Philosophy of Teaching and Learning Statement of Tricia Wilson

…How do students learn?

I believe students learn best by a combination of understanding, repetition, and real-life application of a lesson, using both teacher-to-student instruction and constructive instructional methods. The result ultimately correlates to an actual experience that the student can later reflect on and subsequently build upon, furthering educational knowledge. Mary Driscoll (2002) provides that learning occurs in context and is active, social, and reflective. Students tend to make sense of new information by applying what they already know, making the context of the new information very important in order to gather proper meaning. Involving students allows them to apply what knowledge and experience to create new knowledge and ideas. In this interaction, particularly on real-life problems or challenges, the mind is stimulated by other students' ideas and cultures, strengths and weaknesses of learning styles. One could apply the saying of "1+1=3". And after all is said and done, comes the time for feedback and revision. This reflection allows the student to visit the topic one more time, understand it a little deeper, and culminate the experience that will last well into the future. Remember that time?....

…What is the role of a teacher in an instructional setting?

The roles of teachers in an instructional setting are many, but the overall role is to facilitate learning, teaching students how to learn and become independent learners. To facilitate learning, teachers must provide a socially just classroom and have a solid foundation of leadership, instructional (both teacher-centered and constructionist), and organizational skills (Arends 2007). I believe teachers must be role-models in voice and action, leading students not by micromanagement, but by example and ability to relate to, motivate, and include students of all different backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles, striving for each student to reach his or her

potential. High standards need apply to all students. Students need environments that are interesting, exciting, and engaging as much as possible, with subject matter that relates to the students and the world around them. The instruction and environment needs to be flexible and adapt to each student, taking advantage of student strengths and helping to strengthen student weaknesses. Participation fosters thinking and creativity and should be encouraged both for activities inside and outside the classroom.

I believe students need to be taught both the tangible and intangible aspects of an education. While every student needs to learn reading writing and arithmetic, every student also needs to learn how to succeed and how to fail. How to control actions and emotions is imperative for success in the real world (Arends 2007). This responsibility needs consideration from all educators, from administrators to teachers to coaches, who all need to work together in this process.

…What is the role of technology to promote teaching and learning?

I believe technology, if used properly, will be a key component of the solutions for the largest challenges of today's educational system. Technology provides the ability for more and better visualization of concepts, interactivity of learning programs and among all constituents, and the opportunity for immediate information, feedback, and revision, thus leading to the enhancement of student achievement and teacher learning (Bransford, Brown, Cocking 1999). Believing in Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences; technology can be used to complement education, utilizing learning strengths and improving weaknesses (Dickenson 1998).

To take one example, technology can play a major part in bridging the educational gap whose leading cause is diversity. One classroom might contain students with learning challenges or physical disabilities, English Second Language students, gifted students, several different

cultural backgrounds, one teacher, and one aide. Technology can provide the additional aide to meet student needs. Learning challenged students might need a more interactive program that technology can provide to help reinforce and better understand the lesson. ESL students might use technology for additional and more repetitious English instruction for help to get through the lesson assignment. A physically disabled student might use technology to communicate with group members during collaborative learning exercises. Gifted students might use the technology for additional enrichment assignments while waiting for other students to finish the in-class assignment or lessons. When used properly, the opportunities are endless.

…How do I envision teaching and learning happening in my classroom in the future?

   In my classroom, I envision a combination of a teacher-centered and constructionist instructional style, using materials and methods designed towards the unique learning styles and abilities of my students. The environment will be stimulating, inclusive and collaborative with students working together to apply and further their knowledge by solving real and invented problems. Technology will be infused in the classroom to further enhance the lesson, supply needed assistance to students, and explore the world outside the classroom. Teachers and students will collectively learn from each other.

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