A look at personal beliefs of teaching

When I was young, I never had a dream to become a teacher. My education also was not in the education field. I had never been teaching anywhere before I worked at my university. Therefore, teaching is a new thing for me. When I began to teach, I realized that it was not easy to become a good teacher. It was a big responsibility. What you teach today could affect someone's future. Thus, as a teacher, I need guidance as my foundation to become a good educator.

I believe it is important that personal beliefs about education be explored. This should be an ongoing and evolving process, because building up a personal philosophy of education has been a journey of search and discovery. It will grow over the time based on experiences, and also on personal and educational developments. The challenges that I will meet during the journey stimulate new demands to become a better educator. As a teacher, it is my desire to connect with my students. I believe that teachers should give the students attention and involve them in teaching and learning process. This essay is about my philosophy of education. It will be organized as follows: first, I will offer my point of view about the aims of education. Second, I will illustrate my beliefs about teaching and learning methods. Third, I will present my views about curriculum implementation. I will then describe my ethics and morality in teaching and learning process. I will close by concluding my philosophy of education that I mentioned before.

My philosophy of education starts with what I feel about education. For me, the aims of education should include and teach intellectual, personal, civic, cultural, and moral aspects of life. This will ensure well-rounded and balanced individuals. Education is not only about developing students'

intellects but also developing students' emotional capacities. Education should create people who care for other people. We do not want create intellectual but ignorant people.

Education should also focus on the civic responsibilities of individuals beyond the classroom. I think students should be encouraged to reach out in openness and service to the community beyond the school, to become actively involved in their community. Individuals should obtain skills through education which contribute to self-reliance in solving problems of everyday life. I feel students should develop respect for the custom, cultures, and beliefs that occur in our diverse world. Students should develop values that will be beneficial to the common welfare of society. In addition, I feel it also important for education to embrace programs that develop respect for the environment. Students should recognize and aware about their environment and how to employ sustainable life. I realize that to achieve those aims is a challenge. I hope my philosophy of education will help me and students to achieve them.

As a teacher in a distance learning university, my focus is online teaching. It is a bit different from teaching in a " conventional" or face to face university. I usually have a large online class for my course. Sometime it is difficult to pay attention to every student individually, but I do believe that students need attention to make them engage with the course. They need to be recognized as an individual. So, my philosophy of education is a student-centered one. I believe in focusing on individual needs, and involving students in the process of their learning. It is my belief that individual differences need to be respected. I believe that all students have strengths,

and that is the goal of education to assist students in identifying and building upon these. These beliefs are stronger after I have been studying at Simon Fraser University (SFU). I see that students can learn more if they are engaged with the lessons and with the teachers. Therefore, the lessons have to be interesting and teachers have to give their best attention to the students.

I also believe Freire's (1970/2000) concept about teacher-student with students-teachers. He argued that " the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself or herself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow" (p. 50). I think it can be employed in distance learning university, where most of the students are adult learners, and parts of the teaching-learning process are based on tutorials. In this method, teacher and students have opportunities to develop discussions, and from those, we can learn from each other.

For me, the most meaningful learning takes place when students are motivated and interested. It is my belief that the way to achieve this is by giving students a voice in the learning process, and by assisting them in finding connections in the curriculum with their own life and interests. By allowing students to bring their own stories, experiences, and ideas into the classroom, we provide the students with opportunities to work together, to learn from each other, and to respect each others' differences. I also believe that students should be given opportunities to relate their learning and critical thinking skills to social challenges and problems outside of the classroom. Not only do students have the potential to make a difference

within the society, they can grow as individuals in the process. This approach has the benefits of empowering students and building their self esteem and problem solving skills.

Related with curriculum, I believe that institutions and teachers still hold the main role in developing curriculum, and teachers can be flexible in the curriculum implementation. I learned from my experiences in SFU that students could be involved in curriculum implementation. They are given a chance to give their input, so teachers can identify their needs. I believe when teachers give the students opportunities like this, it will make them feel challenged to learn and become more interested and satisfied with the learning process.

Studying in a distance learning university is not easy. Students have to become self directed-learners. They have to be independent. However, sometime they need to ask and consult about their study difficulties with teachers. That is why I also believe that I should be a good facilitator for my students. Not only should I be a good teacher academically, but also I should be a guide to my students. If there are some questions and concerns about their study, I will help them thoroughly, administratively and academically.

My philosophy also includes respects, kindness, responsibility, democratic teaching, patience, and time. Even though students and teacher have different roles, I believe that I, as a teacher, have to treat them with respect, because when we respect each other, the teaching learning process will run smoothly. I also have responsibilities to give my students a good quality of education. Students should gain something useful when they study. In

addition, in my experience, because students also need attention, as a teacher I should be patient and give them my time for listening.

My philosophy of education has been shaped by experiences within my own life and my education. I feel that attention as well as involving students are important as parts of the teaching and learning process. As I enter the profession of education, my philosophy may evolve as I gain experiences as a teacher. However, the foundations of my educational philosophy will continue to guide me in the way which I interact with my students.