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EDU 373  
Education Philosophy

One's philosophy of education can cover a wide array of ideas on teaching, students, the place of schools in society and everything in between. However, I believe that my philosophy of education is heavily influenced by my study of social studies and my own personal experiences through my K-12 and undergraduate education. I think my philosophy of education can best be summarized as maintaining an exciting, safe, and inviting environment for students to learn in a way that positively affects them and their growth.

In my eyes, the teacher should be the guide that helps students learn and discover things about the world around them, as well as themselves, through a carefully crafted curriculum. It should be the job of the teacher to get students excited about what they will be learning. It can be very obvious to students when a teacher, themselves, is not passionate about their subject. Real excitement like that can be contagious in a classroom and can get students to deeply engage with lessons more readily than the stereotypical image of a boring social studies teacher. As Beal and Bolick (2013) write, many students have not been turned on by social studies, but that only means it is now our chance to get them hooked (p. 5). I also believe students will learn more and want to learn more in an environment where they feel safe and are being taken care of. A teacher must be aware of the needs and backgrounds of their students in order to better tailor their curriculum. Getting to know one's students is one of the most important things a teacher can do. As we can then further adapt lessons, curriculum, and engagement to better their needs and interests. Students must know or at least have a sense that you care about them and who they see themselves as for there to be any real engagement or dialogue in the classroom.

I also think one of the main goals for social studies teachers is for our students to grow as people and citizens in our classrooms. I tend to agree with the 1916 Committee on the Social Studies in that our subject has the ability to turn out and cultivate “good citizens” (Beal & Bolick, 2013, p. 6). By “good citizens”, I believe it should be our philosophy to turn out students who have a care in civic government, see why it is important, see why discussions and debates on issues are important, and finally know how and why our government is structured the way it is. I also believe this means teaching compassion, empathy, and mindfulness indirectly through lessons in history. This should allow the students to see the United States and their world in a new, more important, or more interesting way. The main way to do this is through culturally responsive and inclusive teaching. As educators, our students and classes reflect the nation or state. This means we have a responsibility tell the stories of that entire population, not just what a textbook can or cannot tell us. So, the goal of these lessons should be to help students on the path to a better moral compass, a better sense of the existing world around them, and the enormous and beneficial diversity that they live alongside. I have high hopes for my own students to develop deep critical thinking skills in my class. When we step into my classroom, we should be thinking like historians, which means asking questions, knowing context, and thinking about the wider world around us.

Overall, I do not think my philosophy of education is very complex, but is very important. While math teaches students about the mathematical world and mathematical thinking, and science teaches students about the scientific world and their thinking, social studies teaches about the world and thinking in a way that can apply to every aspect of our lives. It is my philosophy that as teachers we need to foster an environment that maintains an exciting, safe,

and inviting environment for students to learn in a way that positively affects them, their growth, and how they see themselves fitting into the larger picture around them.

## References

Beal, C., & Bolick, C. M. (2013). *Teaching Social Studies in Middle and Secondary Schools*. Pearson Central Pub. Dept.