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Diversity Statement of Informed Beliefs

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EDUC 204: Families, Communities, Culture

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Spring 2014

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**Introduction**

To assess each student’s ability to learn, to take responsibility for my part in the **socialization** process, to appreciate the cultural diversity in each class, and to develop curriculum that enables each child to learn according to his or her ability are the reasons I’m excited to become an educator. I look forward to the challenge of creating a classroom where **individualism** and **collectivism** are cultivated to effectively educate a diverse group of students. My goal will be to work with the administration, teachers, and parents to produce a multi-faceted, quality learning environment in which I can encourage each child to move forward in the process of becoming a successful person ready to meet the next level of their education.

**Students’ Ability to Learn**

As a teacher, it’s my duty to instruct students in a manner that empowers them to learn. Understanding that each child is a unique individual with a particular way of learning, it is necessary to assess each student at the beginning of the school year to determine the following information:

* Establish whether the learner is auditory, visual or kinesthetic or a combination thereof.
* Observe if the student does better working independently or in a group.
* Recognize what motivates the student to learn (Berns, 2013, p. 205).
* Take into account the student’s life experiences, culture, and family.

The prospect of teaching students to appreciate all of these facets of themselves and how each one can contribute to how he or she learns is very exciting! I want to encourage students to use their learning styles to go beyond what they think they’re capable of doing by setting high expectations while giving them the tools and skills to meet them. I will set goals that are S.M.A.R.T: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (Doran, 1981).

My task will be to keep the students focused on the goals through writing, discussing, and planning the steps to reach them in order for them to be successful while capitalizing on their own learning styles.

**Students’ Social Ecology Theory**

It is the teacher’s job, working with the school and the parents, to enable the student to grow into a positive, contributing member of society. The school as a **microsystem** and **agent of socialization** plays a key role in the process.

One of my main objectives in the process of socialization is to help children develop their **self-concept**. According to **Erikson’s theory of personality development** (Berns, 2013, p. 37), the stage of development of children in elementary school would be **industry vs. inferiority** (Berns, 2013, p. 39). As children learn to work and produce, it is important that they are recognized and praised for their achievements, which will increase their enthusiasm towards learning and generate feelings of capability, mastery, and productivity. This motivation to learn and produce will inspire them to thrive well into adulthood.

**Self-efficacy** will be promoted by using **observational learning**, imitation, and modeling according to **Bandura’s** **social learning theory**. In seeing other students triumph, attaining their own objectives, overcoming setbacks, encouraging one another to try hard and do well, and being aware of their own competence; the children can increase their confidence in being able to succeed (Albert Bandura: Social-Cognitive Theory, n.d.).

In addition to growing in their sense of self, it’s imperative that students learn self-control and appropriate behavior in the classroom as well as gaining integrity as young men and women in society. Students will also be taught the essential skills of communicating with others, sharing information and resources, and cooperating to achieve results. The challenge will be to introduce these **values** into the school experience, and at the same time, respect the culture of each student.

**Cultural Diversity Instruction**

It will be my job to consider how families, communities, and cultures impact students’ learning and how to take those aspects and use them in the education process. I plan to use methods and ideas that will recognize the diverse backgrounds and lifestyles of the students including ethnic awareness and appreciation for diversity. Understanding that each individual’s experiences can bring wealth to the classroom is an essential component of this process. Through the act of sharing their culture with the class, the student becomes the teacher and learns in the process, while being validated for who they are.

In addition, I will need to maintain a balance between **cultural assimilation** and **cultural pluralism** where each student will have “equitable opportunities to achieve” (Berns, 2013, p. 190). While it is relevant for a student to learn the **customs** and language of this country in order to become a functioning member of society, it’s possible and beneficial to maintain his or her own culture wherever possible.

The students will also learn the **culture** of the classroom while being respected for where they come from, whether it’s from another country or a single parent family. They will also be taught to respect one another, and learn to appreciate how differences can come together to make a beautiful composition. I think it will be important to weave throughout the curriculum ways to teach appropriate social behavior, manners, and relationship skills. I will also impress upon the students how important it is for them as distinct individuals that they have something unique to contribute to their class and their community.

**Curriculum for All Learners**

With the knowledge that each student is a distinct individual and learns differently, I plan to use a variety of instructional methods: active inquiry, critical thinking, problem solving, and hands-on projects to engage students at all levels of learning.

Integrating technology into the classroom will be a large component of the curriculum. Instruction on mind-mapping, analyzing and evaluating information from websites, creating presentations and writing blog posts will be part of the lesson plan.

I believe that to have great learners, I must give the students the tools to learn. I plan to train them in reading comprehension, writing clearly and effectively, planning essays and reports, and setting goals for themselves which will be benefit them in all subjects.

Allowing students to take a role in teaching is an effective way to learn. **Vygotsky** believed in the **zone of proximal development** (Berns, 2013, p. 261). The theory states that “engaging in apprenticeship activities advances the novice’s level of development” or put another way: the ability to learn is between what a person can do themselves and what they’re capable of doing when taught by someone more experienced (Berns, 2013, p. 261). I would like to suggest that the person who instructs the novice learns something in the process as well, so pairing students who have shown mastery in certain areas with students who are struggling will benefit both children.

In order to evaluate how students are learning in subjects such as math and spelling, I will use **formal assessments**, like quizzes and exams to ensure learning and progress. In other subjects, **informal assessments**, such as observation, presentation projects, and student portfolios will be adequate to measure student performance.

I will always do my utmost to ensure students are staying on task, keeping up with assignments, and working according to the level that they’re capable of. I understand the level of achievement will differ with each student. My goal will be to work as a team with the student, parents, and school personnel so that each child is given the opportunity to prosper.

**Conclusion**

Understanding the classroom is a rich blend of diverse cultures, personalities, and learning styles, I look forward to the job of weaving it all together in a beautiful tapestry as I instruct students in academics and, just as important, in becoming fully-developed individuals who contribute to society and succeed in life.

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