Personal Frame of Reference

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“The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be ignited” -*Plutarch*

“Imagination is more important than knowledge”- *Albert Einstein*

I believe a great teacher is one who can instill the hunger of curiosity into a student. I believe it is a teacher’s responsibility to teach a subject in such a way that the experience is either enjoyable or inspiring. At the very least a teacher should strive to make their subject enjoyable so that his or her students are not bored and can at least have reason to pay attention. The pinnacle of teaching is to inspire students to want to learn about the issues. Various techniques can be used to make courses enjoyable; games, field trips, technologies, experiments, real life examples, and stimulating the senses they also make the subject more fun for the teacher. However, to inspire requires a teacher with a certain charisma or passion for their subject.

My passion and main teaching areas are Geography and Physical Education (PE) with a special focus on outdoor education. I believe these two subjects are very important to our future as we become more populated on this ever shrinking world. PE is important because physical activity is the best ways to stay healthy, both mentally and physically. An unhealthy population is taxing on the healthcare system and leads to lowered quality of life. It is my goal as a PE teacher to inspire students to be active for their lifetime, not just when they are in school. For too long PE has been a class only for jocks, teaching competitive sport rather than healthy living and active lifestyle. How many adults play basketball or volleyball? How many adults hike, kayak, or play bocce? Life long activities should be taught in the classroom where everyone can be active.

Students should feel in some way connected to the issues being taught, or else they will see little point in understanding a subject as it has no relevance to them. But to be able to connect students to the issues in class, the teacher must know something about the students and the culture they come from. I believe relationships need to be built between teacher and student. Trust and respect are paramount to building a teacher-student relationship. Both the student and the teacher must respect one another before they are able to meet in the middle and have an exchange of ideas. Building a community of learners is a good way to ensure all students and the teacher are on the same page as to what they believe a positive classroom environment should look like. The document created from this process can then be held in the classroom as a standard of conduct, and classroom management can be based on adherence to the principles agreed upon by all. Parents must also be included in the relationship building process as their efforts at home can help or hinder a student’s potential to learn. Therefore it is important for the teacher to meet with the parents a few time a year to keep communication flowing and help parents understand what their children are learning and why.

Subject area curriculum and assessments will be based on the standards set out by the Prescribed Learning Outcomes set forth by the BC Ministry of Education. Ideally by the end of my classes students will have a firm grasp on the subject manner to the extent they will be able to evaluate and analyze the course content. I believe a wholistic understanding in a subject is better than blind memorization. If a student can memorize 25 geography definitions- good. However, if a student can describe how their actions affect environmental sustainability, biomes, weather, and tectonic processes, and thereby see how nothing in this world is a set if isolated events; then true learning has taken place!