

A Little Psychology Goes a Long Way

If you are working your way through teacher's college, you are getting a lot of great education that will give you the knowledge and the skills to teach young minds in the not too distant future. But you may not entirely know what kind of minor to declare or what kind of elective classes to take that will harmonize well with your concentration on becoming an educator.

One suggestion that would help you tremendously would be for you to add a concentration in psychology. Psychology is a field of study that can give you invaluable resources and abilities to manage a classroom full of students that otherwise might not be available to you. The reason psychology would help you so much is that when it gets right down to it, teaching and learning are very human events. And you don't just teach the mind. You teach the heart and the soul of the student as well. So by learning how the minds of your students "tick", you give yourself yet another advantage in your quest to maintain control of that classroom at all times.

When you are teaching a group of students, even if not a word is being said, they are talking to you all the time. And part of psychology is learning what they are saying to you with their body language. In general, students will send a signal of blocking you or being open to you based on how their arms are positioned, how relaxed they seem, whether their legs are crossed or open and particularly through their facial expression. If you can learn to understand the language of body language, you can use it to take a boring lesson or lecture and suddenly transform it into a lesson that captures the student's imagination and holds them for as long as you need to for the sake of the lesson.

Psychology will also help you understand how to use your body language to send messages to your students. The thing about body language is that it delivers the message whether the other person is aware of it or not. You no doubt know that standing in front of a group of kids and teaching is about a lot more than what you say or even how you say it with your voice. You are communicating all the time with your body language, your posture and your movements. And if you know a little bit about human psychology and how your students will react to movement or sudden changes in your physical demeanor, you can use the power you have over them to capture their minds and hold them on the subject at hand. In that way psychology can be a powerful aid to your teaching.

Now you are not looking to become Sigmund Freud in your study of psychology. But if you know enough about the human mind and how what is going on inside a student can be expressed externally, you can be a big help to a student who may be in emotional trouble but unable to communicate it. If you can spot the signs

of emotional distress and get that child to counseling and the help he or she needs, you could literally be a lifesaver for one of your students. And that is a wonderful feeling and all the reason you need to make psychology part of your college curriculum plan.

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