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Part 1: Teaching Philosophy

In his book *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy and Civic Courage* (1998/2001), Paulo Freire writes, “to teach is not to transfer knowledge but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge” (Freire 1998/2001, pg. 30). Freire’s philosophy mirrors the primary objective that the modern education system in British Columbia is working towards and resonates with my own beliefs in what the overarching purpose of elementary education should be. During my own childhood education and into my teens, I often perceived education as a reflection of one’s memorization and regurgitation abilities, opposed to one’s knowledge. Now as a teacher candidate, my current education on the skills needed to help students succeed has heavily shifted from those held by several teachers in my past. Instead of telling students exactly what we want them to know, memorize, and repeat, we are strongly encouraged to create a safe and welcoming learning space where students are encouraged to inquire, to have autonomy and choice, and are provided with the skills needed to produce or construct their own understandings. Instead of overloading my future students with facts and information chosen by myself and expecting them to absorb it all as knowledge, I believe more success will be had through the facilitation of interactive activities and activities that provide students with choice to allow for one’s interests to help them make meaning of the new knowledge. For example, if my grade 2 class was learning about the life cycle of butterflies and plants, rather than transferring everything I know about the topic to students, students will create their own butterfly garden. Over the year, students will monitor and tend to the garden, questioning and observing what is happening. In conclusion, I share similar beliefs with Freire, in that a teacher’s role is not to transfer everything we know to our students, but rather, it’s to create and guide opportunities for them to discover their own new knowledge.

Part 2: Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

“62 i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.”

It’s not only my responsibility as a future educator, but also as a guest living on traditional territory, to take thoughtful consideration and action in terms of responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) (2015). After learning about Canada’s history of cultural genocide and colonization during my undergrad, I was introduced to the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015); moving forward, I decided that I needed to ensure that I was educating others and designing my assignments and research around this exact call to action. Now that I’m in the Education Program, it’s even more evident that this is something that must be done and can be done using various methods. Having conversations about this topic can be difficult, but they are conversations that need to be had, and can be done in respectful, engaging, and age-appropriate ways. For approaching the more difficult topics, I would ensure students are aware of the resources available to them and would encourage them to reach out if they find it hard to discuss. One interactive activity to respond to this call of action is to organize a trip to the local Secwepemc Museum and Heritage Park. The museum has tours catered to each grade level, where students will learn about the history of local Indigenous culture, the impacts of the fur trade, the tragedies and realities of residential schools, and the positive contributions that Secwepemc peoples have made in Canada’s past and present. As a non-Indigenous guest, I also believe that it’s critical for knowledge about these topics to come from Indigenous peoples as much as possible, and I plan to invite Indigenous elders into the classroom to share their stories and have their voices heard. Lastly, I’m currently working on a collaborative resource document that includes several Indigenous books, websites, and activities, designed to implement in various grade levels; this is something I will continually refer to when planning my daily lessons.

References

- Freire, P. (2001). *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield. (Original work published 1998).
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and reconciliation commission of Canada: Calls to action*. Retrieved February 21, 2021, from https://moodle.tru.ca/pluginfile.php/1805278/mod_resource/content/1/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.