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Intro To Teaching

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Teaching Credo

There are various reasons for someone to choose teaching as a profession; these reasons also help to mold a person's teaching methods. There are many factors that influence my desire to teach. These motives are produced by my own personal experiences and help to create some of my philosophies on teaching. My interests in teaching stem from my background: family, past teachers, love of children, values, and ideas. These building blocks also help me to shape my teaching techniques.

I grew up in a teaching environment. My dad is a 7th grade science teacher and is continually finding new ways to better educate and engage his students. My mom is an environmental education coordinator at a park where elementary students can come and learn hands-on about the environment. Both of my parents love what they do and are able to successfully educate their students in new and fun ways. Seeing this at home comes as a great inspiration to me; I can physically observe them as they enjoy what they do and reap the rewards of guiding children.

Not only have my parents played a large role in my career search but I am also influenced by my personal experiences with past teachers. There are always certain teachers who are able to reach out and inspire their students to do something. I fondly look back and remember my first grade teacher Mrs. Nicholson, who always had a smile and was excited to be in class. She would have an invention corner filled with odds and

ends, where my fellow classmates and I could expand our imaginations. Teachers like this made a difference in my life and I yearn to be able to make an impact on my students as they did.

Another important characteristic that I possess is a love for children and a great enjoyment of being around them. I look back fondly on the days at home playing school with my younger brother, delighting in the fact that I could help him understand new concepts. In other cases I worked with kids that I baby-sat or I participated in school related activities as a mentor. I find it beneficial to work with younger kids and gain a sense of fulfillment when I have made a positive impact on their lives.

My background has helped to shape my personal philosophies on teaching; I gain many ideas from analyzing my surroundings and learning from my experiences. My ideas stem from observing the ways in which others teach, or paying special attention to the ways in which my fellow classmates' and I best absorb information. There is a philosophy that my mom has passed down to me in regards to teaching values, "Good teachers do not teach, they create exciting learning experiences." (Steve VanMater). The teachers that I remember were not the ones who simply lectured or wrote on the board, but they were the ones who discovered interesting ways to get us excited about learning, such as my parents and their methods do. Launching paper rockets or singing environmental songs to a live band are a few examples of ways to help students become excited to learn. I think it is especially important with elementary students to get them involved with their learning hands-on. One example would be with math patterns: instead of simply showing the students various patterns, have them find their own at home, then create their own in class with different colors and shapes. These types of activities can be

utilized to keep students interested in subject matter. I believe that if I start my students off with an interest in their learning experiences then they are more likely to be productive students in the future, leaving me with a feeling of accomplishment.

Another important teaching strategy is to stay open minded; if I'm not willing to learn, why should my students be? I am reminded of a song by Harry Chapin about a child in school who enjoyed painting flowers of all different colors. Unfortunately his teachers saw all flowers as red and leaves as green. In reality you can make flowers all different colors; those are the things that make life exciting. I can learn as much from my students as they can from me, they hold all their own ideas and concepts of the world that enable me to see things in a new light. I intend to teach with an open mind, encouraging my students to spread their wings and soar to new places by expanding their imaginations.

Many of my initial reasons for becoming a teacher are rooted in my background and past experiences of seeing how fulfilling it can be to guide others through teaching. I also look at the impact I could possibly make on my students as I concentrate on my own concepts for learning. I want to emphasize hands-on interaction along with creative and open minded methods of educating my students. If I can get them to have fun and enjoy learning I have started them on the pathway to success. I will have fulfilled my dream of positively impacting others for the rest of their lives.