

Simone McGautha

Dr. Tony Castro

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### Components of Social Justice Education

The five components of social justice education include building relationships with students, acknowledging and supporting student experiences and identity, paying attention to social and cultural relationships in the classroom, make use of reflective, student-centered teaching and rewarding students for their personal growth and effort. As educators, we often view these components as essential to, “good” teaching, regardless of the location, subject matter, age or grade level. Today, I will focus on three of the components including, teachers teach more than just the content, teachers acknowledge and support the personal and individuals of the student, and teachers awarding personal growth and efforts of students.

This class has taught me so much already, and I am so glad it is a requirement of our degree. I have definitely learned that great teachers teach more than just the content. I never paid very much attention to learning styles of my teachers over the years until now. Looking back on who I considered my favorite teacher, I have realized those particular teachers were my favorite because they went the extra mile for me. The content they taught as well as the life lessons they taught me have made me a better person and ultimately led me to my decision to teach. I see a connection between the type of teachers I had in high school and the type of teacher I am striving to be. For example, in high school, we studied Shakespeare in my English classes. For anyone who has read Shakespeare, it is very hard to understand and grasp. However, one of my favorite high school teachers allowed our class to re-write the story and add present-day connotation and

lingo. It helped us understand the story a lot better and I loved Shakespeare ever since. She taught more than just the content, she taught us how to break down a story and think about it in a different way. From that lesson, I learned that when I don't understand something in life, I can look at it in a different way and understand it a lot more. From this course, I hope to learn how to do the same. I want to be able to have an open mind to students' cultural experiences and their thoughts and outlooks on life in general. I want to become more open to change and embrace it while learning something new from my student's every day.

The next component I want to focus on is acknowledging personal and individual dimensions of experiences. I feel that this component is very important because it shows the student that you value their individuality and tells them that it is okay to be the person they are. Being in this class has taught me how to deal with differences. It has taught me that as long as a student has the passion for learning that is the only thing that matters. Learning this component has also taught me how family partnering is extremely important; this also relates to an article in our book. Janet Gonzalez-Mena from our book says that, "partnering with families is an important goal for teachers and other professionals in early child care and education programs. A related goal is to consider building a community out of the partners" (p.219). This shows the child that everyone in his or her immediate circle gets along regardless of any differences. As a teacher, I hope to understand that it may come naturally, but it also may take some effort. The effort I give will directly correlate with how the student respects me and the relationship we will have in the classroom. From this class, I will like to learn how to handle the situations and go about drawing these connections between me, the student and the student's family. If I learn it now, it won't be as hard to do that in the long run when I am in the classroom.

The last component and definitely not the least important is the rewarding of student's personal growth and efforts as they move along in the learning process. When I think of rewarding a student for their personal growth, I don't think of tangible awards, I think more of compliments and acknowledgements. Since I will be teaching high school students, I think it would be a little too much to give out candy, certificates and other tangible rewards. Maybe for a younger student that might work a lot better. From my own school experience, when I was in high school, I was very stubborn and didn't like anyone telling me what to do or giving me orders. I felt like I was too old to listen to directions from anyone other than my parents; and a lot of times I didn't listen to them either. I wanted to be treated like an adult by everyone I came into contact with. One day, my math teacher asked me to stay after class. He asked me if I had any questions about the class or had any problems about upcoming test, I simply said no. My math teacher didn't give up. He asked me this same question every class period for a month and finally I opened up to him and said, "Yes, I need help." I realized that he cared about my well-being as a student and as a person. I was so reluctant that I didn't want to let him help me. He's persistence shows how passionate and dedicated he is to teaching and he is now one of my favorite teachers. I still keep in touch with him and he still shows concern about my well-being. When I become a teacher, my number one goal will be to have the patience to take time out for each student and make sure I am assisting them to the best of my ability. Whether it is with school or life lessons in general, I want my students to view me as reliable. In this class, I want to learn more about how to be a concerned teacher, but not too overbearing. I think there is a thin line between the two of those.