Philosophy on Teaching

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I believe children must be taught with care and kindness at their own pace. Children must be nurtured in a tender and careful manner. They must be encouraged to discover the world using their own experiences. Children need an element of independence to discover how to manipulate the world around them. A child must be able to have opportunities to unleash their imagination and creativity in order to enhance their thought process. Children learn through discovery and an interactive classroom (Evertson & Emmer, 1). Children must feel that their voices are valued. It is the teacher's duty to be able to provide the proper tools for the child to be able to discover the answers to their own questions about the world. It is also a teacher's role to provide a warm atmosphere.

Creating a nurturing environment will be a goal that I work towards through the entire year. Being nurturing will be relative and various based on each circumstance. There may be times where students need the extra attention and other times when they will want space and as their teacher I need to be aware of that. The idea is to be empathetic and compassionate in each event. In order for me to give them that empathy I will strive to be alert with what is happening at home and at school. When a teacher is empathetic, the teacher uses that in every aspect of their classroom. "How can I get this gifted child to grow further?" "What can I do for those children who need extra help without them feeling singled out?" I will have "fun work" in my students' mailboxes and they will be given the opportunity to complete it during the school day. This work will vary based on each student's ability and needs. Some of the work could be directions for an enrichment activity and some could be directions for a review activity. This will vary depending on the child because I understand that no student is identical. I want my students to become

comfortable with setting their own goals and become comfortable in a kinesthetic environment (Payne 103).

My interactions with my students will be warm, caring and honest. If my students follow my example of this, I feel it will become mutual and reflect daily in my students' actions. Our classroom will be a "we" classroom and we are responsible for helping to make the atmosphere a pleasant one ("Student Responsibilities", 2015). Through habit I want my students in their regular actions to shine warmth and respect, this will cascade to the parents, faculty and other people who meet our class. This will be evident through actions such as eye contact, speaking to them with the upmost respect and showing them consideration. My goal is to add to their emotional bank (Payne 110).

A large factor in adding to a student's emotional bank is building a relationship with them, which has a foundation of positive rapport. Relationships are one of the most critical ways to create and maintain positive rapport with students. Students need positive relationships because those relationships with will become their most influential role models and role models are influential (Payne 9). The social-emotional development of my students will play a role in my classroom. Students' experiences and expressions will be valued. There will be dedicated times when the students can share their thoughts. I will verbally affirm my students consistently how important their thoughts and opinions are. Their emotions should be addressed as a group and individually initially when necessary in order to have a productive learning day. I will establish about five-ten minutes at the beginning of each class for us to talk about our thoughts and feelings. I also will have my students keep a diary that they will be given time to write or draw in. Establishing positive and rewarding relationships with my class and their families is a

goal I will work toward. When there are positive relationships built in the classroom the students are motivated and they feel a sense of belonging.

The ideal learning environment in my eyes is a room that is inclusive. One way that I will create unity is to send cards, newsletters, and other notes out so everyone involved can play a role. Ideally I would like to make home visits and positive phone calls. I would like clear and open communication between myself, the parents, the students and other staff members. I will value open communication because openness welcomes positive changes in the classroom (Emmer & Evertson 168). Open communication creates a learning team for the student. When a child has a team behind them they are motivated to win.

Every aspect must be motivating for the student. A teacher's room has the ability to motivate a student and reflect their philosophy (Evertson & Emmer, 27). My floor plan is created with students' needs in mind. I tried to create an environment that encourages independence and decision-making. If the child needs alone time away from the group, they have the availability to do that. There will be an independent worktable close to my desk so any child can just get up and go to that table and I can see what they are doing. If the child needs a group in order to enhance their learning, I welcome that they do that. This is why I have the desks set up in small groups, to encourage cooperative learning. I have made my classroom so that I can easily see what all the students are doing but they still have the freedom to decide where they learn best. This will be evident to my students through discussion.

Though I believe on giving my students a voice, I stand by setting the standards that I expect of my classroom. I will have the rules right by the door way so as soon as the child comes in they can see exactly what I expect from them before making it any further into my classroom (Evertson & Emmer, 14). I want my students to understand that they do have a valuable voice

and independence is encouraged, but at the end of the day I have expectations that apply to myself as well as them. I expect my students to follow the rules that I clearly establish and post for the class. There will be two rules: Be Respectful and Be Responsible. When my students disobey my rules I will immediately carry out the consequences. A conversation will always be paired with the consequences because addressing the root of the behavior will result in positive results ("Breaking the Cycle of Student Misbehavior"). A consequence will be that the student will need to sit separately from the group until the student is ready to come back and be a part of the group. I will always give the student a few minutes to cool off before I have a discussion with them. I will strive to understand why my student chose to break the rules and explain to them why specifically that was unacceptable. Through discipline I will strive to teach my students right and wrong therefore, my rules will connect with ethics. I want my students to see the value in discipline and rules. The rules you emphasize are the rules the students learn to emphasize as well (Emmer & Evertson 34). Powerful rules, create a powerful classroom.

A powerful classroom is a community that welcomes communication. Communication is critical; this is why I have mailboxes. Also mailboxes give the students a space of ownership, which is key (Evertson & Emmer, 21). I want my students to write encouraging notes to each other and if they have something they feel they need to write to me about they can put it in my mailbox. I would like the mailboxes next to the rules by the door so the students are reminded right away to write these letters.

I feel that having a supply table is necessary. There will be several school supplies such as sharpened pencils, staples, paperclips, etc. When the students need a supply they will silently signal me, during work time when they need to come to the table. The supply table will be close to my desk so I can keep an eye on the table and it does not get out of hand. I do not want the

students to have access to the supplies on my desk. I prefer that they have access to their own materials, which will be on the supply table. Everything on the supply table, they are permitted to use and nothing on that table will be off limits. Supplies on my desk will not be theirs to access (Evertson & Emmer, 19).

There will be two bookshelves in the reading corner. This creates a "surrounded by books" feel. I believe reading is essential to a child's development. The reason I have a separate rug from my circle time rug is because I want students to make reading a separate experience. I want them to make reading a world of its own so that they have a moment to only focus on their stories. I do not want my students to come the reading rug thinking about the calendar and weather, that needs to stay on the circle time rug. Reading is a whole new, special event and should be treated as such every time the students read.

I will have a designated basket for data folders. Keeping track of data for each student is crucial. I will walk around the room with a pad of sticky notes and a clipboard. As I notice acquisition of a new skill or confusion and struggle with a skill, I will record the student's name and a brief comment. The post it note will be placed on a manila folder that each student will have (Dodge 3). I want to be open with my students about data, standardized testing, and assessment.

Students will be assessed before they have leaned because I would like to grasp an understanding of where they are and show them where they were and how far they have come. They will be assessed during the teaching and after as well. Pre assessments will be a variety of different tasks such as a pretest or survey. "During assessments" will be quick tasks such as raising up whiteboards and raising their thumbs when I ask class questions. "After assessments" will be tasks that require students to showcase what they have learned. They will be given a list

of ways that they can pick from such as poster, writing a story, shadowbox and creations using technology. Each task will be accompanied by a rubric so the students understand their expectations. The goal is to have my students put effort into learning. Good effort will give each student confidence with their learning (Emmer 74). I want my students to look at assessment as a way to showcase what they know and as an opportunity to demonstrate their talents. Assessment is an ongoing process and I want that process to be positive for my students.

In efforts to familiarize my students with standardized testing, I will give them a practice problem every morning. The practice problems in addition to my assessments should allow the students to have growth throughout the year thus, working toward the value added goal. Assessments of any kind are an ongoing process (Badders 1). Growth is critical but in order for growth to occur, the teacher must be the positive voice for the students. The positive voice leads to the motivation to work hard (Payne 70). When a student sees that you are working to create a relationship with them and are on their team, they will want to work hard.

The data folder basket will be next to the basked where students will be expected to turn in their homework. The students will be given homework every night. It will be review of what the class did that day. The students are expected to have their parents sign their agendas and return the homework the next day. If a student does not turn in the homework the next day, they will write a short paragraph to me about why they do not have their homework. They will still need to return the homework the following day. If the student still does not bring back the homework they will be moved to yellow and will have a conversation with me about the homework. If the student goes a week without homework, I will reach out to the parent. The students will be well aware of what I expect from them and that includes homework as well as behavior.

"An effectively managed classroom is one that runs smoothly, with minimal confusion and downtime, and maximizes opportunities for student learning" (Emmer 29). Minimizing confusion is minimized when a teacher is clear about the expectations. Maximizing a student's learning is demonstrating to students their best ability is expected and this is achievable as a team, a team between the student and myself. I believe that my role as a teacher is to scaffold my students to achieve all that they can. Scaffolding is about finding a student's zone of proximity and working with them to reach their goals. I expect my students to respect themselves and the work they are capable of doing. It is critical that student's see that part of the high expectations is being expected to take ownership of their work. In cooperative learning, the students each student must be responsible for learning all the material (Emmer 134). My students will be given a "to do" list of work I am expecting from them to complete when in a group situation. Each student will be given a dedicated job when working in the group so that they all have a valuable role to play and are able to add to the group.

When my students make positive choices they will be rewarded with verbal affirmation, high fives, recognition in front of their peers and may have the possibility of having special opportunities such as being in the special reading chair. During independent reading time students who have made positive decisions might get the opportunity to read to a stuffed animal. I could have a stop light poster on the board with clothespins. All the students would start on green; after being given one warning they will be moved to yellow and if the negative behavior continues, they will be moved to red. Students who are on yellow or red will not be permitted to read to a stuffed animal or read in the special reading chair. Even if a student is on yellow or red, they will be given a chance to move back to green if they are able to rethink and make a positive change with their behavior. My students will understand that there is always room to improve

and they are responsible for making that improvement. Responsibility is essential and can be fostered (Emmer 134). Some students may have a more challenging time regarding behavior; however, all students will be participating in the stoplight and all students will be expected to take responsibility and ownership for their behavior.

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