My Professional Credo:

Chaitra Jewell

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Introduction to Teaching 111

Professor Eastman

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Abstract

It is because of all the teachers combined I have ever had over the years that have instilled in me the inspiration to become a teacher someday, particularly, my second grade teacher, Ms. Lynn. It was Ms. Lynn who first believed in me by giving me that extra little push that inspired me to do the same for others. There is not a doubt in my mind that teaching should be my destiny in life. I live and breathe to inspire the many young minds of others, just like I was first inspired several years ago. I believe that teachers are faced with several challenges in today's schools, but it is how they solve those challenges that make them good teachers. As a teacher, my goal is to not only teach those young, innocent minds, but to also inspire them to reach for their dreams as well.
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Dan Rather (2007) was once quoted as saying, “The dream begins, most of the time, with a teacher who believes in you, who tugs and pushes and leads you on to the next plateau, sometimes poking you with a sharp stick called truth” (p. 1). This is exactly how my dream was created for me, also. I, too, was inspired quite some time ago, 11 years to be exact, by my second grade teacher, Ms. Lynn. She not only was just a “good” teacher, but in her own special way, she knew how to both inspire and teach her students simultaneously. This unique ability is something I want to be able to possess someday when I become a teacher. My initial goal as a teacher will hopefully be rather obtainable and somewhat similar to Ms. Lynn’s goal. Being able to both inspire and teach my class well is something I look forward to doing everyday. I wholeheartedly believe that teaching is my destiny in life. I will do absolutely anything and everything to make sure my dream happens for me like it does for every aspiring teacher.

I was not always 100% sure like I am now that teaching was my “thing.” Ever since my early childhood, I had always thought I was going to become a veterinarian when I grew up because my heart seemed set on becoming one. My love for animals could not have been stronger, and from the moment when I was given my first kitten, my passion for helping animals continued to grow lavishly. However, although I was extremely into animals, I simply could not ignore the little voice in my head that appeared to be screaming, “Teaching! Teaching! Teaching!” From that moment on, I knew I was meant to become a teacher rather than a veterinarian.

As a teacher, I will be fully aware of all the responsibilities that come along with the role of teaching; it does not bother me one bit to know that. I am ready to take on all the challenges of
teaching: the name-calling, bullying, behavioral problems, and etc. What I love about teaching is that every day you are in the classroom, you gain more and more experience and knowledge. This is what I am looking forward to the most about a career in teaching. The more years I have of teaching under my belt, the better at teaching my students I will become. This concept is exceptionally exciting for me because I feel the better I am at teaching, the more my students will benefit from the different styles of teaching that are available in my classroom. Moreover, my students will be better prepared to move on to the next grade level, as well as better prepared for their lives well beyond their school years.

Throughout the many different classrooms I have ever been in, there is one concept that always seems to remain the same. While the students are being taught their lessons, the teachers appear to also be taught by their students. I have always seen teaching as a win-win situation meaning as students are taught several lessons each year, the teachers are also being taught lessons by their students as well known as the teaching-learning process. It is so fascinating to me that while students are being taught things such as addition and subtraction, their teachers are also learning different concepts like manners and respect from their students and vice versa.

As any teacher would argue, learning cannot be accomplished in a classroom without first having some sort of knowledge and secondly, having a way to value that knowledge. If a classroom was to be lacking both knowledge and values, the philosophy of Axiology would not be able to take place (Parkay, Stanford, p. 83). Along with Axiology, comes the ability to ask the following questions: “What values should teachers encourage students to adopt” or “What values does a truly educated person hold?” (Parkay, Stanford, p. 83). As a teacher, I will not only hold the responsibility of knowing the answers to these questions, but I will also be expected to make sure my students are acquiring the right amount of knowledge that goes along with their own...
personal values. For example, if the majority of my students value their families as much as I do my own, I would want them to be able to give me the reasons why they value their families and not just say they do without any explanations. Axiology is a very important philosophy because if it is not understood properly, I believe that nobody would understand why they value the things they do.

In the many years I have thought about why it is that I want to become a teacher, it did not take long for me to figure out that there is not just one philosophy of teaching that pertains to me as an educator. I have found that I am a mixture of both Progressivism and Existentialism. I believe that although it is important that the subject matter be addressed in a classroom, the child should be the focus more than anything else. The majority of what is being taught in today's schools should come from what students are most interested in (Parkay, Stanford, p. 87). This, in turn, will enable the teacher to become more effective in whatever it is that he/she is teaching. If students go through several years of being taught without learning how to problem solve, they will grow up lacking the knowledge it takes to discover who they really are throughout their lives. (Parkay, Stanford, p. 87). Along with Progressivism, I also believe in the philosophical viewpoints of Existentialism as well. Existentialism stresses how essential the individual itself is (Becoming a Teacher, p. 88). This philosophical orientation is all about life, its meaning, and how being true to yourself plays a big role in society (Parkay, Stanford p. 88). As Maxine Green (1995) states, “We have to know about our lives, clarify our situations if we are to understand the world from our shared standpoints” (p. 88). Therefore, if students are kept from expressing themselves throughout their own choices and opinions, they will never truly find out the meanings of their own lives. As a teacher, I will allow my students to express what they are feeling so that they grow up to be the creative, unique individuals I know that is inside each and
every one of them.

Just like I have some philosophical orientations that fit my beliefs on teaching, I also have some strong beliefs on the psychological orientation of Constructivism that influences me tremendously. My belief on learning is that if you have no students, learning simply cannot properly take place. Again, just like Progressivism where it is better to be child-centered rather than teacher-centered, Constructivism takes place in a similar way (Parkay, Stanford p. 92). Constructivists tend to keep their focus on the strategies students learn so that they can better understand their students in general (Parkay, Stanford p. 92). My own classroom will encourage my students to be active in their learning to keep their minds stimulated. As a teacher, I remain student-centered rather than teacher-centered because I feel that students learn better if their own interests are addressed more freely.

Every teacher I have ever had has inspired me in some way to go into the field of education. Some of my teachers more than others have pushed me a little harder in that direction, and this is something I will always be completely thankful. Without my second grade teacher, Ms. Lynn, I would have never figured out how important it is to inspire your students while they are being taught. It was Ms. Lynn who first taught me the values of teaching and why teachers do what they do. She has forever instilled in me the passion for teaching and if this had not taken place 11 years ago, who knows if I would have ever figured out what I wanted to do with my own life. It is because of Ms. Lynn that I have the everlasting inspiration to become a teacher and inspire others just like she has inspired me. My goal for the future is to at least become half as good at teaching as she was. I am definitely up for the challenge!
References

