

Teaching Philosophy  
Comprehension Exam  
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As an educator, I am responsible for creating a safe environment for my students and allowing them to think creatively and critically in the classroom. Education allows students to use all educational resources to achieve their learning goals, to develop as self-evaluators, and to receive constructive feedback about their work from their peers and teachers. Educators encourage students to be themselves and learn in their own unique way. Educators help students not only in their academics, in their social lives as well. Being a role model to the next generation of people is why educators do what they do. It takes a certain kind of person to make a difference in a child's life and encourage them to be great.

“Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning” (Proverbs 9:9). The role as a Christian role model is to use the student's prior knowledge and expand on it. This will allow the students to enhance the knowledge they already know and also learn new knowledge. While religion is not incorporated with learning you can still teach the principles that Christians live by. As Christian role models we can teach our students to be caring, forgiving, honest, trustworthy, and determined. These are all aspects of the Christian lifestyle that Christian role models live by. Lesley Barlett states, “knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention.” As a Christian role model, I can share my knowledge and hope that my students will build off of it and learn in their own unique way.

Building relationships within the school community is the key to success when teaching. Not only should you build relationships with your students, you need to build relationships with parents, staff, administrators, and other school personnel. Improving student achievement is the number one goal as an educator and building relationships with all types of people will benefit the students. “Literature suggests that younger children are more strongly influenced by their relationships with adults than are older children.” This quote is powerful because from an early

age it is important for teachers and students to build a healthy relationship because that is when they are most adaptable. A school should be like one big family because without love and support from those around you, it can be difficult to succeed in the workplace. I believe that having support from others and providing support to others is important for teachers. It is also important to teach students how having a support system in their lives will help them achieve their goals.

An advocate is a person who publicly advocates for someone or their cause. As teachers, we are advocates for our students. ELL students, special needs students, and economically challenged students do not always get the love and attention they deserve from their peers or community. It is important for teachers to advocate for all students no matter their struggles or needs. ELL students, special needs students, and economically challenged students need an advocate to stand up for them and support them through their educational path. I have experience working with these types of students and they are just like any ordinary student. These students want to work and get better but may need more resources and more support compared to their peers. I will always advocate for my students and show them that they are not on an educational journey alone.

Teacher's play many roles and one of those roles is a community resource agent. This role allows teachers to be a reliable resource to their students in regards to academic achievement. I feel that being a community resource agent is an honor to have because students look up to teachers and think of them as a role model. I will continue to always be a resource for my students in any aspect of life they may need help in. It takes a certain kind of person to become a community resource agent because it can be a tricky role for students.

The “Big 5” of reading includes phonemic awareness, vocabulary, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. During my student teaching, I was fortunate enough to work with an ELA classroom and an inclusion classroom. Both of these experiences taught the components on the “Big 5.” As educators, it is important that we teach our students these five components because they all work together while reading. When a student is able to understand each of the components separately, it will allow them to read fluently and understand how each component works together. Dorris Roetteger’s study showed that “elementary students who have a good attitude toward reading nevertheless have difficulty with it, and others who read very well have little interest in reading.” I have seen this hands on in the classroom during my field experience. I also have been able to work hands-on with first grade students in small group settings to enhance these five components of reading. From the beginning of the school year up until now, I have seen major growth in the first graders and am proud that I have been a part of their academic growth.

Inquiry-based learning is a learning and teaching strategy where students construct knowledge through a process of observation, investigation, and discovery. When teaching science to elementary students, it is important to keep the lessons interactive and fun. I feel that this is the best method to teach science because not all students find science “fun” or interesting. By teaching science where the students are able to observe, interact, and discover new findings is how they learn and get excited for science. In my field experience, I was able to observe my cooperating teacher teach science to first grade students. We taught science by using one of our databases provided by the school district. The lessons all included interactive videos, activities, and then short summative assessments at the end of the lesson. We found that the science grades

in our classroom went up from the beginning of the year because the students loved interacting with the lesson.

Math instruction involves a combination of mathematics representations, math discourse, conceptual understanding, and perceptual fluency. Math representations involve using visual, numerical, and symbolic representations to teach math concepts to students. This is my favorite math instruction because I have noticed that students understand the problems better when given visuals. Math discourse involves talking about math, questioning and answering about math, and engaging in math discussions with students. Conceptual understanding is the understanding of fundamental mathematical concepts and the ability to connect these concepts to more complex problems. Perceptual fluency involves the ability to recognize key aspects of a math problem and to quickly apply appropriate mathematical operations to find the solution. During my field experience in first grade, I noticed that students from back in September during my practicum are now able to connect the early units to the later units. Math teachers strive to foster these skills in their students to promote math proficiency and a love for learning.

Learning theories provide valuable insight into the different ways in which students process and retain information. One of the most widely accepted theories is constructivism, which posits that students construct knowledge for themselves based on their prior experiences and interactions with the world around them. Teachers provide opportunities for collaboration and problem-solving, allowing students to engage in active and cooperative learning. From an early age, it is important that students understand what constructivism is because they can become more invested in their own learning process and feel a sense of ownership over their learning (Belanger, 2011).

Schema theory is when students use pre-existing knowledge to understand and learn new concepts. Teachers provide opportunities for students to connect new knowledge to concepts they already know. During my field experience, I taught many small group lessons, and I used this theory many times. I enjoyed using this theory because many of my small group lessons were to re-teach or reinforce prior knowledge. I was able to use concepts they had already learned and incorporated them into new lessons. This was an easy way for students to feel confident while learning because they already had the prior knowledge.

Behaviorism suggests that students learn through repetition and reinforcement. To apply this theory to the classroom, teachers can use positive reinforcement and praise to encourage desired behaviors and learning outcomes. From my field experience, I have done this theory in the classroom. It was important for me to continue to repeat and reinforce my lessons because I wanted my students to understand what I was teaching them. By incorporating these theories into their teaching strategies, elementary school teachers can promote a stimulating, engaging and effective learning experience for their students (Belanger, 2011).

Integrating social studies themes and units in the elementary curriculum is essential to help students understand the world around them and enhance their critical thinking abilities. Social studies themes such as history, geography, economics, and citizenship help students to understand the complex interactions of people and societies. By integrating these themes into units alongside mathematics, science, language arts, and other subjects, educators can help students connect content from various themes and apply that learning to real-world issues. My bachelor's degree is in history which means social studies holds a special place in my heart. I was able to teach many social studies lessons to both first and fifth grade during field experience. This approach provides opportunities to improve both knowledge and essential life skills. By

incorporating social studies themes in elementary education, students will have a better understanding of the world they live in, which will benefit them as they grow and advance on their academic journey.

An effective teaching improvement plan for me should to focus on two areas to ensure that both the students and I are successful. First, the plan should incorporate professional development opportunities that are centered around the latest teaching techniques and strategies. Whether the focus is on smaller methods, classroom management, or differentiated instruction, professional development ensures that teachers develop the necessary skills to keep pace with changes in the industry. Second, the professional development should prioritize usage of technology to support instruction and learning. Teachers' use of technology enhances creativity, engages students and promotes critical thinking. The adoption of digital methods of learning helps to assess students' understanding and provide instant feedback. During my field experience, school districts rely on technology and it is important for teachers to stay up to date and continue to educate themselves to best serve their students (Howley, 1984).

As a Christian educator, leadership goals must align with biblical principles, values and beliefs. A primary leadership goal must be to create a nurturing and positive learning environment where students feel comfortable and motivated enough to learn. The focus must be on building positive relationships and ensuring that students appreciate what Christian principles stand for. Leaders must ensure that they model Christlike behavior by treating students with respect, patience, and kindness. Students need the love and support from their teachers to help guide them through their academic journeys. Gitterman states, "when students feel respected and trusted by the instructor, they, in turn, will more readily respect and trust each other." I want all of my students to feel that they can trust me and show me respect as their teacher.

Fostering appropriate and research-based assessment practices in elementary school is crucial because it ensure that students receive high-quality education and achieve academic success. A suitable assessment should utilize appropriate tools, strategies, and methods to assess student progress. In my classroom, I typically gave my students formative assessments which helped inform teaching decisions and observations in regards to the individual student's progress. My assessments were typically short and created around real-life situations so students were able to demonstrate their comprehension of the content. I also like to measure students' knowledge through observation rather than traditional assessments. Research-based assessment practice places an emphasis on providing opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning and creates necessary checks to measure that learning without relying on memorization of content. I like to embrace creativity and to aligning assessments with curricular objectives in order to see academic success within my students.

Building positive relationships in educational contexts is essential for student success. Establishing a comfortable and respectful environment between teachers and students ensures that the learning process is effective and enjoyable. One crucial aspect of building positive relationships is showing empathy to students, by actively listening to their concerns, challenges and accomplishments. Teachers can also help create a positive sense of community by encouraging individuality, celebrating diversity, and providing opportunities for collaboration between students. As a student teacher, I was able to make relationships not only with the staff, but my students as well. I was able to get to know their personalities and learn what they enjoyed to do outside of school. This allowed me to differentiate while teaching certain lessons to the class. By setting clear expectations and offering constructive feedback, teachers I developed a sense of trust and respect among students and peers.

Data-driven decision making is an essential part of effective elementary education. Through collecting and analyzing data, teachers are able to make informed decisions about their instruction and tailor their teaching to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students. During my student teaching placement, my cooperating teacher and I used a variety of assessments to gather data, including formative assessments which gave us insight into students' understanding of concepts on a daily or weekly basis, as well as district-wide assessments that measure proficiency in certain subjects. This information allowed us to adjust their instructional strategies, reteach concepts or provide additional support where necessary. We used the databases provided by the school district which was easy because the students were already familiar with the databases on their chromebooks. By using data to drive decision making, I can provide an equitable and effective education for all students.

Instructional planning is critical to the success of elementary school students. Effective planning begins with an understanding of the curriculum and the needs of the students. Prior to planning, I analyze the learning standards for the grade level and determine my knowledge of the content. Based on this, I will create instructional opportunities that are appropriately challenging, but will keep the students engaged and motivated. My planning may involve selecting and developing materials, establishing learning goals and objectives, creating assessments or evaluating existing ones, and choosing teaching techniques and strategies that address diverse learning styles. Marshall states, "If students do not learn the way we teach them, then we must teach them the way they learn!" Collaboration with my colleagues is also very important in the planning stage as teachers can share ideas and feedback, and learn from other teachers who have experience. By carefully planning instruction, I can ensure that every student has equal

opportunity to achieve learning objectives, succeed academically, and flourish along their academic journey.

Principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) involve delivering instructional material that accommodate learners with diverse needs. The three principles are engagement, representation, and action/expression. Accommodating these learners with flexible instructional design promotes successful academic performance among academically challenged students by breaking down academic barriers and providing access to what they know and how they communicate. I was fortunate enough to work in an inclusion classroom and I have noticed these principles enhanced the learning experiences for my students because it provided creative and adaptable learning opportunities. By adopting the principles of UDL, I can create a learning-friendly environment and expand the horizon of academic achievement for all of my students, regardless of ability or challenges.

Effective strategies for English language learners are critical for creating an inclusive learning environment and ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality education. Some of the most important strategies include providing clear and concise instructions, utilizing visual aids and manipulatives, using real-life examples, and allowing ample opportunities for practice and application. While differentiating instruction during my field placement, I knew I had to meet the unique needs and abilities of each student. I used techniques such as modeling, providing examples, and breaking down complex information into simpler parts. I also found it very important to create a welcoming and supportive environment where students feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes is essential to building their confidence and promoting their language development. By implementing these strategies, I can help English language learners reach their full potential and achieve academic success (Harper, 2004).

Using questioning and discussion in elementary school settings can be effective because it teaches critical thinking skills and encourages deeper engagement with subject matter. By asking open-ended questions that allow for multiple answers and interpretations, teachers can help students develop their creativity and problem-solving abilities. During my field experience, I was able to establish structured classroom discussions. This promoted active listening and respect for others' opinions, while encouraging students to articulate their ideas and respond thoughtfully to the ideas of others. Keeping students motivated and engaged with the material can be difficult, but it's important to vary the types of questions asked and to use prompting techniques that are age-appropriate and tailored to students' developmental levels. Overall, by incorporating questioning and discussion into regular classroom routines, teachers can help create an inquiry-oriented learning environment and develop students' communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills.

Engaging elementary school students in learning can be particularly challenging, but motivational strategies can help to ensure children stay invested in their education. One approach is to create a positive and encouraging classroom environment that's rich in praise, and help students set achievable, developmentally appropriate goals that establish a sense of accomplishment. One of the elements I incorporated into my lessons during my student teaching was including games into my instruction. I used games to drill essential skills or to provide a reward system to motivate students. Group work can also establish teamwork, active communication, and social learning amongst students. Finally, using a combination of visuals, manipulatives, and other sensory tools can both help students stay engaged and make lesson materials more enjoyable. By using these motivational strategies, elementary school teachers can help their students stay enthusiastic about learning and achieve academic success.

Elementary school teachers use assessments to gather data about students' academic progress, which they then use to inform their instruction in the classroom. Formative assessments, such as exit tickets, are used to assess whether students have understood a given concept or skill. This allows teachers to adjust instruction on the go based on what students still need to master. Summative assessments, including quizzes, tests, and projects, help teachers evaluate students' grasp of the material and identify gaps in knowledge, which allows teachers to assess future lesson plans. By utilizing both types of assessments, teachers can make sure that their instruction is targeted and effective, and can better support their students in meeting their educational goals.

I feel that I can be an effective teacher because I enjoy molding the minds of students. I believe that I am a good mentor and role model to my students. Educating these students and seeing the smiles on their faces when something works in their favor, brings me joy. I have always been a caring, thoughtful, and organized person which are wonderful qualities in a teacher. I have a passion for learning and want to encourage my students that learning is fun too. Teachers work in teams with their students and their co-workers which I strive for. Teachers get the honor to educate about manners, respect, responsibility, and how to care for one another.

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