Teaching Philosophy

*“So often you find that the students you’re trying to inspire are the ones that end up inspiring you”* – Sean Junkins

As a future teacher, I aim to enhance all students’ knowledge and understandings of the world in an inclusive, interactive and welcoming environment. By accommodating to the diverse needs of students, they are able to enhance their learning in their own way and at their own speed, without conforming to the idea that “one size fits all” (Segura, 2013). According to Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory, students own a unique mind as they ‘learn, remember, perform, and understand in different ways.’ In the unit of work focused on ‘transportation,’ the sequence of lessons incorporated a range of intelligences including verbal/linguistic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and visual-spacial (Lane, n.d). As students learn in different ways, I believe that it is critical to incorporate information and communications technology (ICT) into the classroom. Providing students with the opportunity to learn using ICT enables students to realise their potential as unique individuals, develop as social beings, and also empowers students to build understandings in the context of the modern world (Education Business, 2014). There is an integration of ICT evident in the unit of work, as students will learn about transportation using the IWB and also PowerPoint (PP). Essentially I am a strong believer of having a positive relationship with all students in my classroom, and teaching them as a whole person rather than just teaching the subject matter. This includes teaching students according to their personal, cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions (O’Farrell, 2010). By appreciating the diversity of a classroom, teachers are empowering students to engage in learning in the most effective way (Alberta Education, 2014).

In a primary context, I believe that it is central for students to learn through collaborative and cooperative group work. As stated by Vygotsky, students’ learning is socially constructed, as not all classmates learn through the traditional approach in which the teacher transfers knowledge to students (Learning-Theories, 2014). The developed unit of work empowers students to build knowledge and understandings through a socially constructed environment, such as small-group and whole class learning. For example, in week eight students engage in a ‘*What am I?*’ activity in pairs, in which one peer has to guess the form of transport being described, and vice versa. I believe that creating a flexible teaching program that is open to a range of cooperative tasks transforms a student from a ‘memoriser’ into a ‘thinker.’ This can also be achieved through activities that reflect Bloom’s Taxonomy of remembering, understanding, applying, analysing and evaluating (Hummel, 2010). Essentially, providing students with the opportunity to interact purposefully with their peers enables them to facilitate meaning and possess an active role in their learning (Learning-Theories, 2014).

In my future classroom, I aim to use positive and preventative strategies in order to minimise behavioural difficulties and develop students’ self-esteem and sense of achievement. Through the influence of Roger’s positive behaviour leadership (PBL) model, I believe that teachers should focus on prevention, changing problem environments and teaching new skills (Bambara & Knoster, 2009). This approach has been reflected in the unit of work as the teacher praises students who act in accordance with the classroom/school rules, and moves their names upward on a ‘ladder.’ By offering choices, minimising confrontation and embarrassment, and positively communicating expectations and standards, I aim to manage and/or prevent problematic behaviour in a quality-learning environment. As evident in Dreikur’s goal centred theory (GCT), I believe that it is imperative to ignore attention-seeking behaviour, and instead, understand why the child is driven to behave in that particular way and develop strategies to minimise such behaviour. For example, for a male student who has behavioural difficulties and hearing impairment, the teacher could seat the student near the teacher where he is more likely to engage in learning, as demonstrated in the unit of work. Fundamentally, teachers who purposefully respond to challenging behaviour and provide appropriate consequences are able to develop positive relationships with students, and in turn, enhance students learning and wellbeing (Advantage Press, 2013).

Through experiences with children and working in primary school contexts, I have developed an understanding that students’ engagement in learning is strongly influenced by the teacher and the environment in which they are in. As the teacher alternatively has the power to generate a quality learning environment, I believe that it is crucial to be knowledgeable and up-to-date on pedagogy, inclusive education, theorists, and as importantly, to know the students. This can be achieved by communicating with stakeholders, such as parents and staff, in order to assist students in their learning in their learning in the most effective way (Alberta Education, 2014).

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