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ED 870

Future Learning Goals Essay

Throughout my teaching career, I have been fortunate enough to attend numerous content-driven professional development sessions as well as learn about my subject area through the courses in my master's program. While I recognize that there is always more to research and strategies are constantly changing, my English-area content is something I feel confident with in my classroom. At the heart of what I do is the care I have for my middle and high school students, which is why I want to continue to learn how to support them in every way I can, especially outside of just my subject area. In order to provide my students with a safe, empathy-driven classroom, my goal is to further educate myself on and incorporate strategies for a trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and social-justice oriented classroom.

For any student to learn, they first need to feel protected and cared for; students who have experienced trauma especially need a nurturing and compassionate teacher. My goal to include trauma-informed strategies in my classroom would first be to continue to educate myself on best practices. Websites such as the [Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development](#) (ASCD) site offer basic information about practices as well as strategies teachers can implement. Trauma-informed education, however, is not a system that can be implemented solely by one teacher within an entire school. Therefore, a second part of my goal would be to request a staff professional development session to be led by our school counselor, focused on trauma-informed education. If the entirety of my school's staff can commit to these practices and philosophy, we will create a more empathetic and safe space in which our students can learn.

Once a student feels comfortable in their classroom environment, it becomes possible for learning to take place. The next obstacle that educators face is making learning accessible to students speaking a variety of languages and coming from different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. This is where culturally responsive teaching is vital. The current school where I am teaching is an international school in southern Japan, and we have students from dozens of different countries within one class. Culturally responsive teaching is about making curriculum accessible to everyone, thereby empowering students who are typically underserved. In my research, one tool I found that could help me achieve my goal for a more culturally responsive classroom is this [student questionnaire](#) from Understood for All, Inc.

Questionnaires like this exemplar are a great way for teachers to get to know their students' learning preferences and their homelife situations. In the future, I want to provide my students with a more structured questionnaire at the start of the year in order to better learn about their unique circumstances. I can use the data I collect to inform my classroom practice and help reach every student.

When students are cared for and able to access the curriculum, I believe it is vital to expose them to topics and content that will help them build empathy towards others as well as take action in their own communities. To instill these values in my students, my final goal is to incorporate social justice-based education into my classes. One resource I found that I believe will be invaluable is the website [Teaching Tolerance](#). On this site, they offer lesson plans, strategies and student texts for free to educators in order to help us create inclusive and participatory classrooms. Additionally, I found a compilation of short films aimed at teaching students about humanitarian issues called [Global Oneness Project](#). Students can watch videos about immigration, valuing diversity, and youth empowerment (the list goes on). Already having scrolled through the site, I can see films that could be incorporated in my class tomorrow, allowing for rich discussion amongst my students. It would be my ultimate goal to encourage students to take action on the issues that they feel the most passionate about, taking their learning into the real world.

A core value of my pedagogy is the idea that each of my students are young adults deserving of safety, respect and support. While I believe in the importance of my content area, I understand that there are lessons students learn from us that help shape their lives in a way that learning about organized writing or giving speeches simply does not. My goal for my future classroom is to better understand the ways in which I can teach the whole child. Only then will I consider myself an effective educator.