My Philosophy of Education

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The ultimate goal for schools is to aid its students in receiving the best possible education. There are many ideas about what the best possible education could and should look like, but I believe one thing for certain, it needs to be flexible. An important attribute of creating the best possible education for each student is creating a classroom atmosphere and developing pedagogy that meets the needs of all the children that enter the classroom. I saw a quote once that deeply impacted my view of education and it goes something like this, “Fair isn’t everyone getting the same thing…Fair is everyone getting what they need to be successful.” This is the basic foundation of what I consider to be the best possible education, every child getting the opportunity to learn in a way that best suits them.

Classroom Environment

There are several specific areas I have found important to focus on when in the process of developing a classroom environment that is designed to full fill individual student needs. First, it is important to invite, recognize and appreciate all diversity in the classroom. Second, I am a firm believer that the creation of a classroom community is essential to the development of a positive learning environment. Lastly, I fell it is very important to make the classroom a place where parents and families are welcome. Their support in education is imperative and irreplaceable.

The recognition of diversity in the classrooms comes in as many forms. Naturally what comes to mind first and foremost is diversity as a racial and cultural aspect of classrooms. However educators also encounter diversity in family structure, religious beliefs, learning styles and many other areas. Diversity can consist of recognizing and validating the different cultures represented in the classroom but it can also be appreciating the diversity of students’ interests. An important way of recognizing and validating diversity is to make special efforts to get to know the students and the families that will be entering the classroom.

There is an out-of-touch theory that has appeared in the history of education that gives the impression that students are blank slates that are to be drawn on and developed once they have reach school. This is far from true! Every student enters the classroom with knowledge of the world gained through experience. I believe it is the role of teachers to positively use students’ backgrounds to enhance the learning experience. In order to do this, teachers need to provide opportunities for students to share their personal experiences and interests, if they so desire, in the classroom. If teachers approach their classroom instruction bearing in mind their students’ backgrounds, then instruction will be much more meaningful and students will retain more of the information. As educators we have a crucial role in children’s lives and if we fail to recognize the benefits of diversity in our classrooms then progression towards giving students the best possible education will be severely limited.

Hand in hand with the recognition of diversity comes the task of using that diversity to create a classroom community. The creation of a classroom community is a fragile and crucial step towards having an inviting classroom where students want to come and learn. Competitive learning environments may work for some individuals but the vast majority of students will benefit far more from work place that promotes collaboration between students. Recognizing that peers can be friends, helpers, and supports both in and out of the classroom makes for better relationships between students. Learning in a collaborative environment helps students not only learn the material better but it teaches important social skills. Student need to learn the essential skill of being able to work well with others because it will be essential for their later years of education as well good preparation for the workplace. Positive working environments fuel student achievement and create less time for distractions and misbehavior, and more time for learning which hopefully means that our students are receiving the best possible education.

While the development student to student and student to teacher relationships are essential for the development of a classroom community it is also important to recognize the roles of parents and families in the learning process. Parents in particular play a very important role in their child’s education. The relationship between the parent and teacher is essential to develop because students often observe and mimic those relationships. It had been a known fact in the education community that parent involvement in education boosts school performance for the students. I think that it is very important to get the parents as involved as they possibly can be in their child’s education. This involvement of course can take on many different forms and it is important to recognize all efforts made by parents to be involved.

It is our role as teachers to be proactive in starting and maintain positive relationships with parents and families. We as educators need to encourage positive involvement from parents in the classroom and should be providing ample and diverse ways for parents and families to participate in the classroom and school. Again the recognition of diversity is essential in developing strong partnerships with parents and families. These partnerships may take on a variety of forms but regardless we need as educators need to be on the look out for better and more effective ways to communicate with parents. These partnerships will aid us as educators to be more informed of diversity in the classroom and strengthen our abilities to openly recognize it. Parent partnerships are also apart of the classroom community and really help expand and strengthen the support system that will help us reach our goal of providing the best possible education for all students.

Pedagogy

What you teach and how you teach it is just as important to creating the best possible education for students as having the proper learning environment. Teaching the material through integration has to be one of the most revolutionary and most effective ways of teaching to date. I have had the opportunity to really get a close look at integrated teaching and have fallen in love with the endless possibilities it provides and its educational benefits. As educators it feels like every time you turn around there are more concepts and information is added to the curriculum that you are asked to teach. This is very overwhelming but I feel like using integration as a key component for setting up your lesson plans and activities in the classroom gives you a head start on all that needs to be accomplished each year.

One of my favorite ways to integrate is by using science, social studies, and the arts to teach the core basics of reading and writing. This of course is not a substitute for teaching the language arts but I think it is a great way to help students make connections between subjects. None of these core subjects stand-alone, so we shouldn’t teach them that way. There are so many great ways of guiding deep learning through integration not to mention students enjoy the creativity and opportunities that integrated teaching provides.

Using integrated teaching also really helps teachers address the needs of all the learners in a classroom that have diverse learning styles. Typically students are grouped into three different learning style types: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. These three learning styles can bee easily addressed when using integration to support your teaching efforts. By providing diverse learning opportunities educators are giving all kids a chance to learn in a way that best suits their learning style. This approach to teaching really helps us as educators provide a well-rounded education to all of our students, which means that they are receiving the best possible education.