

Personal Reflection – August 13, 2022

Was It Augustine?

Today is Tyler's birthday! I wanted to write to him to thank him for his careful, caring attention to my friend, Betsy Barton, who is working to become a Certified Teacher. I wrote, *Betsy was one of the brilliant folk who came to the first course I offered at the School of Public Health at UNC. I led their learning for a week there in 1989.*

As I wrote that, I thought of the words of St. Augustine: *"No man teaches another man anything; all we do is prepare the way for the work of the Holy Spirit."*

I really do not know where I read that. I know I did not make it up. Was it really Augustine who redefined teaching?

I like the phrase *"I led their learning."* Those graduate students were experienced adults with long years of learning. My task was to invite them to examine that experience for the sprinkled diamonds of 'ah-ha's!'

The opening learning task of that course was: *Describe to a partner the best learning experience in your life. Then name what happened to make it so memorable.*

Wow! I can still hear the excitement in that room in Chapel Hill. I sat in awe, listening to the noise and laughter, and the ah-ha's from each two-some as they recognized the similarity of their discoveries.

Our job is to unveil the rich experience adult learners bring and to celebrate with them the emerging diamonds. How? Know the learners and design appropriate open questions.

Augustine was right!

--by Jane Vella