Learning with Hope; Teaching with Joy!

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Outline of Talk

- Blunders of the World That Lead to Violence
- A Bit of My Own Story
- Hope Theory
- Neuroscience of Joyful Teaching/Learning
- IUPUI Student and Faculty Voices
- “An Elementary School Classroom in a Slum”
- Stephanie’s Story
- Questions and Conversation
Blunders of the World That Lead to Violence (Mohandas Gandhi)

- Wealth without work
- Pleasure without conscience
- Knowledge without character
- Commerce without morality
- Science without humanity
- Worship without sacrifice
- Politics without principle
Blunders of the World (additions)

- Arun Gandhi
  - Rights without responsibilities
- Steve Gilbert
  - Technology without direction
  - Connection without community
  - Teaching without joy
  - Learning without hope
A Bit of My Own Story

- Beginnings
  - Sterile Environments
  - Worms, Dogs, Birds
  - Literacy as a route to becoming human

- A Mother Who Taught with Hope and Joy
  - Bicycle Story
  - Bobby’s Story
Hope Theory

- Definition of hope
- Influence of hope
- Reconstructing the past to influence the present and the future:
  - Maori legend
  - Retelling stories
  - “My Brother Was My Mother’s Only Child”
Definition of Hope

- That which enables people to set valued goals, to see the means to achieve those goals, and to find the drive to make those goals happen (R. Snyder, 1991).

- Goal-directed, cognitive process
  - Agency (goal-directed determination)
  - Pathways (planning to meet goals)

- Hierarchically organized system of beliefs
  - Global or trait hope
  - Domain-specific hope
  - Goal-specific hope
Predictive Power of Hope

- 1990’s research with 3,920 college students
  - Equivalent intellectual aptitude and past academic achievements
  - Level of hope among first year students a more accurate predictor of grades than SAT or H.S. GPA

- Students with high hope set themselves higher goals and know how to work to attain them (Snyder).
Implications for teaching & learning

- First step in building hope is to have students identify a set of goals
  - Hopelessness: feeling of little or no control over lives (lost talent; disadvantaged in job market)
  - Need to help students determine how to meet goals – develop sub-goals
- Aid students in setting clear endpoints to show that a goal has been achieved.
Hope Theory

- Definition of hope *
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Neuroscience of Joyful Education

- Brain research tells us that when the fun stops, learning often stops too (J. Willis).

- Neuroimaging studies and measurement of brain chemical transmitters suggest that superior learning occurs when classroom experiences are enjoyable and relevant to students’ lives and experiences (Pawluk et al 2003).
Neuroscience of Joyful Learning cont.

When students are engaged and motivated, information flows freely through the affective filter in the amygdala and they achieve higher levels of cognition, make connections, and experience “aha” moments. Such learning comes from classrooms with an atmosphere of exuberant discovery (Kohn 2004).
Think of an “aha” moment
Think of an “aaaah” moment.
Moving from “aha’ to “aaaaaah”
  - Henry VIII lecture
  - Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom*
  - \((\text{Aha} + \text{aha})^x = \text{aaaaah}\)?
What role do teachers play?
What role do learners play?
IUPUI Student and Faculty Voices

- Learning with Hope
- Teaching with Joy
- My own joy at coming to IUPUI
Learning With Hope (n=53)
**Student Comments on Hope (N=53)**

- Career 29
- Knowledge 15
- More Money 10
- Identity 9
- Freedom/Choice 3
- Other 6
- (happy; impact; easier life; a degree; mobility)
Some student comments

- Employers will see that I am intelligent, committed, and hardworking even if my particular major doesn’t pertain directly to what I end up doing.
- I hope it will get me a job I can rely on; however, I know it will not.
- Create me into a more educated, well-rounded, savvy individual
More student comments

- I hope it will open my eyes and let me discover how great this great earth is and how it and the people on it can teach me great things.

- I hope that it will teach me the tools I need to know to be a successful elementary teacher in my future. I hope it also gives me good experience into the teaching world so that I myself can make a student hopeful one day!
Teaching with Joy Survey (n=62)
Categories of Joy (n=62)

- Interactions/Engagement: 17
- Aha: 15
- Knowledge: 14
- Mature/Change: 11
- Impact/Helping: 6
- Enjoy the subject: 6
- Having fun/sharing the joy: 4
Faculty Voices on Joy

- I love to see the spark when students have the great aha! I love to challenge their learning and help them be more precise in their communications. I love to share their joy at learning and mastery.

- The moments I really enjoy teaching are the moments when the students are obviously excited about the subject matter. Sometimes that comes in the form of smiles, sometimes in the form of arguments with me, but always in the form of activity. It is this kind of engagement that makes me the most joyful.
More Faculty Voices on Joy

- I am most joyful when a class activity is going well – when students are on-task and productive and seem to be enjoying themselves in the process. I am also joyful when I collect a set of papers and see that the students “got” the assignment. So, based on those two “joyful” occasions, I would say that clear evidence of student engagement and learning make me joyful as a teacher.
Student interaction and student achievement bring me joy. I am now in my 45th year of teaching. Although I have taught the same course many times, I have never taught the same class more than once, because the students make every class unique. Interacting with students is a renewable and perpetual joy. Secondly, when the class works and a student learns a skill, understands a concept, or finds the amazement of thinking, that student’s gain is for me the greatest of joys. Julia Child may have the JOY OF COOKING, but the greatest joy is the JOY OF TEACHING.
Joy at Coming to IUPUI

- The path to IUPUI
- W001
An Elementary School Classroom in a Slum (Stephen Spender)

- Far far from gusty waves these children's faces. Like rootless weeds, the hair torn around their pallor. The tall girl with her weighed-down head. The paper-seeming boy, with rat's eyes. The stunted, unlucky heir Of twisted bones, reciting a father's gnarled disease, His lesson from his desk. At back of the dim class One unnoted, sweet and young. His eyes live in a dream, Of squirrel's game, in tree room, other than this.
On sour cream walls, donations. Shakespeare's head, Cloudless at dawn, civilized dome riding all cities. Bellied, flowery, Tyrolese valley. Open-handed map Awarding the world its world. And yet, for these Children, these windows, not this world, are world, Where all their future's painted with a fog, A narrow street sealed in with a lead sky, Far far from rivers, capes, and stars of words.
Surely, Shakespeare is wicked, and the map a bad example
With ships and sun and love tempting them to steal.
For lives that slyly turn in their cramped holes
From fog to endless night? On their slag heap,
these children
Wear skins peeped through by bones and
spectacles of steel
With mended glass, like bottle bits on stones.
All of their time and space are foggy slum.
So blot their maps with slums as big as doom.
Unless, governor, teacher, inspector, visitor,
This map becomes their window and these windows
That shut upon their lives like catacombs,
Break O break open 'till they break the town
And show the children green fields and make their world
Run azure on gold sands, and let their tongues
Run naked into books, the white and green leaves open
History theirs, whose language is the sun.
Stephanie’s Story

- So what? Who cares?
Questions and Conversation