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| My Philosophy of Education |
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I believe that the purpose of education is to help shape and mold the future generations and to help prepare them for a lifetime of success. In a proper education setting a student should learn a great deal of information that will go on to help him or her later in life. There are many different styles of teaching, and if taught in a proper way they could all prove to be effective. If I had to classify myself as a teacher I would most definitely fall into the progressivism teaching style, with a lot of ideas from the style of social reconstructionism.

I do believe that schools should be teaching all of the students the basics, such as language arts, mathematics, science, and history, but I also understand the importance of schools spending time teaching their students more than just the basics. How can a student be expected to jump out into the ‘real world’ when all they obtain in school is a basic knowledge of the core subjects? To really go on and gain success an individual needs to have knowledge of several different trades and life skills, as well as the ability to connect all the lessons they have learned in core classes back into real situations.

When I become a teacher one of the main techniques I will use in my classroom will be to connect every lesson and assignment back to something that my students will need to know for their future. Whether it is a tricky situation that could be solved by doing some type of math problem they learn in algebra, or just having general knowledge of events going on in the world such as politics which was learned after doing bell work or writing a short essay on the topic. I want my students to be prepared.

 I do believe that one of a teacher’s main jobs should be to help facilitate learning and growth. This needs to be done not only on classroom topics, but worldly ones as well. As a teacher I will help my students learn and devise strategies to answer any questions they may have. I will often plan my lesson around events that are currently going on in the community, as well as around the world. One of the main reasons that my teaching styles would fall into the category of social reconstructionism if because I do deeply feel as though one of the main reasons for a student to be in school getting an education is to earn a career, and in doing so making a life for themselves. Once a student is done with school they will hopefully go out and become an active member of society, taking all the skills they have learned in school with them. Teachers need to make sure that their students are prepared for this! If a teacher actively tries to prepare their students for this by connecting lessons back to life situations it will be a great help for society (Harmin, 1998). They will actually remember the lessons their have learned and then apply them into their lives.

There is a direct correlation between the curriculum being taught in schools and the political, social, and economic development of society (Reed, 1999). If students are able to apply skills learned from lessons in school to their lives they will have a better chance of identifying problems and needs, and then discover methods and set goals in order to solve them. This type of teaching will help students develop strategies for effecting change (Reed, 1999).

The teacher plays a critical role in doing this, and the teacher must truly believe in the reconstructionism style of teaching in order to be effective. A good teacher of reconstructionism curriculum will try and help their students relate their academic goals and their personal goals to world, national, and local purposes (Reed, p 3).

Schools should be teaching these skills be constantly having current news events be learned in their classrooms. Students should be discussing topics from worldly events going on to knowing about issues within their own economic society. News articles should be shared. One great way to get information like that around in schools is having a school newspaper. Another great strategy a school can do to keep students informed would be having daily or weekly announcements containing the week’s hot topics. I feel like a lot of people think that schools should keep their students sheltered, and only share information that is ‘relevant’ to the students. Are the students not members of society? I do believe that appropriate shielding should be put in place, especially with the younger students, but once a student gets to high school I believe that they should have good general knowledge of what is going on in the world. (Harmin, 1998)

One type of strategy that I personally will use in my classroom will be breaking my students down into small groups (Fairhurst, 1995). I feel as though this type of classroom environment helps to better facilitate learning to most students. While in groups students are able to share their ideas freely, without feeling as judged as some might feel when speaking in front of the entire class. When talking amongst themselves students are able to share their own ideas as well as learn each other’s individual knowledge on the subject being discussed. I think that when students are able to move around freely and converse with their peers more active learning will take place.

Once small groups have been established (sometimes I will let students choose their own groups, other times I will assign them[Harmin, 1998]) I will put up a topic that is trending in the world or local news. I will ask students to discuss this within their groups. The students will have a certain amount of time to talk amongst themselves before I will end the group time. On certain days I may have the group of students come up in front of the class and explain what they know on the topic and how they feel about it, other days after group time I will have students go back to their seats and write a short essay over everything they discussed and learned while in the group (Harmin, 1998). With all the sharing of ideas going in these groups I feel like each student will really learn something new and take something from the conversations. I plan do this type of group work at least a couple of times a week, always having different topics and changing up the groups weekly.

As for classroom management, my style would be classified as progressivism. I will teach and manage my classroom in a student centered way. If a student is misbehaving, it will be up to that student to choose to stop the behavior (Fairhurst, 1995). Obviously if the situation is out of hand I will step in and do what I need to do. I will encourage my students to behave by rewarding positive behavior instead of focusing on the negative. I will develop systems of rewards that students will receive for their good behavior; something such as extra credit, free work time, or anything else they will enjoy.

The role of the student is to learn and the role of the teacher is to facilitate with the learning. Students should be enjoying the time they spend in school in addition to just learning. Teachers should enjoy their time spent teaching the students as well.

My main rule in my classroom (regardless of grade level) will be to give respect to all. I want all of my students to feel as though my classroom is a safe place to share their ideas without the threat of feeling judged. I will not make students expand on ideas if they do not know the correct answer to a question. I would just give positive feedback to them and then open the question back up for the correct answer to be given. I would use a statement such as, “that was a great start to the question can anyone elaborate on it?” I will try and make every student feel special and important. I will make sure that most of the time in the classroom is being spent actively learning and sharing ideas. If a classroom is properly managed it will flow easily, respect will be received and given to all, and everyone in the classroom should be enjoying themselves most of the time.

References

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