

An educational philosophy is a set of beliefs and principles which guide educational practices. As a beginning teacher my educational philosophy is just emerging. My beliefs about education are based now, on my experiences as a student just as much as they are as a teacher. As a past student and as a present teacher I place an extremely high value on education. Education plays a central and essential role in society.

My educational philosophy is my set of beliefs and principles, beliefs and principles which guide my practices. My educational philosophy is just emerging and, over my teaching life, will evolve and blossom into a full-fledged perspective and guided practice. My belief is that education is essential. Central to my philosophy is this essentiality. I perceive education as being at the centre of everything. Education is multi-faceted and multi-purposeful. The aims of education are plentiful. Education does not serve only to educate children. My educational philosophy is that education exists to develop responsible, educated citizens of the next generation.

Education plays an integral role in instilling responsibility in students. Through the education system children are taught self-regulation and responsibility. Student autonomy, when an integrated part of the classroom, promotes said responsibility. Children develop of sense of responsibility for themselves and others in the context of the classroom. Education is a situation, sometimes the first encountered by children, that demands responsibility of children.

Education, most expectedly, creates educated learners out of children. Education not only educates children but it also creates learners, potentially and hopefully, lifelong learners of children. The education system teaches children how to learn. The education the education system provides is not only academic. From my personal philosophical perspective, education is the key to everyone's success, academic and otherwise. Not only does education develop

academic knowledge but it also key in the development of essential, non-academic skills. For example, education, in the realm of basic/essential skills, provides children, as potential citizens, an opportunity to become socialized. Education teaches children to communicate and interact with other people as people themselves.

Education also creates physical, emotional, social, and political citizens of students. Children's entrance into the education system signifies, in many regards, their entrance into society. Education is one of the first introductions into the routines and norms of daily and societal life. Education introduces children, as students, to physical, emotional, social, and political norms. Education trains students. Education creates citizens out of students.

My educational philosophy, what I believe about education and its role in society, is reflected, or more accurately guides, my practices. Understandably, how I feel about education and what I see as the aims of education, influence how and what I teach. I believe education is central and essential. On the basis of this belief I can align myself with essentialism, existentialism, and progressivism.

Aligning myself with essentialism means I am systematic and disciplined. I function most effectively in a routinized environment and therefore my teaching practices, in many regards, are routinized. I teach in a manner which is very organized. There is a method to all of my madness. I am a planner. For example, the lesson plans which I created during my student teaching placement were extremely detailed. I included everything that I was going to do, what and how I was going to do it. My students began to expect a certain amount of structure and they responded well to that. They always knew what they were to be doing or what was expected of them because I always knew what I was doing and what was expected of me.

Even at this early stage in my teaching life I know that I am, through and through, an existentialist. My teaching goes outside of the curriculum. I see learning and education as essential and therefore I, in my teaching practices, incorporate education and promote education in situations and arenas not only covered and/or required by the curriculum. The curriculum is important but there are so many other things and ways to teach things not included in the curriculum. I taught kids, not the curriculum.

Linked with my alignment with existentialism is also my tendency to align with progressivism, another orientation. Being aligned with progressivism means that my teaching reflects the needs and interests of my students. I am creative in my teaching. I teach outside of the boring or lack luster curriculum. I teach in a way that interests my students, which satisfies their needs and wants while still being educational, sometimes, if not always, in a nontraditional manner. For example, I see literature as such a key part of any classroom and therefore I found time everyday to read to my students. I allowed my students to play a role in the selection of the literature everyday. My students were more interested in what I was reading, more likely to want to reread it, read it themselves, talk about it, and/or share it when they had been part of the selection, if the text was something they liked and/or enjoyed.

So many things influence education and educating. For example, technology influences education and educating. Technology is a part of social change. Just like much of social change, good and bad accompanies technology as a new and evolving part of education. For the classroom teacher, technology broadens methods of communication as well as methods of lesson delivery and lesson content. Technology can be a great resource for teachers. Technology is becoming a social reality and norm and therefore it is to be expected that it is now a part of the classroom. For myself, aligning with existentialism, technology is a valuable tool as it

conveniently provides many opportunities for extension outside of the curriculum. During my student teaching placement I made use of the SMARTboard in many of my lessons. For example, in preparation for a class fieldtrip to the fire hall we listened to books about fire halls through the Tumble Books website on the SMARTboard, created interactive fire safety plans, and took a virtual tour of a fire hall. My students were excited about the fire hall field trip, they were interested in learning more about fire halls, firefighters, fire trucks, and fire and therefore even though the material I taught was not in the curriculum I taught it.

While technology can bring a lot to the classroom and education it can also be detrimental to a classroom and students. Technology, while it provides access to appropriate learning information, also provides an opportunity for plagiarism as well as access to inappropriate learning information. Technology needs to be carefully monitored. Technology also must be used in a way which does not distract from traditional and required knowledge. For example, students are not developing traditional communication skills that are required of face-to-face interaction. Yes, technology is a useful addition to the classroom but it can, in certain situations and if used certain ways, be dangerous.

Another topic, one covered in the context of this class, that influences the delivery and content of education is family dynamics. Family dynamic is an evolving reality. Today's students are facing a poverty of family time as the relationship between parents and children has become compromised as parents seem more ambivalent about using authority. As a result, schools and teachers are being asked to do more. I will take on this responsibility because I align with existentialism. I will not only be a teacher but also a care-giver, disciplinarian, counselor, piggy bank, and meal provider. These roles will be thrust upon me as a teacher because of the

evolving family structures of today's students. It is a good thing that I align with existentialism because I will have to be more than just a teacher.

Parents, another topic discussed in the context of the class, play an increased and integral role in education. Today's parents are as big of a part of the classroom as today's students. Today's parents are, literally, a part of today's classroom because of their tendency to hover, like helicopters. Parents are extremely involved in their children's lives and therefore as teachers we have to not only be accountable for and to our students but for and to our student's parents as well. My student's parents will scrutinize what and how I teach and I have to keep that in mind at all times. I have to be able to defend what I teach and how I teach it. This is just another one of the daunting tasks that awaits me upon graduation and employment.

Within the context of the class we also discussed the essential teacher skills and knowledge I will be expected to have and/or develop. Some of these skills and knowledge areas include knowledge of: the curriculum, teacher and student rights, assessment and management techniques, disabilities, the current interests of my students, the legalities of teaching, and cultural diversity. This knowledge almost requires teachers to align with existentialism. There is so much more to know and do than what is outlined and required in the curriculum. Teaching is so much more than the curriculum. This fact is something that both excites and terrifies me as a new teacher.

Education is a consistent but yet evolving concept, one which will be my life. I believe that education exists to develop responsible, educated citizens of the next generation. This belief guides my practices as a teacher, how I teach. Because I see and believe in the wide-reaching necessity, effects, and benefits of education I teach in a way which bridges the curriculum, bridges what is supposed to be taught and learned and what my students are interested in and

want to learn. The how influences the what. How I feel about teaching and education influences how I teach and educate. As a new teacher my beliefs are virginal. Over the years I will grow and evolve as a teacher and as I do so will my educational philosophy. I hope I only become better with practice.