Classroom Philosophy

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Introduction

A great teacher will "focus on students first, with a broad vision that keeps everything in perspective" (Whitaker, pg. 48, 2015). Focusing on students, and keeping things in perspective are two qualities that are essential when planning to use learning theories in the classroom. A learning theory is the process of "understanding how people learn to inform our teaching philosophy and shape our curricular planning and teaching" (Tufte). In this paper you will find a brief overview of three learning theories: humanism, constructivism, and 21st century skills. It is my goal to implement these three learning theories and thereby develop the classroom environment that I have always envisioned.

Humanistic Learning Theory

In secondary education it is common that teachers will use humanism in the way that they care for their students. When using a humanistic approach, teachers are caring genuinely about the human dignity of someone and instilling that into the way they teach. For instance, when a student makes a mistake the teacher will find a way to make it a teachable moment for the student instead of just dealing out punishment right away. The goal of an educator that is using the humanistic learning theory is to set goals, clarify values, form identity, increase personal efficacy, and form meaningful relationships in the classroom (Alschuler, 1970). When you empower students with the humanistic learning theory you can start to blend it into using other learning theories like the choice theory, where you would give students a say for policies in the classroom.

Constructivist Learning Theory

Learning by doing is definitely a thought that a constructivist teacher would cling to. If you use a constructivist learning theory in the classroom you gain the advantage of creating an

opportunity for students to develop their own understanding and knowledge through their experiences. In the classroom "the constructivist views knowledge as existing within the context of a learner" (Caprio, 1994). Each learner in the classroom is different due to the prior knowledge and experiences that they bring in, this will drastically alter the way they consume information. One of the best ways to use the constructivist learning theory in the classroom is through hands on projects that might even include experiences outside of the classroom.

21st Century Skills Learning Theory

Our job as an educator is to prepare students for the next step in life as they go into the so called "real world". The learning theory that best prepares students for this is 21st century skills. When you apply this learning theory in the classroom you allow students to foster "creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, information media and technology skills (IMTS)" (Urbani, 2017). The way in which you would apply these into the classroom would consist of personal development, applied development, and professional development (Urbani, 2017). In Business Education, this theory would be very important because business is an ever-changing subject.

Applying Learning Theories

Being a preservice business education teacher, I am excited to be able to use these three learning theories in my future classroom. Each of these learning theories carry values that are all relevant in the business world. The humanism learning theory teaches you to treat people with a human dignity and to make mistakes teachable moments. For example, if Johnny handed in an assignment late because he had to attend a funeral last week, it would be very insensitive of me to just give him a zero for the late assignment. Instead, I could use this moment to show empathy stating something like, "Hey Johnny, first and foremost I'm so sorry for your loss, if you need

someone to talk to we can sure chat with the school counselor. I'm not going to dock you for the assignment being late and if you need any help with your other work in class I'd be happy to help." This models what empathy looks like to students and allows Johnny to see that you truly care about his success. It doesn't matter what business you work for after high school or even if you work at all, humanism is a valuable learning theory because of the life lessons that it teaches you. The constructivism learning theory will allow me to give students experiences that will foster learning such as bringing in local business owners, running a school store, or visiting some of the big business's in the community. In a business especially you learn by experiencing new things, that is why I am excited to have this learning theory apart of my classroom. It is my goal to use constructivism to have students actively involved in learning how business's start, the various functions, and opportunities that can be presented. Lastly, 21st century skills learning theory makes up the basic components needed in every business. These skills being "creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, information media and technology skills" (Urbani, 2017). I am excited to use 21st century skills learning theory by creating a project-based learning (pbl) assignment that has to do with creating your own business. The key to having 21st century skills, constructivism, and humanism learning theories in the classroom is by actively modeling them in the classroom.

Conclusion

Humanism, constructivism, and 21st century skills are the three learning theories that I will have my classroom rooted in. In my classroom students will feel a sense of value due to humanism in the classroom, they will have useful experiences due to constructivism, and will learn valuable qualities such as communication and collaboration from 21st century skills. These

learning theories align to assist educators with the planning of their classroom and provide a

meaningful education to youth.

References

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