, human service, and higher education experience.

Scott Berkun. (2015, July 08). The many mothers of invention, Retrieved April 04, 2016, from <http://scottberkun.com/>

Fink, L. D. (2003). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Joubert, J., Lyttelton, K., & Ward, H. (1898). Joubert: A selection from his thoughts. London: Duckworth.