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TCH 233
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2 May 2022

Teaching Philosophy

Reading over these teaching philosophies I am able to picture myself using most of them at some point in my teaching career. I also believe in order to obtain a strong, successful classroom, you need to provide an example of a little bit of every philosophy. However, reviewing, reflecting, and researching all of them individually, I think the one that resonates with me the most is social constructivism. Social constructivism states that it is a sociological theory of knowledge according to which human development is socially situated and knowledge is constructed through interaction with others. This theory is based off the theory that students work better when they are able to work in groups with their peers. This theory best represents me as a teacher because I rely mostly on group work. I strongly believe that each student has something to offer to the class and they are able to offer insight to a peer that they are working with during a group activity.

When reflecting on my clinical experience, my clinical teacher did mostly lecture based instruction. He would lecture to the kids for most of the class and then allow them to work on a worksheet with their table groups for the rest of the class period. While it was apparent that the students did not enjoy being lectured at, they developed more as students when they were able to communicate with their peers on the assigned topic. As a clinical student, I observed the students collaborating and helping each other further their knowledge on a topic. When a student would personally ask me for help, I commonly found that while I was explaining, another student at the table would chime in and help me explain it to that student. This applies to my theory because sometimes students learn better when someone their age is explaining it in their language versus the language a teacher is using. It is helpful to see a topic from someone else's perspective in some instances.

My endorsements for teaching are in English language arts and math. These are two completely different topics that require two completely different teaching styles. When someone is teaching math, it is hard to stray away from lecture-based instruction. It is the most common practice. However, similar to the style my clinical teacher teaches in, I think it is important to give students time to work on the material with their peers and help each other deeper their understanding on a topic. When it comes to language arts, it is easier to plan lessons revolving around peer interaction. Group literacy units, discussions, and writing workshops are some ways I will integrate peer learning in my ELA classroom.

Some limitations to this philosophy include group projects. While I do believe in working together during class time, I don't think assigning group assignments or projects is beneficial to the students. When this is assigned, I think one or two of the students in the group end up doing

all of the work and the other people in the group get away with doing nothing. This is different than having them work together in class because during class they are still individually working on their own assignment, they are just referring to their peers when they have questions or are confused on a topic. Collaboration outside of the classroom can be very challenging especially during this age group. Therefore, I think this is where I would draw the line between working with peers during class and assigning group projects out of class. Another limitation to outside of class group projects is I, as the teacher, am unable to observe the students while they work, ensuring that they are all doing their part to complete the final product.

While I mostly see myself utilizing the social constructivism practice, I also see strong importance in the progressivism philosophy. Progressivists believe that individuality, progress, and change are fundamental to one's education. They believe that people learn best from what they consider most relevant to their lives. I think this is an important philosophy to incorporate in your teaching because more often than not, students question the relevancy of what they are learning in a given subject, specifically math. When I was completing my clinical block this past semester in an advanced algebra class, there were many times that students would ask me why they were learning a specific topic like polynomials. They weren't sure when they would ever apply that to their future careers. Applying progressivism helps eliminate that uncertainty and also encourages me as a teacher to help my students relate their content so it feels useful to them.

The instruction and delivery of this philosophy is very important because I believe active engagement, constructivism, and cooperative learning will enhance the student's life skills and what they will carry with them in the future. The current educational system does not allow for students to learn at their highest potential. Between teachers being required to follow the standard curriculum and states requiring students to complete their standardized testing, the students are only being provided with content that the states are requiring. I believe it is important to teach students knowledge on topics that are meaningful and relevant to the students in their lives outside of the school setting.

Overall, as a teacher I plan to incorporate various teaching philosophies in my classroom with emphasis on social constructivism and progressivism. I strongly believe these two philosophies represent me as a teacher in the best way possible and I believe for the design for my classroom I want to achieve these will help my students excel in the content areas I will be teaching.