In the article, “Personal Thoughts on Teaching and Learning,” Carl Rogers (1961) states that based on his personal experience in the educational field, he feels that teaching “has little or no significant influence on behavior” and that “the only learning which significantly influence behavior is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning” (268-269). With that being said, Rogers believes that learning should be motivated through an individuals desire to learn.

In addition to stating that teaching does not influence behavior and that only through self-discovery can one learn, Rogers (1961) also says self-discovered learning “cannot be directly communicated to another” (269) because it is experience that leads to learning, and you cannot communicate a direct experience. He also states that teaching causes an “individual to distrust his own experience, and to stifle significant learning” (269) because one is simply being given information to memorize, and it has little personal meaning. Despite the fact that Rogers has come to the conclusion that he has lost interest in being a teacher, he says that he still loves to learn and that learning occurs when, “[I] state my own uncertainties, to try and clarify my puzzlements and thus get closer to the meaning” (269). This further demonstrates Rogers’ belief that all learning is self-discovered.

Due to Rogers (1961) disbelief that learning can be taught, he states that if everyone had the same experiences as he, they would reach the same five conclusions: we would get rid of teaching because “people would get together if they wished to learn” (269); we would get rid of tests and exams; we would get rid of grades and credits; we would get rid of degrees for they measure inconsequential learning and mark the end of something when learning should be a continuous process; we would get rid of the idea of conclusions.

Although somewhat satirical, Rogers (1961) article stresses the importance of self-discovered learning. It also demonstrates how valuable it is to teach subject matter that is meaningful and not just simply inconsequential, otherwise individuals will have little desire to learn, and little learning will occur.

References:

Rogers, C. (1961). Personal Thoughts on Teaching and Learning. In K. Ryan & J.M. Cooper (Eds.), *Kaleidoscope: Readings in education* (11th ed., pp. 268-270). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.