Personal Teaching Philosophy

The mission statement of a school guides the views and actions of staff and students. Similarly, a teacher’s philosophy of education guides his or her path in the field. Having worked with both special needs and gifted students in my student teaching experience, I have developed a balanced view of how children learn. As a result, I recognize that all students learn. Additionally, all students have the ability to be successful, but success looks different in each student. It is an educator’s duty to see each student’s greatest personal potential and work toward that goal with the student.

Currently, the field of education is dominated by a debate about whether or not all children can learn. In my experience, it is evident all children learn. While the previously stated debate may be focused on whether or not all children are able to learn in the confines of traditional academic curricula, learning is a much broader activity. This spring, I worked with children who quickly adopted the disinterested attitude toward education that their parents embodied. Geoffrey Canada works with students who admire their incarcerated family members and internalize the expectation that, by adulthood, they too may be incarcerated (Tough, 2008). Indeed, these children are acquiring poor habits and distorted ways of thinking. But they display an ability to internalize a concept. Thus, with the expectation that every student I teach will be able to learn, my job becomes a task of finding the best channels through which they learn and reaching them through those outlets.

Furthermore, all students have the ability to progress and succeed. However, a group-wide achievement benchmark is not always suitable. In teaching both gifted and special needs students, it became apparent that some students understood a lesson’s topic prior to the lesson’s commencement. Meanwhile, other students were unable to comprehend the topic entirely, despite remediation procedures. Thus, an achievement benchmark on the average student’s level is an injustice to both gifted and special needs students. While these benchmarks are necessary at times, they must be supplemented by personal growth goals. Gifted students must be challenged in developing higher order thinking skills. Special needs students must be praised for their incremental academic gains. In this way, stagnation and failure is unlikely at either end of the learning spectrum because all students realize their personal learning potential.

Reference

Tough, P. (2008). *Whatever it takes: Geoffrey Canada’s quest to change Harlem and America.* New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company.