

Portfolio

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My philosophy of teaching: Mission statement

I

Identify items where you think you are naturally gifted.

I believe that through life experience I have developed several skills that I can readily apply in my teaching practise. Firstly I am enthusiastic in utilising and advancing my vocational skills, aiming to achieve long-term personal and professional goals. Secondly I recognise, tolerate and respond to each individual and their right to equal education. Thirdly by being exemplary in my association with students I will foster affirmative behaviour and attitudes. Fourthly I am a perceptive and an amenable communicator, within a team or on an individual level. Finally I engage in marked reflection on my vocation to improve myself as necessary.

Identify items where you can readily develop your existing talents.

My enthusiasm and positive attitude can be expanded and utilised to influence students and peers to achieve goals. My tolerance and individualism will allow me to take on, in time, more challenging tasks easily. My dedication to achieving personal goals will influence students to succeed by being an example. Utilising my empathy and communication skills, I can become proactive at spotting, and solving, problem areas in student development.

Identify items that worry/concern you the most.

I am not readily familiar with several areas of the teaching practise. Firstly I do not have the knowledge or experience in the ascertainment and appraisal of student improvement and learning outcomes. Secondly in the areas of ethical and legal responsibility, I require much development. Thirdly I have not had experience in constructing and overseeing an educational advancement process. Finally I am not generally a very organised individual.

III

Mission statement.

My mission is to foster a tolerant attitude and positive self-belief. Developing independent thinking in the individual, will enable them to achieve their personal goals.

II

Written reflection

In order to understand how to become an effective teacher, the student studying teaching must have an understanding of what strengths and weaknesses they have, and a plan to develop and expand on both these areas.

Areas of concern, when acknowledged, can be evolved into empowering abilities. According to Mcinerney and Mcinerney "The effective teacher is organised"(2002, p. 10). In completing my tertiary qualifications I will hone my organisational skills, allowing me to manage time and information more effectively. "Effective teachers are knowledgeable..."(Mcinerney and Mcinerney, 2002, p.10). This statement serves to illustrate the need for knowledge as an effective teacher. Once again I will readily increase my knowledge of content, teaching practises, legal and ethical responsibilities through tertiary and vocational studies. These areas will, in time and with dedicated effort, become personal strengths.

Individuals bring their personality and natural gifts to the teaching profession. I have several natural abilities that can be expanded upon. Firstly I am tolerant and believe in the individual, with their unique abilities and needs. Secondly I am an effective, energetic and enthusiastic communicator, enjoying verbal interaction with people. Thirdly I have a positive attitude, in myself, and believe this attitude has a marked influence on others. Fourthly I am an imaginative, creative and diverse thinker, fostering lateral thought in others. Finally I am gregarious and charismatic, generally able to develop a rapport with any individual.

Vocational skills and content knowledge can be developed through formal study and with time. However, personality and life skills are more difficult to gain in this way. I can now develop these areas I have identified as my natural abilities and areas of concern. By becoming aware of this, I now have an invaluable plan for becoming an effective teacher.

What I bring to the teaching profession

Moving through Kohlberg's stages of development

My mother, in giving guidance, helped me move from stage one to stage two. My mother gave me the freedom to decide on courses of action. If the action was incorrect I was punished and conversely I was rewarded for correct actions. Subconsciously my decision-making was guided by the consequences of my actions and resulting punishment.

My year 8 Drama teacher helped me evolve to stage three of moral development. Mrs De Bruin established her expectations, and the guidelines, to meet these goals. She taught me to understand her perspective in regards to disruptive class activity and discipline. She constructively criticised mistakes and disciplined me fairly. She gave me freedom to make decisions based on her expectations.

Moving to stage four, my guides were, my best friends parents. Mr and Mrs Botha instilled a work ethic into me. They made me aware of my moral obligations to society, to respect the law even if I was in disagreement with it. They were an example to me by the way they lived freely, honestly and morally, without a concern for societies conventions of them as parents and adults. They taught me a sense of individualism and supported my moral decisions.

Finally I moved to stage five of my moral development. This was through my peers, much more mature than myself, Clive Scott and Terry. They gave me guidance and wisdom in interpreting societies laws, based on my moral beliefs. They lived, and taught me, to think of myself as an individual independent of societies conventions. They gave me council in decisions that affected my future, moral development, always focusing on how I felt about the issue.

Which Level of Kohlberg's development do I operate on?

According to Kohlberg's stages I operate at stage six of moral development, with ubiquitous moralistic convictions. I justify this personal opinion on my highly developed, through life experience, set of moral values. I understand the laws society has in place, however I interpret these laws within my moral values. This can lead me to break these laws, understanding and accepting the consequences that follow, if my moral belief is strong enough.

Implications on teachers of understanding of Kohlberg's levels and stages

According to Wainryb and Turiel (1993, p. 28) "Effective moral education should account for the complexities of social and moral reasoning." The responsibility of the teacher is to recognise the individual and at what stage of moral development he or she is. Part of a teacher's responsibility is to develop, through action, council and support the moral development of the individual into higher levels of understanding. My responsibilities as a teacher are to educate. Moreover this is based on my unbiased moral interpretation of societies conventions and laws. In following my vocation and personal moral values, I will break conventions, if necessary, in the pursuit of education.

Teacher's reality check and areas that need to be "fired up"

I believe that I have many natural talents that I can develop and cultivate. My motivated, confident and imaginative leadership style, in conjunction with my enthusiastic life affirming ability to effectively communicate, will help me to be passionate, have a sure calling and maintain my vision. My confident, motivated attitude will ensure I maintain a consistently high standard. This combined with my tolerance and sense of humour will serve to bolster my character and ego thus averting any sense of fear or failure.

Being constructive in elaborating my concerns, will lead me to being an effective teacher. In developing a disciplined approach to managing information and time, I will become more organised and maintain the focus on the task at hand. To provide my students with the highest

quality education, I must undertake to become the most successful student myself, thus leading by my example as a life long learner.

Leadership, change and transition

Change: how I handled transition

Without change the individual would remain dormant and apathetic. A positive outlook and sense of humour, has allowed me to manage the transition involved in the change. The passage involved in the immigration process can be difficult. However relying on my personal strengths, I was able to overcome any adversities and start life afresh.

Moving from South Africa to Australia was an unexpected development. Due to the political climate, in South Africa during the early part of 1993, my parents announced that they were applying for immigration to Australia. Upon being accepted the family finalised the departure date for February 1999. I was at that stage working in the hospitality industry, in Durban, where I had lived for the past 22 years. I had not expected this change, as it was very difficult for South Africans to gain entry, without trade skills, into Australia.

Leaving family and close friends can be heartbreaking on the individual. The time came for myself to bid goodbye to my family and friends. Durban had been my home, place of birth and schooling, all my life. I had many very close friends who I had to bid farewell to, with the likelihood I would never see them again. This was a very emotional time for me as I valued my peers, their understanding and empathy, with high regard.

Having faith in your own strengths and a positive outlook can make the transition easier. I found myself feeling apprehensive of adapting to a new culture, making friends, and seeking employment in Australia. However I adopted a positive outlook to the change. I chose to view it as a chance to begin anew, meet new friends, change careers and possibly pursue tertiary education opportunities. This outlook brought strength, and excitement, to my conviction that change can develop the individual.

Dealing with regrets is made easier by believing in the positive aspects of change. I am now a, fully naturalised, Australian citizen. I still occasionally feel regrets about South Africa. However my opportunities have grown and my attitude to change has developed with it. I firmly believe that change is a rewarding experience and that transition must be faced with a positive attitude and confidence.

My strongest EQ domain and how this has helped my deal with change.

Self-motivation is the key strength I rely on to deal with change. When facing adversity, my determination and confidence, allow me to maintain a positive outlook. I perceive opportunities, for self-development, in all aspects of change. This strength allows me to deal with regret rationally, and in a positive manner.

Why do I believe leadership is important to teaching?

A leader leads by his example and motivates his followers to succeed. According to Hybels (2002, p.183) "How can any of us lead others effectively if our spirits are sagging or our courage is wavering?" Being an effective leader, including self-leadership, allows the teacher to face and deal with challenges effectively. Students will look up to the teacher, as a leader, for inspiration in their own lives. The teacher's influence will impact upon student's future development. As a teacher, and leader, my influence will motivate my students to perform and succeed.

An article dealing with change in the West Australian

The increasing of teacher's salaries is a positive reinforcement for educators. In the West Australian an article describes how, public school teachers, are to receive a nine percent increase over 3 years. This is very positive news and has several effects. Firstly it is a positive reinforcement by the government, of teacher's role as professionals in the workforce. Secondly it will help to motivate teachers to pursue a career in public schools. Thirdly it gives

the teachers more incentive, not a necessary but important factor, to concentrate on students not salaries. Finally it will ensure teachers stay on at government schools for longer terms.

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