A Philosophy on Cultural Diversity in Education: Strength in Our Differences

Steven R. Covey has said, “Strength lies in difference, not in similarities.” We are all aware that the United States of America is home to numerous cultures and this reflects in our nation’s classroom as well. Every student brings different learning experiences into my classroom because no one ever experiences life in the same way and we all learn differently. 

Students’ backgrounds also have an influence on their success in a classroom but it is up to me to make sure that all have an equal chance to succeed. Differences in students is what makes our schools and classrooms strong and helps them flourish. As a future teacher I will ensure that all students in my classroom have an equal chance to succeed and have a friendly, warm and open environment to learn in.

Teaching high school or middle school can ensure different aspects of diversity into my future room. Such examples are race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status and language, but others include youth culture and sexual orientation. Adolescence is usually the time that a student is striving to come to terms with the person they think they are which can be a time of confusion for some of them. It is important that they all feel safe in the school environment so they have that time to find out who they are and can become comfortable with it before they enter the “real world” that starts after high school graduation. It is also important that the other students are aware that they must respect each other no matter what because that is what creates a safe learning environment and allows them to thrive.

Teaching a multicultural curriculum helps all students flourish because they see that aspects of what they are learning apply more to them. One way I intend to introduce a multicultural curriculum into my room is by doing a project where the student’s research scientists from all different backgrounds instead of just the classic ones we tend to hear about
every year in school like Darwin and Einstein. Another way I can include many cultures in my room is by making sure that all aspects of a theory are presented in an unbiased way so my future students can come to their own conclusion on the theory. Having worldwide current activities also would give the students opportunities so see what is going around all over the world and allows them to have a broader view of it then they normally would by just reading a textbook. Even though teaching curriculum is important having a student centered environment may be more important.

Since the students are the focus of the classroom it is important that they come first. Curriculum may need to be adapted to fit the student’s needs. For example I may need to spend an extra class period on a certain topic because they students are having a hard time grasping it. By finding out a student’s needs it becomes easier to teach them because you become aware of their strengths and weaknesses and then you can easier play to their strengths. Being in touch with parents can also help a teacher be aware of a student’s needs because they know their child better and can explain to me any special considerations their child might need. I plan on teaching to all the learning styles of my students as well as being sure aspects of the hidden curriculum are addressed at the same time. Teaching the content is important but it is also good to ensure that the students will be good people as well as good learners. Having high expectations for all students helps establish a good relationship and allows all of them to have high expectations of each other as well.

Having a respectful student-to-student and teacher-to-student relationship is important in the classroom because it is the basis of all learning. If students do not feel comfortable in my future classroom then they will not be able to learn to their fullest potential because they will always be worrying about something else other than their studies. I intend to prevent
inappropriate words and phrases that demean another person’s race, ethnicity, religion, sex or any other aspect of culture out of my classroom. Realizing the difference between the voice of the school and the voice of the students is also important because finding common ground between the two allows us to reach a point that we catch student’s interests because they see the curriculum as applicable to them. This also creates an opportunity to eliminate bias and ignorance the students may have towards other cultures because understanding come with knowledge.

In order to be a culturally responsive teacher I will need to display all the same traits I want my students to display. One of the most important is the sense of equality and mutual respect for each other. Another is being open minded to new ideas to help us learn and grow. By having the same expectations for all of my students, I hope to let them know that they all have an equal chance to succeed in school and life after school as long as they are willing to work hard, having high expectations also allows me to keep from minimizing a student’s potential. By reflecting on aspects of all cultures I can give my future students a chance to open their minds further to the world and I can make connections between student interests and the content I am suppose to teach. Ensuring that I teach the hidden curriculum well also makes sure that the students will know how to be good people as well as being good students which is important.

When all the aspects of this philosophy are reached I hope to create a classroom that creates a positive learning environment for every students as well as a safe haven where they can learn. By teaching a multicultural curriculum I also hope to help my students come to understand the worlds they live in better as well. I also hope to create a productive learning environment where students learn to their full potential and can gain as much knowledge as possible. By having a open learning environment I want to create a place that one again is based on respect
and where no student is afraid to express their opinion. Having every student reach their greatest potential is really important to me because it means that I did my job as a teacher to make sure they can succeed in choices later in life once they graduate from school.