**Reflection:**

When looking to revise my teaching philosophy through the lens of the EDST 403 course, the one thing that stood out to me the most was that while I had a clear idea of the *attitudes* and the *values* that I come from, and those that I want to instill in my students, I hadn’t thought more specifically about *what* I was going to teach and what I choose to be important for all my students to learn. Upon reflection, I realized that between *content knowledge* and *pedagogical knowledge*, I put a lot of emphasis and importance on pedagogical knowledge and not on content knowledge, which may have consequences for my future students. It was through our discussions in class around “core knowledge” and the article by Shulman that has greatly influenced me for this assignment, and oriented me to think towards striking a balance between content and pedagogical knowledge as I continue to revise and build upon my teaching philosophy.

While I was reading Shulman’s article, there were a couple of quotes that stood out to me as Shulman is trying to explain the importance of integrating content and pedagogical knowledge:

* *How does the successful college student transform his or her expertise in the subject matter into a form that high school students can comprehend?*
* *When this novice teacher confronts flawed or muddled textbook chapters or befuddled students, how does he or she employ content expertise to generate new explanations, representations, or clarification?*
* *What pedagogical prices are paid when the teacher’s subject matter competence is itself a compromised by deficiencies of prior education or ability?*
* *But to blend properly the two aspects of a teacher’s capacities requires that we pay as much attention to the content aspects of teaching as we have recently devoted to the elements of teaching process*

I was kind of blown away when reading these, as it was something that I had not previously thought of but thought them to be pertinent questions to ask myself throughout my teaching career, especially since I currently don’t have any concrete answers to them.

I had thoroughly enjoyed doing the “Core Knowledge” assignment, so the main revision I would make to my teaching philosophy would be to add that assignment to my teaching philosophy. I had talked primarily about content with that assignment, but my explanations on why I thought the content was important gives an idea of my perspective and how I would go about teaching that content to my students.

Another take-home message from reflection is that while we may not have concrete answers to the questions and issues we’ve discussed (what constitutes core knowledge? Should we have it? What is knowledge and what is belief? How do we navigate those constructs? What are other ways we can represent knowledge or have our children learn?), we as teachers are also constantly learning, and we should remain cognizant of this as move through our careers. We should always be looking to learn more, explore, question and build upon our own knowledge.

**Philosophy (edits are in red)**

Every time I walk down the stairs of my local library, on the wall I see the quote, “Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn” from Benjamin Franklin. This, in the simplest sense, is the basis of my working teaching philosophy. For me, having kids be involved/having a say in their learning is paramount. Involving students also means we should move away from traditional models of teaching and explore with our students the many different ways in which we learn (through our bodies, through our relationships with others, etc.)

Stemming from this, there are other key “pillars” in my philosophy that I value as an upcoming teacher. These other pillars are:

* Building an inclusive community – within the classroom, within the school, and within the local community.
* Teaching students to value *process* over *outcomes.*
* Creating a safe classroom environment where students feel like they can take risks, make mistakes and challenge themselves.
* Instill curiosity and a love of learning within my students.
* Make learning fun and engaging by moving away from traditional models and teacher-centered learning.
* Incorporating the importance of good physical and mental health throughout the curriculum.
* Always looking to develop and gain more expertise/knowledge as a teacher.
* Model through my own behaviour, what I want to see in my students.

First and foremost, I believe the key to involving students in their own learning journey is to make them believe that I care about them and are interested in their lives beyond the classroom. If students feel that I value them as a person, I believe they will be more engaged in their studies, and be more comfortable to come to me with problems or questions they may have. I also want my students to care about and respect each other that goes beyond how they know each other in the classroom. I would really like to create a “team” atmosphere in my classes, one that teaches students to support individual and group successes, and to realize that destructive individual actions will affect the group as a whole (individual and group accountability). I feel that if this is established, it is easier for students to take risks, challenge themselves, and to stay motivated through difficult tasks, because they feel they have the support of their teacher and their peers.

As I mentioned above, I really want to emphasize process over outcomes. It seems that we (as a society) put a lot of pressure and importance on grades, on tangible results, solid skills that will get students a job in the future. I think this creates unnecessary competition and stress on students, especially at the elementary level, when those things shouldn’t be important. Valuing process also means that as teacher, I work with my students in co-constructing knowledge –students should have a say in what they learn, and how they learn it. I think if I teach students to value the process of learning, they are learning equally valuable skills but with the added benefit of being more curious and to love learning more.

Lastly, even though I’m in teaching, I’m also a learner, and always will be. I should not be complacent in thinking that I’ve learned all I need to know to teach, and should strive to constantly grow, develop, and build upon my own knowledge. Not only do we have a responsibility to our students, but we have a responsibility to ourselves as well.

Core Knowledge assignment link: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/edst403/2015/01/12/assignment-core-knowledge/>

**Reference:**

Shulman, L. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher, 15*(2), 4-14.