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## **Philosophy of Education**

Through my past experience as a student, I have had positive experiences with teachers that have given their students choices within a safe, structured environment. These teachers have given me the desire to learn through motivational instruction and curriculum. Those teachers that had the largest positive impact were those that were calm and patient in nature. I have had a great opportunity to grow up in an area of great diversity. My fellow classmates came from different ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Attention was not brought to our differences until high school. Many of my high school teachers expressed their appreciation for our diverse student population. They would tell us that we were fortunate to attend a school that accurately represents the outside world. Their appreciation for diversity has been passed down to me. For many years now, I have been fascinated about different cultures and wanted to learn more about them through cultural experiences.

I want to pass down my appreciation for diversity and the desire to learn more about different cultures to my students. As a teacher, I want to celebrate, educate, and experience the diverse cultures that are found within our society. I want to provide students with a safe learning environment in order to give rise to children who desire to learn. Furthermore, I want to promote open interaction among all of my students. Providing opportunities for children to share their cultural background and to take initiative by encouraging self-expression could create this environment or safe community. The sharing and discussing of information that is representative of multiple perspectives will enrich the learning of the students. Content should build upon the student's previous knowledge, including cultural knowledge, in order to make the content and instruction more meaningful and to promote student empowerment and self-esteem. Furthermore, an understanding and acceptance of people's differences will better prepare our youth for a future in a diverse world.

Moreover, encouraging students to take part in higher levels of thinking skills, such as discussing, comparing, and evaluating, will better prepare our youth with essential skills needed to confront the enormous challenges they face in their daily lives. Students will be able to evaluate the validity of information they are exposed to and create an educated evaluation or opinion. This can not take place unless the teacher takes the role of a decision-maker, rather than teacher as a technician. Using critical reflective thinking skills to determine what areas of the curriculum to emphasize and explore in great depth is crucial for the enrichment of knowledge provided to our children.

In addition to the decisions regarding the curriculum, I believe that teachers should not teach classes or groups of students, but rather individuals with special needs. I have developed this outlook on instruction through my work with diverse populations over the past few years. My experience working with physically and mentally handicapped children strongly illustrates the importance of teaching to my students' individual needs. Not only are the individual needs important to consider, the cultural values and local politics are influential in the school's community. In many cases, they influence what and how content is taught.

Learning to teach a diverse population requires a teacher to encourage their students and individuals in the community to share their culture with the class. Teachers face challenges throughout their profession that are unique and rewarding that may have never been discussed in the preparation of becoming a teacher. For example, teachers face unique challenges concerning parents, the administration, and possible conflicts among students. Teaching is a life-long process in which the teacher is constantly reflecting on

their instruction and curriculum in an attempt to improve. As a teacher, I hope to work with a diverse population that will contribute to the enrichment of my life and the life of my students through multicultural content and experience.