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Teaching Philosophy

**My Teaching Philosophy: The Student is the Key but the Learning is the Lock**

I am not one of those people who always knew they wanted to be a teacher; however, I have always worked well with kids and was teaching anyway. Only now, through reflection, do I recognize I was drawn to those kinds of jobs or volunteer work because I was good at it, and it brought me a lot of intrinsic satisfaction. I have worked summer camps, coached basketball teams, taught dance lessons and swim lessons, and worked with the children in my church for years, all while trying to decide what the big picture “what should I do with my life” should be. It was truthfully because of my now husband that the dots connected. He was the one who encouraged me to go back to school for education because he could see the pattern that I had not noticed yet. Now that I have invested in this path to becoming an educator, I can better explain why I want to teach and why I think it is important. I believe in the transformative power of education, and I have seen how good teachers affect a single child or a whole community. Teaching and teaching well is my way of contributing to society and the future. I hope to empower the next generation to become thoughtful, compassionate, and engaged members of society. Progressivism and existentialism are prominent in what I find important in education and how to teach. I plan to incorporate both theories into my teaching and develop a well-rounded and successful student-learning environment.

My teaching philosophy stems from an emphasis in progressivism and existentialism. Progressivism plays an essential role in who I am and how I will teach because it puts the focus on the student. “The best way to prepare students for an unknown future is to equip them with problem-solving strategies that will enable them to discover meaningful knowledge at various stages of their lives” (Parkay, p. 127). Progressivism is not only an impactful teaching philosophy, but it is one of the focuses that has helped me to learn, too. “I wonder if how we teach might be improved by considering how we ourselves learn” (Weimer 2014). I do think about my method of teaching through this lens of what works for me; it has influenced my approach to curriculum design and classroom activities by tailoring education to students' individual needs and interests. This means incorporating hands-on projects, collaborative learning experiences, and opportunities for students to engage with the material actively, which also builds the foundation for me to create an inclusive learning environment. Progressivism encourages me to view education not as a one-size-fits-all process but as a dynamic and evolving journey that responds to the evolving needs of my students. Existentialism is of equal importance in my teaching philosophy as well, and it balances out with progressivism. “Schooling should be practical and provide children with a sound instruction that prepares them for life” (Parkay, p. 126). By incorporating existentialism into my teaching of English and language arts, I can engage students in material that I believe to be fundamental to their lives. My hope is for students to develop a multifaceted set of skills that extend beyond the technicalities of grammar and literature analysis. I aim for them to cultivate a deep appreciation for the power of language as a tool for communication and expression. In the process, I hope students discover the joy of reading not just as a requirement but as a lifelong pursuit in the same way I have and that they can identify their strengths and interests in literature, language, and communication.

To summarize my combination of progressivism and existentialism into an indispensable message, I would say there is no one-size-fits-all to learning. I aim to guide students to be successful learners and positive members of society while also equipping students with crucial English and language arts-based skills that will be used throughout their whole lives. I recognize that each student will have strengths and weaknesses, and I am prepared to learn and adapt with them as I am also a lifelong learner. I want to cultivate a learning environment that goes beyond the classroom, preparing them for fulfilling and purposeful lives beyond graduation.

## Works Cited

Parkay, F. W. (2016). Chapter Four . In *Becoming a teacher* (pp. 126–127). essay, Pearson.

Weimer, M. 2014. What's your learning philosophy? *Faculty Focus*, March 26.

<https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-professor-blog/whats-learning-philosophy/>