

Statement of Educational Philosophy

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Similar to the awareness that everything good comes from God, a central idea that makes learning meaningful and significant is an understanding that all truth is God's truth. This reality centers the learning process on the subject that is being considered, observed, and investigated. It also creates a learning environment in which all learners "gather" around the subject together, from different places of understanding and from different vantage points, seeking to understand more fully and more deeply the truth of the subject. A few of the more important implications of such an approach to learning for education are an increased need for embracing humility, hospitality, integrity, courage, and perseverance.

Humility is important because there is a recognition that truth exists outside of oneself and thereby allows for greater understanding to be received, beyond what has already been received and known. New thoughts, ideas, and perspectives are neither immediate threats nor dismissed without being given respectful consideration. Humility also makes possible the remaining virtues—without humility, not only is knowledge and wisdom compromised, but hospitality, integrity, courage, and perseverance are also jeopardized.

The practice of hospitality creates a climate of invitation. This is realized as both the welcoming of others as part of the community of learners as well as the welcoming of knowledge to be brought before those committed to discerning truth. With truth remaining at the center of a learning community, characterized by humility and hospitality allows for an appropriate relationship between inclusion and wisdom without relativity. What inherently supports wisdom and inclusion within the community of learners is their commitment to seeking truth. This requires integrity—an honesty and transparency in all efforts given to the seeking of truth as well as in the relationships with fellow learners committed to this endeavor. It importantly includes the recognition that self is not of primary concern and remains open to correction and change.

Creating an educational space that embraces humility, hospitality, and integrity may not always be comfortable or what was expected. In this way, learning requires courage in the midst of such risk. Courage allows learners to journey together into unknown spaces filled with discoveries and revelations that bring joy and deeper connections to what we have been created to know. Closely connected to this need for courage is the virtue of perseverance. Not only do we need to be able to journey into what is unknown, we need to be able to continue the journey when we are confronted with mysteries, difficulties, problems, and obstacles as we commit to seeking truth together as a community of learners.

In summary, I believe that education is always transformational—we are never the same when we commit ourselves to the consideration of all that there is for us to know about ourselves, others, the world in which we live, and the Creator who opens Himself up to be known by those who diligently seek Him. As a life-long learner, although these are the beliefs about education that guide my role as a facilitator and shepherd of learning in the classroom, I also continue to grow in my views of effective ways to allow students to deepen their understanding of all things.