

Sabo says 'Good students make good teachers'

By Anna Wilson

"I was so surprised when I won the award, that all I could think about was not falling on my way to the stage," said Dr. Bill Sabo, political science lecturer and winner of the Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award given at graduation last May.

"It was a complete shock," said Sabo. "I'm not sure at all that I am a good teacher. In terms of the award, I feel a tremendous pressure to live up to it."

"I feel that there are a lot of teachers more deserving than I," he said.

One of the three things Sabo likes about teaching here is the faculty.

"This school has as extraordinarily talented faculty," said Sabo. "I am astonished at how good they are."

"I steal ideas and techniques shamelessly and I have to work really hard to fit in," he said.

Sabo said teaching is hard work and it is hard sometimes to get motivated.

"It takes time to get everything together," said Sabo.

But if a teacher has

good students, he said that makes all the difference in the world. The students, in fact, are the second reason Sabo likes to teach here.

"I feel that you can't be a good teacher without good students, so a lot of credit for good teaching goes to the students," said Sabo.

"I'm really fortunate in having students to make me work. I've been very lucky in that I've had very good students," he said.

"The only thing that really gets to me though, is that students see college education, not as a rare experience to grow, but in terms of 'will it help me to get a job,'" Sabo said.

"It's very hard to get through that mental block. Students aren't aware of how important they are to us teachers," he said.

Other professions know if their final product is a reward, such as a doctor or a lawyer, but the rewards of teaching aren't immediate or apparent.

"The average M.D. makes five times more than me, so you know it's not the financial awards," said Sabo.

The third thing Sabo

likes about teaching here is his subject.

"Political science is inherently fascinating. There are so many nuances and it's related to so many things," he said.

"Every time I prepare a lecture or read a new book, I learn something new," he said.

"I really enjoyed college and to me this is an extension of it. It opens so many different attitudes."

"I would throw in the towel if one of these things were missing. It just wouldn't be worth it," he said.

Sabo and his wife, Theresa, have two sons, Dylan and Jefferson.

"Dylan is named after the poet Dylan Thomas and Jefferson after Thomas Jefferson," said Sabo.

The explanation behind these names is simple. Sabo likes Thomas' poetry and he really admires Jefferson for his understanding of education.

And Sabo has some definite ideas about education.

"I don't think this state spends very much money on schools and it shows. It may be like this elsewhere, but from my



Staff photo by Caroline Brown

Outstanding Teacher of the Year recipient Bill Sabo is looking for Bruce Springsteen and Rolling Stones albums, but he's not telling what for.

second-hand experience, not much is spent on primary and secondary schools in North Carolina," said Sabo.

"The focus is on the university level but I feel that primary and

secondary education is far more important," he said.

Sabo believes, however, that a college education is important, but teaching students who haven't learned the basics, make it harder on the teacher.

Experiential educators give hands-on experience

By Donna Obrecht

Educators from all over the country arrived at Lake Junaluska Assembly on October 5. These weren't ordinary school teachers however.

The Association for Experiential Education held their annual conference. Experiential education

means simply, learning by doing.

The approximately 700 people attending the conference, believe that students learn better and remember longer by doing something than they do by hearing about it or reading about it.

Zeke Zeliff, associate

director of North Carolina Outward Bound, (NCOB), was instrumental in having the conference held in North Carolina.

The North Carolina Outward Bound school is a well-known example of experiential education. In its 21-day course students hike, camp, canoe, rock

climb and do other challenging activities.

NCOB believes their students learn problem solving techniques, how to work with each other, and how to depend on their own resources.

Experiential education doesn't have to involve physical exertion in the outdoors, however. Elliot Wigginton proved this by starting Foxfire Magazine.

As an English teacher in Rabun Gap, Georgia, Wigginton wanted to stimulate his lethargic students. So he started a magazine that the students wrote and published; a magazine about mountain crafts and old fashioned ways of doing things.

Wigginton found that the excitement of putting out their own magazine encouraged his students to do work superior to what they believed they could do.

Groups of students in the Foxfire project have published several books on the same subject as the magazines.

Wigginton was a major speaker at the conference and was the recipient of the 1984 A.E.E. Kurt Hahn Award.

The Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, N.C. and the Nantahala Outdoor Center in Bryson City, N.C. are two local experiential education organizations that presented workshops at the conference.

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