



Ralph Waldo Emerson

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The tough problems are always solved from within. Ralph Waldo Emerson called this self-reliance. You must grow your capabilities, reach your potential so you can dig deep to meet life's challenges. Emerson's teaching method would be one of provocation rather than instruction. Once provoked, the student turns within to inspect, then revise her mental models. That is how we tap into the genius within each of us. To Emerson, "Perception makes." When it rains, it is our perception (not the rain) that makes us mope or dance about. Rack up as many provocative experiences as you can because it is through these experiences—and ultimately your categories—that you grow to see and seize the hidden opportunities dancing out there. Do not neglect to tell your students that their experiences are all they have to offer to those whom they will teach someday.

Have you reflected upon the role provocation plays in your own learning? Does your teaching allow students to see cells, organisms, and populations through a lens of conceptual order or perceptual flux?

Suggested Readings:

1. Emerson RW. Circles. In: Essays and journals. Garden City, NY: Nelson Doubleday; 1968.
2. Emerson RW. Self-reliance. In: Essays and journals. Garden City, NY: Nelson Doubleday; 1968.
3. Emerson RW. The American scholar. In: Essays and journals. Garden City, NY: Nelson Doubleday; 1968.
4. Emerson RW. Intellect. In: Essays and journals. Garden City, NY: Nelson Doubleday; 1968.
5. Emerson RW. Education. In: Mumford Jones H, editor. Emerson on education. New York: Teachers College Press; 1966.
6. Poirier R. The renewal of literature: Emersonian reflections. New York: Random House; 1987.
7. Buell L. Ralph Waldo Emerson: a collection of critical essays. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc; 1993.
8. Orth RH, Ferguson AR, editors. Journals and miscellaneous notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, volume 13:1852-1855. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; 1977.

Learn More about Emerson:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Waldo_Emerson