|  |
| --- |
| University of Mary |
| Classroom Synthesis Paper |
| The Classroom I Desire to Lead |
|  |
| Caleb Knudsen |
| 4/25/2016 |

|  |
| --- |
| This synthesis is a summary of the content from the Curriculum Instruction Course which will be guiding me in my future endeavors as an Elementary School Teacher. |

During the course of the Education 320 class on Curriculum Instruction, the students have been studying Borich’s book on Teaching Methods. During our study, we have been developing an in-depth journal to progress our comprehension of what creates an efficient teacher. “The term good teaching changed to effective teaching, and the research focus shifted from studying teachers exclusively to including teachers’ effects on students.” (Borich, 2014, p. 4) To me, an incredible teacher falls in some way under the six following categories: Self-knowing, humble, adaptable, passionate, hard-working, and loving. The more proximity a teacher has to these traits, the better the teacher they will be and the more efficiently they will be able to create lifelong learners from their students. As it is stated in our Teaching Methods text (See Appendix A), we want to develop efficient teachers who influence their students to become the very best they can be, good is not good enough anymore. In this essay, I will be covering each of the six individual attributes of the effective teacher and concisely defining what it means to fall under each of these categories. After reading, one should feel confident that they too can spot or become an efficient teacher simply by reading the moral and intellectual values of an instructor.

To reach our full potential as individuals, we must learn to see who we are. If one lacks the intuition to see who they are on a foundational level, they will never reach their full potential. Self-knowledge is a blanket category, spanning over the core of the individual rather than simply the surface “In fact, knowing my students and my subject depends heavily on self-knowledge. When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are.” **(**Palmer, 1998. P. **2)**Without the capability to see what needs to change, strengths and weaknesses, and how to communicate, the teacher will fail to progress their students towards their full-potential.

With the knowledge of self comes a concept many people fear, failure. Failure is a terrifying idea and often causes people to give up or to doubt themselves. What needs to be understood is that no matter what area of life you are at, you are going to find yourself at some point making a mistake or not knowing the answers. When these moments happen the efficient teacher will stand practice humility. Humility is what it means when someone knows they have something they need to improve and accepts it. Humility is looking at our weaknesses and not trying to hide them. Humility is taking those weaknesses that we all have and learning from them, presenting them, using them to our advantage. The fact of the matter is, everyone has weaknesses and problems, the people who succeed in life are those who are willing to admit that they have a problem. This is tremendously important for the students to learn as well, because through failure some of their most important lessons may become clear. “Another concept important to self-directed learning is functional errors. Student errors play an important role in the interplay between learner and teacher. If your reaction promotes an inaccurate and meaningless response, the interplay may not be so gentle, at least not in the learner’s mind. But if your reaction create (or even intentionally promotes) a student response that is inaccurate but meaningful, the interplay returns to a gentler state.” (Borich 2014, p. 330)

Now, it is important to note that the previous trait of the efficient teacher is entirely useless without the current trait, adaptability. Once we possess the capability to accept that we need to change something, we need to have the ability to do so. To improve is to alter the areas in which we have failed. One of the biggest parts of teaching is getting out there and failing. Whether that failure is not knowing what to say to a student, not being able to get the class’ attention, or simply not getting through to your learners, you need to fail. Through this failure, you will see what needs to change. You will see what is wrong and you will modify your lesson and next-time you won’t run into the same problem. “An important key behavior for effective teaching is the variability or flexibility of delivery during the presentation of a lesson.” (Borich, 2014, p.11) The students in your class will never be the same as any other. As a teacher, the capability to change mid-lesson is imperative. Even with what little experience I myself have, I have found myself placed in positions where what I am doing is not working and I need to fix it. Without this ability to adapt, teaching effectively is an impossibility.

Adapting to the waves caused by your students on a daily basis is incomparably taxing. Often, teachers end up quitting simply because they are so exhausted. The job is low-paying, the hours are extensive, and the gratitude of others is few and far between. This is where the aspect of passion comes into play. You need to love your job. You need to wake up every day and find meaning and purpose in what you are doing. No job, no career, no aspiration can come to fruition without the passion necessary to inspire us. By being passionate, we allow ourselves to desire improvement and growth in our aspirations. One of the primary paths towards happiness is virtue; by having this passion towards altruism we are in fact making ourselves happier one life at a time. (See Appendix B)

Once again, being passionate about an idea or concept is useless without a driving force to back it up. Each layer of what makes an efficient teacher builds off of one another. To follow our passions and to guide the students we love so dearly towards their end-goal, we need hard-work. Intellect, talent, insight, advantages among competition, none of these things will ever get us where we need to be in life if we aren’t willing to work to get ourselves there. Hard-work is the aspect of teaching that covers content and classroom management. “All five key behaviors---lesson clarity, instructional variety, teacher task orientation, student engagement, and success rate---are essential for effective teaching.” (Borich, 2014, p. 14) Each of these 5 attributes mentioned in Borich’s text can only come forth through dedication and experience. By learning what the students need to guide them towards their respective goals and being able to actively work and adapt accordingly, only then will the students learn. Furthermore, as a role model to the students, instilling a respect for hard-work and diligence at a young age is a truly vital lesson. “Attitudes and values are among the most important outcomes of schooling, because they alone provide the framework for guiding actions outside the classroom, where there may be no formal sources of knowledge to fall back on.” (p. 354)

The last attribute of an effective teacher in my book is by far the most important. To me, this factor guides all the rest, ties them together, and identifies the truly dedicated individuals among this profession. Love is the final attribute. Love is what our mothers and fathers first give us when we enter this world. Love is what we as people strive for in every facet of life. Love is the say all be all of conceptual ideology. To me, love is what makes a truly great teacher. We as teachers need to love the world enough to help guide its children towards their goals. We as teachers need to love ourselves enough that the students we mentor see the light within us and want to illuminate their own beings. We as teachers need to love the world enough to want to make a difference, regardless of wage, time, or reputation. We as teachers need to love our students enough that the number one priority in our eyes is for them to succeed. Only then can we become truly efficient teachers.

In conclusion, the teacher who can tie all of these skills together is the one that is going to make a difference. The teacher who does this will have a notably more efficient classroom than their peers. We need this teacher: The teacher who sees what needs to happen for their students to learn and accepts that they will mess up. The teacher who adapts to the mental and emotional needs of their students as well as the problems they view in themselves. The teacher who wakes up every day knowing that this is what they want to do because they enjoy seeing others succeed. The teacher who does whatever it takes to help others succeed, particularly through allowing themselves to succeed. The teacher who loves the world enough to make a difference and spread that love in any way they can. I plan to become this teacher. I plan to have the kind of classroom environment where every student feels confident, excited, and prepared to learn. My classroom will be a center of self-improvement where students fuel their passions. No aspect of my classroom will hint towards discrimination, intolerance, or discouragement. I will make a classroom with bright colors and inspiring art, I want my students to be reminded every moment of their potential. I plan to continue to grow and work towards my goal of making a difference. I will not simply plan; I will make my dreams come true. Only then, through my own Self-knowledge, humility, adaptability, passion, hard-work, and love, will I become an *efficient teacher*.

Sources Cited

Borich, G. D. (2000). *Effective teaching methods*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

Palmer, P. J. (1999). The Courage to Teach. *College Composition and Communication,* *51*(1), 135. Doi:10.2307/358975

Appendix A

Teaching Methods text- This is the Borich text used in the Education 320 course I attended at the University of Mary. The Borich text is mentioned several times and cited throughout the paper but is never fully defined as it should be. This course was the reason this paper was written and was designed to guide us towards further comprehension of the content which goes into instructing course curriculum in a school setting.

Appendix B

Moral Ethics- Much of the mindset and principles which I bring to this paper come from my Philosophy class which has taught me the importance of living a virtuous life. While this class was never distinctly mentioned due to the fact that it would distract from the purpose of the paper, it was important in developing the body and mission of the paper. The mention I made about the virtuous life was an extremely important in my Philosophy 308 class. Concisely, living in a charitable manner has been proven to improve the happiness in our lives. Therefore, having passion regarding something charitable can move us towards a happier life.