

Ten Easy Ways to Become an Ineffective Teacher

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The message of this article is a simple but an important one: An individual must be able to accept himself as an "adequate human" before he can perceive himself and behave as an "adequate student." It is felt that in order to effectively educate the "total child" we must deal with his affective experiences (i.e. feeling, emotions, interests, needs, etc.) as well as his cognitive and academic experiences.

Traditionally, the objectives of educational process have been concerned primarily with the cognitive development and academic training of the school-age child. Personal and psychological needs of the child have typically been considered by classroom teachers to be subsidiary enterprises and for some, even "off-limits" within the educational setting. (Obviously, there are some exceptions to the latter generalization. In many schools there may be a few people who possess the enviable combination of competence and empathy which is reflected by an acute sensitivity to the needs and feelings of their students, as well as an almost charismatic facility to communicate their acceptance of children—these qualities in addition to providing an excellent academic program.)

To convey the spirit of the theme of developing the "total child," irony was used in enumerating several suggestions which were obviously antithetical to the actual intended implications. Any resemblance of the following methods and procedures to your own is strictly coincidental.

1. The first prescription for becoming a failure as a teacher is related to *the area of academic activities and curriculum planning*. Make every attempt necessary to emphasize activities and content which require excessive drill, rote memory, and arduous repetitive exercises. Avoid experiences which involve creative thought and expression, discovery and intuitive methods, practical and experientially oriented approaches. After all, you wouldn't want the

student to get any ideas about real life experiences. You certainly wouldn't want to be responsible for providing the youngster with opportunities to apply behaviorally what he has learned theoretically. Therefore, try not to make a fuss about making lesson material meaningful and intrinsically motivating.

2. *Regarding the experiences of success and failure*: Be sure to accentuate the youngster's shortcomings and inadequacies in his performance. (For example, on a 20-item spelling test always express the student's score as 6 wrong instead of 14 right; and be sure to use bright red ink for the markings since this often helps the slow-learner realize that he ought to "shape-up" and fast!) Frequently remind students of the crucial nature of grades and report cards lest some of them lose the traumatic feelings which accompany report card distribution each quarter. Remember, grades should be emphasized more than meaning in education. Finally, be sure to equate a youngster's classroom failure with his personal failure as a human; it will elevate his ego.

3. If you are inclined to use *ridicule as a disciplinary tactic*, try embarrassing the child in front of the rest of the class. Kids by nature like to be ridiculed before their peers. Select sarcastic and abrasive personal criticisms since the self-concepts of children are extremely durable and tolerant to stress.

4. *Maintain a strictly pedagogical, not a psychological classroom atmosphere*: Permit only the kinds of activities and experiences which are exclusively academic and cognitive in nature. Make it a point to prohibit a child's attempts to comprehend and deal with activities and sensations which occur below the anatomical regions of the head and neck. Let's do our best to keep education as anti-humanistic as possible as we certainly would not want to see the classroom subversively converted to a counseling center. Heaven forbid any possibility of a youngster expressing his feelings about life or venting his

emotions! We might be accused of helping to prepare the child for dealing effectively with his psychological make-up through self-understanding.

5. *Regarding the teaching of gratitude and appreciation by example*; never demonstrate overtly in class that you are grateful or thankful. It would be a shame to have to suffer the blame for fostering good manners and appreciation through your example.

6. *Regarding the relative importance of your problems vs. those of the student*: When a student approaches you with what appear to be problems (personal or otherwise), try to act busy with impressive activities such as scoring papers or tests. This will quickly make him realize that his problems must be trivial compared to yours since your intense preoccupation with your own work resulted in your ignoring him. Let him learn that there are priorities in your profession.

7. *Don't experiment with new approaches and creative techniques in the classroom*. Don't encourage the development of new materials and curriculum content. After all, what was good for you in school is certainly good enough for the kids you're now teaching! There is no need for you to research new educational methods and ideas or read up on the data which may be published about them. You simply need your intuitive process to determine whether or not materials and techniques are effective and worthwhile.

8. *Regarding respect for the personal worth of students*: You are under no obligation to demonstrate respect for your students as humans; after all, you are an adult with an expensive education behind you and these are merely saplings who need your fertilizing knowledge. Be cautious of open signs of acceptance of the children. For example, don't try to remember students by their first names; don't permit students to have a voice in planning activities; never admit your mistakes; and above all don't permit constructive criticism or legitimate challenge of your opinions and beliefs. Be sure not to show your students that you trust them and be careful not to express your confidence in their abilities. Don't pay attention to individual problems since you don't want to be branded as being "milk-toast" or overly sensitive to the needs of children. Listen only for sounds and grammatical accuracy, not for meanings and feelings. As for the atypical or special youngster, let him fend for himself. If a child doesn't have much

ability, it will all be swept under the rug and come out in the wash as we promote him from year to year.

Finally, with respect to this issue of respect for students, don't feel obligated to communicate with students on a private or personal basis. As a teacher, your only responsibilities to the child are related to his cognitive growth. Therefore, why should you concern yourself with his personality and character developments? Don't hesitate to display open signs of rejection of a child. You are not compelled by your contract to show any warmth, much less compassion or humanism with youngsters. In fact, you would probably run the risk of being labeled a moralistic fanatic or a radical liberal by colleagues if you did resort to these unnatural tendencies.

9. *Build a fantastic facade around yourself* so that even you are not aware of who the "real you" is. Don't worry about putting on airs or about assuming a false character, as children are not skilled enough to detect it. Never share your emotions or inner feelings with anyone so you won't have to worry about revealing any inner hang-ups you may have. Most important, don't let the children know you have "human" weaknesses.

10. Finally to insure that you are taking the right steps toward becoming an incompetent teacher, go back and review these ten easy-to-learn suggestions; memorize them by rote, then apply them each day with as little comprehension as possible.

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