

NCTSN

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CERTIFICATE of ACHIEVEMENT

This is to certify that

Sarah DeVoe

has completed the course

Psychological First Aid (PFA) Online

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**5 CE Contact Hours
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Personal Educational Philosophy in Practice

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Abstract

The successful measure of the American education system is that it produces students who not only thrive in society but are an improvement to it. To support the production of thriving students and a subsequently thriving society, schools should create an environment of community and encourage relationship building. In these school communities, school staff are members of the community who interact with community helpers to support the whole needs of the students. Teachers act as advocates to bridge opportunity gaps and provide resources for students. Family is also a source of support for students and are encouraged to engage as part of the school community.

Keywords: philosophy of education, community, equity, family engagement, holistic education

Personal Educational Philosophy in Practice

There is a common saying, “It takes a village to raise a child.”, and I believe that communities and educational institutions should be part of that village. The educational philosophy of an individual or institution should be holistic and inclusive so that the whole educational needs of all students are met. This can be accomplished when schools work together with their community to help students succeed. To understand whether an educational philosophy is effective in accomplishing its goals, outcomes such as a student’s personal and academic success should be evaluated. Community building is extremely important in schools- positive relationships between the teacher, the learner, the learner’s family, and the whole local community can greatly contribute to the success of a school and its students (Daniel et al., 2019). The successful measure of the American education system is that it produces students who not only thrive in society but are an improvement to it.

Philosophy of Schools and Learning

Early educational theories such as the mental discipline approach placed value in education as a tool to exercise students’ minds and produce students with intellectual minds (Ornstein et al., 2017). Later on, more progressive concepts took hold to address not only students’ academic development but social and psychological development as well. Depending on the current needs of the nation, the school system has gone back and forth between the idea that schools should be solely responsible for student education, and the idea that the school system can be used to address social issues as well. My personal view is that there exists a middle ground between these two ideas: that mental exercise can be balanced with the needs of the whole child. With the current outcomes-based approach to education, emphasis is placed on

measurable results and not on practical applications for the knowledge that students are acquiring. The education system should be producing members of society who flourish because they have received a holistic education that they can realistically and successfully apply in real life.

Instructional Practice

The American education system is currently training the next generation of leaders- if change is desired in society, that change can start in the schools. In order to achieve the goal of teaching students how to thrive and contribute to society through practical education, schools should integrate themselves more actively into the communities they exist within. Schools that exist in symbiosis with their neighborhood, aligning the resources of both the school and community, can help bridge opportunity gaps and better support underserved communities (Daniel et al., 2019). Students can gain knowledge and skills that are relevant to their lives by being taught by fellow members of the community, and in turn be an asset to the community. Teachers may connect their students with community helpers by bringing them into the school to speak or take the students out into the community for hands-on instruction. In this way, students learn to thrive in society through the direct example of their teachers and the school community. As part of a more holistic education, students should be taught social-emotional skills so that they can form supportive relationships with fellow students and staff. Building these relationships in a supportive learning environment can improve student achievement, impede disruptive behavior, and prevent staff burnout.

Teacher-Learner Relationships

Teachers and learners should build a community atmosphere in the classroom that is modeled off of the cooperative relationships that schools should be building within their communities. As schools become invested in their communities, teachers need to become invested in their students and provide them with the access to resources they need to grow and flourish (Daniel et al., 2019). Teachers who build a feeling of community in the classroom have better teacher-learner interactions and can work with students to find enduring solutions to problems in the classroom. Learners come to understand their role in the classroom community through the teacher's example and instruction and should seek to contribute to a positive learning atmosphere. In order to build this classroom community, teachers must familiarize themselves with the local community to better understand their students and seek out ways to support their development. This may require stepping outside of the conventional role of a teacher to work with community members in advocating for and providing equitable education. It is imperative that schools have organizational supports in place to sustain and support teachers in their expanded role as they advocate for their student's education. Teachers should also be able to lean on the support system of colleagues such as administration and school counselors to address issues and help students gain access to services so that teachers can focus on teaching.

Diversity

Factors of diversity are extremely important to consider in the field of education as they impact a large majority of the student population (Ornstein et al, 2017). To make education more equitable, factors of diversity such as race, culture, religion, socio-economic status, capability, and sexual orientation should be taken into account while planning educational services. School achievement has been shown to be linked to social class, with those in poorer communities scoring much lower in math and literacy tests. High-school and college completion rates are also

lower for minority students. These opportunity gaps can be addressed through educational services in a variety of ways. Schools can engage more deeply with their community by hiring teachers and staff from the community who better understand the sociocultural environment the students are living in (Daniel et al., 2019). Teachers should have an understanding of the community the students are coming from and be educated in a variety of diverse cultural backgrounds, sexual identities, and disabilities, and know how to respectfully interact with students from all walks of life. Teachers and administration should take diversity factors into account when choosing curriculum, planning lessons, deciding on class sizes, and responding to patterns of behavior (Ornstein et al, 2017). Being inclusive of all backgrounds in every area of education can help remove the barriers that minority students face.

Family Engagement

Parent engagement is a major factor in student academic success and positive teacher-learner relationships (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020). As a positive influencing factor on students, schools should build relationships with students' families. If the schools want to become an integral part of their community, students' parents and guardians need to be included in building that community. In a study done by Kelty and Wakabayashi (2020), they heard from many parents who felt that schools lacked channels of communication and were unwelcoming of diverse families. When factors such as socio-economic status, language minority status, and family composition are not considered in planning school engagement opportunities, those families get left out of the school community. An effective and inclusive way to engage families is for school staff to perform home visits. These visits can help parents feel involved in their child's education as well as support students with low academic achievement and attendance. These visits are not only beneficial for the family, but also help to build empathy, understanding, and community

with school staff (Daniel et al., 2019). Home visits are just one way to increase communication between schools and families, which is essential for family engagement. Schools need to develop multiple formats of communication with their community such as a school newsletter, social media, and email (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020). These communications should strive to be inclusive by being culturally relevant and in the languages that families speak. Families are an asset to students and the school community as a whole, and schools should do their best to keep them engaged within that community.

Conclusion

A quality educational philosophy should include evidence-based practice that has a clear positive impact on students. Research showing the effectiveness of community involvement in the schools and in society indicates that a community-involved philosophy would create positive change (Daniel et al., 2019). If the measure of a successful education system is producing students who flourish and enhance the community around them, then a community-led educational philosophy is the best way to guarantee that success. By supporting the whole needs of the student- both educationally and socially, schools help students succeed in society. Teachers must act together with their community members to advocate for resources to bridge gaps in opportunity for students. Creating relationships with students' families provides positive influencing factors for students and builds community. If it takes a village to raise a child, schools need to make themselves an integral part of that village.

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