My Professional Teaching Credo

Adam Welcher

Introduction to Teaching 111

Mrs. Eastman
Abstract

With the help and guidance of many different teachers and family, I have spent a considerable amount of time finding myself not only as a student and learner but also as a person. Through different experiences in school and interactions with teachers and counselors, I developed my beliefs about the teaching profession. These people had a great influence not only on the way that I learned but also on the way I want to teach. I believe that teachers are given an enormous task - to develop and prepare the minds of our youth. As a teacher, my goal is not limited to giving the students only the skills they need to succeed in the classroom, but also to help prepare them to succeed at a much larger scale: life.
My Professional Credo:

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A teacher and mentor of mine, Libby Nave, once said, “Students will never care how much you know until they know how much you care.” I have been guided by many different teachers and family members throughout my educational journey. I have spent a considerable amount of time finding myself not only as a student and learner but also as a person. Throughout this period of my life, experiences in school and interactions with teachers and counselors have helped develop my beliefs about the teaching profession. Both of my parents are teachers, so I became familiar with teaching philosophies and definitions early in life. There are many definitions of teaching, but Webster’s dictionary defines it as “to cause to know something.” I hope that I can be a causal agent in the classroom – to cause to know. I believe that teachers are given an enormous task. That is to develop and prepare the minds of our youth. I believe this is a crucial task that cannot be taken lightly. As a teacher, my goal is to give the children the skills they need to succeed not only in the classroom but also in life.

I was in fourth grade when I realized that one day I wanted to become a teacher. Mrs. Brenda was my teacher and she showed me how learning could be fun if the subject was presented effectively. Although I had already developed many basic educational skills before entering Mrs. Brenda’s classroom, her teaching methods made learning fun. What she taught me went beyond elementary education. She also demonstrated the importance of always working to my full potential and being the best person that I can be.
The lessons took me far beyond her immediate classroom; they started to take me out into the real world.

As a teacher, I will obviously have many responsibilities. One of my most important responsibilities will be to work with children and their minds to help them grow and develop throughout the year. I believe that teaching and learning go “hand-in-hand”, and both teacher and student share equal responsibility. If I remain open-minded and always willing to learn, I believe students can teach me nearly as much as I can teach them. I believe that students must interact with teachers as well as other students. While student independence is important, students learn most effectively through interaction with the teacher and interaction with group members. Through my own classroom observations, students learn more by sharing their different thoughts and ideas with others rather than keeping them to themselves. One of my ultimate goals is to create a classroom environment where students feel comfortable sharing and are not afraid to express their ideas.

When it comes to the learning process, I feel that testing and grading are important; however, these criteria should not be the sole basis of how students are evaluated. I believe a student can prove “mastery” of a subject through many different means other than just a test or exam. For example, this “mastery” can be proven through a great presentation, or a project that is very well done. I think that too much emphasis is put on competition. Too often, both teachers and students focus on high percentage grades versus mastery of concepts. The main focus should be on learning and understanding throughout the year. Many times in life, the things that are the most difficult and challenging come with the greatest reward; I believe that the interactive
learning process that occurs between teacher and student can be rewarding and fulfilling for both student and teacher.

What knowledge is true? This is a question that comes to mind as I contemplate the pursuit of knowledge. As a teacher and educator, I will be accountable for answering this question along with many others. I will have to decide what is correct and incorrect regarding the material that I am teaching and the right way to share this knowledge with my students in a way that all of them can understand. In my teaching career, I will have to rely on my ability to reason logically and by process. This is a skill I hope to instill in my students - the ability to think rationally and go about solving problems in proper steps. This is clearly not the only way of understanding and learning, but I believe it is the best way for a child to learn the basics of a subject.

I believe that students should be challenged to not simply believe what they read or hear teachers say. I want to challenge my students to be critical thinkers. I hope that my students will be able to find a balance between what they read, what they hear teachers say, and their own logical step-by-step analysis of the material. I want my students to always feel welcome to ask “why”, because I know that this will help ensure that they understand more completely. I do not want my students to simply accept what the book says. Inquiry and asking why have always played a big part in my education, and I want to pass that same curiosity and desire to know more about the subject to my students.

While examining myself as an educator, I have found that there is not just one teaching philosophy that describes all of my beliefs. However, the two philosophies that best encapsulate my beliefs are progressivism and social reconstruction. As
progressivism would suggest, I believe that the curriculum should be derived from the students’ interests, and their learning is active rather than passive. I think that effective teaching involves teaching things that will help the students in their daily lives, not just in their education. Consistent with the progressivist philosophy, I believe the best way to prepare the students for the future is to give them problem solving skills that will help them make important discoveries throughout their lives. I hope to help my students see that effort in the classroom can enhance and change their lives. Along with progressivism, social reconstruction is a philosophy that accurately reflects my views. I believe schools can and should be a catalyst for change. The school should be a place where hope is created. Things such as tolerance, compassion, truthfulness, and responsibility should be stressed and applied - not just seen as something to hope for. I hope to bring these ideas into the classroom from day one. I want to challenge students not only to understand our existing social order but also to help reconstruct it into something better. I am convinced that interaction with strong leaders in the classroom coupled with interaction with a diverse student population will help our young students lead the way to reconstruction.

There are many different philosophies and beliefs concerning the teaching profession today, but the one that most accurately describes my views is the constructivist view. The constructivist view stresses the process of learning rather than the learning behavior. I believe taking this view into the classroom will allow my students to practice active learning while attempting to make sense of the changing environment around them. There are many outside factors that contribute to a student’s education; home environment, previous classroom experience, and social interaction all help develop a
child’s perception. Truly, each of my students will have his or her own world view. Considering individual perception, interest, and ideas, I will make curriculum choices for my classroom – carefully guided by state mandates for appropriate education.

All teachers and authoritative figures have influenced me and helped turn me into the person that I am today. Many of the ideas and beliefs that they taught me will go on with me long beyond my school years. My teachers have helped shape me as a student and enhanced my knowledge and skills. Their guidance will be the foundation when it comes to helping and inspiring my own students. Most importantly, they instilled in me the will and drive to be the absolute best person that I could be. It is because of their willingness to help and influence that I want to become a teacher and pass on all the great things I learned to the next generation - our future.