

REAL LEARNING

Education is the basis of freedom. It allows people to become themselves, to weigh their own, and other people's, opinions and to reach their own conclusions. This is the true goal of education.

We cannot know what is useful to someone else.

No two people learn in the same way or at the same speed.

Learning is not linear: we do not learn our native language as a fixed and rigid system in which the grammar is learnt by heart before we speak; we learn by immersing ourselves in a world of language: even a game of language.

Learning is natural to the human animal and can also be joyous (which is not the same as being easy): each person knows what is best for themselves and learn quickly and avidly when allowed to do so at their own speed and in their own way.

Teaching requires having faith in people.

The process of learning; real learning, is a process of changing and growing. This is painful; it requires that we take responsibility for ourselves, are willing to give up our illusions and look at ourselves honestly, and it requires discipline.

True discipline is self-discipline, not imposed discipline.

Real learning is self-directed; the teacher is there to help, guide and facilitate not to impose.

Those that embark on real learning need encouragement and support and given faith in their own opinions.

Real listening is essential to real learning: to hear and to be open without judgement.

Grading is irrelevant to real education.

Many people do not want real learning. Many people do not want the responsibility for themselves and many institutions fear the result of such an education.

Thus much schooling is moulding people to fit into pre-defined models or roles; to squeeze them into shoes on the shelf, even if this makes them limp slowly, rather than allowing them to run barefoot.

Much teaching has been based on forcing the students to understand the teachers rather than the teachers trying to understand the students.

Teaching from certainty is absurd. There is no longer a place for the all-knowing teacher and ignorant student: there is too much information and things are changing too fast. We are all learners. We must be proud of learning and not afraid of not knowing.

We must emphasize the tools of learning and engender a respect for them: analysis, synthesis, logic, clarity, process and creativity.

Education is being replaced more and more by training and wisdom by information. Values that are not pragmatic values are regarded with suspicion.

The capacity for learning outside institutions is growing exponentially on the World Wide Web and on CD Rom. These give information but not human interaction. We still require human contact.

We need to nurture a respect for learning and a respect for teaching.

If we are going to do this we need to make schools of real learning and freedom.