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PSYC 414

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Autobiographical Assignment

**Values and Motivations for Teaching:**

I come from a family of teachers. So one would assume that teaching has been something I have wanted to do my whole life based on the influence of my family, but it’s not. In the past few years is when it really began to make sense to me that teaching is what I want to do with my life. I have always enjoyed working with children, from volunteering with youth theater groups to babysitting, it has always been a passion of mine. I am currently a Child Development major at CSU Chico and love every minute of it. I currently work in the infant room on campus and have a lot of experience working with preschool and toddler age children. Working with this age group has become one of my strengths and a weakness at the same time. When I enter the teaching field I will most likely be working with older children, I don’t necessarily have the kind of experience of working with older children that one of my peers who is a Liberal Studies major might have. This is one thing that I am worried about when going into the teaching field. I am also concerned that I have not had the proper course like math, science, and history in order to prepare me for the credential program. I know when entering the program that I am going to be a few steps behind my peers. Although I am scared of these challenges I am also excited. I am willing to go that extra step to catch up with my peers in order to be on the right track because teaching is something I am truly passionate about.

Teaching is a profession that often times falls by the waste side. People do not truly appreciate the values and importance of a good education. Teaching is something that I take very seriously. To be a good teacher one must be a good listener, an effective communicator, a positive role model, and flexible. We spend up to eight hours a day, five days a week with these children. We need to be able to motivate, challenge, and push our students to be the best that they can be.

**Philosophies and Belief Systems about Teaching and Learning:**

I believe that as a teacher we are constantly learning in order to better ourselves for our students and our own personal lives. Teaching is a continuum of trying new things and finding what works depending on your classroom and your students. It’s about adapting to different situations and finding out how to best motivate your students so that they perform their best work.

One belief that I hope to implement in my classroom one day is modeling. I believe that children learn best when correct behavior is modeled for them. One quote that I have come across in my education that struck a chord with me is, *“Don’t worry that children never listen to you. Worry that they are always watching you.”* Robert Fulghum. I find this quote to be very powerful. It is something that I will always keep in the back of my head when working in the classroom. As teachers we must provide a positive example for our students. I plan on implementing this quote into my daily life as a teacher by making sure that I am always putting my best foot forwards and remain positive in tough situations. Not only will I live up to this quote through my demeanor but through my education as well. I will make sure that I show my students that I am continuing my education in order to help and benefit them in the classroom. I want to make sure that I keep up to date on policies and changes in the education system so that my students can benefit greatly from the changes.

A theorist who has made a profound impact on my belief system is Lev Vygotsky. I subscribe to his beliefs that social interaction aid cognitive development because I have seen first had these types of things work in the classroom. When working with infants in the infant room on campus I have observed just how much social interaction help to develop speech, sharing, and give and take. I will implement this theory into my classroom by promoting group play during recess and free time. I will also incorporate a lot of group work and cooperative learning to foster social interaction in the classroom. I will also try and use the Zone of Proximal Development in my classroom by providing students with a little help when completing a task if they are struggling.

Another method of teaching that I believe in is basing curriculum off of observations that I see in the classroom. I want to be able to know my students on a personal level and be able to shape my curriculum to their likes and interests. I plan on doing this by observing my students and incorporating into my curriculum what I observe their interests to be. I want to make sure that my students are engaged in what I am teaching them and that it is not boring for them. By incorporating their interests into my lesson plan it will help them to keep their attention.

**Relationships:**

My goals for my classroom is to create a safe and open environment where my students feel comfortable coming to me with any problems or concerns that they might have, whether it be school related or personal. I want to foster an environment of mutual trust and respect between my students and I. I plan on doing this by showing them respect and holding them to a higher standard. Not only do I want to create an open environment for my students but also for parents as well. I want to be able to communicate effectively with parents and show them that they can trust me with their student education. Over the year I hope to get to know my students and their families on a more personal level and be able to relate to them and their different situation. I also hope to act as a resource for my students and parents in whatever they may need help with. I plan on creating this environment by communicating effectively with the parents and students. I want to encourage parent involvement in the student’s education and plan on keeping them involved by sending home newsletters and updates as to what we have been doing in the classroom.

**Goal Setting, Assessment, and Monitoring:**

One goal I have for myself is to continue my education in all fields related to education. I want to make sure that I am pushing myself as a teacher and becoming the best educator I can be for myself and for my students. I plan on accomplishing this goal by taking course throughout my career that relate to the development of my classroom and to hold myself to the same high standard that I will set for my students. Another goal that I have for myself is to create the type of safe and open environment in my classroom that I described in the above section. I know that this will be hard to accomplish and that it will take a lot of work on my part, but I feel that it is important aspect that I want to have in my classroom. One final goal that I have for myself is to remain positive. Teaching can be difficult, but it is crucial that as teacher we remain positive for our students. I plan on keeping a positive attitude in the classroom by staying optimistic when faced with hard decision. These are just a few of the goals I hope to accomplish while teacher. I am sure many more will come up along throughout my journey as a teacher.