Andrew Stibitz

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| *“Continuous effort - not strength or intelligence - is the key to unlocking our potential” Sir Winston Churchill*My classroom goal is to create a community of learners. As a teacher, it is my belief that I should not be the king of this community; I need to be the guide. I will make the classroom student-centered where power is shared. I do not want to be seen as the expert who has all of the answers. I strive to be the one who asks the questions and helps students find their own answers. The information needs to be discovered by the individual student. With each discovery comes the personalization of the information and the connection to the students’ lives. I will create an environment where students work with each other and the teacher to create meaning for themselves and to fulfill their educational goals. The environment I will create in my classroom is based around Churchill’s concept of unlocking our potential. I will reward effort. I believe education is more about the process than the end result. For me to feel successful as an educator, I believe that I need to create a student that can truly learn rather than spew unnecessary information. I will teach students how to think. A key to creating this environment is active learning. I will not have the students merely memorize facts. I want to make each class as lively as possible. My classroom will be a series of discoveries where students question what they already know and come together to find new solutions. They will build on their previous knowledge as well as knowledge offered by the class. This will happen through classroom discussion, group work, as well as personal reflection.  I understand that teaching philosophy is based around the Nurturing Perspective. For learning to best happen, the learner must have confidence and a positive self-image. I will continually strive to build students’ self-efficacy by not only teaching the subject matter, but also teaching how to be a good student. I believe in teaching students how to set goals and creating plans to reach these goals. I will have high expectations for my students and the goals they create will reflect these expectations. The goals will be obtainable and with each goal reached comes more confidence. A key aspect of this nurturing perspective is creating an environment that is safe for learning. In this environment, students will feel free to take risks allowing them to grow. It will also be an environment that is safe for dialogue and where all participants are respected. To create this, I must have high expectations, have clear rules and model the behavior I want to see in my students. I will always strive to create intrinsic motivation in my students. To do this, I will let students know what is important to learn while connecting the content to their lives. I believe that there are two ways to do this. First, a teacher should set goals with the class and let them have input on where the class is going. This will make what they are learning important because the information being taught in class is fulfilling their learning goals. Secondly, the class needs to be authentic. As a History teacher, this can sometimes be difficult. The material I teach must be useful and relevant to their lives. I will always try to tie the thoughts and concepts to their lives. This should help motivate the class because they are not just studying an isolated event in the past. They are studying what affects their lives. To help the authenticity of the class, I will offer choices that allow the students the freedom to take the class where they find meaning. To make sure that my students are meeting their goals, I will give prompt and frequent feedback. Assessment should take place every time the class meets. My assessments will function as a marker of where the students are and what they need to learn. They will also provide a teaching opportunity. I believe assessments are best used when they just do not test facts and information. They need to give the student an opportunity to take what they know and apply it to make new conclusions. In History, I do not want students to memories the dates so I can test their memorization. I want them to see how history affects them and the world around them. My assessments will reflect this belief. Teachers need to understand that each student learns in a different manner. As a teacher, I need to be aware that each student has a distinct learning style. An effective teacher utilizes all of the methods of instruction at different times in their classroom. I will be flexible in my classroom to meet the needs of all of my students. As a teacher, I need to take interest in my students’ lives beyond just getting to know their students’ names. Teachers need to get to know their students. Simple chatting before and after class can mean so much. As I look back at my best teachers, there is a general theme in that I got to know them as a person and they got to know me. This seemed to motivate me and want to learn more. A lot of this has to do with the learning environment. As I got to know the teacher, I felt safer in the classroom and freer to express my opinions. I hope to do the same for my students. I am aware that continuing education is key in my career. I continually need to improve in order to provide the best possible experience for my students. Part of continuing my education is working within the educational community. Teachers need to be able to work with colleagues. It is important to share information with each other in this community. Colleagues are an invaluable resource to improving my teaching. I also believe that in order to improve, I must take both formal and informal steps. Along with reading books and journals, I must take classes and seminars to keep up with new philosophes and techniques for teaching.Wilbert McKeachie wrote a statement that has a lot of meaning to me. He said, “Teachers can occasionally be wrong. If they are wrong too often, they should not be teaching. If they are never wrong, they belong in heaven, not in a college classroom.” I understand that I am human and I will make mistakes along the way. I can promise the education community that I will do my best to be the best teacher I can possibly be. I will give continuous effort to unlock my full potential. The best teachers are the ones that teach with passion. I have this passion towards education and I look forward to each day for the opportunity to share it with my students.  |
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