

The purpose of education and why the world needs educators is to create critical thinkers that can take past knowledge, break it down in to their own ideas and then build their own beliefs that funnel in to future knowledge. It is a system that creates people that are prepared to effectively evaluate their world and environment, make good decisions, and ready to work in a job they find exciting and rewarding. My teaching philosophy is to do this is to follow similarly to a mix of Skinner and Thorndike. Modeling behavior and knowledge along with reinforcement is essential to learning. This comes from my background in athletics and music where learning was done by repetition of the content. As the saying goes, "practice makes perfect." The goal is to learn the content and understand the knowledge in a level of mastery.

Educators are stewards of building children that are there to learn both scholarly and in general as people. For elementary there is a great opportunity to foster children to be inquisitive and keep questioning why we learn what we learn and thirst for more knowledge. Being able to do this at the elementary level builds them to be great students at the secondary level. Along with this reading, writing, math, history, government, and geography are all things that are currently taught and should be taught. In the earlier years of education there should be an emphasis on teaching the basics that will lead to more complex thoughts and ideas further down the road in the learners' career as a student. Along with the content a large focus should be developing young person's desire for new knowledge and learning. High emphasis should be on gripping the students with a fun and exciting learning atmosphere that propels them in to higher areas of learning in the future.

The curriculum should be the building blocks that prepare students further in their learning career, broken down in to unit and daily studies. In elementary education the educator is laying the ground work to ignite students in being excite to learn, along with building a

foundation of knowledge for secondary and higher education to build off of. Lesson planing then becomes highly important making sure daily tasks are building to meaningful assessments that reflect on why are the students learning the content.

It's important for an educator to be organized in their method to teaching and having text books and a laid out set of standards helps them to be able to structure their year to hit benchmarks in the overall structure that leads the students to subsequent years. Textbooks offer content from experts that an educator can take their own thoughts and back them up with information from the "more knowledgeable other."

Howard Gardner made popular the idea of multiple intelligences, and giving educators more tools that leads them in fostering children who learn differently. One thing I learned as a swim coach is that you have a group of athletes that all want to improve, but don't connect the amount of work needed to excel. So, then the job becomes convincing swimmers to do what they don't want to do, to achieve the goals they do want. I would directly relate this to students in a classroom, with the extra caveat that, for the most part, they must be there. The challenge then becomes creating a learning environment that is fun, worthwhile, and in an individualized method to tend to the needs of different students.

Classroom management then becomes even more important to cater so many needs and covers everything from the way the classroom is setup, how students know how to operate with you as their instructor, and how you can adapt your lessons to reach as many students in the best way possible. How you teach and how the classroom functions become intertwining concepts that work hand in hand. When I'm running, a swim group my entire thinking is that I'm the one in control and keeping things on task. Then I think, how can I break up some instruction sometimes to make the session fun and memorable. Lastly is to work with the swimmers, or students, on when is it question time or watch demonstration time. This comes down to time management. Time can slip away when that all-important demonstration is happening and it is filled with questions that the modeling or explanation may answer.

Having a set standard of rules, procedures, and processes is where I work to alleviate some of this lost time. I like to teach them to, “listen, watch, demonstrate,” and corrections are made either in a group or individual basis on the demonstration phase. So in essence, I’m teaching the group how I want to teach. This is typically done at the beginning of the season and heavily reinforced, until it becomes part of our daily routine. I always encourage questions, but teaching them when the questions happen allow the learning to sink in with more clarity.

In my interview to enter the Bethel Transition to Teaching Program I answered with a response to a question with, “a good teacher can spot those moments that might arise from students that is off subject, but allow further development in the children. Knowing when to go on these tangents for life lessons and how to get back on track can make a great impact on the students.” That is where I see values and ethics, at least at my Elementary Education level, as teachable moments. How we deal with bullying, being polite, and common values can be little moments that crop up or prompted in small formative assessments. The teacher’s role in the education of students is not only to teach the content, but teach students how to be students and how to be valuable members of society. But these traits come from the entirety of the student’s environment. A teacher only has the child for a short amount of time, so lessons like these should be more reinforcement, rather than brand new concepts.

This summarizes my thought on education. As educators, we need to get the content in, but along the way we have a great opportunity to energize and find glimmers of greatness in any student. From anything small of getting a C student to be a B student, or something bigger with a student winning a science fair. If being a swimmer and teaching swimming has taught me anything, it is that great achievements come in vastly different ways. There are different ways of looking at success, but all success comes from taking the basics, understanding those fundamentals, and building further with new knowledge. With my philosophy of education, understanding I’m modeling learning, molding behavior and knowledge with repetition for retention, and all while creating a fun environment. I would do this by assessing what reaching

different types of children. How can I utilize differentiating learning to target students that engage them and get them to participate. By rewarding this exemplary behavior of participating in the lessons, I would build students that look forward to coming to school and remember their elementary schools, years down the road.