

# Random Thoughts . . .

## SPEAKING OF EDUCATION—IV

RICHARD M. FELDER

*North Carolina State University*

Schools teach you to imitate. If you don't imitate what the teacher wants you get a bad grade. Here in college it was more sophisticated, of course; you were supposed to imitate the teacher in such a way as to convince the teacher you were not imitating. (Robert Pirsig)

Teaching means creating situations where structures can be discovered: it does not mean transmitting structures which may be assimilated at nothing other than a verbal level. (Jean Piaget)

Learning takes place through the active behavior of the student: it is what he does that he learns, not what the teacher does. (Ralph Tyler)

Teaching and learning are correlative or corresponding processes, as much so as selling and buying. One might as well say he has sold when no one has bought, as to say that he has taught when no one has learned. (John Dewey)

I had a terrible education. I attended a school for emotionally disturbed teachers. (Woody Allen)

It is not the teacher's task to teach interesting things, but to make interesting the things that must be taught. (C.S. Schlicter)

It's an insane tragedy that 700,000 people get a diploma each year and can't read the damned diploma. (William Brock)

I write when I'm inspired, and I see to it that I'm inspired at nine o'clock every morning. (Peter De Vries)

The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift. (Albert Einstein)

Any subject can be effectively taught in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development. (Jerome Bruner)

The illiterate of the future will not be the person who cannot read. It will be the person who does not know how to learn. (Alvin Toffler)

What's another word for thesaurus? (Steven Wright)

Nine tenths of education is encouragement. (Anatole France)

Good teaching is one-fourth preparation and three-fourths pure theatre. (Gail Godwin)

Education has failed in a very serious way to convey the most important lesson science can teach: skepticism. (David Suzuki)

Self-education is, I firmly believe, the only kind of education there is. (Isaac Asimov)

What does education often do? It makes a straight-cut ditch of a free, meandering brook. (Henry Thoreau)

What if there were no hypothetical questions? (George Carlin)

In what may as well be starkly labeled smug satisfaction, an amazing 94% [of college instructors] rate themselves as above average teachers, and 68% rank themselves in the top quarter of teaching performances. (Patricia Cross)

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,  
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,  
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide,  
and measure them,  
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with  
much applause in the lecture room,  
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,  
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,  
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,  
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.  
(Walt Whitman)

**Richard M. Felder** is Hoechst Celanese Professor Emeritus of Chemical Engineering at North Carolina State University. He is co-author of *Elementary Principles of Chemical Processes* (Wiley, 2005) and numerous articles on chemical process engineering and engineering and science education, and regularly presents workshops on effective college teaching at campuses and conferences around the world. Many of his publications can be seen at <[www.ncsu.edu/effective\\_teaching](http://www.ncsu.edu/effective_teaching)>.

